



CALL FOR UNITY, VIGILANCE ON PAINFUL AUGUST 2 MEMORY Kuwait cannot forget its martyrs

1,342 laid down lives for country

By Abdul Nasser Al-Aslami and
Mohammad Ghanem
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 1: The Martyr's Office organized the Martyrs' Day event under the slogan "Kuwait Remains" at the Avenues Mall the day before yesterday on the occasion of the 34th anniversary of the brutal invasion of the State of Kuwait.

In a press statement issued after inaugurating the exhibition, which is part of the event at the Avenues Mall, the Director General of the office Salah Al-Awfan said, "The commemoration of Martyrs' Day on August 2 every year represents one of the most important and unforgettable days in the memory of Kuwaiti society. It stands as a testament to the virtues of resilience, sacrifice, and resistance during the brutal Iraqi aggression against the State of Kuwait.

"The sacrifices of 1,342 martyrs of Kuwaiti heroes, from 1961 through the invasion phase and until today, deserve our appreciation and gratitude, as they sacrificed themselves so that Kuwait would remain.

"It is the solemn duty of the Martyr's Office and all residents of this land to immortalize the memory of these heroes and honor the families and children who lost their loved ones for the sake of this beloved land."

Al-Awfan revealed that in the current exhibition, an interactive system was used featuring 30 paintings by artist Fahad Al-Najjar who affirmed that his participation aims to document Kuwait's history for both present and future generations through the interactive artwork that depicts stories of the martyrs and illustrate historical events that transpired during the Kuwaiti invasion.

Al-Awfan emphasized that commemorating the invasion symbolizes "our enduring love for this homeland, which will remain eternal, and the sacrifices of the martyrs serve as a guiding light for the current generation." He urged everyone to cherish this beloved homeland, underscoring the political leadership's commitment to immortalize the martyrs and honor their families through the Martyr's Office.

Al-Awfan said he considered commemorating the invasion an embodiment of "our love for this homeland that will remain forever and that what the martyrs have sacrificed is a beacon for the current generation."

He called on all the people to preserve this dear homeland, stressing the keenness of the political leadership to immortalize the martyrs and honor their families through the Martyrs' Office.

In addition, the artist Fahad Al-Najjar emphasized that art, especially painting, has the unique ability to document and convey messages to future generations in a way that is both accessible and beautiful.

Continued on Page 5



The Martyrs' Office organized an event to commemorate the martyrs at the Avenues Mall on the 34th anniversary of the heathenish Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. Photo by Mohammad Morsi

Kuwait's foreign reserves dip to lowest level since Jan 2024

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 1: Kuwait's foreign reserves have fallen to their lowest level since January 2024, reflecting a significant decrease in the country's reserve assets, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The daily quoting sources said as of the end of June 2024, Kuwait's official reserve assets amounted to 14.279 billion dinars (\$46.806 billion). This is a decrease of 4.38% annually, which equates to a reduction of 661 million dinars (\$2.166 billion).

In June 2023, Kuwait's reserves were at 15.089 billion dinars (\$49.461 billion). By May 2024, reserves had dropped to 14.591 billion dinars (\$47.829 billion).

Since the beginning of 2024, reserves have decreased by 1.31% from their end-of-2023 level of 14.620 billion dinars (\$47.858 billion).

The decline is attributed to a reduction in the "foreign currency and deposits abroad" component, which was 12.808 billion dinars in June 2024. This figure is down 4.73% from June 2023 and 1.32% from May 2024.

This decrease in reserves could impact Kuwait's financial stability and its ability to manage external shocks, highlighting the need for strategic adjustments in financial policies.

Meanwhile, the Central Bank of Kuwait has announced that the broad money supply (M2) remained steady at 40.1 billion Kuwaiti dinars (approximately \$131 billion) as of June 2024.

This figure reflects a stable monetary environment, maintaining the same level as the previous month.

Continued on Page 5

Pioneers in region: Jawaher

Kuwait strives to safeguard rights

CAIRO, Aug 1, (KUNA): Kuwait Assistant Foreign Minister for human rights, Ambassador Sheikha Jawaher Ibrahim Duaij Al-Sabah affirmed on Thursday Kuwait's dedication to safeguarding and promoting human rights through its adherence to various international treaties and conventions.

In a statement to KUNA, following Sheikha Jawaher's meeting with Jaber Al-Marri, Chairman of the Arab Human Rights Committee, Sheikha Jawaher discussed the procedures for submitting and reviewing Kuwait's second periodic report to the Charter Committee, scheduled to be submitted by the end of 2024.

Sheikha Jawaher highlighted Kuwait's efforts in advancing human rights both in legislation and practice, emphasizing that Kuwait was a pioneering nation in this field within the region. On his part, Al-Marri expressed the Committee's readiness to support Kuwait in preparing the periodic report, which is to be presented during the next session at the League of Arab States headquarters by the end of this year.



Sheikha Jawaher

Almost 2.5m people undergo 'biometrics'

By Munif Naif
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 1: Major-General Eid Al-Owaihian, the Director-General of the General Department of Criminal Evidences, said nearly 2.487 million citizens and residents have undergone biometric fingerprinting since its implementation last May.

In an interview on the Kuwait TV's news channel, Major-General Al-Owaihian stated, "Approximately 22 percent of Kuwaitis and 28.5 percent of expatriates have yet to complete the fingerprinting process."

The Ministry of Interior, following the directives of the First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense and

Continued on Page 5

Kuwait army rejects launch pad 'blame'

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 1, (Agencies): Kuwait will never be used as a launchpad for attacks on neighboring countries, the spokesman for the defense ministry Colonel Hamad Al-Saqer said on Thursday.

Kuwait authorities will not allow the use of the country's lands or airspace to carry out military operations against neighbors and allies, he was cited as saying in a military statement, denying the veracity of reports alleging otherwise.

Meanwhile, the Federation of Arab Journalists (FAJ) called on the international community on Thursday to protect journalists in Palestine, Lebanon, and Sudan from the threats that seek to silence and veil reality from being reported.

FAJ condemned the blatant assaults on journalists in Palestine, emphasizing that these journalists, who bear witness to the atrocities of the Israeli occupation regime, have become targets for Israeli forces and settlers, often facing fatal risks in their pursuit of truth, said a statement released by FAJ.

FAJ called on Arab media institutions to highlight the plight of the Palestinian people, particularly journalists, by sharing documented human stories beyond mere statistics. Additionally, the Union urged a ban on normalization with representatives of the Israeli regime.

The statement reaffirmed the federation's commitment to monitoring the situation of journalists in Palestine, who face systematic and organized crimes by Israeli forces aimed at concealing the reality of the ongoing genocide against the Palestinian population.

Continued on Page 5

Kuwait security forces take part in blood donation drive

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

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 1: Minister of Health Dr. Ahmad Al-Awadhi on Thursday launched the national blood donation campaign, which is being held for the ninth consecutive year, under the slogan, "Together Forever... A Wall for the Nation", at the Central Blood Bank with the participation of the military corps (Army, Police, National Guard and Kuwait Fire Force).

Al-Awadhi stressed the importance of noble giving without compensation in the form of donating blood to save people's lives. He appreciated the participation of the military agencies in this national campaign, as well as the blood donors.

He inspected the Blood Transfusion Unit at the Central Blood Bank; where one patient was undergoing blood changing which he has done for 901 times so far due to a disease he is suffering from, while another patient changes blood by about six pints daily in preparation for a liver transplant operation.

Continued on Page 5



Minister of Health Dr. Ahmad Al-Awadhi visits the Blood Bank at the launching of the blood donation campaign. Photo by Mahmoud Jadeed

MoCI to tackle fraud in precious metals

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

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 1: The Undersecretary of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry Ziad Al-Najem issued a decision to form a joint working team between the Precious Metals Department and the Commercial Control Department to reduce the phenomenon of fraud in precious metals. This team is headed by the Director of the Commercial Control Department Faisal Al-Ansari, and Khaled Mansour Al-Otaibi as his deputy, and has nine ministry employees as members.

The decision defined the team's responsibilities, which include conducting joint inspection tours between the Precious Metals Department and the Commercial Control Department at gold and precious metal jewelry shops and workshops to combat commercial fraud. The team's activities will continue over a period of three months from the date of the decision's issuance.

In a related context, sources revealed that the Commercial Control Inspection Teams at the Fish Market Center in the eastern region affiliated with the Ministry of Commerce and

Industry are continuing their efforts and inspection campaigns to monitor the performance of offices selling imported fish.

They explained that one of the campaigns had resulted in the closure of an office after the office owner started the auction without obtaining the approval of the inspectors of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry. This is in violation of the regulations and laws in force in this regard, which prohibit the practice of fish brokerage without obtaining the approval of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.

Continued on Page 5



Minister of Public Works and Minister of State for Municipal Affairs Dr Noura Al-Mashaan during an inspection tour of the Shuwaikh Beach Development Project. — See Page 8

From peace ... to peril

An expat's eyewitness account of Kuwait's darkest day – August 2, 1990

— Details Page 11 —

MoH has completed all projects in the 100-day plan

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

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 1: The Ministry of Health has completed the projects included in the 100-day plan that was announced after the formation of the government. It has prepared a detailed report that will be presented

to the Council of Ministers for discussion during the next meeting.

According to informed sources, the ministry's plan included working on three tracks:

1. The first track is related to digital health and the electronic file to ease the burden on citizens, and move from the paper system to the electronic one

2. The second track is related to continuing to open health facilities including clinics, hospitals and specialized centers

3. The third track is to enhance the public health of citizens, and support the health of individuals and families

Continued on Page 5

Prayer Timings

Fajr 03:39 Asr 15:30
Sunrise .. 05:08 Maghrib .. 18:40
Zohr 11:54 Isha 20:06

Local

Expected weather for next 24 hrs:

By Day: Very hot with moderate to fresh northwesterly wind, with speeds of 25-60 km/h causing rising dust.

By Night: Hot to rather hot with

Weather

light to moderate freshening over coastal areas northwesterly wind, with speeds of 15-40 km/h.

Station	Max Exp	Min Rec
Kuwait City	48	37
Kuwait Airport	49	32

Abdaly	49	31
Jahra	49	34
Salmiyah	43	34
Jal Aliyah	48	33
Nuwaisib	45	33
Wafra	48	32

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

HH Crown Prince and Prime Minister send greetings

HH Amir congratulates Benin and Switzerland on national days

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 1, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent on Thursday a cable to the President of Benin Patrice Talon, congratulating him on the country's National Day.

His Highness the Amir wished President Patrice good health, the Republic of Benin and its people further progress and prosperity.

His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah sent a congratulatory cable to President Patrice Talon on the occasion of his country's National Day.

In the cable, His Highness the Crown Prince wished the president everlasting health and wellness, and further progress and prosperity to his country and people.

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah sent a cable to President Talon congratulating

him on his country's National Day.

Meanwhile, His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad sent a cable of congratulations on Thursday to the President of the Swiss Confederation, Viola Amherd, on her country's National Day.

In the cable, His Highness the Amir wished her good health and well-being and wished Switzerland and its people more progress and prosperity.

His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled sent a cable of congratulations to President Viola Amherd, on her country's National Day.

In the cable, His Highness the Crown Prince wished her good health and well-being.

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Abdullah Al-Ahmad sent a cable of congratulations to President Viola Amherd, on her country's National Day.

'Kuwait committed to sustainable, environmental-friendly urban dev'

4th Master Plan for 2040 supports development of green buildings

KUWAIT CITY Aug 1: Kuwait is demonstrating a strong commitment to sustainable and environmentally friendly urban development through a series of innovative projects and strategic planning, reports Al-Jarida daily.

The country's focus on enhancing green spaces, establishing natural barriers against desertification, and combating climate change is a cornerstone of its "New Kuwait 2035" vision. This vision places significant emphasis on the "Sustainable Living Environment" pillar, which is central to ensuring the longevity and health of Kuwait's environment for future generations.

The "New Kuwait 2035" vision underscores Kuwait's dedication to fulfilling its environmental commitments on a global scale. The country is actively engaged in various projects aimed at increasing green spaces, bolstering vegetation cover, establishing nature reserves, and supporting ecotourism.

Achieving carbon neutrality by mid-century is viewed as pivotal for environmental improvement, economic growth, and sustainable development. This ambitious goal is expected to open numerous economic opportunities and significantly benefit future generations.

The 2024/2025 annual development plan highlights the creation of environmentally harmonious living areas. This initiative focuses on optimizing the use of natural resources, harmonizing development with the environment, and reducing pollution levels. The aim is to enhance the quality of life for Kuwaiti citizens through a set of strategic policies including building environmentally friendly cities.

This involves the adoption of green building principles, green infrastructure, and smart technology. The implementation of these policies is currently underway by the relevant authorities.

Green

The Fourth Master Plan for the State of Kuwait 2040 supports the development of green buildings as part of its strategy for sustainable urban growth.

These green buildings are designed to foster a healthier lifestyle and contribute to environmental well-being.

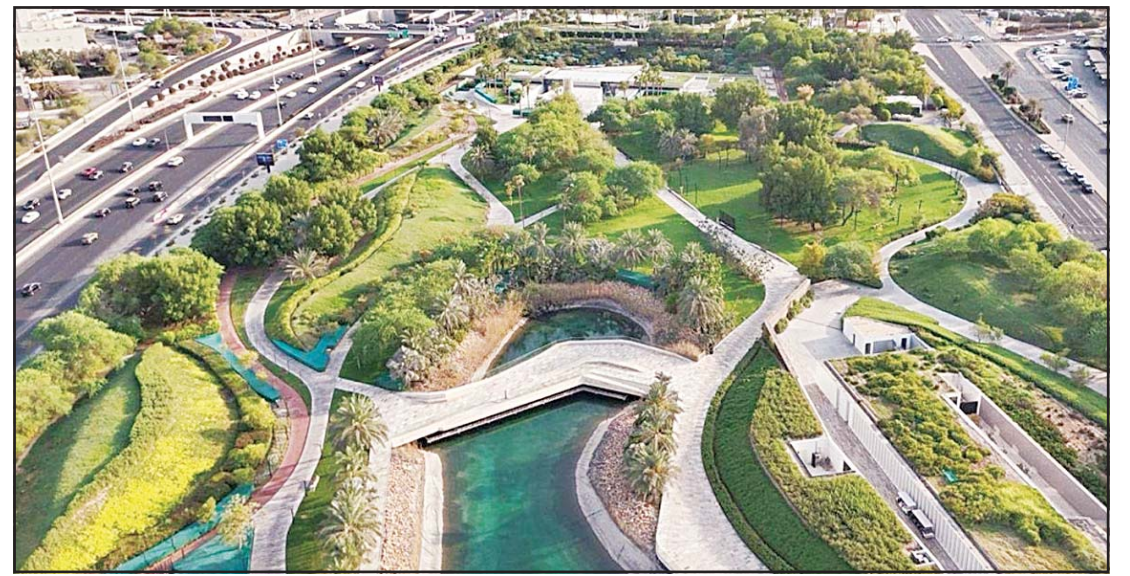
Additionally, tree planting campaigns are being carried out along the northern and southern borders to introduce tree species suited to Kuwait's environment. The expansion of green areas in public spaces and along roads is coordinated with various state ministries.

Recent statistics from the Public Authority for Agricultural Affairs and Fish Resources reveal significant progress in greening efforts.

The authority has established 179 parks covering an area of 2,695,993 square meters; approximately 462,149 trees have been planted; about 2,120,201 shrubs have been introduced; the flower planting area totals 285,109 square meters; there are 14,929 date palms; 125,942 ornamental palms have been planted and the area covered by palms is 217,107 square meters.

The Environment Public Authority has also been active in cultivating mangroves since 2018. The plan aims to grow 18,000 mangrove seedlings by 2035, leveraging their ability to absorb significant amounts of carbon dioxide.

Kuwait's efforts in sustainable urban development reflect its commitment to environmental stewardship and its strategic alignment with global sustainability goals. By investing in green infrastructure, expanding green spaces, and supporting innovative environmental projects, Kuwait is paving the way for a more sustainable and resilient future.



Aerial view of the greenery area initiated by PAAAFR.

Al-Jarida photo

Both countries mark 125 years of relations

British envoy pays tribute to Kuwaiti spirit on 34th Iraqi invasion 'versary

KUWAIT CITY Aug 1: August 2 marks the 34th anniversary of the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. On this significant day, the United Kingdom honors the courage, sacrifice, and enduring spirit of the Kuwaiti people. The United Kingdom stands in solidarity with Kuwait, remembering the shared history and the steadfast partnership that has grown over the years, says a press release issued by the British Embassy in Kuwait.

On the occasion, British Ambassador to the State of Kuwait, HE Belinda Lewis stated, "I would like to pay tribute to the bravery and resilience of the Kuwaiti people who faced immense challenges with unwavering strength.

"We also remember the sacrifices made by the coalition forces, including British servicemen and women, who played a crucial role in the liberation of Kuwait. The UK's commitment to Kuwait's sovereignty and security remains as strong today as it did 34 years ago.

"Kuwait and the UK have a long-standing defense relationship that has evolved over several decades, built on mutual respect, shared values, and a commitment to peace and stability in the region.

"Our partnership is reflected through defense agreements, military training, education, and regular joint exercises to enhance and strengthen our defense capabilities.

"This year is another milestone in our deep historical ties, as we commemorate 125 years of Kuwait-British



Col Ashour receiving his award.

UK honors Kuwaiti Col Ashour

It was a pleasure for the British Ambassador to Kuwait, Her Excellency Ms. Belinda Lewis, and the British Defence Attaché, Colonel Neil Marriott, to host Colonel Engineer Ali Ashour from the Kuwaiti Ministry of Interior. This event was in recognition of his achievement of being awarded the title "Fellow of the Royal Institute of Marine Engineers" under the patronage of His Majesty King Charles III, says a press release issued by the British Embassy in Kuwait.

This honor marks a historic milestone for the Royal Institute of Marine Engineers, as Kuwait becomes the first Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) country to have a citizen receive this prestigious recognition.



Lewis

ish relations. I look forward many more years of working together as we jointly face the challenges and enjoy the opportunities of the future."

■ During Kuwait's most challenging time, a story of extraordinary bravery among its people and strong leadership unfolded.

■ The UK played a vital role as an ally, standing shoulder to shoulder with Kuwait in its darkest hour.

■ During the invasion of Kuwait, UK swiftly provided crucial military assistance and diplomatic backing, ensuring the protection of Kuwait's sovereignty and the restoration of its freedom.

Other Voices

Concept of an 'Arab nation is a myth'

By Ahmed alsarraf

Colleague Salah Al-Sayer argues in a video clip that most Arab countries are not genuinely Arab, and that the concept of an "Arab nation" is a myth.

He critiques the proponents of Arab unity, who base their ideology on shared history, geography, religion, language, and other factors.

Al-Sayer's research suggests that "Arab history" is fragmented and cannot be universally applied or believed. For example, he questions the commonalities between the histories of Lebanon, Morocco, the Sudan, and Yemen.

He contends that the presence of a shared history between two neighboring countries is a natural phenomenon seen worldwide, not exclusive to Arab countries.

Geographical proximity, according to Al-Sayer, is also meaningless. He compares the Arab world to South America, where countries share similar features, languages, heritage, religions, and traditions, yet do not feel compelled to unite under a chauvinistic nationalist impulse. He questions why Arabs should strive for unity amidst significant differences.

"Regarding religion, Al-Sayer points out those common religious beliefs do not necessarily unify groups. He cites the example of over 1.4 billion Catholics and other Christians who do not form a unified entity.

"Within the Islamic religion, there are various sects and groups, and many Arab countries have substantial non-Muslim minorities. He argues that if Syria and Iraq were to unite on a religious basis, millions of non-Muslims, including Christians, Jews, Druze, Baha'is, and Alawites, would be marginalized.

"Al-Sayer also challenges the notion of a common language as a unifying factor. He compares the Arab world to

Francophone countries, which share the French language but have little else in common, and notes that France, a former colonizer, leads this cultural group. He doubts that shared language alone would prompt countries to support one another militarily.

"He believes that Arab unity and Arab nationalism were originally British and French ideas aimed at creating a military entity against the Ottoman Turks, realized partially through the Arab Revolt.

"Arab Christians, fearing Islamic numerical dominance and potential marginalization, played a significant role in promoting Arab nationalism. The idea primarily focused on uniting Egypt, Iraq, and the Levant, while peripheral regions like the Arabian Peninsula, Sudan, and North Africa were largely excluded.

"Al-Sayer underscores the cultural, aspirational, physical, and traditional differences among Arab countries. He argues that uniting these diverse nations under one umbrella would not transform their collective status.

"Instead, he advocates for each country to focus on its own scientific, cultural, and financial development before entertaining the notion of a potentially unattainable unity. He concludes that small, wealthy countries are unlikely to merge with larger, economically struggling nations.

"For instance, Jordan, which once supported Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait, would not accept a union with Sudan but might consider merging with a similarly small and rich country. Ultimately, he asserts that practical interests, not nationalist sentiments, should guide these decisions."

e-mail: a.alsarraf@alqabas.com.kw



Alfouz flyer

Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait names Hamad Alsaeb as Alfouz monthly draw winner

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 1: Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) is excited to announce Hamad Mohammad Alsaeb as the winner of Alfouz KD 20,000 monthly draw on Monday 29 July 2024. The draw took place in the presence of a Ministry of Commerce and Industry representative, ensuring transparency.

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

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

To top it off, ABK has simplified the

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

ABK encourages everyone to open an Alfouz draw account or increase their balance to participate in the upcoming weekly draw, which is scheduled to take place on Monday 5 August 2024.

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

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



Audience interaction with the traditional Sadu craft.

KUNA photo

Great turnout at Kuwait pavilion in Jerash fest

Kuwait pavilion witnessed a great turnout at Jordan's Cultural Jerash Festival in its 38th edition.

Kuwait pavilion included books, most of whose titles focused on publications related to Arab identity, culture, and the Palestinian cause, within the framework of Kuwait's participation that aims to enhance Arab culture, mainly amid the sufferings of Palestinians in Gaza.

Kuwait pavilion also included handicrafts and traditional weaving crafts (Sadu), in addition to displaying tradi-

tional Kuwaiti popular food, which received great interaction from visitors.

Participating Kuwaiti delegation member Sarah Khalaf told KUNA that included the Kuwait Fine Art gallery, which included paintings by Abdulredha Baqir, Ibtisam Al-Asfour, Thuraya Al-Baqasami, Lina Hejazy, Anbar Waleed, Shua'a Al-Helfi, and Marzouq Al-Jenae.

The Kuwaiti delegation is led by Secretary General of the National Council for Culture, Arts and Literature Dr. Mohammad Al-Jassar. (KUNA)

Local shrimp floods markets as Kuwaiti fishing season begins

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

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 1: Local shrimp flooded the markets yesterday with the start of shrimp fishing season by Kuwaiti fishing vessels that are licensed to operate in the exclusive economic zone. This was based on the announcement by the Public Authority for Agricultural Affairs and Fish Resources (PAAAFR), and the completion of preparations by the Kuwaiti fishing fleet to set sail.

A total of 297 boats had obtained permits to fish for shrimps in the exclusive economic waters. About 64 baskets of shrimp of all sizes arrived at the Sharq Fish Market on the first day, and the price of each basket was KD 65. Three kilograms of shrimp were sold for ten dinars, and one kilogram for KD 3.5.

Meanwhile, the cost of a basket of local pomfret ranged between KD 95 and KD 100 yesterday, and the price of one kilogram was close to KD 18. One kilogram of seabream costs KD 5. One kilogram of small grouper costs KD 8, and one kilogram of large grouper was sold for KD 5. One kilogram of trevally costs only KD 7.



Photo by Mahmoud Jadedd
Baskets full of prawns being kept for the auction.

PAAAFR announced that licensed Kuwaiti fishing vessels would be allowed to fish for shrimp in the special economic zone after obtaining a prior permit from the authority.

It is worth highlighting that shrimp fishing was banned since January 1 in order to preserve marine resources and enrich fish stocks.

LOCAL

Minister chairs 'security' meet

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 1: The First Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defense, and Minister of Interior, Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef, chaired a security meeting with several security leaders, including the Undersecretary of the Ministry of Interior, Lieutenant General Sheikh Salem Al-Nawaf, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef conveyed the greetings and appreciation of the country's top political leadership to the security leaders for exerting efforts to maintain law and order in the country. He emphasized that their work is highly valued by the political leadership.

During the meeting, the Minister of Interior listened to reports from security leaders about the current security plans and the results of intensive campaigns against residency law violators and outlaws. He directed an intensification of security deployment across the country, increased field presence, and a commitment to applying the law to everyone.

Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef then instructed to form a committee in cooperation with the Kuwait Municipality and the Public Authority for Agriculture Affairs and Fisheries Resources (PAAAFR).



A group photo taken during the honoring event.

Mol photo

Mol honors top security personnel to boost workforce motivation

The Security Facilities General Department in the Ministry of Interior recently honored a group of securitymen in order to motivate the entire workforce to perform well, reports Al-Rai daily.

Assistant Undersecretary for Special Security Affairs at the ministry Major General Abdullah Safah Al-Mulla and Director General of the Security Facilities Gen-

eral Department Brigadier Talal Al-Mansour awarded certificates of appreciation to the distinguished members of the force in the presence of Assistant Director General of the Security Facilities General Department Brigadier General Tariq Hussein.

Al-Mulla expressed appreciation for the tremendous efforts exerted by the securitymen, indicating the

award serves as their motivation to keep on improving their performance.

He lauded the securitymen for their dedication in maintaining the security and safety of the homeland; as well as their efficiency in carrying out the tasks and duties assigned to them, while urging them to be more careful and vigilant.

Three held in narcotic pills factory bust; 12,000 liquor bottles seized

Detention extended for accused in KD 120m laundering case

By Munif Naif, Jaber Al-Hamoud

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff and Agencies

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 1: In an important development in the ongoing efforts to combat drugs, the Drug Control General Department (DCGD) in the Criminal Security Sector at the Interior Ministry seized a psychotropic substance factory with the latest devices and equipment in encapsulating and manufacturing narcotic and psychotropic substances in a desert area in the northern part of the country.

In a press statement on Thursday, the ministry confirmed that DCGD officers arrested three individuals operating the factory. About 55 kilograms of Lyrica powder; 35 kilograms of a chemical substance; 500,000 Lyrica capsules; 100,000 Captagon tablets; 500 grams of shabu; 12 modern devices for manufacturing psychotropic substances and a weighing scale were found in their possession.

The suspects and the confiscated items were referred to the competent authority.

Moreover, customs officers at the Northern Ports Customs Administration-Shuwaikh Port dealt a strong blow to liquor and contraband dealers, as they seized a 40-foot container containing a large quantity of liquor from an Asian country. The officers inspected the shipment of household furniture as per the customs declaration.

However, the X-ray inspection showed foreign objects, so the shipment was subjected to a more thorough inspection.

This led to the discovery that there were attempts of fraud and concealment, as approximately 12,000 bottles of six types of liquor were hidden between the boxes and household furniture.

The necessary measures were taken and the confiscated items were referred to the competent authorities.

□ □ □

Detention extended for 15 days: The detention renewal judge has extended the detention of 27 defendants for the fourth consecutive time, pending further investigation for another 15 days.

The defendants, including citizens, Arabs, and Asians, are implicated in a network accused of laundering over KD 120 million.

They allegedly formed a criminal gang that laundered more than KD 120 million within a short span, illicitly transferred and invested funds into local banking systems to conceal their origin and disguise their source.

□ □ □

1 injured in cooking gas blast: Wednesday evening, fire-fighting teams responded to an explosion caused by a cooking gas leak in the kitchen of a house in the Raqqa area, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The incident resulted in injury of one person. The fire-fighting teams managed the situation and handed over the injured person to emergency medical services personnel for treatment.

□ □ □

Water bottles distribution: The General Manager of Al-Najat Charity Mohammad Al-Ansari disclosed that Al-Najat Charity, with the cooperation of Secretariat General of the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs, is undertaking a project for distributing 870,000 bottles of water across Kuwait, reports Al-Anba daily.

Al-Ansari explained that the distribution of drinking water is a seasonal initiative carried out regularly in partnership with the Secretariat General during the summer months when temperatures are high.

This project, which is part of Kuwait's charitable efforts, aims at providing cold water to beneficiaries in various areas, particularly remote and densely populated areas, as well as in cemetaries, hospitals, and the blood bank.

'Education' prepares for new academic year, rainy season

By Abdulrahman Al-Shammari

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 1: The Ministry of Education has started preparations for the new academic year 2024/2025 and the rainy season.

Assistant Undersecretary for Educational Facilities and Planning Mohammad Al-Khalidi, through the assistant undersecretary for Public Education Affairs, has instructed the principals in all schools and kindergartens to coordinate with the concerned authorities in taking the necessary precautionary measures to prepare for the new academic year and the upcoming rainy season in order to protect the buildings and prevent damage or leakage from ceilings.

He stressed the need to follow up a number of procedures, including coordination with the competent authorities regarding cleaning schools and providing the engineering affairs departments with a cleaning plan including a strategy to operate air conditioning devices and equipment.

He said this is in addition to cleaning water tanks through specialized companies and notifying engineering departments to be able to replace water cooler filters to ensure the good quality of drinking water and to avoid citations and violation of the Environment Public Authority regulations.

He also underscored the need to ensure the cleanliness of surfaces and rain gutters, and to clean and remove dust, weeds and waste, especially around water drains and ensure the cleanliness of rainwater drainage manholes in all school facilities.



Officers taking part in the campaign.

Mol photo

Face deportation

Surprise security drives in Mahboula and Jleeb net over 100 illegal expats

By Munif Naif

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY Aug 1: During a surprise security campaign in Mahboula and Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh the Ministry of Interior has rounded up more than 100 violators of Residency and Labor laws.

The campaign was organized upon instructions from the Deputy Prime Minister,

Minister of Defense and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahd Al-Yousef.

Security sources said the campaign was led by the Assistant Undersecretary for Private Security Affairs, Major-General Abdullah Al-Saffah and senior security officials.

All those arrested have been referred to the deportation center.

Several proposals sent

KPA board seeks clarification on the 'pharmacy officer' role

KUWAIT CITY Aug 1: Members of the Board of Directors of the Kuwait Pharmaceutical Association (KPA), Muhammad Al-Anzi and Abdul Aziz Al-Jadaan, have called for organizing and defining the administrative and technical responsibilities of the title "pharmacy officer," reports Al-Seyassah daily.

They emphasized the importance of removing the ambiguity surrounding this role and accelerating comprehensive reforms in the pharmacy sector.

Al-Anzi and Al-Jadaan highlighted that according to clauses 4 and 5 of Ministerial Resolution No. 367 of 2017, which specify the authority and responsibility of the head of the health center in its technical and administrative aspects, responsibility falls on the center's pharmacists in the event of any issue within the pharmacy.

They pointed out that no ministerial resolution has been issued to regulate and specify the administrative and technical responsibilities of the "pharmacy officer" title.

To address these concerns, Al-Anzi and Al-Jadaan presented several proposals for the required reforms in the pharmacy sector.

The key proposals include expediting the issuance of a ministerial decision to regulate the administrative and technical structure of primary care pharmacies, defining a clear job description for the health center pharmacy manager, both technically and legally, and adding this role as a clear administrative entity within the Ministry of Health and the Civil Service Bureau.

This is in addition to installing a magnetic (electronic) card system at the gate of each pharmacy and security cameras at the entrances, exits, and pharmacist's warehouses, identifying and sorting the specialized technical workers within the pharmacy and issuing a decision to clearly define the job description for the pharmacy profession and pharmacists in all their roles, as well as for pharmacy technicians, outlining their tasks, responsibilities, and powers.



Mol photo

On Wednesday, Major General Khaled Fahd, Acting Chief of the Directorate-General of Fire Department (DGFD), inspected the Fire Force Training Department to monitor the progress of tests for new applicants enrolling in firefighting courses, reports Al-Jarida daily. During the tour, Major General Fahd was briefed on the various procedures and mechanisms involved in the selection process for non-commissioned officer courses. These tests include evaluations of height and weight, physical fitness, swimming abilities, and personal interviews.

diwaniya ديوانية

A DIGEST OF PUBLIC OPINION

'Vital to tackle greed-driven national identity corruption'

"WHEN national identity and its components, as well as the demographic composition, are manipulated for greed, covetousness, commerce, and gain, or disguised and infiltrated for personal profit through false nationality claims, it becomes a corrupt goal and a criminal enterprise," Dr. Muhammad Al-Maqqati wrote for Al-Jarida daily.

"This issue has arisen through false testimony, fraudulent affiliations, and deceitful claims of lineage, often in exchange for money. Such actions have corrupted the national identity and led to significant harm to the homeland and patriotism. Perpetrators of these crimes deserve severe punishment, including imprisonment and hefty fines.

"Forgery, falsification of data, and providing false testimony are continuous crimes that renew daily and are not subject to the statute of limitations, as affirmed by the Court of Cassation.

"The established legal principle that 'whatever is built on falsehood is false' serves as a basis for withdrawing, losing, or forfeiting citizenship. Careful examination of illegal acquisition of citizenship, including forgery, pretense, and duplication, reveals that these acts are part of a criminal conspiracy aimed at financial gain.

"Forgers, impersonators, fraudsters, and those who alter their data, along with those who facilitate these acts, benefit from citizenship's rights and benefits through a multilateral criminal network.

"This network includes those who forge documents, tamper with citizenship files, alter and hide information, and falsely attribute children to themselves. Some make false statements to orphanages, enter sham marriages, or falsely claim to have been born or educated in Kuwait.

"These acts constitute forgery, deception, and data manipulation, all aimed at surreptitiously gaining Kuwaiti citizenship for its benefits. Officials, influential people, and employees who facilitate these crimes for financial gain are also guilty.

"They have treated the nation as a commercial opportunity and citizenship as a tradeable commodity. All involved are criminals deserving of punishment. Procedures for punishing, tracking, and stripping them of citizenship must be carried out impartially, without sentimentality or harmful intercession.

"The country's political leadership has recognized this issue and is taking determined and systematic steps to rectify it. By adhering to legal procedures and documented evidence, they aim to eliminate greed and avarice associated with trafficking in the country and nationality."

Also:

"Breast feeding is the ideal source of nutrition for children, providing essential antibodies that help prevent diseases. Neglecting breastfeeding can lead to serious health consequences for the child, including malnutrition, immunodeficiency, allergies, and life-threatening illnesses," columnist Dr. Hind Al-Shomer, wrote for Al-Anba daily.

"This is why the world celebrates Breastfeeding Week from the first of August each year to support women in breastfeeding their children. Currently, less than half of infants under six months are breastfed.

"Research shows that breastfed children perform better on intelligence tests and are less likely to develop diabetes, obesity or leukemia, both in childhood and later in life; women who breastfeed

also have a lower risk of breast and ovarian cancer compared to those who do not.

"World Breastfeeding Week was first celebrated in 1992 by the Global Breastfeeding Alliance. In 2018, a World Health Assembly resolution recognized World Breastfeeding Week as an important health promotion strategy.

"It is now celebrated in more than 120 countries under the auspices of UNICEF and the World Health Organization. WHO, health ministries, and partners aim to re-establish a global culture of breastfeeding and support it everywhere.

"The week aims to create an enabling environment that supports women in breastfeeding their children, providing local community and workplace support, and ensuring adequate protective measures in government policies and laws.

"It also promotes the exchange of information on the benefits and strategies of breastfeeding. Some countries encourage breastfeeding by allowing women time off work to breastfeed due to its health benefits for both mothers and children.

"Breastfeeding offers numerous benefits for both women and children. Breast milk is rich in essential nutrients balanced for infant growth, making it crucial to start breastfeeding within the first hours of birth.

"Breastfeeding is convenient, as it eliminates the need to wash bottles and is more cost-effective than manufactured milk. It helps the uterus contract to its normal size after pregnancy and strengthens the mother-child bond. Additionally, breastfeeding helps mothers lose excess weight effortlessly and reduces the risk of postpartum depression due to hormonal changes.

"Given these health benefits, it is essential to encourage and support women to breastfeed their children, not just during World Breastfeeding Week but throughout the year, to ensure future generations enjoy good health and contribute to nation-building."

□ □ □

"Black Thursday marks the anniversary of the blatant Iraqi aggression on Kuwait, and Kuwait's resilience and unity that has astounding the world", columnist Sheikh Faisal Al-Hamoud Al-Malik Al-Sabah wrote for Al-Seyassah daily.

"Today (August 2) commemorates the painful 34th anniversary of the brutal Iraqi invasion of our beloved Kuwait. It was a heinous act perpetrated by a treacherous aggressor in the dead of night under cover of darkness with the intention of erasing our identity and history, and plundering our wealth.

"Black Thursday, which falls on August 2 every year, represents both a trial and a triumph, affirming the strength and unity of the Kuwaiti people. They rallied around their government and legitimate leadership, demonstrated remarkable unity to repel aggression, upheld legitimacy, and safeguarded Kuwait's freedom and pride.

"The leadership at the time - the late Amir Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad, the Crown Prince and Prime Minister Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah, and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad (May God bless their souls) - had swiftly mobilized international and Arab support for Kuwait's cause and took decisive steps towards the liberation of the country.

"This anniversary serves to remind us of the profound suffering our homeland and its people endured due to heinous criminal acts. It marks a day of humanitarian disaster when our land fell victim to occupation by forces of injustice and tyranny who disregarded the most basic principles of life.

— Compiled by PFX Fernandes

WEDDINGS, UPTO 140

AUDITORIUM

BUFFET

ANNIVERSARY

BIRTHDAY

KIDS CELEBRATION

WE ARE BUDGET-FRIENDLY

MUGHAL MAHAL

FAHAHEEL

Weddings | Seminars | Conferences | Celebrations

Sea view | Ample car parking

For more enquires Call: 23911174 / 23911175

Mr. Jack: 97644421

Email: fahaheel@mughalmahal.com

info@mughalmahal.com

Kuwait's housing crackdown raises labor costs and construction prices

Urgent need for effective solutions to stabilize market

KUWAIT CITY Aug 1: Recent actions to address violations in investment housing have led to significant disruptions in Kuwait's labor market and increased construction costs, reports Al-Jarida daily.

The sources have indicated that while addressing these violations was

necessary, the method of enforcement has had unintended negative consequences.

The enforcement actions have led to a rise in labor wages. Workers who previously earned around 10 dinars per day are now demanding up to 15 dinars per day. This increase is attributed to the higher costs of housing and transportation, as workers are now residing further from new residential areas like Al-Mutlaa and Al-Wafra.

The removal of violations related to the use of basements and ground floors for worker accommodation has created a shortage of affordable housing for expatriate workers. This shortage has led to increased rental values for worker housing, further driving up costs.

The rising cost of worker housing is expected to contribute to higher overall construction costs. With increased wages and housing expenses, the final cost for citizens receiving new plots in areas like Al-Mutlaa and Al-Wafra is anticipated to rise.

The recent fire in Al-Mangaf has intensified the need for proper organization and regulation of buildings, including residential properties. The fire has led to increased costs for storage and housing, with some small business owners experiencing rental price increases of up to 300%. This surge in costs is likely to be passed on to consumers through higher product prices.

The business owners and project managers are calling for the development of new storage areas and warehouses to mitigate the impact of increased rental prices. Immediate solutions are necessary to prevent further strain on businesses and to stabilize costs.

Imposing fines on violating property owners, rather than immediate enforcement actions, might have been a more balanced approach.

The authorities should expedite the construction of new housing and storage solutions to address the increased demand and prevent further price hikes.



Issuing a violation as part of the municipality's enforcement campaign.

July sees 22.5% of total citations

MoCI issues '577 violations' in 7 months, highlights false ads

By Marwa Al-Bahrawi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY Aug 1: Faisal Al Ansari, Director of the Commercial Control Department at the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, said the department has issued 577 violations over the past seven months.

This was achieved during 1,840 inspection tours, including 380 conducted in July alone. In July, the inspection teams issued 130 citations, accounting for 22.5% of the total violations reported during the period.

According to Al Ansari, the violation statistics for July highlighted a significant shift in the nature of the infractions. The most common violation was related to advertisements with false specifications, data, or prices, which comprised 27.7% of the total violations with 36 cases.

This was followed by violations involving the agent's failure to honor the quality guarantee of products during the warranty period (15 violations), and restaurant delivery price issues (14 violations).

Other violations included extra fees on the value of commodities or services (9 violations) and charging prices higher than the announced amount (7 violations).



KUNA photo

Faisal Al Ansari, Director of the Commercial Control Department at the Ministry of Commerce and Industry

Abdali 'farms' to face water crisis

KUWAIT CITY Aug 1: The Ministry of Public Works has announced that treated water will be cut off from Abdali farms due to maintenance work, reports Al-Seyassah daily. The cut-off will begin on Monday, August 5, and is expected to last for six days.



Sheikh Athbi Al-Nasser, Governor of Farwaniya, conducted a recent field inspection of the Government Mall located at Avenues Mall.

Sheikh Athbi urges continued improvement

Farwaniya Governor inspects gov't mall

KUWAIT CITY Aug 1: Farwaniya Governor Sheikh Athbi Al-Nasser, underscored the critical importance of addressing citizens' needs by efficiently fulfilling their requirements through government institutions, reports Al-Jarida daily.

His remarks came during a recent field inspection of the Government Mall located in Avenues Mall.

Sheikh Athbi Al-Nasser, who was received by Brigadier General Nayef Al-Hajraf, Assistant Director of Security of the Governorate, and retired Major General Hamad Al-Suray, Director of Security of the Avenues, received a com-

prehensive briefing on the services provided at the Government Mall.

The visit aimed to review the facilities and ensure that services are delivered effectively and in line with applicable regulations and laws.

The Governor commended the efforts of various government agencies for their dedication to providing high-quality service. He encouraged government employees to continue improving their work and enhance the service experience for citizens and visitors.



AUGUST

Room Promotion






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

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

Move seeks to cut wasted funds

Al-Adwani forms committee to review scholarship policies and curb failures

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 1: Minister of Education, Higher Education and Scientific Research Adel Al-Adwani announced the formation of a committee tasked with conducting a comprehensive review of local and overseas scholarship policies to reduce instances of academic failure, reports Al-Anba daily.

In a press statement, Al-Adwani highlighted Kuwait's commitment to providing numerous academic opportunities to its citizens, including the scholarship program, which is integral to Kuwait's educational strategy.

He stressed that investing in human resources is crucial for comprehensive and sustainable development; however he clarified that cases of academic failure and students withdrawing from scholarships result in waste of public funds, thus necessitating effective solutions.

Al-Adwani affirmed the need for rigorous measures to address these issues and ensure scholarships are optimally utilized.

He said the initiatives undertaken by the Ministry of Education, and the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research are in response to directives from the Amiri leadership to tackle issues related to the educational system through transparent actions.

Al-Adwani stated that forming the committee reflects his commitment and continu-

New schools equipped

Budget designed to cater students, teachers' needs

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 1: Nashmiya Al-Dhuwahi, Acting Director of the Supplies and Warehouses Department at the Ministry of Education, confirmed the ministry's commitment to preparing and equipping schools for the upcoming academic year, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

In a press statement, Al-Dhuwahi highlighted how the Supply Department has overseen the equipping of 18 new schools, as well as the reopening of a school in the suburb of Saad Al-Abdullah.

These facilities have been furnished with the necessary school furniture for both students and the educational staff.

The estimated budget for these new schools is designed to cater to the needs of approximately 7,900 students and 1,430 teachers and administrators.

The ministry is nearing the completion of the furniture and educational equipment provision, in line with its plan to ensure readiness for the new academic year.

ous efforts to elevate the standard of education and safeguard public funds.

He indicated that the committee will submit its report as soon as possible, and emphasized his dedication to ensuring the best academic opportunities are provided to Kuwaiti students.



Al-Adwani



Dr. Jassim Al-Hamdan, Mohammed Al-Sanousi, Nasser Al-Hilali and Faleh Al-Masoud during the meeting.

KU and Scientific Center enhance collaboration to support students

KUWAIT CITY Aug 1: The Deanship of Student Affairs at the Kuwait University recently met with representatives from The Scientific Center to discuss and enhance their memorandum of cooperation, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The meeting focused on integrating new terms to better serve Kuwait University students.

The Scientific Center's team expressed their commitment to working closely with the university to achieve shared goals.

During the discussions, eight new items were added to the memorandum,

addressing various aspects of student support. These items were refined to align with the objectives of both parties.

The updated memorandum will undergo a final review by the Deanship of Student Affairs for any additional comments.

Taking part in the discussions were Dr. Jassim Al-Hamdan, Dean of Student Affairs; Mohammed Al-Sanousi, Deputy Director General of Visitor Experience at the Scientific Center; Nasser Al-Hilali, Deputy Director General for Institutional Support; and Faleh Al-Masoud, Director of Student Housing and International Student Affairs.

Students invited to explore new majors and get expert advice

PAAET launches 'My Beginning is Right' campaign at Avenues Mall

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 1, (KUNA): The Public Authority for Applied Education and Training (PAAET) launched an awareness campaign titled "My Beginning is Right" at the Avenues Mall on Thursday, aiming to educate students on how to choose appropriate majors. The campaign will continue until August 6.

Director General of PAAET, Dr. Hassan Al-Fajjam, said in a press statement that the authority has set up a pavilion at the Avenues Mall for this purpose and to answer inquiries and questions related to the application process for colleges, institutes, and training courses.

Al-Fajjam explained that a specialized team from the Deanship of Admissions and Registration is responsible for informing visitors at the pavilion about the majors and courses offered

for the academic year 2024/2025 and everything related to the application process to avoid any mistakes that applicants may make. He wished everyone success in making the right choice for their future.

He stressed that the authority sought to harness all capabilities to facilitate the registration process and educate students on how to choose the appropriate major for them, as desired in the labor market, indicating that the participation in the Avenues Mall came in response to students' desire to communicate with officials at the authority.

For his part, Dean of Admissions and Registration at the Applied University, Dr. Fawzi Al-Dokhi, said in a similar statement that the admission plan for the academic year 2024/2025 includes new specializations offered for the first time, namely (Financial Management), (Mar-

CSC announces new batch of candidates for state positions

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 1, (KUNA): The Civil Service Commission (CSC) announced on Thursday the nomination of 2,983 male and female citizens as a new batch of those registered in the central employment system who wish to work in state institutions, departments, and ministries.

The commission stated in a press release on its official account on the social networking site X that the new nominations included various administrative and technical specializations. With this

batch, the total number of candidates has now reached 12,854 citizens, both male and female.

It added that today's batch includes the nomination of all registered holders of educational specializations – numbering 1,040 graduates of Kuwait University and the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training – to work in the Ministry of Education. The commission called on candidates to visit the employer to whom they were nominated directly, without the need to visit the CSC.

keting), (Management Information Systems), and (Logistics Management) in the College of Business Studies, and (Energy Efficiency Technology) in the College of Technological Studies for Boys only.

He added that specializations have been reopened after being suspended, namely (Islamic Studies), (Sciences), and (Mathematics) in the College of Basic Education for Boys only, and (Kindergarten) in the College of Basic Educa-

tion for Girls.

He called on students and parents to visit the Authority's pavilion at the Avenues Mall in the first phase, starting Thursday, from 10:00 am to 10:00 pm.



The Applied University aimed to streamline registration and assist students in choosing the best specialization for their goals.



Dean of Admission and Registration at the Authority, Dr. Fawzi Al-Dokhi, answers some students' inquiries.

Almost 2.5m

Continued from Page 1

Interior, has ensured convenience for citizens and residents by offering fingerprinting services from 8 am to 8 pm, based on prior appointments.

Kuwaiti citizens can complete the fingerprinting at any center, while expatriates must schedule appointments through the Sahel and My Identity applications.

Al-Owaidan also mentioned that after the fingerprinting deadline, transactions for individuals who have not completed the process will be halted, with the exception of those with special needs.

The Al-Seyassah daily said mobile devices will be provided to facilitate fingerprinting for this category of people.

Kuwait army

Continued from Page 1

FAJ also lauded the bravery and determination of Palestinian journalists who continue their work despite daily threats and dangers to themselves and their families from Israeli forces.

The statement also highlighted the perilous conditions faced by journalists in southern Lebanon, where Israeli occupation forces have increasingly targeted the media amid significant international political complicity.

Furthermore, the federation expressed its full support and solidarity with Sudanese journalists working under extremely harsh and inhumane conditions. The statement deplored the attacks on hundreds of Sudanese journalists, including instances of theft and kidnapping, noting that 12 journalists had been directly targeted due to their profession.

FAJ reported the destruction of numerous media offices in Sudan and highlighted that approximately 1,000 Sudanese journalists are currently unemployed, representing half of the country's active journalist workforce.

MoCI to

Continued from Page 1

The sources added that the inspection teams also conducted several tours of school clothing stores in Hawally, resulting in the issuance of seven citations for various violations such as lack of price tags and absence of country of origin labels.

MoH has

Continued from Page 1

The expansion plan for healthcare facilities included the inauguration of many specialized centers and clinics across the country. In the northern region, Mutlaa Centers 1 and 2, and an ambulance center in suburb N11 were opened. In the southern region, several services were inaugurated including a kidney dialysis unit at Sabah Al-Ahmad Health Center (Sector E).

Additionally, the Ministry of Health inaugurated the Sabah Al-Salem Suburb Center for Kidney Dialysis, a warehouse building at Adan Hospital, the National Center for Disease Prevention and Control, and the Kuwait Center for Kidney Diseases and Transplantation. These initiatives aim to enhance the primary healthcare system with specialized medical personnel and facilities.

Kuwait cannot

Continued from Page 1

The Minister of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy Dr. Mahmoud Boushahri yesterday morning inaugurated the exhibition titled "Brutal Iraqi Invasion of Kuwait", which displayed pictures of the martyrs of Kuwait particularly the martyrs from the ministry, with a caption about them in appreciation of their precious sacrifice of their lives to serve the homeland.

Dr. Boushahri expressed appreciation for such events that remind the new generations about the martyrs of their nation, their heroism, and the sac-

rifices they made to serve their homeland.

He called on Almighty Allah to accept the martyrs of Kuwait who sacrificed their lives for their homeland in the gardens of bliss.

Meanwhile, the acting Undersecretary of the Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy, Eng. Maha Al-Asousi said, "Today marks the 34th anniversary of the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait on August 2, 1990.

"On this day, we remember our martyrs who sacrificed their lives for Kuwait, particularly the martyrs of the Ministry of Electricity and Water who sacrificed their lives in order to deliver and secure the access of electricity and water to citizens and residents during that period.

"The ministry has nine martyrs who were working in the various sectors of the ministry. These heroes, whom we consider martyrs in the sight of Allah, were working to secure the services of the ministry in those circumstances that Kuwait witnessed, and they sacrificed their lives for this country."

The Kuwait Trade Union Federation, the working class and the trade union movement as a whole affirmed their support for and solidarity with the wise political leadership, led by His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah; while calling for the preservation of national unity, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

In a press statement, the union pointed out that "the second of August every year brings back to mind the sad and painful events and great human tragedies experienced by the people of the State of Kuwait as a result of the brutal Iraqi invasion led by the late Saddam Hussein against our beloved country. The killing, displacement, destruction, devastation and arrests that accompanied it claimed the lives of many people; in addition to the wounded and missing persons. Kuwaiti families are still suffering from its effects.

The painful commemoration of the 34th anniversary of the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait comes with all appreciation and gratitude for the international community's unwavering support of Kuwait's just cause from the onset, given Kuwait's esteemed global standing, honorable positions, and balanced diplomatic relations with nations worldwide, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

From the outset of Iraq's aggression on August 2, 1990, many brotherly and friendly nations rushed to condemn this barbaric invasion, and unequivocally denounce its baseless claims and flagrant disregard for international laws and charters of global organizations.

The memory of 'Black Thursday' will forever endure in the hearts of Kuwait's people who experienced the bitterness of the invasion. It will also resonate with the younger generation, who, though not present during those tumultuous times, have come to know of their country's struggles through the narratives of their fathers and grandfathers – stories of sacrifice and valor for the freedom of our homeland.

On that day, Iraqi forces advanced towards Kuwait, occupying vital roads and facilities, and systematically destroying all government and private buildings within reach. They established checkpoints on roads to target vehicles and civilians, and did not hesitate to commit egregious crimes that violated all laws, charters, and norms.

If that day marked a profound disaster and a difficult test of the Kuwaiti people's will, resilience and unity, their resistance against the invaders constituted a unique chapter in Kuwait's history and its people's struggle. United in their rejection of occupation and steadfast in their resistance, they demonstrated unwavering solidarity, astonishing the world with their resolute stance against the invaders' brutality.

After the aggression, the Kuwaiti people mobilized to establish specialized military factions and groups aimed at resisting the occupiers and causing maximum disruption. Concurrently, other groups undertook crucial roles in media, nutrition, hygiene, healthcare, logistics, and providing popular support.

At that time, Kuwaiti resistance groups were formed to deliver devastating blows to the invading forces, instilling fear and panic among their ranks. They also aimed to boost Ku-

waiti morale, protect the public, and convey a resolute message to the world that Kuwaiti people vehemently reject the Iraqi occupation, resist its presence in the country, and are prepared to fight for their freedom and sovereignty, regardless of the sacrifices required.

The wise leadership of the country at that time, led by the late Amir Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and his Crown Prince and Prime Minister Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Al-Salem Al-Sabah, spared no effort in mobilizing Arab and international support for Kuwait's just cause. They undertook all necessary measures to liberate the country, restore its sovereignty, and ensure the security and safety of its lands.

The permanent member states of the Security Council swiftly adopted a unified stance following the Iraqi aggression on Kuwait territory. Shortly after news reached the Security Council chambers, they convened and unanimously passed resolution No. 660, condemning the invasion and demanding the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of all Iraqi forces from Kuwait."

In accordance with the Security Council resolutions, Arab and international forces assembled in Saudi territory to form the international coalition for liberating Kuwait from the invading forces. This coalition successfully achieved its goal in February 1991 through Operation Desert Storm.

The support from brotherly and friendly forces was a direct result of Kuwait's esteemed status achieved through its wise policies, honorable positions, and balanced relations with countries worldwide, as well as its active engagement with regional and international organizations, and its provision of various forms of assistance.

In the early years of its independence, Kuwait was at the forefront among countries in terms of providing aid and loans for development to other countries. The aid volume reached unprecedented levels relative to its gross national product, peaking at 8.3 percent during that period.

Kuwait also played a significant role in extending a helping hand to the disadvantaged and needy people all around the world, offering urgent aid to alleviate disasters that affected many countries worldwide through Kuwaiti charitable organizations and institutions.

Kuwait's foreign

Continued from Page 1

According to the Central Bank's Economic Research Department, private sector deposits in local banks increased slightly by 0.2% in June, reaching 36.6 billion dinars (around \$119.6 billion). This growth indicates a modest rise in liquidity within the domestic economy.

Moreover, deposits held by the private sector in foreign currencies rose by 0.1%, totaling 1.85 billion dinars (approximately \$6 billion). This small increase highlights ongoing international financial activity and foreign currency reserves.

However, the total balances of local banks' claims on the Central Bank, represented by Central Bonds, saw a notable decrease of 7.2%, dropping to 2.9 billion dinars (about \$9.5 billion). This decline may suggest a reduction in central bank securities or a shift in investment preferences.

Kuwait security

Continued from Page 1

He disclosed that the Central Blood Bank has obtained four international quality certificates. He also thanked the government agencies, public benefit associations, citizens and expatriates for participating in blood donation campaigns.

Meanwhile, Undersecretary of the National Guard Lieutenant General Eng. Hashem Al-Rifai praised the cooperation between the National Guard and Central Blood Bank in enriching the general blood stock. He affirmed the commitment of National Guard officers to participate in such activities, as about 130 of them took the initiative to donate blood in this campaign.

Mubarakiya Market set to embrace 'modern' revival

Heritage preserved in new development

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 1: The master plan for the Mubarakiya development project includes hotels and museums; as well as the regulation of shops and markets, improvement of services, raising the economic, social and cultural value of the market and enhancing its tourist destination status, reports Al-Anba daily.

The main aim of the project is to develop the market, while preserving its heritage value. The Kuwait Municipality's strategy in this regard is based on the idea of partnership with the private sector as part of the Kuwait 2035 vision to transform the country into a financial and commercial hub.

Sources told the daily that the restoration work has started and it has been divided into two – one is the restoration of the areas affected by the fire including the meat, dates, fish, sweets and vegetable shops; and the other is the restoration of the shops area adjacent to the market.

Sources explained the development of the market aims to stimulate tourism and attract visitors in order to raise the economic, social and cultural value of the market; in addition to enhancing its tourist destination status. Sources said the structural plan is ready and the Municipality has prepared the necessary equipment to kick-start such a huge development project.

Sources revealed the master plan includes hotels and museums; indicating there is a plan to regulate the shops and markets, especially those with similar activities. Sources affirmed the commitment to maintain the heritage value of the market; which consists of dates, meat, vegetables, fish and sweets shops. They stressed that the development will not be fundamental as the heritage aspect shall be maintained, similar to Souq Waqif in the State of Qatar that was rebuilt in a modern and advanced manner, but its heritage and authenticity were retained.

Sources added hotels with historical or heritage features will be built in Bin Bahr Square, as well as the Imam Abdulrahman Al-Faisal Museum, which will be a destination for visitors and those interested in history. Sources disclosed there will be shops and multi-storey parking areas; pointing out that the Municipality's strategy in the implementation of such projects is based on the idea of partnership with the private sector. They stressed such partnership is part of

Nicotine poisoning

Risks of using e-cigarettes

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



KUWAIT CITY, Aug 1: Director of the Health Promotion Department at the Health Ministry Dr. Abeer Al-Buhwa vehemently denied rumors spread on some social media sites about the use of electronic cigarettes in order to quit smoking; confirming that the liquid in the electronic cigarette contains the same amount of nicotine as 20 regular cigarettes, which may lead to nicotine poisoning.

In a statement to the newspaper, Al-Buhwa explained that the spray used in electronic cigarettes may contain cancer-causing chemicals like formaldehyde and heavy metals such as nickel, tin and lead; in addition to flavors of the chemical, Diacetyl, which causes serious lung diseases, as it contains volatile organic compounds and small particles that can be inhaled and reach the lungs.

She warned about many harmful effects of nicotine on the development of the brain of adolescents and young people up to the age of 25; especially the parts of the brain related to attention, education, mood and control of nerve impulses. The chances of addiction increases if used at an early age, she added.

She said the symptoms of nicotine poisoning include vomiting, sweating, dizziness, tremors and convulsions, and it could lead to death. She cited a study published on the websites of the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The study was conducted on about 2,477 students between the ages of 13 and 15. The results showed that the smoking rate in general reached 16.7 percent; while it was 24.2 percent among boys and 8.9 percent

E-cigarettes' growing appeal to young people is fueling a rise in addiction.

among girls, and that 38.4 percent of them were exposed to passive smoking inside their homes. It confirmed that the idea of using electronic cigarettes as a means of quitting smoking and the common belief that they are harmless are the most important reasons for using electronic cigarettes, in addition to the ease of using them anywhere. It disclosed there are many types and flavors of electronic cigarettes, each of which has its own harmful effects, she added.

She also mentioned the Stanford University's research in 2019 that affirmed the presence of six popular flavors, which destroy blood vessels and cause death -- menthol, butter with brown sugar, cinnamon, caramel, vanilla and fruit.

She said the University of California study showed that electronic cigarettes increase the risk for users to have asthma, bronchitis, emphysema and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease by 30 percent. The US Food and Drug Administration called for an immediate cessation of the use of all electronic smoking methods, she stressed.

She stated that a study was conducted in Kuwait for six months on about 4,391 people between the ages of 18 and 69. The results showed that tobacco smoking reached 20.5 percent -- the smoking rate among men reached 39.3 percent and 3.3 percent among women. This study was published on the websites of WHO and CDC, she added.

Kuwait's vision for the year 2035 to transform the country into a financial and commercial center.

Sources reiterated that the Mubarakiya heritage and historical areas like Mubarak Kiosk; Mubarakiya School; Bin Duaij Market; the gold, sweets, safafir, bisht, attarin, sarraf, ghutra,

aql, Misbaha, fish, meat, vegetables, harem, dates and jat markets; Ruwaih Library; Qaisariya Bin Rashdan; Abu Nashi Coffee and Dalalawah Coffee will retain their historical form, as they will be developed in a way that attracts visitors without compromising their historical or heritage value.



Speech by the Director of the Information and Research Center, Ibtihal Al-Muzaini, at the enlightening meeting.

Workshop offers hands-on training and rewards

KUNA launches ninth journalism program for university students

KUWAIT CITY, August 1, (KUNA): Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) launched its ninth journalism-training program on Thursday, and will conclude on September first, to qualify university students from Kuwait University with journalistic skills.

During orientation Wafaa Ramadan, the Head of Coordination and Follow-up Department and general coordinator of the summer program (2024-2025), said that KUNA's continued effort with the program honors the agency's academic work. Ramadan added that the program would start on Sunday with workshops on how to write a proper news article,

and then proceed to apply what they learned in practice with the help of experienced news editors working in the editorial hall.

The students will be separated into 3 groups once in the editorial hall, and will rotate weekly in all departments, the Local bulletin department, the Arabic bulletin department, the Foreign bulletin department, the Electronic department and the Artificial Intelligence department.

Ramadan highlighted that the students participating will be given two certificates and a financial reward at the end of the program.

World News Roundup

Europe

Moldova expels diplomat

Stabbings suspect named in UK court

LONDON, Aug 1, (AP) - A 17-year-old boy charged with three counts of murder and 10 counts of attempted murder for the stabbings at a dance class in northwest England was named in court on Thursday as Axel Rudakubana, as he made his first court appearance.

Liverpool Judge Andrew Menary said that despite not being an adult, the boy can be named because he will turn 18 next week.

The appearance in Liverpool Crown Court came after the shocking crime inspired two nights of violent unrest across England and Prime Minister **Keir Starmer** summoned British police chiefs to address the crisis Thursday.

The attack Monday on children at a Taylor Swift-themed summer holiday dance class shocked a country where knife crime is a long-standing and vexing problem, though mass stabbings are rare. The deaths have been used by far-right activists to stoke anger at immigrants and Muslims - though the suspect is not an immigrant, and his religion has not been disclosed.



Starmer

The suspect, who police said was born in Britain, has not been charged with terrorism offenses but faces three counts of murder over the deaths of Alice Dasilva Aguiar, 9, Elsie Dot Stancombe, 7, and Bebe King, 6, in the seaside town of Southport in northwest England.

He also has been charged with 10 counts of attempted murder for the eight children and two adults who were injured.

The adults, who were listed in critical condition, were publicly named for the first time as Leanne Lucas, who led the dance class, and John Hayes, who worked nearby and intervened in the attack to protect children. The wounded children cannot be named because of their ages.

Two of the children were discharged Thursday, Alder Hey Children's hospital said. Five others were in stable condition at the hospital.

Russia launches Shahed drones: Ukrainian forces shot down all 89 Shahed drones launched by Russia in a nighttime attack on the country, Ukraine's air force said Wednesday, in what was one of the largest drone barrages this year.

No damage or injuries were immediately reported in the bombardment, which mostly targeted the region of Kyiv, the capital.

Russia used the same number of Shahed drones in a Jan. 1 attack, an air force statement said.

Both Ukraine and Russia have relied extensively on explosive drones during the war and have scrambled to come up with more countermeasures.

Russian couple in Slovenia sentenced: A Russian couple on Wednesday was sentenced in the Slovenian capital to 19 months in prison each, after pleading guilty to spying charges. The husband and wife were released on time served and were ordered to leave the country.

The Ljubljana court sentenced them for espionage and using fake documents to register their firms. The couple was also banned from returning to Slovenia for five years.

The two - who posed as Argentine citizens - settled in Slovenia in 2017. The husband, who used the name Ludwig Gisch, ran a startup IT company. The wife, who had fake documents in the name of Maria Rosa Mayer Muñoz, had an online art gallery. Their actual names are Artem Viktorovich Dultsev and Anna Valerevna Dultseva, according to media reports.

Moldova expels Russian diplomat: Moldova's Ministry of Foreign Affairs said Thursday it has expelled a Russian diplomat after two Moldovan officials were detained on suspicion of treason and conspiracy against the European Union candidate country.

One of the Moldovan officials is suspected of treason for allegedly collecting and providing information to an embassy employee that could be used against Moldova's interests, the Prosecutor's Office for Combating Organized Crime and Special Cases said, and the other is accused of plotting against the country for personal gain.

One of the suspects works in Parliament and the other for the border police. Both were detained earlier this week for 72 hours and were allegedly collaborating with a foreign embassy in Moldova's capital, Chisinau.

German prez asks Poles for forgiveness: German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier asked the Polish people for forgiveness during observances Wednesday marking the 80th anniversary of the Warsaw Uprising, saying Germans must never forget the immeasurable suffering inflicted on the neighboring nation.

"We Germans must not forget," the German head of state said in Warsaw, the Polish capital, where people rose up against the occupying German forces during World War II.

Steinmeier's words fall into a tradition of German leaders traveling to Warsaw to pay homage to the victims of Adolf Hitler's regime.

Protest at German airport halts flights: An overnight protest by climate activists at Leipzig/Halle Airport in eastern Germany forced a three-hour halt to cargo flights, officials said Thursday.

The protest by the Last Generation group followed demonstrations last week at Cologne-Bonn Airport and then at Frankfurt Airport, Germany's busiest, which significantly disrupted passenger flights.

Federal police said five activists attached themselves to the ground inside the airport perimeter shortly after midnight, and another two were prevented from doing so, German news agency dpa reported. They were removed at about 5 am. Last Generation said they didn't set foot on the runways.

Storm disrupts trains from Paris: A storm Wednesday interrupted all high-speed train traffic connecting Paris to the southeast of the country as well as Switzerland in both directions, France's rail company said, leaving thousands of travelers stranded amid the Olympics and departures for summer vacation.

The SNCF said all the fast trains leaving from and arriving at the Gare de Lyon train station in the French capital were immobilized due to a tree that fell on the tracks and was hit by a train in Burgundy, southeast of the French capital. Regular-speed trains use separate tracks and haven't been affected.



Flames consume trees as the Alexander Mountain Fire burns near Sylvan Dale Ranch late Tuesday, July 30, 2024, west of Loveland, Colorado. Inset: A roadblock keeps residents away as a wildfire burns in the mountains near the Ken Caryl Ranch development on Wednesday southwest of Littleton, Colo. (AP)

1 person killed in Colorado wildfires as blazes torch large areas of the US West

A person was killed in one of several wildfires threatening heavily populated areas of the Colorado foothills, authorities said Wednesday, as almost 100 large blazes burned across the western U.S.

The death came in a fire near the town of Lyons that blackened more than two square miles (six square kilometers) by Wednesday afternoon, authorities said. The person's remains were discovered in one of five homes that burned, Boulder

County Sheriff Curtis Johnson said without providing further details.

Though listed as zero percent contained, the Stone Canyon Fire was not growing significantly Wednesday as 150 firefighters battled the flames, Johnson said. It was one of several large fires burning along Colorado's Front Range, a densely populated corridor that includes Denver and stretches roughly 80 miles (130 kilometers) along the eastern

edge of the Rocky Mountains.

A fire at the edge of the Denver metro area west of the small town of Conifer triggered evacuation orders for about 575 houses from several subdivisions overnight Tuesday. That fire was less than one square mile (2.5 square kilometers) as of midday Wednesday but was expected to grow with temperatures forecast to reach nearly 100 degrees (38 Celsius). (AP)

Politics

Harris slams former president

Trump ramps up his defense of Sen Vance

HARRISBURG, Pa., Aug 1, (AP) - Donald Trump is used to defending himself. But this week, the Republican presidential nominee has been put in the rare position of having to defend someone else - his running mate, Ohio Sen JD Vance.

When Vance was first introduced at the Republican National Convention last month, many GOP officials said they didn't know much about him. Since then, the void has been filled with multiple reports of controversial statements - especially Vance's previous suggestion that Vice President Kamala Harris and other so-called "childless cat ladies" want to make the country miserable - that have made his rollout among the most turbulent in recent history.

"I'm just speaking for myself. And I think I'm speaking for him, too," Trump said during a contentious interview Wednesday at the National Association of Black Journalists conference in Chicago. "My interpretation is he's strongly family-oriented. But that doesn't mean that if you don't have a family, there's something wrong with that."

Agree

Conservative commentators, Republican strategists and GOP elected officials on Capitol Hill publicly and privately agree that Vance's introduction to America has not gone well, with Democrats highlighting his past statements on abortion rights and a suggestion that parents should have more of a vote than adults without children. Harris and her allies have started calling both Vance and Trump "weird," messaging that has taken off online.

Seventeen days later, Trump and his allies have yet to quiet criticism from within their own party.

"I think if he was thinking two years ago or three years ago, 'I might be

in 1972 after it was revealed Eagleton had received electroshock therapy for a mental health issue."

More recently, Arizona Sen. John McCain's selection of Alaska Gov. Sarah Palin helped sink his 2008 campaign.

There is a sense that things would need to get much worse before Vance would become a serious political liability for Trump, who could theoretically replace him - a possibility that Democrats have been eager to promote in recent days.

"This is a short-term bump in the road," Republican pollster Neil Newhouse said.

Also:

WASHINGTON: US Vice President Kamala Harris said Wednesday that former president Donald Trump's false assertions about her race were the "same old show" as she emphasized the need for Black women to organize for his defeat this November.

Addressing the Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority Inc. - one of "Divine Nine" historically Black fraternities and sororities - in Houston, Harris told the crowd, "When I look out at everyone here, I see family."

She drew knowing chuckles from the audience as she mentioned Trump's comments earlier in the day at the annual meeting of the National Association of Black Journalists. Trump said Harris, the first Black woman and Asian American to serve as vice president, had in the past promoted only her Indian heritage.

"I didn't know she was Black until a number of years ago when she happened to turn Black and now she wants to be known as Black. So, I don't know, is she Indian or is she Black?" Trump said while addressing the NABJ in Chicago.

counts of assault with intent to murder and 10 counts of using a firearm during a felony, Wayne County prosecutors said in a statement.

The shooting in which Toyake Thirkeild, 39, and Andre Willis, 38, were killed took place July 31, 2022. (AP)

Dad, gf charged in Missouri: The father of a 3-year-old boy who tumbled out of the eighth-story window of a Missouri apartment building and died has been charged with child endangerment, along with his girlfriend.

No attorney is listed for either of them in online court records.

Emergency crews rushed Monday to their apartment building in the Kansas City suburb of Independence after a fourth-floor resident called to report seeing the child fall. The boy was rushed to a hospital, where he was pronounced dead.

According to online court records, the father and his girlfriend had known for months about problems securing the window in the room where the boy and two other children lived. The father told investigators that neighbors and building management had alerted them that the children were throwing toys out of the window. (AP)



Republican presidential candidate former president Donald Trump walking off stage after speaking at a campaign rally on July 31, in Harrisburg, Pa. (AP)



Scott



Schuman

America

Vermonters stick together - gov: Vermont's governor said Wednesday that the latest storms to hit the state have undone much of the cleanup and recovery work from its last major bout of flooding only weeks ago, and he called on residents to "stick together" amid fears that more bad weather could cause even more damage.

Thunderstorms on Tuesday brought another round of heavy flooding that washed away roads, crushed vehicles, pushed homes off their foundations and required at least two dozen boat rescues in northeastern Vermont. Some areas got more than 8 inches (20 centimeters) of rain.

"This time, it's especially bad after workers spent the past three weeks working furiously to recover from the last flooding," Gov. **Phil Scott** said at the news conference. (AP)

Man gets 20 yrs for stabbing: A Minnesota man convicted in the slaying of a high school student and stabbings of four other people who were tubing on a western Wisconsin river was sentenced Wednesday to 20 years in prison.

A judge also ordered Nicolae Miu, 54, to serve six years of extended supervision following his release from prison in the July 2022 stabbings along the Apple River in St Croix County, which sits along Wisconsin's state line with Minnesota.

A jury convicted Miu, of Prior Lake, Minnesota, in April of first-degree reckless homicide, four counts of first-degree recklessly endangering safety and one count of battery.

Prosecutors had sought a 70-year prison term for Miu in the stabbing attack that killed **Isaac Schuman**, 17, of Stillwater, Minnesota, and wounded four others. The stabbing took place as Miu and the victims were tubing along the Apple River in separate groups. (AP)

Detroit man convicted in shooting:

A Detroit man was convicted Wednesday of fatally shooting two people and wounding six others during an argument

that started over a vehicle blocking his driveway.

A jury found Winston Kirtley Jr guilty of two counts of first-degree murder, six



Britain's King Charles III, centre, attends his visit to the Forsnaird Flows Visitor Centre in Forsnaird, Highland, Scotland on July 31. (AP)

Lat/Am

OAS holds meet

Maduro urges top court to audit poll

CARACAS, Venezuela, Aug 1, (AP): President Nicolás Maduro on Wednesday asked Venezuela's high court to conduct an audit of the presidential election after opposition leaders disputed his claim of victory, drawing criticism from foreign observers who said the court is too close to the government to produce an independent review.

Maduro told reporters that the ruling party is also ready to show all the vote tally sheets from Sunday's election.

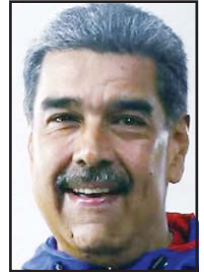
"I throw myself before justice," he said outside the Supreme Tribunal of Justice headquarters in the capital, Caracas, adding that he is "willing to be summoned, questioned, investigated."

This is Maduro's first concession to demands for more transparency about the election. However, the court is closely aligned with his government; the court's justices are proposed by federal officials and ratified by the National Assembly, which is dominated by Maduro sympathizers.

The Carter Center, which sent a delegation to Venezuela to monitor the election, criticized Maduro's audit request, saying the court would not provide an independent review.

"You have another government institution, which is appointed by the government, to verify the government numbers for the election results, which are in question," said Jennie K. Lincoln, who led the delegation. "This is not an independent assessment."

The Atlanta-based group said Tuesday night that it was unable to verify the announced results and criticized what it called a "complete lack of transparency" in declaring Maduro the winner. Venezuela's electoral authorities allowed the Carter Center to send 17 observers.



Maduro

The Carter Center, which sent a delegation to Venezuela to monitor the election, criticized Maduro's audit request, saying the court would not provide an independent review.

"You have another government institution, which is appointed by the government, to verify the government numbers for the election results, which are in question," said Jennie K. Lincoln, who led the delegation. "This is not an independent assessment."

The Atlanta-based group said Tuesday night that it was unable to verify the announced results and criticized what it called a "complete lack of transparency" in declaring Maduro the winner. Venezuela's electoral authorities allowed the Carter Center to send 17 observers.

Prove

Maduro's main challenger, Edmundo González, and opposition leader María Corina Machado say they obtained more than two-thirds of the tally sheets that each electronic voting machine printed after polls closed. They said the release of the data on those tallies would prove Maduro lost.

Maduro insisted to reporters that there had been a plot against his government and that the electoral system was hacked. Asked later on during a news conference why electoral authorities have not released detailed vote counts, Maduro said the National Electoral Council has come under attack, including cyberattacks.

"Engineers are fighting right now" to solve those attacks, he said without elaborating.

The government presented some videos that the president said showed people attacking and torching some electoral offices. The Associated Press was not immediately able to verify the images.

Attorney General Tarek William Saab said more than 1,000 people related to some of those attacks have been arrested.

Pressure has been building on the president since the election. The National Electoral Council, which is loyal to his United Socialist Party of Venezuela, has yet to release any results broken down by voting machine, which it did in past elections.

Process

"The serious doubts that have arisen around the Venezuelan electoral process can lead its people to a deep violent polarization with serious consequences of permanent division," Petro said on the social platform X.

"I invite the Venezuelan government to allow the elections to end in peace, allowing a transparent vote count, with the counting of votes, and with the supervision of all the political forces of its country and professional international supervision," he added.

Petro proposed that Maduro's government and the opposition reach an agreement "that allows for the maximum respect of the (political) force that has lost the elections." The agreement, he said, could be submitted to the United Nations Security Council.

Brazil's presidential office refused to comment Wednesday on whether an audit by the Supreme Tribunal of Justice would amount to an independent verification. Instead, it pointed to a Monday statement from the Ministry for Foreign Relations saying the government awaits "the publication by the National Electoral Council of data broken down by polling station, an indispensable step for the transparency, credibility and legitimacy of the election result."

Also:

WASHINGTON: The Permanent Council of the Organization of American States (OAS) held a special meeting to address the results of the electoral process in Venezuela, and the protests erupting across the country objecting Nicolás Maduro's third term as president.

National Security Council spokesperson John Kirby stated during the meeting on Wednesday, "Our patience and that of the international community is running out. It is running out on waiting for the Venezuelan electoral authorities to come clean and release the full, detailed data on this election so that everyone can see the results."

He voiced the concern of the United States and that of other democracies on the integrity of the Venezuelan presidential elections, extending the concern to, "the reports of casualties, violence, and arrests, including the arrest warrants that Maduro and his representatives issued today for opposition leaders."

Kirby went on to condemn political violence and repression of any kind, stating, "We're watching, and we're going to respond accordingly."

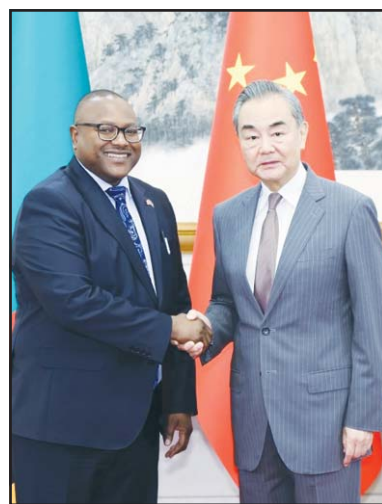
CARACAS, Venezuela: A former US Green Beret who organized a failed crossborder raid in 2020 to remove President Nicolás Maduro has been arrested in New York.

An unsealed federal indictment out of Tampa, Florida, accuses Jordan Goudreau and a Venezuelan partner, Yacys Alvarez, of violating US arms control laws when they allegedly assembled and sent to Colombia AR-styled weapons, ammo and other defense equipment requiring a US export license.

Goudreau, 48, also was charged with conspiracy, smuggling goods from the United States and "unlawful possession of a machine gun," among other counts. He was being held in at the Metropolitan Detention Center in Brooklyn, according to US Bureau of Prisons booking records.



US Secretary of State Antony Blinken, (second left) and Mongolia's Foreign Minister Batmunkh Battsetseg, (third right), hold a meeting in Ulaanbaatar on Aug 1. (AP)



Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi, also a member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, holds talks with Mulambo Haimbe, Zambia's minister of foreign affairs and international cooperation, in Beijing, capital of China on July 31. (Xinhua)



Creecy



Tebboune

Africa

Sáfrica bus-train crash kills 5: Five pupils were killed and 20 others injured in a collision between a school bus and a train in South Africa on Wednesday, authorities said.

The crash involving a bus and a goods train occurred Wednesday afternoon at a level crossing in Middelburg, Mpumalanga, a province in eastern South Africa, the Department of Transport said in a statement.

The department confirmed that five children lost their lives and 20 children were critically injured in the accident.

Law enforcement authorities said the bus driver fled the scene after the crash, and the train driver and crew did not sustain any injuries.

The cause of the crash is under investigation, the statement said.

In the statement, South African Minister of Transport Barbara Creecy called on law enforcement agencies to intensify their road safety campaign involving school transportation, and urged road users to exercise extreme caution, especially at level crossings, and to adhere strictly to traffic regulations.

Earlier in July, 13 people, including 12 pupils and a driver, were killed and seven others injured in a minibus-truck collision near Johannesburg in Gauteng province. (Xinhua)

3 OK'd to run for Algeria prez: Algeria's Constitutional Court on Wednesday approved three candidates for presidential elections scheduled for Sept. 7.

The approved candidates are the incumbent President Abdelmadjid Tebboune running as an independent, head of the Movement of Society for Peace Abdelali Hassani Cherif and Secretary General of the Socialist Forces Front Youcef Aouchiche, the court said in a statement.

Last Thursday, the National Independent Authority for Elections (ANIE) temporarily validated the candidacy requests of these three individuals while rejecting 13 other applications. ANIE noted that it was up to the Constitutional Court to approve the candidate requests and review appeals of the rejected applications.

Under Algeria's electoral law, any candidate wishing to run for president must collect either 600 individual signatures from elected members of municipal, provincial, or parliamentary councils, or at least 50,000 signatures from eligible voters across at least 29 provinces, with a minimum of 1,200 signatures in each province.

More than 26 million Algerians, out of a population exceeding 45 million, are eligible to vote. (Xinhua)

Uganda announces date for polls: Uganda's Electoral Commission (EC) on Wednesday released a revised electoral roadmap announcing the date for the 2026

Asia

Myanmar junta extends state of emergency

SKorea offers humanitarian aid to North

SEOUL, South Korea, Aug 1, (AP): South Korea on Thursday offered to send aid supplies to North Korea to help the country recover from heavy rains and floods that submerged thousands of homes and huge swaths of farmland.

It's unclear whether North Korea would accept South Korea's proposal for help. Animosity between the war-divided rivals is at its highest in years over the North's growing nuclear ambitions and the South's expansion of combined military exercises with the United States and Japan to counter the North's threats.

South Korea's Unification Ministry, which handles inter-Korean affairs, said the South was willing to swiftly provide supplies to address the "humanitarian difficulties" facing North Korean residents following the recent storms. The ministry in a statement urged North Korea's Red Cross to promptly respond to its calls for discussions to determine the types and amounts of South Korean supplies and how to deliver them.

North Korea didn't immediately respond to the South's offer.

North Korean state media said Wednesday that recent heavy rains left 4,100 houses, 7,410 acres of agricultural fields and numerous other public buildings, structures, roads and railways flooded in the northwestern city of Sinuiju and the neighboring town of Uiju.

The North has not reported details about casualties.

SKorea military intel official held:

A civilian employee in South Korea's military intelligence command was arrested for allegedly leaking military secrets, the Defense Ministry said, as local media speculated the information was about South Korean spies operating abroad and that it may have been sent to North Korea.

A military court issued a warrant Tuesday to arrest the employee in the Korea Defense Intelligence Command for alleged leaks of confidential military information, the Defense Ministry said in a brief statement. It said it won't disclose details of the employee's criminal allegations because an investigation was underway.

South Korean media reported the employee gave a Chinese national thousands of confidential documents including those on the intelligence command's list of agents operating in foreign countries with disguised names and jobs. The reports said the leaked documents have the real names and ages of those secret agents and where they are stationed. It was unclear why

presidential and parliamentary elections.

The nominations for presidential and parliamentary elections will be conducted between Sept 17 and Oct 3, 2025, said Justice Simon Byabakama, chairperson of the

Blinken aims to ease anxiety over US election on 6-nation Asia tour

SINGAPORE, Aug 1, (AP): With large parts of the world in turmoil and deep uncertainty over the future direction of America's global role, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken sought this week to project an aura of calm normalcy as he traveled through Asia on his first overseas mission since President Joe Biden jolted the 2024 presidential race with his withdrawal.

Whether he succeeded or not remains an open question. On a trip to Laos, Vietnam, Japan, the Philippines, Singapore and Mongolia that was punctuated by several potential escalatory developments in the Middle East, an uptick in Russian attacks in Ukraine and overshadowed by persistent fears about China's increasingly aggressive actions, he could not escape questions and comments about domestic US politics.

Having embarked on the six-nation tour just days after Biden's decision, Blinken no doubt would have preferred to avoid the issue entirely but came prepared with several stock answers to questions about US leadership from concerned partners and

the employee allegedly handed over the information to the Chinese.

Myanmar extends 'emergency':

The military regime that seized power in Myanmar 3 1/2 years ago extended a state of emergency in the civil war-racked country for another six months, saying Wednesday it needs time to prepare for long-promised elections.

The state of emergency was initially declared when troops ousted the elected government of Aung San Suu Kyi on Feb. 1, 2021, arresting her and members of her National League for Democracy party. The emergency decree empowers the military to assume all government functions, giving the head of the ruling military council, Senior Gen. Min Aung Hlaing, legislative, judicial and executive powers.

At the moment, the military regime is facing its greatest challenge since taking power. Powerful ethnic minority militias and people's defense forces that support Myanmar's main opposition have taken wide swaths of territory in fierce fighting in recent months.

The military is now estimated to control less than half the country, but is holding on tenaciously to much of central

allies. Chief among them: "I don't do politics" and variations on "American engagement abroad endures across administrations."

In the Philippines, Blinken and Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin remained politely silent when President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. welcomed them with a nod toward the campaign that now pits former President Donald Trump against presumptive Democratic nominee Vice President Kamala Harris.

"We are very happy to see (you) once again," Marcos said on Tuesday in Manila. "I am a bit surprised considering how interesting your political situation has become back in the States, but I'm glad that you've found the time to come and visit with us."

In Singapore, Blinken was asked by a senior diplomat about the "noise coming out of the presidential campaign" and replied with a joke.

"Really? I hadn't heard any of it," he said to laughter from the audience of students and academics from Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy before taking a stab at a serious answer.

Myanmar, including the capital, Naypyidaw, which was recently targeted by small rocket attacks and two bombings.

China sanctions US Rep:

China sanctioned a US congressman Wednesday for "frequently interfering" in China's domestic affairs, in its latest effort to express displeasure with U.S. politicians who have criticized China's policy and practice.

Rep. Jim McGovern is the top Democrat on the House Committee on Rules, and he co-chairs the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission. He represents Massachusetts and is a member of the Congressional-Executive Commission on China, which focuses on China's human rights record.

The sanctions against him are symbolic, since McGovern has no assets or business dealings in China. The sanctions include freezing his assets and properties in China, prohibiting any organization or individual in China from conducting transactions or working with him, and denying him and his family a visa to enter the country, according to a statement from China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs. McGovern called the sanctions absurd and said he would wear his "as a badge of honor."

12, 2026.

Museveni, 79, beat his main rival, Robert Kyagulanyi, alias Bobi Wine, a popular musician turned politician. Kyagulanyi got 34.83 percent of the total votes tallied. (Xinhua)

Guinea ex-junta leader gets 20 yrs:

A Guinea court on Wednesday sentenced former junta leader Moussa "Dadis" Camara to 20 years in prison after finding him guilty of crimes against humanity in the 2009 stadium massacre by the military that killed at least 157 people and left dozens of women raped.

Guinea's Criminal Court convicted Camara and seven other high-ranking officials after a prolonged trial on charges of murder, kidnapping and rape that were reclassified as "crimes against humanity" on Wednesday. Four other accused were acquitted.

More than 100 survivors and victims' relatives testified in the trial that started in November 2022, more than a decade after the massacre and under pressure from families and activists demanding justice.

Some of the victims' relatives lauded the verdict as justice at last while others said the penalty for Camara in particular was not enough.

"The convictions do not match the crimes. Our sisters were raped, our brothers massacred, bodies reported missing," said Safiatou Baldé, 25, a relative of one of the victims. (AP)



Protesters face off with police during demonstrations against the official election results declaring President Nicolas Maduro's reelection, the day after the vote in Caracas, Venezuela on July 29. Maduro on July 31 asked Venezuela's high court to conduct an audit of the presidential election after opposition leaders disputed his claim of victory, drawing criticism from foreign observers who said the court is too close to the government to produce an independent review. (AP)

	Change	Closing pts		Change	Closing pts
DUBAI - DFMGI	+11.84	4,279.89	SAUDI - TASI	-63.74	12,045.78
PHILIPPINES - PSEI	+74.74	6,693.83	JAPAN - Nikkei 225	-975.49	38,126.33
			EGYPT - EGX 30	-18.95	29,359.87
			PAKISTAN - KSE 100	-109.88	77,762.65

Bank organizes on-site visit with municipality leaders to follow up project progress

Al-Mashaan & NBK review work progress in Shuwaikh Beach Development Project

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 1: National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) organized an on-site visit to Shuwaikh Beach Development and Beautification Project to review work progress in this landmark tourism and entertainment project spanning an area of 1.7 km, three months after starting construction works.

The visitors were headed by Dr. Noura Al-Mashaan, Minister of Public Works and Minister of State for Municipal Affairs, Mr. Isam Al-Sager, Group Vice-Chairman and CEO of National Bank of Kuwait. The visitors also included Eng. Maysa Boushahri, Deputy Director General for Projects Sector Affairs at Kuwait Municipality, and Eng. Amina Hamada, Head of the Municipality's Shuwaikh Beach Project Management and Supervision team, and team members. NBK's attendees also included Eng. Ezzat Hallal, General Manager - Engineering Services, Eng. Ahmed Assi, AGM- Engineering Services, and Talal Al-Turki, Executive Manager, Head of Public Relations and Event Management.

During the tour, the visitors reviewed the progress made since starting the project's construction works in early May, as work is underway, with the entire project set to be completed within 11 months, i.e. by the end of March 2025, after which Shuwaikh Beach will be ready to welcome visitors with its new look.

It is worth mentioning that NBK signed a cooperation agreement with Kuwait Municipality, under which the bank committed KD 3 million for the development and renovation of Shuwaikh Beachfront to serve all visitors' needs, with a focus on providing high quality and highly efficient modern facilities, in a way that fosters sustainable health, sports and entertainment in Kuwait.

On this occasion, by Dr. Noura Al-Mashaan, Minister of Public Works and Minister of State for Municipal Affairs, stated, "This project aligns with the Municipality's strategy to partner with all development stakeholders in a way that serves Kuwait Vision 2035."

"Al-Mashaan praised NBK's generous donation for this vital project, which is expected to be completed by end of March 2025. She explained that the Shuwaikh Beach Development And Beautification Project comes within the Municipality's ongoing efforts to develop seafronts in Kuwait in order to serve the well-being of its visitors from local citizens and residents, as well as external visitors."

On his part, Mr. Isam Al-Sager, Group Vice-Chairman and CEO of National Bank of Kuwait commented, "This visit aims to review work progress in Shuwaikh Beach Development and Beautification Project, which stands out as a model for fostering Public-Private Partnerships



Al-Mashaan, Al-Sager, Boushahri, Hamada and the Kuwait Municipality Project Supervision Team with NBK Executives and Staff.

Al-Mashaan:

■ A generous donation from NBK as we seek to develop the seafronts for the well being of visitors

Al-Sager:

■ The project stands out as a model for fostering Public-Private Partnerships
 ■ NBK's initiative promotes sustainable development of national economy and serves Kuwait Vision 2035

(PPPs) in Kuwait."

"NBK's contribution to this project comes within its efforts to promote sustainable development of Kuwait's economy, and to serve the implementation of Kuwait Vision 2035, which underscores the importance of developing tourism and entertainment sector in the Country. This initiative also reflects our ongoing fostering of Kuwait's climate action plan, in line with the Country's pledge to become carbon neutral by 2060," he explained.

"The project includes 4 integrated main areas providing all the needs of beach goers, while being eco-friendly to help reduce carbon emissions and environmental impact, reflecting NBK's unwavering commitment to environmental sustainability on the one hand, and pioneering corporate social responsibility on the other hand," he remarked.

NBK is committed to supporting Kuwait's national

initiative to promote environmental, social and economic prosperity, in line with the Country's recent pledge to become carbon neutral by 2060 by progressing towards its environmental goals and supporting the banking sector's endeavors to accelerate the transition to a carbon-free economy.

Project contents

The Shuwaikh Beach Development and Beautification Project consists of the following areas:

Area 1: includes playgrounds and entertainment areas, as well as a large green areas allowing for outdoor activities, in addition to restoration of the mosque, restrooms, and commercial kiosks within the project. The area also includes future work sites for a number of kiosks, ATMs and ITMS.

Area 2: includes an extended sandy beach area with wooden benches in the middle.



Minister and Al-Sager listen to an explanation from the Head of the Project Management and Supervision Team, Eng. Amina Hamada.



Al-Mashaan and Al-Sager during the project site tour.

Area 3: includes a walled garden with green landscape and dense trees providing large, shaded areas for relaxation and meditation amidst serene atmosphere.

Area 4: includes the project's starting point and interactive giantcheckers game, in addition to large green spaces that allow for outdoor activities and multi-use spaces.

Project management team

Kuwait Municipality's team assigned to manage and supervise Shuwaikh Beach Development and Beautification Project is headed by Eng. Amina Hamada, and includes as members: Eng. Khaled Abdul-Latif Al-Kandari, Eng. Sarah Al-Qahs, Eng. Iman Al-Kandari, Eng. Ahmed Al-Enezi, Eng. Hessa Al-Sanea, and Eng. Rawa'a Al-Radwan.

Mixed opinions on Gulf mergers & acquisitions

Amir Al-Mansour warns of risks in banking sector mergers

By Najeh Bilal

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY Aug 1: With the rising trend of mergers and acquisitions in the Gulf and predictions of an increase in these activities, the Al-Seyassah newspaper sought expert opinions on their implications for the local market.

The views were mixed, highlighting both potential benefits and risks associated with these corporate strategies.

Amir Al-Mansour, a financial and economic expert, emphasized the risks of mergers and acquisitions, particularly in the banking sector.

He argued that the potential negative impact of losing one merged entity outweighs the benefits, suggesting that a single bank's failure could be less catastrophic than the consequences of a merger gone wrong.

Al-Mansour expressed concern that mergers could lead to reduced competition, especially in the banking sector, where major institutions might dominate and stifle market dynamics.

Another economic expert and head of the Kuwaiti Consumer Protection Society, Mishaal Al-Manea, threw his support for mergers among local companies, particularly in the consumer sector.

He went on to say successful mergers could enhance the ability of local banks to compete regionally but cautioned that such mergers should not result in market monopolies that could lead to higher prices for consumers.

Al-Manea stressed that the most beneficial mergers are those that offer advantages to consumers without causing harm and highlighted that mergers and acquisitions should aim to provide enhanced services and achieve stability for the merged entities.

He emphasized that the ultimate goal of such corporate strategies should be to improve service quality and operational stability within the sector.

An anonymous banking official provided additional insights on the merger and acquisition landscape in Kuwait. According to this source, merging Kuwaiti banks is not a new phenomenon; previous experiences have shown that such mergers can offer substantial benefits to shareholders and customers.

The official stressed the importance of conducting thorough studies and reviewing past merger experiences to maximize the benefits and

minimize potential issues.

Notable examples include the 2008 global financial crisis, which prompted significant mergers such as Bank of America and Merrill Lynch.

More recently, he cited the merger between Kuwait Finance House and Al-Ahli United Bank in the first quarter of this year represents a major event in the Kuwaiti banking sector.

However, the full impact of this merger is yet to be evaluated and will only become clear after a full fiscal year has passed.

The official said several key benefits of mergers, including reduction of financial waste by consolidating assets, including bank branches and company resources, into a single entity; higher profits for shareholders if managed effectively; enhanced access to digital tools and techniques; the ability to extend operations and finance major projects, opening up new investment opportunities and benefiting from lower operational expenses.

The official concluded that mergers of Kuwaiti banks and major companies can boost their international competitiveness, expand their business operations, and increase their project volumes, ultimately contributing positively to the national economy.

Oil price up to \$81.67 pb

Kuwait to participate in fifth Gulf petroleum media forum in Oman

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 1, (Agencies): The Ministry of Oil has announced its participation in the Fifth Petroleum Media Forum for the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries, set to take place on Aug 7 and 8 in the Dhofar Governorate, Salalah, Sultanate of Oman, reports Al-Jarida daily.

The forum, titled "Petroleum Media for the Gulf States ... Enabling Communication and Enhancing Understanding" will see a high-level delegation from Kuwait joining the event.

Sheikh Dr. Nimer Al Malik, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Oil, emphasized the forum's significance as a pivotal step in improving communication and interaction between the media sector and the petroleum industry.

He highlighted the forum's role in raising public awareness about the

petroleum industry's critical contribution to both national and global economies. The event aims to address the latest developments and challenges in the oil and gas sector, offering media perspectives that enhance coverage and transparency, ultimately supporting oil market stability and GCC interests.

Sheikha Tamara Al-Khaled, Director of the Public Relations and Petroleum Media Department, noted that the forum serves as a valuable platform for dialogue and collaboration between media professionals and petroleum industry experts.

This interaction fosters the exchange of information and ideas, tackling current developments and challenges in the oil and gas sector with effective media strategies.

Al-Khaled underscored the Ministry of Oil's commitment to strengthening

partnerships with the media, viewing it as a strategic ally in shaping public opinion and disseminating accurate information about the petroleum industry.

She affirmed the Ministry's dedication to supporting efforts that advance the petroleum sector and ensure its sustainability, citing the Petroleum Media Forum as a key initiative in this endeavor.

Also:

KUWAIT CITY: The price of Kuwaiti oil went up 46 cents to read USD 81.67 per barrel on Wednesday compared to USD 81.21 pb on Tuesday, said Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC).

Brent crude futures rose USD 2.09 to USD 80.72 pb, while US West Texas Intermediate crude rose USD 3.18 to settle at USD 77.91 pb.

General market index rises by 0.73%

Bursa Kuwait sees increase in trading activity

KUWAIT CITY Aug 1: During its fourth session of the week, the Bursa Kuwait experienced a notable increase in trading activity, reports Al-Jarida daily.

The general market index climbed by 0.73 percent or 52.70 points, and ended the day at 7239.41 points; trading volume surged to 85.2 million dinars, with 319.5 million shares exchanged through 17,787 deals. Among the 126 shares traded, 40 saw gains, 74 faced losses, and 12 remained unchanged.

The Premier Market Index also saw gains, up by 0.74 percent, or 58.08 points, closing at 7899.47 points. Liquidity in this market segment reached 70.8 million dinars, with 199.6 million shares traded across 11,468 transactions.

Out of the 34 shares traded, only 9 gained, 22 lost, and 3 remained stable.

The Main Market Index increased by 0.70 percent, or 42.07 points, to end at 6068.61 points. This segment saw liquidity of 14.3 million dinars, with 119.8 million shares traded through 6,319 transactions. Among the 92 shares traded, 31 gained, 52 lost, and 9 remained unchanged.

Despite ongoing geopolitical tensions, including the recent strikes in Beirut and Tehran, and their impact on gold prices, the Kuwait Stock Exchange remained resilient. The market was buoyed by news of a merger between Boubayan Bank and Gulf Bank, which significantly boosted their stock prices.

Gulf Bank's stock surged to 310 fils, while Boubayan Bank's stock rose to 592 fils, with combined trading volumes approaching 25 million dinars, accounting for 30 percent of the total market liquidity.

The National Bank, a major shareholder in Boubayan Bank, also saw its stock increase by 3.3 percent, driven by high trading volumes of 8 million dinars. Meanwhile, smaller speculative stocks experienced volatility, with Bayan stock dropping by 26.5 percent to 62.5 fils, amid high trading volumes of nearly 2.9 million dinars.

Overall, the Kuwait Stock Exchange's performance today reflects strong investor sentiment and significant market activity, despite external geopolitical pressures.

Firm welcomes independent directors to enhance expertise

GIG shareholders approve new board formation

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 1: Gulf Insurance Group ("GIG"), one of the leading insurance groups in the Middle East and North Africa region, announced the formation of a new Board, which comprises the current Directors representing majority shareholder, Fairfax Financial Holdings Limited (Fairfax), and two newly elected independent members, who bring valuable expertise in the financial, economic and insurance sectors. The new members were elected at the Ordinary General Assembly Meeting held on 28th of July 2024.

"We welcome the new composition and independent Directors onto the Board of GIG as Fairfax's acquisition of a majority shareholding in our Group has started to take effect," said Mr. Khaled Saoud Al Hasan, Group Vice Chairman & CEO of GIG. "Today, GIG is not only benefiting from an international network and extensive experience in the insurance industry through Fairfax's global presence, but it will also continue to be guided by a diversified Board, offering us unparalleled global expertise and resources, specifically in markets where we operate and lead in. The board composition brings a wealth of knowledge and experience that will undoubtedly drive GIG towards greater innovation and growth in the insurance industry."

The new Board composition is as follows:

■ Mr. Bijan Khosrowshahi, Group Chairman: A seasoned executive with extensive experience in global insurance markets.

■ Mr. Khaled Saoud Al Hasan, Group Vice Chairman & CEO: Renowned for his strategic leadership and deep understanding of the regional insurance landscape.

■ Mr. Jean Cloutier, Director: Expert in financial management and corporate governance within the insurance sector.

■ Mr. Quinn McLean, Director: Specialist in investment strategies and risk management.

■ Mr. Amin Hesham Ezzalarab, Independent Director: Chairman, Commercial Intl Bank Egypt, and is highly skilled in insurance operations and market expansion.

■ H.E. Abdulkarim Kabariti, Independent Director: He currently holds the roles of Chairman at Algeria Gulf Bank SPA, Strategy Co., Chairman-



Mr. Bijan - Group Chairman



Khaled Al Hasan - Group Vice Chairman & CEO



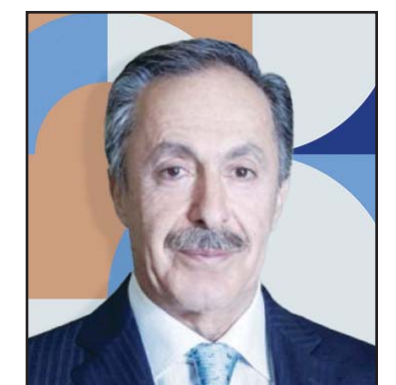
Jean Cloutier - Director (Fairfax)



Quinn McLean - Director



Amin Hesham Ezzalarab - Independent Director



Abdulkarim Kabariti - Independent Director

Trustee at Al-Ahliyya Amman University, Vice Chairman at Burgan Bank AS Turkey, Director at Jordan Dairy Co. Ltd., and Non-Executive Director at Burgan Bank KPCS, and has profound insights into economic policies

and financial regulations. Al Hasan added: "The change in shareholding and new Board election does not affect any of our stakeholders and will not change in our identity and values as a Kuwait-grown insurance group."

KFH's market cap exceeds KD 12 billion, leading Boursa Kuwait

Kuwait Finance House holds earnings webcast for H1-2024

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 1: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) held the earnings webcast for highlighting the Bank's financial performance during H1-2024.

AbdulWahab Al-Roshood, Acting Group Chief Executive Officer said: "By the grace of Allah, KFH has reported a record net profit for its shareholders of KD 341.2 million up to the end of the first half of 2024, an increase of 2.3% compared to the same period last year.

Earnings per share reached 20.73 Fils; an increase of 2.6% compared to the same period last year.

The financial statements demonstrated a solid capital base, high liquidity ratios and robust operating performance which drove growth in all key financial indicators.

Al-Roshood added that KFH ranked first among the largest listed companies and banks on Boursa Kuwait in terms of a market capitalization which exceeded KD 12 billion. Additionally, KFH claimed third place among the top 20 Middle East and Africa Banks by market cap according to the latest S&P Global Intelligence analysis.

He pointed out that KFH implemented strategic steps to strengthen its expansion and solvency, develop its operations, and keep pace with technology and digital banking updates. Additionally, KFH Group signed the final agreement with Al Salam Bank to acquire, in return for cash consolidation, the entire share of KFH Group in KFH – Bahrain.

Al-Roshood said that KFH is the first strategic partner for major development plans. The Bank offers comprehensive financing solutions across various project sectors, with a particular focus on petrochemicals, oil and gas, water and energy, renewable energy, and infrastructure as well as SMEs.

KFH is committed to providing top-notch digital financial services and solutions. The Bank successfully transitioned numerous processes and functions from manual systems to automated systems using Robotic Process Automation (RPA). This improved production efficiency, reduced service times for customers and increased their satisfaction levels.

Al-Roshood indicated that KFH is dedicated towards investing in green finance products and integrating Sustainable Development Goals and ESG principles across all its operations. KFH has been recently included in the FTSE4Good Index Series created by the global index and data provider FTSE Russell. KFH also released the first-of-its-kind in the Kuwaiti banking sector carbon footprint report. Additionally, KFH signed the Global Takaful Alliance agreement with the United Nations Development Program (UNDP). This alliance aims to provide Takaful insurance to 100 million farmers worldwide.

Al-Roshood said that KFH succeeded in attaining the key goals of its strategy, overcoming the challenges of the operational environment. KFH maintained its long-term credit rating at (A) by Fitch with Stable Outlook and at (A2) by Moody's with Stable outlook.

KFH has scooped many local and global awards. The awards confirm KFH's reputation, diverse capabilities in the Islamic finance sector, brand



AbdulWahab Al-Roshood



Fahad Al-Mukhaizeem



Jamal Alhumairi

Al-Roshood:

■ KFH implements strategic steps to strengthen its expansion and solvency

Al-Mukhaizeem:

■ KFH is committed to leaving a clear mark by supporting development and economic growth in Kuwait

Alhumairi:

■ Higher profits are mainly from the increase in total operating income

excellence, and robust operating performance. These awards include Kuwait's Best Bank for Sustainable Finance by Global Finance magazine. KFH also received His Highness Sheikh Salem Al-Ali Al-Sabah Informatics Award under the patronage and presence of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah for the category of excellence in digital transformation in technical financial solutions, in addition to winning several awards in different categories.

Group Chief Strategy Officer Eng. Fahad Al-Mukhaizeem

Meanwhile, Group Chief Strategy Officer Eng. Fahad Al-Mukhaizeem covered highlights of the Kuwait operating environment with an overview on KFH. He also shared KFH's strategy, as well as H1-2024 results.

Al-Mukhaizeem said: "During 2024, Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) has maintained the discount rate at the level of 4.25%, after an increase of 75 basis points during 2023. Furthermore, inflation is moderating where Kuwait's annual inflation rate based on average consumer prices is forecasted to decline to 3.2% in 2024 compared to 3.6% in 2023 according to latest International Monetary Fund (IMF) outlook report.

Additionally, Kuwait's

GDP is estimated to reach KD 39.7 billion in 2024 and to increase further in the coming years according to the most recent (IMF) report. Kuwait's crude oil price increased to USD 87.9 per barrel as of the end of June 2024 with an increase of 13% from the same period last year.

Al-Mukhaizeem added that Moody's Rating Agency has recently affirmed the Government of Kuwait's long-term local and foreign currency issuer ratings at A1 with a stable outlook. Similarly, In June Standard & Poor's also reaffirmed Kuwait's sovereign rating at A+ with a stable outlook. We expect for Kuwait long-term economic prosperity with signals of stability in the local environment and a commitment to advancing the development path.

He pointed out that Kuwait has implemented a range of economic reforms with the goal of diversifying its economy and reducing its reliance on oil revenue. These reforms encompass areas such as Economic Diversification, Foreign Investment Promotion, Fiscal Reforms, and Public-Private Partnerships. Their aim is to establish a more resilient and diversified economy, attract foreign investment, and foster sustainable economic growth in Kuwait. However, there are certain challenges associated

with these reforms, in addition to external factors, including volatility in oil prices and production, as well as spillovers from regional conflicts.

Al-Mukhaizeem explained that Kuwait has solid economic fundamentals, due to improved financial balances as well as increased foreign investments and anticipates more opportunities in 2024 notably in terms of diversification, strategic investments, and financial and structural changes. Kuwait's improved financial and external balances mean that its financial prospects are still favorable overall.

Al-Mukhaizeem said that (KFH) was recognized for its leading position in the Islamic banking sector by winning five prestigious awards at Euromoney's Middle East Awards for Excellence 2024. Additionally, KFH Capital, the investment arm of KFH Group, won the Islamic Finance Deal of the Year Award in Türkiye for its role in the Republic of Türkiye's USD 2.5 billion Sukuk. Winning these awards further recognizes KFH's successes and achievements in its pursuit of becoming one of the 100 largest banks globally. KFH is also committed to leaving a clear mark by supporting development and economic growth in Kuwait.

Acting Group Chief Financial Officer and General Manager Financial Control

and Regulatory Reporting, Jamal Alhumairi

Acting Group Chief Financial Officer and General Manager Financial Control and Regulatory Reporting, Jamal Alhumairi said that KFH Group has achieved Net Profit After Tax attributable to Shareholders for the first six months ended 30th June 2024 of KD 341.2mn higher by KD 7.8mn or 2.3% compared to H1-23 of KD 333.4mn.

Alhumairi added that the higher profits are mainly from the increase in total operating income and lower provision. Partly offset by higher net monetary loss that resulted from the application of IAS-29 "Financial reporting in Hyperinflationary Economies" on the financial statements of Kuwait Turkish Participation Bank (KTPB) and increase in operating expenses.

Financing income has increased by KD 424.6mn or 42.9% compared to the same period last year mainly due to an increase in yield.

Net financing income at KD 558.8mn increased by KD 100.3mn or 21.9% compared to same period last year mainly due to increase in financing income by KD 424.6mn offset by increase in finance cost and distribution to depositors by KD 324.3mn.

Looking at the operating income profile, Alhumairi said

the contribution of net financing income to operating income increased from 62.4% in H1-23 to 67.9% in H1-24 due to an increase in net financing income and decline in investment income.

Increase in fees and commissions by KD 22.3mn is mainly related to increase in transaction fee income due to increase in card income and increase in arrangement fee.

Group NFM for H1-24 at 3.02% is higher by 40bps compared to H1-23. Average yield improved by 255bps while average COF also increased by 215bps. This was the result of both rate hikes and repricing of assets and liabilities during the period.

Looking at provisions and impairments, Alhumairi explained that the group total impairment charge decreased of KD 19.5 mn compared to H1-23.

KFH cautious approach towards provisioning have contributed to financing provision balance exceeding ECL required as per CBK IFRS 9 by KD 544mn as of 30 June 2024.

Moving to the Net Monetary Loss, application of IAS-29 on the financial statements of KTPB resulted in recognition of net monetary loss of KD 86.8mn in the current period an increase of KD 77.6mn compared to H-1 2023 due to increase inflation and significant maturity of CPI linked sukuk.

Alhumairi said that the total Assets amounted to KD 36.4bn.

Net financing receivables at KD 19bn decreased by 2.2% mainly due to sale of KFH Bahrain and foreign currency volatility during the period. Excluding this impact, group net financing receivable increased in H-1 2024 by 4.5%.

Investments in debt securities amounted to KD 6.1bn

Additionally, deposits for H1-24 amounted to KD 19.5bn

The contribution from CASA deposits to total group customer deposits as at the end of H1-24 is 42.8% and on an overall basis group continues to benefit from a large pool of low-cost deposits.

Contribution of customer deposits to total funding is 67.6% compared to 71.7% in 2023.



Kuwait Finance House branch

Extortion & gang violence hitting even big corporations

Even Mexico's largest corporations are now being hit by demands from drug cartels, and gangs are increasingly trying to control the sale, distribution and pricing of certain goods. Well-known, high-ranking business leaders aren't even safe. On Monday, the head of the business chambers' federation in Tamaulipas state, across the border from Texas, gave television interviews complaining about drug cartel extortion in the state. Hours later on Tuesday, Ju-

lio Almanza was shot to death outside his offices in the city of Matamoros, across from Brownsville, Texas. "We are hostages to extortion demands, we are hostages of criminal groups," Almanza said in one of his last interviews. "Charging extortion payments has practically become the national sport in Tamaulipas." The problem came to a head when the Femsa corporation, which operates Oxxo, Mexico's largest chain of convenience stores, announced late

last week that it was closing all of its 191 stores and seven gas stations in another border city, Nuevo Laredo, because of gang problems. The company said it had long had to deal with cartel demands that its gas stations buy their fuel from certain distributors. But the straw that broke the camel's back came in recent weeks when gang members abducted two store employees, demanding they act as lookouts or provide information to the gang. (AP)

China's factory activity contracts for third month

China's factory activity contracted for the third consecutive month in July, government data showed. The Purchasing Managers Index (PMI) for China's manufacturing sector, a gauge of activity of some 3,000 big and state-owned firms across the country, stood at 49.4, down from June's 49.5 on a 100-point scale, the National Bureau of Statistics. A PMI reading above 50 percent indicates growth from the previous month, while a reading below 50 represents contraction. The index, a closely watched barometer

of the health of the world's second-biggest economy, has been in contractionary territory since May. Bureau senior statistician Zhao Qinghe explained that the decline was due to July being the traditional off-season for production, the state-run China Daily reported. Other contributing factors included insufficient demand and extreme weather in certain regions, such as heatwaves and floods, according to Zhao. Meanwhile, the PMI for China's non-manufacturing sector at 50.2 in July, down from 50.5 in June. (KUNA)

The Conversation

Offshore wind farms connected by an underwater power grid for transmission could revolutionize how the E.Coast gets electricity

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



By Tyler Hansen, Dartmouth College; Abraham Silverman, Johns Hopkins University; Elizabeth J. Wilson, Dartmouth College, and Erin Baker, UMass Amherst

Offshore winds have the potential to supply coastlines with massive, consistent flows of clean electricity. One study estimates wind farms just offshore could meet 11 times the projected global electricity demand in 2040. In the U.S., the East Coast is an ideal location to capture this power, but there's a problem: getting electricity from ocean wind farms to the cities and towns that need it. While everyone wants reliable electricity in their homes and businesses, few support the construction of the transmission lines necessary to get it there. This has always been a problem, both in the U.S. and internationally, but it is becoming an even bigger challenge as countries speed toward net-zero carbon energy systems that will use more electricity. The U.S. Department of Energy and 10 states in the Northeast States Collaborative on Interregional Transmission are working on a potentially transformative solution: plans for an offshore electric power grid. At the core of this grid would be backbone transmission lines off the East Coast, from North Carolina to Maine, where dozens of offshore wind projects are already in the pipeline. The plans envision it supporting at least 85 gigawatts of offshore wind power by 2050 - close to the U.S. goal of

110 GW of installed wind power by mid-century, enough to power 40 million homes and up from 0.2 GW today. The Northeast States Collaborative formalized their goals in July 2024 through a multistate memorandum of understanding. Emerging research from the Department of Energy, the research company Brattle and other groups suggests that an offshore electric power grid could mitigate key challenges to building new transmission lines on land and reduce the costs of offshore wind power. Cutting costs would be welcome news - offshore wind project costs rose as much as 50% from 2021 to 2023. While some of the underlying causes have subsided, such as inflation and global supply chain disruptions, interest rates remain high, and the industry is still trying to find its footing in the U.S. Today's offshore wind projects use a point-to-point, or radial design, where each offshore wind farm is individually connected to the onshore grid. This method works if a region has only a few projects, but it quickly becomes more expensive due to the cabling and other infrastructure. Its lines are also disruptive to communities and marine life. And it requires more costly onshore grid upgrades. Coordinated offshore transmission can avoid many of those costs with what the Department of Energy calls "meshed" or "backbone" designs. Rather than individual connections to land, many offshore wind farms would be connected to a shared transmission line, which would connect to the onshore grid through strategically placed "points of interconnection." This way, electricity produced by an offshore wind farm would be transmitted to where it is most needed, up and down the East Coast. Even better, electricity generated onshore could also be

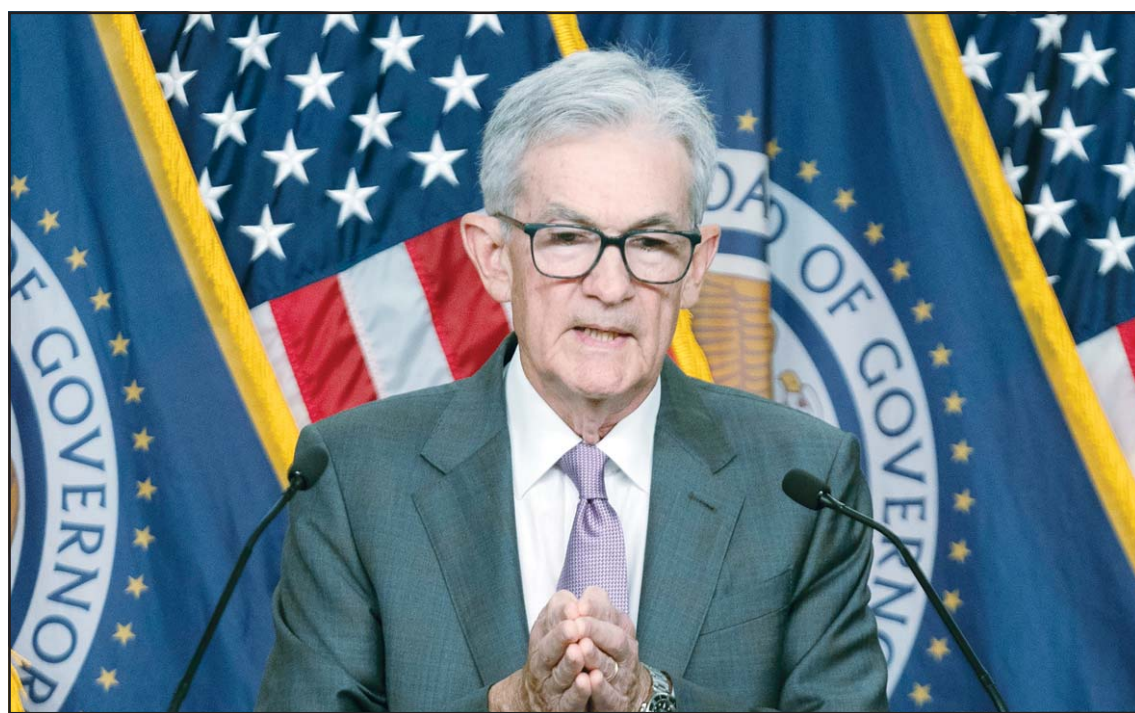
transmitted through these shared lines to move energy to where it is needed. This could improve the resilience of power grids and reduce the need for new transmission lines over land, which have been notoriously difficult to gain approval for, especially on the East Coast. Coordinated offshore transmission was part of early U.S. discussions on offshore wind planning and development. In the late 2000s when Google and partners first proposed the Atlantic Wind Connection, an offshore transmission project, the benefits in both offshore renewables and the entire energy system were intriguing. At the time, the U.S. had just one utility-scale offshore wind project in the pipeline, and it ultimately failed. Today, the U.S. has 53 GW of offshore wind projects being planned or developed. As energy researchers, we believe coordinated offshore transmission is important for the industry to succeed at scale. By enabling power from offshore wind farms and onshore electricity generators to travel to more places, coordinated transmission can enhance grid reliability and enable electricity to get to where it is most needed. This reduces the need for more expensive and often more polluting power plants. A 2024 report from the National Renewable Energy Lab found the benefits of a coordinated design are nearly three times higher than the costs when compared with a standard point-to-point design. Studies from Europe, the U.K. and Brattle have pointed to additional benefits, including reducing planet-warming carbon emissions, cutting the number of beach crossings by a third and reducing the miles of transmission cables needed by 35% to 60%. In the U.S., offshore transmission lines would be almost entirely in federal waters, potentially avoiding many of the

conflicts associated with onshore projects, though it would still face challenges. Building an offshore grid will require some important changes. First is changing government incentives. The federal investment tax credit for offshore wind, which covers at least 30% of the upfront capital cost of a project, does not currently help pay for coordinated transmission designs. Second, planning needs to take everyone's concerns into account from the beginning. While the overall benefits of coordinated transmission designs outweigh overall costs, who receives the benefits and who bears the costs matters. For example, more expensive power generators could earn less, and some communities feel threatened by offshore development. Third, greater coordination will be needed among everyone involved to dispatch power to and from the regional grids. The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission's recent Order 1920, requiring power providers to plan for future needs, may serve as a blueprint, but it does not apply to inter-regional projects, such as an offshore transmission backbone connecting over a dozen states across three regions. The U.S. reached an important milestone in March 2024 with the completion of South Fork Wind, the country's first utility-scale wind farm, bringing U.S. offshore wind power capacity to nearly 200 megawatts. Eight more projects are under construction or approved for construction. Once built, they would bring installed capacity to over 13 gigawatts, roughly the same as three dozen coal-fired power plants. An offshore transmission backbone could support offshore wind development and the East Coast's energy needs for generations to come. This article was updated July 31, 2024, to clarify that the states formalized the memorandum of understanding. (AP)

Powell says September interest rate cut could be 'on the table' as inflation cools

Immediate reduction unlikely

WASHINGTON, Aug 1, (AP): Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell has set the stage for the central bank's first rate cut in four years, citing greater progress toward lower inflation as well as a cooler job market that no longer threatens to overheat the economy.



Federal Reserve Board Chairman Jerome Powell speaks during a news conference at the Federal Reserve Board Building Tuesday, Wednesday, July 31, 2024, in Washington. (AP)

Still, the Fed kept its key interest rate unchanged at a 23-year high of 5.3%, despite calls from some economists and Democratic politicians to implement a cut Wednesday. Instead, Powell said that, if inflation continues to fall, "a reduction in our policy rate could be on the table" when the Fed next meets Sept. 17-18. "We're getting closer to the point at which it'll be appropriate to reduce our policy rate," Powell said, "but we're not quite at that point."

A rate cut by the Fed is unlikely to have much immediate impact because it is largely expected by financial markets. Yet over time, lower Fed rates should reduce borrowing costs for consumers and businesses, including mortgage and auto-loan rates. Rate cuts could also bolster the economy and potentially improve Vice President Kamala Harris' prospects in the upcoming presidential election. Former President Donald Trump has said the Fed shouldn't cut rates before the election. After September, the Fed's next meeting is two days after the election in November.

In a statement Wednesday, the Fed said that "job gains have moderated" and acknowledged that the unemployment rate has risen. The Fed is required by Congress to pursue stable prices and maximum employment, and the statement said the central bank is "attentive to the risks" to both goals. The focus on both inflation and employment is a major shift after several years of Fed officials focusing exclusively on combating rising prices. "They're ready to cut, just as long as we don't get an inflation surprise between now and September, which we won't," said Mark Zandi, chief economist at Moody's Analytics. "Better late than never."

But Powell provided little guidance on how many times the Fed might reduce rates in the coming months. "I can imagine a scenario in which it would be everywhere from zero cuts to several cuts," by the end of this year, he said. Before the Fed's decision, financial market traders had priced in 100% odds that the central bank would reduce its benchmark rate at its September meeting, according to futures markets. The Fed typically seeks to avoid surprising investors with its rate decisions. Stocks added a bit to earlier gains and Treasury yields eased after the Federal Reserve held its main interest rate at a two-decade high but gave some indication that an easing may soon be on the way. The S&P 500

FRANKFURT, Germany, Aug 1, (AP): Inflation in the 20 countries that use the euro ticked up to 2.6% in July, stubbornly above the European Central Bank's target and complicating the ECB's next decision on whether to cut interest rates and boost growth as the economy struggles to stage a convincing recovery after more than a year of stagnation. Inflation rose from 2.5% in June, according to official figures Wednesday from the EU statistics agency Eurostat. Services inflation, a figure closely watched by the ECB, remained elevated at 4.0%, down from 4.1%.

The uptick will intensify discussions around the ECB's next move at its Sept. 12 meeting. The central bank for the eurozone countries made a first tentative interest rate cut in June, low-

ering its benchmark rate by a quarter percentage point to 3.75%. The bank's governing council then hit pause at the July meeting, with ECB President Christine Lagarde saying the bank would take its next decisions meeting by meeting based on incoming data. The ECB along with other central banks including the U.S. Federal Reserve rapidly raised interest rates to combat a spike in inflation sparked by Russia's invasion of Ukraine and higher energy prices as well as by the sudden rebound of the economy after the pandemic, which strained supplies of parts and raw materials. Europe in particular was hit by higher energy prices after Russia cut off most supplies of natural gas. Energy prices have fallen and inflation is now down from its peak of

10.6% in October 2022. But it has remained stuck between 2% and 3%, short of the ECB's target of 2% which is considered best for the economy. Rate hikes combat inflation by raising the cost of credit for buying things, cooling demand for goods and taking the pressure off prices. But higher rates can hurt growth, and recent economic data have been downbeat as Europe struggles to show a convincing recovery after more than a year of near-zero growth figures. Gross domestic product rose 0.3% in each of the first two quarters of this year, an improvement on zero or below. But recent indicators of economic activity going forward, such as S&P Global's purchasing managers' index, suggest that the economy is still barely growing.

and fall, with one-tenth of a mile left in the marathon, which is what I think they would be doing if they don't start cutting," Bharat Ramamurti, an advisor at the American Economic Liberties Project and former economist in the Biden White House, said on a call Monday with reporters. Also Wednesday, three Democratic senators, led by Elizabeth Warren from Massachusetts, urged Powell in a letter to cut rates. The letter charged that a failure to reduce borrowing costs soon would suggest the Fed is "giving in to bullying" and would itself be a political move. Powell said Wednesday that the upcoming elections would have no influence on the Fed's decisions.

First cut for over 4 years BoE lowers main interest rate by 0.25 pct to 5 pct

LONDON, Aug 1, (AP): The Bank of England has cut interest rates for the first time since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in early 2020 as inflationary pressures in the economy have eased.

In a statement Thursday, the bank said that by a 5-4 margin, its policy making panel backed a quarter-point reduction in its main interest rate to 5%, from the 16-year of 5.25%. Economists were divided as to whether the bank, which is independent of government, would cut rates given persistent price pressures in the services sector, which accounts for around 80% of the British economy. Though those concerns remain, certainly among the four opting to keep borrowing rates on hold, inflation in the U.K. overall is down at the bank's target of 2%.

"Inflationary pressures have eased enough that we've been able to cut interest rates today," said Bank Gov. Andrew Bailey, who voted for a cut. "But we need to make sure inflation stays low, and be careful not to cut interest rates too quickly or by too much. Ensuring low and stable inflation is the best thing we can do to support economic growth and the prosperity of the country." Bailey's comment suggests that interest rates will not be falling dramatically over coming months, certainly nowhere near the pace that the bank had hiked them in recent years. Central banks around the world dramatically increased borrowing costs from near zero during the coronavirus pandemic when prices started to shoot up, first as a result of supply chain issues built up during the pandemic and then because of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine which pushed up energy costs.

Though no one is anticipating rates to fall to those previous lows, there are widespread expectations that the bank will cut again in coming months, especially as its forecasts suggest inflation will be below target in the next couple of years, despite a modest increase in the second half of the year.

"But ultimately it is the data that will determine how interest rates evolve from here, with the bank hoping its conviction that underlying inflation pressures are fading will be vindicated," said Luke Bartholomew, deputy chief economist at abrdn, formerly known as Aberdeen Asset Management. The cut - and the potential of future cuts - are welcome news to millions of mortgage holders, certainly those whose borrowing costs track the bank's headline rate, though it will likely mean that the savings rates offered by banks could be reduced.

Higher interest rates - which cool the economy by making it more expensive to borrow - have helped ease inflation, but they've also weighed on the British economy, which has barely grown since the pandemic rebound. Critics of the Bank of England say it has been overly cautious about inflation in recent months and that it had maintained high interest rates for too long, unnecessarily harming the economy. Borrowing costs had been held at 5.25% since August last year, even though inflation was clearly on a downturn while the economy stagnated.

It is a charge that's also been leveled against the U.S. Federal Reserve, which kept rates unchanged on Wednesday. It is widely anticipated that the Fed will

Other central banks, including the European Central Bank, have opted to cut rates but are doing so cautiously.

Planned protests could turn ugly

Nigerians frustrated by economic crisis

ABUJA, Nigeria, Aug 1, (AP): Frustrated with growing economic hardships, Nigerians are planning nationwide protests this week against the country's worst cost-of-living crisis in a generation.

And with momentum soaring on social media, authorities fear a replay of the deadly 2020 demonstrations against police brutality in this West African nation - or a wave of violence similar to last month's protests in Kenya, where a tax hike led to chaos in the capital, Nairobi. The government of Nigerian President Bola Tinubu says it is determined to prevent such a scenario in a country that has long been a top African oil producer but whose citizens are among the world's poorest.

On Wednesday, security forces were deployed on major roads in cities, including the capital of Abuja and the country's largest, Lagos. Authorities touted the positives, appealing to organizers to shelve plans for the protests. "Is a protest the catalyst for progress we need now? I strongly believe it isn't. Instead, it could undo the modest gains we've made," Lagos Gov.

Babajide Sanwo-Olu said in a speech. Nigerian politicians and lawmakers, often accused of corruption, are some of the best-paid in Africa. Even the president's wife - her office nowhere in the constitution - is entitled to SUVs and other luxuries funded by taxpayers. Nigeria's population of over 210 million people - the continent's largest - is also among the hungriest in the world and its government has struggled to create jobs.

The current economic hardship under Tinubu, who promised "renewed hope" when he was sworn into office in May 2023, is blamed on surging inflation that is at a 28-year high and the government's economic policies that have pushed the local currency to record low against the dollar.

Local media have reported that organizers of the protests, which are planned for Thursday, rejected a proposal from Nigeria's police to instead hold rallies in confined spaces - easily controlled by security forces. "So many people are struggling to stay alive," Rev. Peter Odogwu said during his Sunday sermon at a church in Nigeria's capital, Abuja.



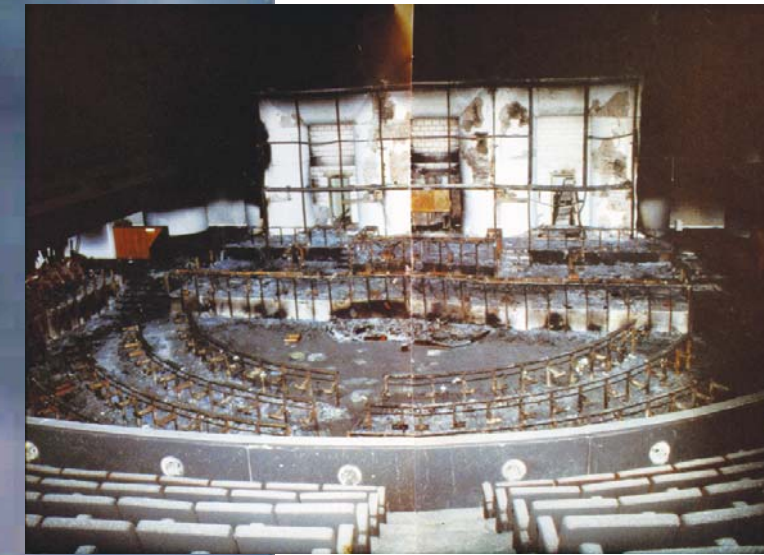
SPECIAL REPORT

From peace ... to peril

An expat's eyewitness account of Kuwait's darkest day – August 2, 1990



The Iraqi brutal invasion of Kuwait in 1990.



The damages and destruction caused during the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in 1990.

By Sanjay Jangle

Expat in Kuwait since 1988 with a deep love for the country

In my opinion, till August 2, 1990 Kuwait essentially owed her freedom and prosperity to three visionary leaders: Sheikh Mubarak Bin Sabah, also known as Mubarak the Great (1896 – 1915), Sheikh Ahmed Bin Jaber Al Sabah (1921-1950), and Sheikh Abdulla Al Salem Al Sabah (1950 – 1965), who took timely actions to save Kuwait from annexation by Iraq and lead the country to prosperity.

Kuwait, a small but immensely wealthy nation, astutely and ably ruled by the Sabah family over the years, rose to prominence during the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s, becoming one of the most prosperous and influential countries in the region and the world. This remarkable success attracted envy and the evil eye, when Iraq launched an invasion of Kuwait on August 2, 1990. I was living in Kuwait that time, and the following are my personal experiences during the initial days of the invasion in Kuwait, intertwined with other researched information.

August 1, 1990: We finished the regular weekly meeting in the GM's office on the Wednesday afternoon of 1st August 1990 and after the meeting, as usual I browsed the news headlines on the Reuters terminal in the office. The first headline was the failure of the meeting in Jeddah of Arab leaders with the Kuwaiti leaders returning immediately to Kuwait and one other headline indicated that the American warship in the Gulf was 'on alert'.

What led up to the meeting in Jeddah?
At the end of the Iran-Iraq War, Iraq was on the brink of financial collapse due to President Saddam Hussein's significant military expenditures, and by 1990, the country owed approximately \$37 billion to the GCC countries, including \$14 billion to Kuwait. In an effort to replenish Iraq's treasury, Saddam aimed to sell oil at high prices but accused the Amir of Kuwait of flooding the market, thereby driving prices



Sanjay Jangle

down and worsening Iraq's financial crisis. On July 17, Saddam launched a televised verbal assault on Kuwait and the UAE for exceeding the oil export quotas established by OPEC. The next day, Kuwait was accused of stealing oil from the Rumaila oil field, which lies on the border between Iraq and Kuwait. In spite of the fact that during the eight-year conflict with Iran, Kuwait had financially backed Saddam Hussein, his advisors decided that if Kuwait did not immediately provide Iraq with \$10 billion, they would invade. Saddam then ordered the Republican Guard, Iraq's elite divisions equipped with Soviet tanks, to move towards the Kuwaiti border. These forces were unrivaled in the Middle East. Soon, 30,000 Iraqi troops had amassed at the Iraq-Kuwait border.

As the crisis intensified, Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak rushed to Baghdad on behalf of Kuwait and the Arab world to negotiate. Despite his efforts, the Iraqi threat at the Kuwaiti border continued to escalate, with troop numbers increasing from 30,000 to 100,000. The Saudi government also attempted to mediate the conflict between Iraq and Kuwait. Thus on Tuesday, August 1, 1990, a meeting was held in Jeddah, where Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Abdullah bin Abdul Aziz Al-Saud mediated between Kuwait's Crown Prince Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Al-Sabah and Iraqi regime representative Prime Minister Izzat Ibrahim. The mediation was unsuccessful, and the leaders quickly returned to their respective countries.

When I read the headline that the American war ship was on alert, I felt no reason to be afraid of. Yet, my two colleagues and I decided as a precautionary measure, to gather some US dollars, just in case a war erupts. After the office closed at 5 pm that day, we went to the foreign currency exchanges at Safat square. We went through all the exchanges out there one by one, and to our surprise, not a single US dollar bill was available in the market. Now this gave us some cause for fear. We then rushed

Continued on Page 12



SPECIAL REPORT

From peace ... to peril

An expat's eyewitness account of Kuwait's darkest day – August 2, 1990

Continued from Page 11

to Kuwait India International Exchange so as to prepare a US dollar draft and remit to our accounts in India. We were happy that we got the drafts, and the exchange company would send the drafts to India the next day.

The next day, that is on 2nd August at about 5-5:30 am, I was woken up by a roaring sound of planes. I couldn't guess what exactly that was and thought that must have been some maneuvers by Kuwaiti fighter planes. Later I came to know it was the roar of two Scud missiles that flew over the building, which targeted a telecommunications tower in Sabahiya in South Kuwait. While getting ready to go to office, I switched on the BBC news on radio and heard the sinister news that Iraq has invaded Kuwait. In India we had known of two wars, one with China, and one with Pakistan, which were fought on the border and that was the feeling in the mind that the war has erupted on the Kuwait Iraq border, and it would end there, a naive thinking. I didn't imagine that within hours Kuwait would be overrun. Incidentally, one newspaper headline that day read "A Summer Cloud That Won't Last Long". It probably referred to Iraq's threat to Kuwait which would subside eventually, but that was not to be.

At 2 a.m. on August 2, 1990, Iraq initiated an invasion of Kuwait using four elite Iraqi Republican Guard divisions. The Iraqi Army deployed a squadron of Mi-25 and Mi-8 gunships, along with several units of Mi-17 transport helicopters, to transport and support Iraqi commandos into Kuwait City and to aid the advance of ground troops. Although the Kuwaiti ground and air forces resisted, they were vastly outnumbered. Approximately 20% of the Kuwaiti military aircraft were lost or captured, while the remaining 80% were flown to Saudi Arabia and Bahrain.

Iraqi troops launched an intense assault on Dasman Palace, the royal residence of the Kuwaiti Amir, involving clashes between the Amiri Guards, local police, and the British Chieftain tanks. Despite the fierce resistance, the palace eventually fell after Iraqi marines landed from the sea. After several hours of heavy fighting, Republican Guard tanks entered Kuwait City. Many members of the Kuwaiti royal family, including the Amir, and a large number of Kuwaitis fled to Taif in Saudi Arabia. This move was strategically important for several reasons: it allowed the Kuwaiti leadership to establish a government-in-exile, organize, and seek international support for Kuwait's liberation and also to support the resistance efforts of those who remained in Kuwait. Sadly, the Amir's younger half-brother, Sheikh Fahad Al Ahmed Al Jaber Al Sabah, was shot and killed by the invading Iraqi forces while defending Dasman Palace.

By 7:30 am I got ready for the office and took two friends in my car and started driving to our office in Subhan. On the 5th ring road the traffic was diverted by military personnel, bypassing the Bayan Palace. We couldn't figure out if that was Kuwaiti military or Iraqi military. As we were approaching Subhan, with the airport runway on the right-hand side, we saw battle tanks lined up on the runway. Now this scene was scary. Anyhow, we reached our office, which was not far away from there. The office was closed, and some people were loitering outside the gate. We were told by our Iraqi watchman that the office was closed and informed us to go back home.

Survive

As a sensible action, we rushed to a bank in Subhan, which was nearby. Though the bank was open, all the bank operations were closed. There was a long queue of hopefuls, but no one was working in the bank. We all had accepted the fact that now we have to survive with whatever cash we had physically with us. Here I must describe the adventurous step taken by one of our senior colleagues. He straight went to the manager of the bank in his cabin, caught his collar, and threatened him saying "give me all my money, or your lives". He thus managed to get KD 2,000 from his account! Hat's off to his daring!

From Subhan, we returned to Salmiya where we all lived. We went to a famous Indian grocery store to buy and stock as much food we could get. There was so much crowd out there that there was not an inch of space to move inside the bakala. The shop-owner had tripled prices of food-stuff. People had no choice but to buy. It was a question of survival in the uncertain future.

By the end of the first day of the invasion, only small pockets of resistance remained in Kuwait. On August 3, the Kuwaiti Air Force's Ali Al Salem Air Base was the last base still under Kuwaiti control. Throughout the day, Kuwaiti aircraft attempted to conduct resupply missions from Saudi Arabia to support the defense. However, by nightfall, Iraqi forces had taken over Ali Al Salem Air Base. At 11:11 am on August 3, Kuwait Radio went silent after broadcasting a desperate appeal: "Arabs, brothers, beloved brothers, Muslims. Hurry to our aid."

"There is a thin line between life and death" – that is what I personally felt. We had been living in Salmiya for about two years, and we never felt that we were in a strange or unsafe place. One Kuwaiti Dinar was equivalent to about Rs 60 at that time. I had a cozy apartment and had a car from my company. Before Iraq invaded Kuwait, my wife and son had already travelled to India.

It was only for a few hours on 2nd August that a few people could make international calls, but afterwards there was absolutely no contact with the outside world. "What next

was a big question mark in front of us. Banks were closed. Thank God, my wife had prepared some food stuff and stocked in freezer for about a month.

The one contact with outside world was only through radio news like BBC which also were frightening. It was feared that Saddam Hussein could use chemical weapons, and hence as a precaution, we all put cello tapes on windows and door frames. If Iraq bombs the civilian area, people had prepared to stay in basements, as most of the buildings had basements for storage. One of my friends had in fact prepared a letter to his family in India, that had a semblance of a 'will'.

There was no office from 2nd August onwards for anyone. After daily chores, people had nothing to do but to keep talking on land-line telephones. There weren't mobile phones at that time. Everyday there used to be some canards spreading on the phones, and there was no method to fact-check. One day my friend told, that he heard that the Salmiya 4th ring road fire station has been bombed. We went there in the evening and found it was intact. Next day someone said, the Sultan Centre, a high end supermarket store was bombed, and again we drove there in the evening to find it intact.

The Iraqi invasion and occupation of Kuwait received unanimous condemnation from all major global powers. Even nations that had historically been seen as close allies of Iraq, like France and India, demanded the immediate withdrawal of Iraqi forces from Kuwait. Several countries, including the Soviet Union (which was still the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics at that time) and China, imposed arms embargoes on Iraq. On August 3, 1990, the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 660, denouncing the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait and calling for the unconditional withdrawal of all Iraqi forces from Kuwaiti territory.

Military

The local TV showed pictures of 'Iraqi military going back to Iraq', which was only fooling the world. In the age of satellite truth cannot be hidden. But we were happy looking at the TV pictures, hoping after hope that this is true. It wasn't clear if Iraq would keep quiet after capturing Kuwait or would further enter Saudi since the man had such ambitions and Iraq had world's fifth largest army with sizeable number of tanks and artillery equipment. Taking over Saudi Arabia would grant Saddam control over more than 40 percent of the world's oil reserves and two of the most sacred sites in Islam, Makkah and Madinah. With Iraqi troops positioned on the Saudi border, King Fahd made an unprecedented decision to invite both Western and Arab forces to deploy in Saudi Arabia to bolster the kingdom's defense.

About 1,000 Kuwaitis lost their lives directly due to the invasion. While the number of deaths during the invasion and from the resistance attacks or retribution may not seem substantial, it concealed some grim realities. Many of these deaths involved brutal, prolonged torture. Moreover, given that the Kuwaiti population during the occupation was about 300,000, the death toll was proportionally twice as high as American casualties in the decade-long Vietnam War. Furthermore, this count does not account for the numerous rapes and other assaults on Kuwaitis and excludes about 600 Kuwaitis who are still missing.

The last civilian flight to land in Kuwait before the invasion was the British Airways Flight 149, with its route from London to Kuala Lumpur with brief stops in Kuwait City and Madras (now Chennai). The BA flight departed on August 1, 1990, carrying 367 passengers and 18 crew members from London. It landed in Kuwait at 4:13 a.m. which was after the Iraqi military had already commenced the invasion. The airline reported that the pilot had contacted ahead to inquire about the situation, but Kuwaiti air traffic control provided no warning prior to landing. Observers noted that everything appeared normal at the airport. The majority of passengers were continuing their journey to Madras or Kuala Lumpur.

The flight was preparing to embark on the next leg of its journey, with Captain Peter Clark readying for takeoff. Around 4:40 a.m., he was informed that the airport would be closed for two hours. Shortly afterward, Iraqi jets appeared over a secondary runway, strafing and bombing it. The passengers were promptly evacuated.

The Iraqi military then took control of the airport, preventing all British Airways staff and passengers from leaving. Thirty-six passengers, mostly British except for two, were moved to Baghdad, where some were used as human shields. After the crew and passengers had disembarked, the BA149 aircraft was destroyed on the runway.

The passengers accused British Airways of negligence and, again in July 2024, filed a lawsuit against both the British government and British Airways for jeopardizing their safety.

As extensively detailed by Dr. Ibrahim Al Marashi in "Saddam's Security Apparatus During the Invasion of Kuwait and the Kuwaiti Resistance," one of the major obstacles to Saddam's strategy for maintaining internal security in the 19th province was the Kuwaiti resistance. Elite Special Forces and numerous Popular Army units (Iraqi Baath Party Militia) were assigned to neutralize the Kuwaiti resistance. In practice, the Special Forces operated more as a security intelligence unit than a traditional military force, reporting to both Ali Hassan al-Majid and Saba'wi Ibrahim Hassan, director of the General Intelligence Service. Smaller units conducted patrols in urban areas to monitor Kuwaitis, with each unit was reinforced by 100 Popular Army troops to provide additional force. The Kuwaiti resistance used propaganda to counteract the invaders' rhetoric. A notable document was a leaflet titled "A Call to Arms from Kuwaiti Resistance to Everybody in Kuwait," which began with the heading "God (Allah), the Nation



Al-Seif Palace after being destroyed by Iraqi soldiers during the invasion.



The family smiles withered after 2nd August, 1990.

(Al-Watan), and the Prince (Al-Amir)." This choice of the term al-watan, as opposed to the Iraqi term al-qawm, highlighted the Kuwaiti resistance's challenge to the Iraqi narrative. By using al-watan, the Kuwaiti resistance reaffirmed its independence and national identity, asserting its sovereignty under God and its Prince.

The leaflet opened with – "They took over the land, and increased the corruption, and your God made them suffer, your God is waiting for them." This verse portrays the Iraqis as aggressors, aligning God with the Kuwaitis. The leaflet continues in the same vein: "People of resilient Kuwait, do not give up on the dear motherland. Do not turn against your brother because the motherland relies on everyone, whether Kuwaiti or non-Kuwaiti Arab." The leaflet likely aimed to reach non-Kuwaitis, acknowledging that most of Kuwait's population consisted of expatriate Arabs. It appealed to them not to be swayed by Iraqi promises of greater "Arabhood" but to remain loyal to the country that has been their home. "Therefore, we ask all young men, Kuwaiti or any other Arab, who wish to stand side by side and defend this dear motherland, to help return it to His Excellency, Sheikh Jaber Al Ahmed Al Sabah, and his noble government. We ask God to make this land free and secure and to damn those who have occupied it and stolen its blessings." The leaflet was signed in the name of the "State of Kuwait" and the Kuwaiti resistance, under the title Al-Shabab Al-Murabitun.

The Kuwaitis also distributed another flyer appealing to Iraqi soldiers, urging them to defy the orders of the Iraqi government. The flyer began, "To the Iraqi soldier, O Iraqi hero who defended the Arab nations from the greedy and sacrificed your bodies. We, the people of Kuwait, have not forgotten your sacrifices. Therefore, we ask you to consult your conscience, and you will realize that an honorable and heroic soldier cannot be content with the hostile actions taken against your brothers and neighbors." This statement indirectly referenced the sacrifices made by Iraqi soldiers during the Iran-Iraq War and reminded them of Kuwaiti financial support during that conflict. The flyer continued, "In the name of God, we ask you to consult your conscience and mind and question whether it is just for an Arab to attack his Arab neighbor and this land that supported you in the past."

Demonstrations

In late August, Kuwaiti demonstrations and armed resistance commenced when the Popular Army command in Kuwait issued directives to all its units regarding a group of Kuwaitis engaged in assassinating and kidnapping soldiers and members of the Popular Army. The command reported that the resistance was organizing their activities in mosques during prayer times and employing women to attack their fighters. These challenges would not be ignored, prompting a decision to "target such incidents to teach them a lesson and prevent these actions." Criticisms of the Iraqi president were taken seriously and dealt with harshly.

All along for the seventeen days that we lived in Kuwait after 2nd of August, almost daily we went to Kuwait Flour Mills in Rumaithiya to buy Khubus, to Salmiya Co-operative store for vegetables and groceries. We stood in queue at Salmiya Co-operative for hours for gas cylinder. There once I observed one slender Iraqi soldier overlooking the crowd, in torn canvas shoes and I pitied about his condition that he was suffering for which the country's leader was responsible.

In 1990, Kuwait had a population of approximately 600,000 citizens and 1,200,000 expatriates. During the Iraqi occupation, around 300,000 to 400,000 residents either left the country for vacations before the invasion or fled afterward. Of the 170,000 Indians in Kuwait at the time of the invasion, about 7,000 remained in the occupied country, displaying remarkable defiance, courage, and ingenuity to survive those days of fear and repression.

About a week after 2nd August, we heard news of some looting, one of our friends' car was usurped. In every build-

ing in Salmiya, two-three people from the building used to guard during the nights, as a precautionary measure. As Kuwait TV was taken over by the Iraqis, every day Saddam Hussein used to be there on the Kuwait TV. He had already declared that there is no more Kuwait and this was Iraq's 19th province. There was tension all the time in the air.

Couple of days after 2nd August, my company manager called me and another senior colleague to office to collect passports of employees in our area and distribute to them. My colleague drove me to our office in Subhan. I vividly remember a ghastly scene of some dead bodies covered in white cloths lying under the Khaitan overbridge. We saw Iraqi soldiers around and didn't have the courage to look around through the window, but looked straight.

With each passing day, our anxiety grew. How long would this continue? How and when would we be able to leave Kuwait? We knew the Saudi border to the south was sealed, and the only way out was through the northern Kuwait-Iraq border. We were frustrated by the lack of response or action from the Indian government. Moreover, the Indian embassy in Kuwait had issued a notice advising all Indians to stay put, stating that anyone who wished to leave would do so at their own risk. We lived in constant tension, uncertain of what fate had in store for us. Listening to BBC news about Iraq and the world coalition amassing their military forces was even more frightening, as we were right in the midst of it.

Families

During the occupation of Kuwait, Iraqi forces launched a systematic campaign of torture, murder, rape, and the plundering of Kuwait's economic resources. Despite the Iraqi occupation government declaring the death penalty for looters, it allowed the transfer of assets from various establishments in Kuwait.

As we had sensed that the way the whole world opinion has gone against Iraq and if and when a war erupts between the world forces and Iraq, the flash-point would be Kuwait.

Thus there was constant fear in the mind all the time and after about 13-14 days a few of my friends and I started planning our escape from Kuwait. We estimated that including air ticket to Bombay, it would cost about KD 300 per head to reach Bombay via Baghdad and Amman. On 19th August, Sunday early morning, fifteen of us in all, started in three taxis of 'Gulf Taxi' service to Baghdad. Families of all fifteen of us were in India. Everybody was told to just carry one small briefcase, so that we do not waste time at any customs border. I carried my certificates, a VCR, few clothes, a camera, and a plastic bag with 7-8 litres of water with some food stuff.

Kuwait to Baghdad distance is about 750 km. At Abdally check point, there was heavy traffic with lots of Iraqi military flowing into Kuwait. There was no check-post on the Kuwait-Iraq border, as it didn't have to be, now that Kuwait was part of Iraq as far as Iraq was concerned. On the way we halted for breakfast at about 9 am and later for lunch at a small-town hotel. I noticed that the people en route to Baghdad were quite poor in all the towns, which was little strange to me, since I never saw poverty in Kuwait. Due to their nation's immense oil wealth, most Kuwaitis enjoyed lives of considerable comfort before the Iraqi invasion. I felt pity that the people in Iraq which is endowed with both oil and water had to suffer only because of one man, their supreme leader, who first fought an eight year war with Iran and put the country to a heavy burden of debts.

Until about 280 km before arriving Baghdad, there was no checking on the road at all, but after that our taxis were checked 6 times, though not much questioning or checking any baggage. Kuwait to Baghdad journey cost us KD 250 per taxi. We reached Baghdad at around 4:30 pm the same day and went straight to Air India office and bought Amman to Bombay (Bombay was officially changed to Mumbai in 1995) air ticket. We had difficulties as regards exchanging Kuwaiti Dinars and fixing up a bus to Jordan. The bus cost us about 2,500 Dinars for the full bus.

On 20th August, Monday night, we started our bus journey to Amman. On the way, while still in Iraq, the bus was halted by Iraqi soldiers for about four hours. We were afraid if they were sending us back to Baghdad, however it was later revealed that they stopped us to reduce rush on the border between Iraq and Jordan. Next day, that is on Tuesday, the 21st August at about 10:30 am we reached the Iraq-Jordan border. It took us about five hours to cross the border, traverse through the no man's land and then cross the Jordan check-post. We were so relieved at this point, with the feeling of having come out of the war zone. We had reached the Indian Embassy in Amman at about 7:30 pm on Tuesday, the 21st August. In accordance with giving priority for women and children, we finally took off by an Air India flight on 22nd night and arrived in Bombay in the morning of 23rd August 1990.



One of the wells on fire. Left: The Kuwait Airways head office burned down during the Iraqi invasion in 1990.

Legionnaires' disease cases soar up to 60 in Melbourne

Kenya, CAR confirm Mpox outbreaks, race to contain the spread

ABUJA, Nigeria, Aug 1, (Agencies): Kenya and the Central African Republic have declared new outbreaks of mpox as Africa's health officials race to contain the spread of the disease in a region lacking vaccines.

Nairobi announced the outbreak on Wednesday, after a case was detected in a passenger traveling from Uganda to Rwanda at a border crossing in southern Kenya. The Central African Republic Car was the first to declare a new outbreak on Monday, saying it extends to its capital of Bangui.

Mpox, previously known as monkeypox, is caused by a virus that originates in wild animals and occasionally jumps to people, who can spread it to others.

"We are very concerned about the cases of monkeypox, which is ravaging region 7 of the country," the Central African Republic's public health minister, Pierre Somsé, said Monday. Mpox became a focus of worldwide concern during an international outbreak in 2022 that saw the disease spread to over 100 countries, and has been endemic in parts of central and west Africa for decades.

The World Health Organization said in November it had confirmed sexual transmission of mpox in Congo for the first time. African scientists warned this could make the disease difficult to contain.

Although the mpox epidemics in the West were contained with the help of

FDA warns: More ground cinnamon tainted with lead

NEW YORK, Aug 1, (AP): US health officials are warning that several types of ground cinnamon sold at certain discount and specialty grocery stores are contaminated with high levels of lead and should be discarded.

The Food and Drug Administration has issued its third alert this year, adding at least 10 types of packaged ground cinnamon sold at popular outlets including Dollar Tree, Patel Brothers and Eurogrocery stores in several states.

The FDA has recommended that companies recall the products. In the meantime, consumers should throw away and avoid buying these ground cinnamon products. No illnesses have been reported in connection with these

vaccines and treatments, barely any have been available in parts of Africa where several countries have reported outbreaks in recent months.

The worst hit on the continent is Congo, which has recorded more than 12,000 cases and at least 470 deaths this year in its biggest outbreak. South Africa, which last recorded an mpox

products, the agency said.

Here's what you need to know:

The FDA issued its latest alert Tuesday, naming these brands of cinnamon: El Chilar, Marcum, SWAD, Supreme Tradition, Compania Indillor Orientale, ALB Flavor, Shahzada, Spice Class and La Frontera.

On July 25, the agency issued an alert for El Servidor brand cinnamon. That followed an alert on March 6.

Testing by state programs and confirmed by the FDA found levels of lead that ranged from a little over 2 parts per million to about 7 parts per million in most of the spices, the agency said. The El Servidor brand was found to have a lead concentration of 20 parts

per million.

That's far lower than the 2,000 to 5,000 parts per million detected in ground cinnamon in pouches of WanaBana and other brands of cinnamon apple puree that sickened more than 500 U.S. children starting last year.

There is currently no FDA limit for heavy metals in spices. However, the agency has set a limit of 1 part per million of lead in candy likely to be consumed by small children. The American Spice Trade Association, an industry trade group, calls for no more than 2 parts per million of lead in bark spices such as cinnamon.

Many foods, including spices, contain lead from natural sources such as soil and

water, said Karen Everstine, technical director for FoodchainID, a company that tracks food supply chains.

Spices also can accumulate lead from other sources in the environment, such as pollution. Some lead in spices may come from manufacturing, storage or shipping processes.

In some cases, spices have been mixed with substances, including lead, to boost color or weight, increasing the value of the product.

No amount of lead is safe, so it should be avoided, health officials say. Because spices are used in such small amounts, the potential harm of any single use is small, but damage could occur after weeks or months of exposure.

case in 2022, has also reported an outbreak this year.

In the Central African Republic, where the infection is most common in remote areas, authorities called for public support to assist efforts being taken by the government to slow the spread of the disease.

The East African Community regional bloc has also issued a statement alerting

member states about the disease in Congo, which borders five countries in the region. One of them, Burundi, has already confirmed three cases.

Andrea Aguer Ariik Malueth, the bloc's deputy secretary general, on Monday urged the group's partner states to "provide necessary information about the disease and take preven-

tive measures."

Legionnaires' disease: Authorities said on Thursday that a major outbreak of Legionnaires' disease resulted in 60 confirmed cases in the Australian state of Victoria.

The Victorian Department of Health

Antibiotic resistance in hospitals escalates

Hospital infections rising: Tips to stay safe in 'healthcare' settings

By Nasia Safdar

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

A new study from the National Institutes of Health shows a jump in both hospital-acquired infections and resistance to the antibiotics used to treat them. The findings are based on data gathered at 120 US hospitals from January 2018 to December 2022, a five-year period that included the COVID-19 pandemic. Dr. Nasia Safdar, a professor of infectious medicine at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, discusses why infection rates have gone up and how you can protect yourself as a hospital patient or visiting family member.

The Conversation has collaborated with SciLine to bring you highlights from the discussion that have been edited for brevity and clarity.

Question: What are health care-associated infections?

Nasia Safdar: These are infections that occur as a result of exposure to the health care system. People coming in for care are typically quite sick, so they're at risk of acquiring bacteria that can then cause an infection while they're in the hospital, or shortly after they're discharged from the hospital.

Q: Why do infections, particularly antibiotic-resistant ones, spread so easily in hospitals and other health care settings?

Nasia Safdar: There is a certain profile of bacteria and germs that develop in health care facilities. And that profile is typically bacteria that are resistant to many commonly used antibiotics.

Patients are already vulnerable



A child infected with dengue receives treatment at a hospital in Dhaka, Bangladesh, July 29, 2024. (Xinhua)

Dengue deaths, cases rise in Bangladesh

Bangladesh reported 272 new dengue cases and two new deaths in the last 24 hours as of 8:00 a.m. local time Sunday, taking the tally to 5,768 and the death toll to 55 so far this year, the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) under the Ministry of Health said.

According to the DGHS, 2,117 dengue cases were recorded so far

in July, after 798 in June and 644 in May.

The total of 55 deaths included 11 in July, eight in June and 12 in May.

The June-September monsoon period is the season of dengue fever in Bangladesh, which is considered a high-risk country prone to the mosquito-borne disease. (Xinhua)

and may have compromised immune systems. On top of that, add the risks associated with heavy-duty antibiotic usage, surgeries, procedures and medical devices like urinary catheters and intravascular catheters, which go into the bloodstream. The result is a population at risk for acquiring these bacteria circulating in the environment.

Q: What does it mean for an infection to be antibiotic-resistant?

Nasia Safdar: For any typical infection, there might be a range of choices for treatment. There is what's called first-line treatment, which is the first antibiotic you would go to. These are typically antibiotics that can treat the infections really well, but without harming the good bacteria that live in your intestine.

But when bacteria get resistant to antibiotics, we have to go to more broad-spectrum antibiotics, which

initially issued a public alert over "a significant increase in cases notified across metropolitan Melbourne and surrounding areas" on Monday, while the confirmed cases continued to rise in the following days.

According to the newly updated warning, the health department has so far been notified of 60 confirmed and 10 suspected cases since July 26, mostly in adults aged over 40 years.

The majority of the infected patients were hospitalized, with multiple of them also admitted to intensive care for "severe community-acquired pneumonia."

Local investigators are currently probing the source of the outbreak through testing of local cooling towers and other potential sources.

The Victorian Department of Health also confirmed that the outbreak is linked to Legionella pneumophila serogroup 1, which can be detected through a urinary antigen test.

As all cases visited or reside in metropolitan Melbourne, adults aged over 40 years, particularly those with other medical conditions or immune compromise, or who smoke have been urged to stay alert and seek urgent medical care if any symptom develops.

Earlier, the health authority reported on Tuesday that 33 cases of Legionnaires' disease were confirmed in the state, after which the figure almost doubled within two days.



Representatives from Boston Oncology and King Fahd Medical City (KFMC), along with His Excellency Eng. Abdulaziz AlRamaih, Deputy Minister of Health for Planning and Development, at the signing ceremony for the partnership to advance localized Cell & Gene Therapy in Saudi Arabia.

Transform healthcare

Boston Oncology, KFMC boost 'cell therapy' in Saudi Arabia

RIYADH, Saudi Arabia, Aug 1, (AP): In a landmark initiative poised to transform healthcare in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Boston Oncology and King Fahd Medical City (KFMC) have signed a Letter of Intent to collaborate on the localization of Cell & Gene Therapy.

The signing ceremony, attended by His Excellency Eng. Abdulaziz AlRamaih, Deputy Minister of Health for Planning and Development, marks a significant step forward in advancing the Kingdom's medical capabilities and achieving the ambitious goals set forth in Vision 2030.

Dr. Fahad Al-Ghofaili, KFMC CEO, expressed his enthusiasm: "Localizing Cell & Gene Therapy in KFMC is an important step to increase local capabilities in advanced treatments and medical technologies, contributing to the goals of the Healthcare Transformation Project."

Boston Oncology, renowned for its customer-centered model, brings extensive expertise in localizing technology. Laser-focused on the real-world needs of patients and hospitals, Boston Oncology is positioned to provide cutting-edge technologies and Cell & Gene Therapies through this partnership. This collaboration will establish a local treatment option, relieving bottle-

necks in therapy provision and improving patient outcomes. The resulting Research & Development and clinical trials will significantly contribute to innovative advancements in the healthcare sector of Saudi Arabia.

Dr. Abdullah Baaj, CEO of Boston Oncology, described the partnership: "KFMC brings world-class clinicians and infrastructure, making it a destination for patients throughout the region. Joining forces to localize Cell & Gene Therapy is a transformative step towards our mission to impact the lives of one billion patients."

Boston Oncology is an innovative life science company with a mission to impact the lives of one billion patients by 2030. With corporate headquarters in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and operations throughout the world, the company is focused on bringing patient-centered solutions and advanced treatment modalities to growing markets. Its new Cell & Gene Therapy entity establishes a fully localized offering to deliver personalized treatments that address the unique genetic profiles of patients. By partnering with leading medical institutions and leveraging leading-edge technologies, Boston Oncology CGT is expanding the company's legacy of transformative advancements in healthcare.

MEDICAL CLASSIFIEDS

Take care of your health

To advertise in this page please call: (+965) 24813566 Ext.: 513 or E-mail: advt@arabtimesonline.com

For your ads on this page

Call: **24813805** E-mail: **advt@arabtimesonline.com**

www.arabtimesonline.com

مرکز شفاء الجزيرة الطبي
SHIFA AL JAZEERA MEDICAL CENTRE
الفروانية FARWANIYA

DENTAL & COSMETIC DEPARTMENT

- SCALING & GUM TREATMENT
- COSMETIC SMILE RECONSTRUCTION
- GUM & ORAL SURGERY
- BAD BREATH TREATMENT
- SURGICAL TREATMENT
- ROOT CANAL TREATMENT
- COSMETIC FILLING
- FIXED & REMOVABLE DENTURES
- CROWN TREATMENT
- SIMPLE & SURGICAL EXTRACTION

Dr. Shajahan V.M
BDS, MDS
Dental Surgeon

Dr. Ayham Askar
BDS
Dental Surgeon

Dr. Raina Fernandes
BDS
Dental Surgeon

Working Time: From 9am to 1pm & 5pm to 9pm
Ph: 24 734 000
Behind Maghateer Commercial Complex & Opp. Police station - Farwaniya
www.shifaaljazeera.com.kw

Canada on the brink of elimination

The Opals bounce back as Germany earn quarterfinal spot in debut

VILLENEUVE-D'ASCQ, France, Aug 1, (AP): Sami Whitcomb scored 19 points as Australia rebounded from a surprising opening loss in the Olympic women's basketball tournament and pushed Canada to the brink of elimination with a 70-65 victory Thursday in group play.

The Canadians conclude group play Sunday against Nigeria.

Australia also came in needing a win, or a France victory over Nigeria could have eliminated the Opals with a game left in pool play. Australia reached the quarterfinals three years ago only to lose to the U.S. in the Tokyo Games.

Germany continued its dazzling Olympic debut by beating Japan 75-64 on Thursday to clinch a spot in Paris for the quarterfinals. Spain and Serbia

grabbed the first quarterfinal berths with wins Wednesday.

France also can clinch its group and a quarterfinal berth with a win over Nigeria. The African nation has its own hopes of qualifying, needing both a win and an Australia victory over Canada.

BASKETBALL

Canada's best Olympic finish came in 1984 at fourth. Australia came in ranked third in the world for its 10th Olympics berth but lost forward Bec Allen to another ankle injury last week.

Steph Talbot, Marianna Tolo and Cayla George each added 11 points for the Opals. Ezi Magbegor had 10.

Bridget Carleton led Canada

with 19 points. Kia Nurse had 12, and Kayla Alexander added 10.

The Canadians scored the first five points, a lead that didn't last. Australia led 18-16 after the first quarter and 38-32 at halftime.

Syla Swords, set to play college basketball at Michigan, drove to the basket for a layup that pulled the Canadians within 46-44. But Isobel Borlase answered with a floater, and Tolo's layup in the final seconds put the Opals up 51-44 going into the fourth.

They led by as many as 13 in finishing off a much-needed win.

Satou Sabally scored 23 of her 33 points in the first half to help Germany clinch its spot in Paris. Her sister, Nyara, didn't play, with the WNBA's New York Liberty forward in the concus-

sion protocol after being helped off the court in the Germans' opening win.

Satou Sabally, a forward for the WNBA's Dallas Wings, handled her absence easily, tying for the eighth-most points in an Olympic game.

Japan tied it at 44 on a 3-point shot by Maki Takada with 8:22 left in the third quarter, then Leonie Fiebich scored inside to put Germany ahead to stay. Germany finished the third on a 15-5 run for a 59-49 lead going into the fourth. It led by as many as 12 to remain undefeated in pool play.

Alexis Peterson added 11 points for Germany, and Luisa Geiselsoder had 10 points and 10 rebounds.

Japan, which won silver at the 2021 Tokyo Games, will need a win and some help Sunday wrap-



Australia's Tess Madgen dribbles while under pressure from Canada's Bridget Carleton during a women's basketball game at the 2024 Summer Olympics in Villeneuve-d'Ascq, France. (AP)

ping up against Belgium to grab one of the final two quarterfinal spots. Germany concludes pool play against the U.S.

Germany lead qualifying for team dressage final



Germany's Isabell Werth, riding Wendy, during the Equestrian Dressage competition, at the 2024 Summer Olympics in Versailles, France. (AP)

Bredow-Werndl top-scored with 82.06

VERSAILLES, France, Aug 1, (AP): Led by Jessica von Bredow-Werndl and equestrian record holder Isabell Werth, defending champion Germany topped qualifying for the Paris Olympics team dressage final.

Riding Dalera, the horse which also helped her win individual dressage gold at the Tokyo Games three years ago, Bredow-Werndl top-scored with 82.065 over two days of the dressage Grand Prix test at the Palace of Versailles.

Denmark's Cathrine Dufour-Laudrup on Freestyle was next with 80.792, followed by the seven-time Olympic gold medalist Werth scoring 79.363 with her new horse, Wendy.

EQUESTRIAN

Six of Werth's Olympic golds have been in team dressage - her first at the 1992 Games. Her 12 Olympic medals, all in dressage, are more than any equestrian.

Germany's overall score was 237.546 with Denmark on 235.730 and Britain scoring 231.196. Sweden and host France were among the 10 teams qualifying for Saturday's final.

Wednesday was the second day of qualifying for dressage's team final and the individual final - which takes place Sunday and features 18 riders.

Three groups of 10 competed on each day - the 55-year-old Werth and Dufour-Laudrup were both in Group E on Wednesday - with the top two riders in each group advancing along with the next six highest scorers.

British rider Charlotte Fry was among them. She was delighted to set off first at 10 a.m. in cooler conditions, before temperatures hit 34 degrees Celsius (93 Fahrenheit) by the afternoon.

"It was definitely nice to ride at that time," said Fry, who rode Glamourdale. The individual finalists get to perform to music of their choosing.

Zain Premier League clubs wrap up preseason with key friendlies

By Hassan Musa

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 1: The Zain Premier League clubs are finalizing their preparations for the 2024-2025 sports season with a series of friendly matches today and tomorrow. The league is set to kick off next Thursday.

Defending champion Kuwait Club will conclude its preseason friendlies with a closed match against Al-Salmiya at Kaifan Stadium. Both teams requested that the match be closed to the public.

Kuwait Club's Montenegrin coach, Nebojsa, aims to assess his players' readiness following their training camp in Turkey. The team will face Al-Qadisiya next Thursday in the league opener, an important fixture before its departure to Manama for a playoff match against Al-Ahly of Bahrain on August 14, which is part of the qualification process for the AFC Champions League 2.

Meanwhile, Al-Salmiya's Croatian coach, Ante Misa, will use this match to finalize his lineup for their league debut against Al-Nasr on August 10. Misa's team has recently concluded a training camp in Bosnia.

Additionally, Ayman Abu Al-Fath, who replaced the injured Argentine Sergio Vitor, joined Kuwait SC's training sessions. Vitor is sidelined due to a cruciate ligament injury.

Al-Qadisiya will also play a

"You're trying to please the judges and you're trying to get the crowd going," said Hester, who rode on Tuesday. "I'm 57 now, so I don't think it's going to be poppy."

"One of the most well-known movements is a slow-motion trotting technique called the piaffe. Each diagonal pair of legs is raised and returned to the ground alternately in a kind of springing motion, giving the image of a horse almost floating.



Players celebrate at the end of friendly match.

friendly against Saudi Arabia's Al-Taawoun to wrap up its training camp in Egypt. It will return to Kuwait on Sunday to prepare for its match against Kuwait SC.

Al-Qadisiya's coach, Mohammed Al-Mishaan, is looking for an improved performance after his team ended their camp with three draws and no wins. While victories are not critical, they are seen as an important psychological boost for the team.

Al-Arabi will play its final preseason match against Turkish side Erzurum

The piaffe hit the headlines last week when three-time Olympic gold medalist Charlotte Dujardin withdrew from the Paris Games after a video emerged of her whipping a horse's legs repeatedly during a coaching session.

Dujardin has been strongly criticized - including by Hester, who signed a letter by the International Dressage Riders Club condemning her actions.

"(The video) was a huge shock to me. In the UK you don't see that sort

of stuff. I have never seen it," Hester said Tuesday. "Charlotte's made her statement, she's apologized. I've known her for 17 years. She's paying very heavily for this."

Hester, who won bronze with Dujardin and Fry in team dressage at Tokyo, said equestrian is having a "difficult time." However, despite the damaged image, Hester has been encouraged by the enthusiasm of the huge crowds in Versailles.

Africa's fastest man

Omanyala carries Kenya's hopes for first Olympic gold in the 100m

PARIS, Aug 1, (AP): Ferdinand Omanyala's status as Africa's fastest man has many people believing Kenya's push for Olympic gold medals isn't entirely a long-distance objective.

The Commonwealth Games 100-meter champion doesn't want to get ahead of himself, though, despite posting the second-fastest time this season of 9.79 seconds to qualify for Paris at the national Olympic trials.

"I won't say I am thinking of the final," Omanyala said. "Of course it's at the back of my mind but the Olympics has heats, semis and the final so you can't start thinking about the final when you are not there yet - so many things happen."

Among the sprinters from African countries who have qualified for the 100 in Paris, including Botswana's world championship silver medalist Letsile Tebogo and South Africa's Akani Simbine, Omanyala has run the fastest times.

His comeback from a doping ban imposed in 2017 to becoming the 9th-fastest man of all time has inspired Kenyans and has drawn more crowds to stadiums during national competitions.

His 9.77 personal best, a continental record set in September 2021 in Nairobi, united a nation in celebration and some Kenyans honored him by naming new born babies after him.

His name and image have been emblazoned on some of the graffiti-covered private minibuses, known as matatus, that serve as the main source of public transportation.

So there's a lot of expectations for Omanyala to be the first man from an African nation to win the Olympic 100-meter title.

The ex-rugby winger has had to reject assertions from critics that he loses his nerve in major global events, owing to his failure to reach the final at the Tokyo Olympics or the podium at last year's world titles.

Omanyala had been touted by the American sprint legend Michael Johnson as a potential 100-meter champion at last year's World Championships in Budapest, Hungary but placed seventh in the final. He attributed that to inexperience in dealing with flight fatigue.

He has visibly lost size from his bulging musculature and attributes the changes to his strategy for this Olympics, where he's aiming to maintain strength but carry a lighter frame in a bid to run faster and also recover quicker between races.

Omanyala is an example of Kenya's ambitions for success beyond distance running and among the most prominent athletes affected by a doping crisis in a country where more than 200 athletes have been banned over the last seven years.

Kenya has achieved great success in modern distance running, but a wave of positive drug tests has made it one of the sport's latest doping pariahs.

Omanyala received a 14-month suspension after testing positive for the prohibited substance betamethasone, a ban which could have cost him any chance of representing Kenya again.

He maintains his case was a result of pain medication he received for a back injury and wasn't intentional doping.

"There are those who do it intentionally," Omanyala concedes of the doping problem, but he adds: "There are those who eat (contaminated) meat and they end up testing positive; there are those who walk into chemists or



Trizah Atuka and Ferdinand Omanyala, flag bearers for Kenya, are seen on the team's boat as it makes its way along the Seine in Paris, France, during the opening ceremony for the 2024 Summer Olympics. (AP)

medication places and they are given medication that have steroids in them - (those) people you cannot put in the same bracket.

"Don't judge when you first hear an athlete has tested positive for banned substances, try to hear the story."

Athletes who are using performance enhancement drugs intentionally are making it difficult for the rest, he said, because any time a Kenyan athlete is running well there will be suspicion that they maybe on performance enhancers.

Bamaba Korir, an Athletics Kenya official, says authorities have ramped up education programs for young athletes across the country to help them understand the implications of doping and avoid it.

Poverty and unemployment are the main factors driving some athletes to use banned substances because they're trying to pull themselves and their families out of penury, Korir says, and will do so at all costs.

The concentration of talent also means that while some countries can focus testing on a small elite groups, Kenya has hundreds of distance runners capable of competing internationally from middle distance to the marathon.

The scope of events is broadening. Kenyan sports authorities are hopeful that the inclusion of Omanyala and Alexandra Ndolo - Kenya's first representative in Olympic fencing - will increase the medal hauls that have traditionally depended on middle- and long-distance runners.

"This is one of the best teams we have ever assembled for the Olympics" Korir said of a Kenya contingent containing 42 track and field athletes, two swimmers, one fencer, one judoka, as well as volleyball and rugby sevens teams.

With a total medal haul of 113 medals, including 35 gold, since first participating at the Summer Games in 1956, Kenya is the continent's most successful at Olympics.

Omanyala says he wants to leave a legacy in which Kenya produces a world-class sprinter more frequently.

"For the long distance races, we have an industry in this country," he said, "so that is what I want to do with sprints."

Man City fined for delayed kickoffs

LONDON, Aug 1, (AP): Manchester City has been fined more than 2 million pounds (\$2.5 million) by the Premier League for 22 instances of delaying the kickoff or restart of matches.

City accepted the sanction, which relates to rule infringements over the last two seasons. The issue is not connected to the 115 charges City are facing for alleged breaches of the competition's financial regulations.

A statement Wednesday from the Premier League said: "The Premier League and Manchester City FC have entered into a sanction agreement after the club accepted it had breached Premier League Rule L.33 relating to kickoff and restart obligations."

City has been punished on a sliding scale for each offense. Their first, a delay of 1 minute, 18 seconds to the start of the second half against Crystal Palace in August 2022, incurred a warning.

Fines have then been imposed for

each subsequent breach. The longest delay was 2 minutes, 46 seconds for the start of the final league game against West Ham last season, when City clinched a fourth successive title. City was fined 200,000 pounds (\$256,000) for that 14th breach of the season.

City was fined a total of 2.09 million pounds. "Rules relating to kickoffs and restarts help ensure the organization of the competition is set at the highest possible professional standard and provides certainty to fans and participating clubs," the Premier League statement said. "It also ensures the broadcast of all 380 league matches around the world is kept to schedule."

It said City "has apologized for the accepted breaches... and confirmed that it has reminded the club's players and football management teams of their responsibilities in complying with Rule L.33."

Jacobs hopes to prove doubters wrong

Now that Marcell Jacobs is part of Olympic history, he knows a little bit about it, too. Part of that is knowing that if he defends his title in the 100 meters come Sunday, all those doubters, naysayers and people who called him a fluke won't have much more to say on that topic. "It's hard to arrive at the Olympic Games and win," Jacobs said. "But it's even harder to continue to win."

Jacobs, a Texas-born Italian, doesn't hide from the fact that he hasn't won much - at least not on the biggest stages - since he shocked the world and captured the gold medal three years

ago at the Tokyo Games. It has been three years filled with injuries and doubts. With those have come questions from inside his country, where dreams of having an Olympic champion felt as foreign as Jamaican reggae. Not long had passed after Jacobs' Olympic win, in a European record time of 9.80 seconds, that news resurfaced about reports from earlier in the year that his former nutritionist was being investigated for distributing performance enhancers. Jacobs had cut ties with the nutritionist, who eventually was cleared, months before the Games. (AP)



Qinwen Zheng of China returns the ball against Iga Swiatek of Poland during their women's semifinals match at the Roland Garros stadium, at the 2024 Summer Olympics in Paris, France. (AP)

Zheng stuns Swiatek to reach final

Alcaraz becomes youngest man into Oly tennis semifinals since Djokovic

PARIS, Aug. 1, (Agencies): Australian Open finalist Zheng Qinwen upset top seed Iga Swiatek 6-2, 7-5 in a historic win to book her place in the gold medal match of Olympic women's singles final here at Roland Garros.

The victory marked China's best result in the Olympic tennis women's singles event after two-time Grand Slam winner Li Na reached the last four at Beijing Olympics in 2008.

Both women arrived at Court Philippe-Chatrier after coming through tough three-set matches the day before. Swiatek, a four-time French Open winner, entered the match with a perfect 6-0 record against China's number one.

TENNIS

Despite Zheng's three-hour battle with German veteran Angelique Kerber on Wednesday, it was Swiatek who started the slower. The number one seed was made to work to hold her service in the opening game before Zheng broke at the second time of asking.

Before the changeover, both women broke each other with ease, reflecting shades of Zheng's attritional win against Kerber, where both women broke each other numerous times throughout the match. In the following game, Zheng broke again before carrying her momentum through the set.

Starting the second set, Swiatek found herself down against Zheng, who fought back hard, breaking the Chinese twice consecutively to take a 4-0 lead in the set. But Zheng battled back, breaking Swiatek twice herself to win four games on the trot.

After a goliath battle over deuce in which Zheng held her serve, the match entered the crucial period late in the set, with both women fighting hard to swing the match in their favor. It was Zheng who made the first major step towards victory, breaking



Players of Brazil pose for a photo after winning the Group B women's volleyball match against Japan at the 2024 Summer Olympics in Paris, France. (AP)

Swiatek in the 11th game. Carlos Alcaraz became the youngest man to reach the singles semifinals at a Summer Games since Novak Djokovic in 2008 by getting past Tommy Paul of the U.S. 6-3, 7-6 (7) at the Paris Olympics on Thursday.

Alcaraz is a 21-year-old Spaniard who is just a few days older than Djokovic was 16 years ago in Beijing. This is only the latest in a series of "youngest since" or "youngest ever" achievements for Alcaraz, who is coming off titles at the French Open - which is held at Roland Garros, the same facility being used for the 2024 Paris Games - in June and at Wimbledon in July.

Those trophies raised his Grand Slam trophy count to four. As it is, he was the youngest man with a major championship on hard, grass and clay courts. In 2022, he became the first teenager to reach No. 1 in the ATP rankings, getting there after winning the U.S. Open.

And so on. Alcaraz and Paul, whose best showing at a major was a semi-final run at the 2023 Australian Open,

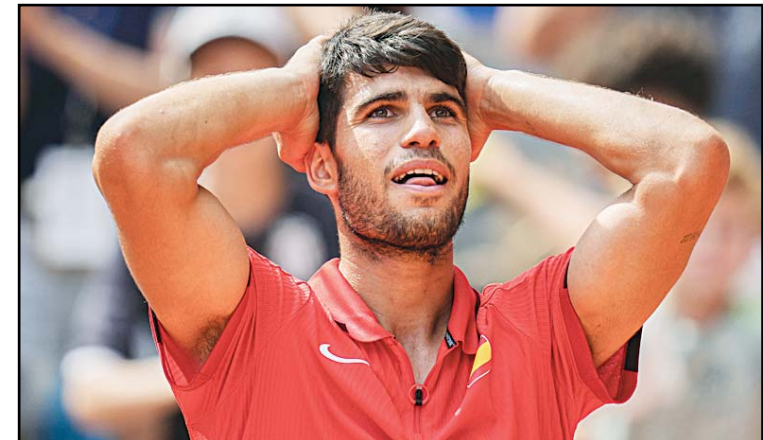
are developing a bit of a rivalry. Alcaraz is now 5-2 head-to-head, which includes defeating Paul a few weeks

ago in the Wimbledon quarterfinals.

Chinese pair Wang Xinyu and Zhang Zhizhen made history after coming from behind to beat Demi Schuurs and Wesley Koolhof of the Netherlands to reach the Paris Olympics Tennis mixed doubles final on Thursday.

The Netherlands pair collected the first set 6-2 in 37 minutes, while Wang and Zhang won back the second set 6-4. In the decider, the Chinese duo extended high morale to lead the tie-breaker and scored 10 points first against their opponents' four.

It is also the first time for Wang to team up with Zhang, whose original teammate was Zheng Qinwen, while the latter, who reached the women's singles final on Thursday, had to quit the mixed doubles for a concentration on the singles.



Carlos Alcaraz of Spain celebrates his victory over Tommy Paul, of United States during their men's quarter-final match at the Roland Garros stadium, at the 2024 Summer Olympics in Paris, France. (AP)

Yukun makes winning debut

Gymnast-turned-shooter Ruano 'wins' Guatemala's first Oly gold

CHATEAUROUX, France, Aug. 1, (AP): A spinal injury ended Adriana Ruano's chances of competing at the Olympics as a gymnast. She came back as a shooter and won Guatemala's first gold medal on Wednesday.

Ruano was training for the 2011 world championships in gymnastics, a qualifier for the London Olympics the following year, when she felt pain in her back.

Scans showed she had six damaged vertebrae - a career-ending injury at age 16 - and she spent a year recovering, wearing a brace. Ruano's doctor recommended she take up shooting if she wanted to stay in sports without aggravating her injured back.

"When I had my injury, I didn't have anything. I started to get desperate, and I was frustrated. Then the door opened for me with this sport," Ruano said.

More than a decade after Ruano swapped the balance beam and vault for a shotgun, her doctor's advice paid off Wednesday when she won the

women's trap with an Olympic-record score of 45 out of 50.

Ruano closed her eyes and took a deep breath before hitting her 43rd target to make sure Italian silver medalist Silvana Stanco couldn't catch her for the gold. She missed her next two shots after that, but it didn't matter.

SHOOTING

It was a stint volunteering at the 2016 Olympics in Rio de Janeiro that put her on the path back to elite-level sports.

"I said to myself, 'If I can't be there as an athlete, maybe I can be there as a volunteer', so I applied," she said. "They put me on shooting, and I was able to watch my teammates. I could see the competition, and that was the moment that inspired me to think, 'OK, maybe if not in gymnastics, I can do it in shooting.'"

Ruano placed 26th at the last Olympics in Tokyo, shortly after her father had died.

Coming into Paris, though, she was the defending Pan-American Games champion.

Now she has given her country an Olympic gold medal, a day after Jean Pierre Brol won bronze in the men's trap to claim Guatemala's first medal since race walker Erick Barrondo's silver at the 2012 London Olympics.

Stanco won the silver on 40 and Australia's Penny Smith took the bronze.

China's Liu Yukun bagged a gold medal in his Olympic debut after winning the men's 50m rifle 3 positions here on Thursday.

Qualified first with 594 points, the world record holder registered 463.6 points in the final for the victory. Four-time Olympian Serhiy Kulish of Ukraine added another silver to the one he won in men's 10m air rifle at the Rio Olympics with 461.3 points.



Japan's Nako Motohashi, (second from left), reaches for a rebound along with Germany's Alexis Peterson, (second from right), and Germany's Lina Sontag, (right), as Japan's Saki Hayashi watches in a women's basketball game at the 2024 Summer Olympics in Villeneuve-d'Ascq, France. (AP)



Martin Dougoud of Switzerland competes in the men's kayak single finals at the 2024 Summer Olympics in Vaires-sur-Marne, France. (AP)



IOC president with Suad Al-Faqaa and her coach.

Pintado wins first gold for Ecuador

PARIS, Aug. 1, (Xinhua): Ecuador's Brian Pintado won the first athletics gold of Paris 2024, taking victory in the men's 20km race walk in one hour, 18 minutes and 55 seconds here on Thursday morning.

"I have competed in three Olympic Games, and now I'm an Olympic champion. It's a dream come true," said Pintado after his triumph.

It is Ecuador's first medal in Paris, while the country's first ever Olympic medal also came in the race walk, with Jefferson Perez claiming gold at Atlanta 1996.

The race was delayed by half an hour due to rain, eventually beginning at 8 a.m. After 15 kilometers, a group of four athletes had emerged at the head of the field, and Pintado pushed himself forward in the last lap, defeating Brazil's Caio Bonfim, who came second in 1:19:09, with Spain's Alvaro Martin claiming bronze in 1:19:11. Tokyo 2020 race walk champion Massimo Stano missed out on the medal placings, crossing the line just one second behind Martin.

ATHLETICS

"It was insane. In the last few meters, I realized I was completely alone, and seeing the finish line I just kept thinking, I'm the Olympic champion, it's me," said Pintado afterwards.

Zhang Jun was China's best finisher, placing 10th in 1:19:56, with Li Yandong and Wang Zhaozhao ranking 31st and 36th respectively.

Zhang, who has the world's second best time in 2024, expressed disappointment in his race afterwards. "I performed well in the first 10 kilometers, but the humid condition affected me, and I was out of pace in the last phase," he said.

The 26-year-old had finished eighth in Tokyo three years ago, and won the 2023 Asian Games, but was coy on his future in the sport.

"I have been improving over the past three years, but I don't know if I will compete in the next edition," he said.

World record holder Yang Jiayu claimed the first athletics gold for China at the Paris Olympics, winning the women's 20km race walk in one hour, 25 minutes and 54 seconds on Thursday.

Yang, who finished 12th at Tokyo 2020, crossed the line with a 25-second

advantage over second-placed Maria Perez of Spain. The bronze medal was grabbed by Jemima Montag from Australia.

It is China's fourth Olympic gold medal in women's 20km race walk. Yang's best performance this season also earned China its 11th gold medal in Paris.

"It is an exciting moment for me. I have been waiting for this gold medal for eight years," said 28-year-old Yang after the game.

"I started my Olympic journey as a substitute in 2016," she added. "At that moment, I started to dream of being a regular athlete to compete at this stage even to fight for the gold."

Yang, who has set the world record in 2021 with 1:23:49, led the race almost from the start. She had already established a 34-second advantage after 10 kilometers.

Perez's had narrowed the gap to 15 seconds with two laps to go, but Yang still gritted her teeth to keep the Spaniard at bay. Perez improved on her fourth finish from Tokyo with 1:26:19, six seconds ahead of Australia's Montag.

Yang disclosed she initially planned to follow the group in the first-half, but she changed tactics before the kick-off.

"My coach told me to rise to the occasion, so it's my own decision on the field. I felt really nervous in the last three or four laps when Perez was trying to catch me, but my coach kept telling me to relax, and eventually I held my nerve to win."



Brian Daniel Pintado, of Ecuador (29), Brazil's Caio Bonfim (15) and Italy's Massimo Stano (55) compete during the men's 20km race walk at the 2024 Summer Olympics in Paris, France. (AP)



Guatemala's Adriana Oliva Ruano celebrates after winning the gold medal in the Trap women's final at the 2024 Summer Olympics in Chateauroux, France. (AP)

Oly Diary

Wightman out of Oly: Britain's former 1,500m world champion Jake Wightman has been forced to pull out of the Olympic 800m race due to a hamstring injury.

The 30-year-old has been replaced by Elliot Giles, who joins Ben Pattison and Max Burgin in the 800 race in what will be his third appearance at the Games.

Wightman won the 1,500m in the 2022 World Championships and won a silver medal for 800m in that year's European Championships.

However, injury forced him out of the 2023 World Championships and he also missed this year's British Championships at the end of June, although he was still selected for Paris. (Xinhua)

Plapp released: Australian cyclist Luke Plapp was released from hospital on Wednesday after undergoing abdominal surgery, the Australian Olympic Committee confirmed.

The 23-year-old Plapp was taken to hospital on Saturday after falling on the treacherous road surface in the men's time trial. The accident was said to be caused by heavy rain.

He slid under a barrier and photos showed him bloodied and with the shirt almost ripped off his back.

The cyclist is now back in the Olympic Village and will be monitored by the Australian medical staff in the coming days. (Xinhua)

Peleteiro eyes gold: Spanish triple jumper Ana Peleteiro-Compaoro focused on just one thing in Paris, which is winning an Olympic gold medal to add to the bronze she notched in Tokyo 2020.

The 28-year-old, who won the recent European title in Rome, has worked back to fitness after becoming a mother in 2022, and the absence of reigning Olympic champion, Yulimar Rojas in Paris has further increased her medal chances.

"I have trained to be an Olympic champion and the only thing I have in mind is gold, although being an Olympic medalist again would be wonderful," said the Spaniard, who begins her competition on Saturday. (Xinhua)



Canada's Wyatt Sanford, left, fights Uzbekistan's Ruslan Abdullaev in their men's 63.5kg quarterfinal boxing match at the 2024 Summer Olympics in Paris, France. (AP)

Sports

Latest sports scores at — <http://sports.arabtimesonline.com>

'We aim to create a positive legacy that extends beyond 2034 World Cup'

Saudi Arabia has established its status as leading sporting nation: King Salman

RIYADH, Aug 1: In light of Saudi Arabia's bid to host the 2034 World Cup, King Salman bin Abdulaziz emphasized the Kingdom's success in establishing itself as a premier global sporting destination, driven by the determination and ambition of its people.

King Salman stated, "We are confident that the capabilities and resources that the Kingdom will offer, along with the efforts and cooperation of the international community, will help us achieve our shared goals and create a bright and dazzling future for football. Additionally, we aim to create a positive legacy that extends beyond 2034."

He further highlighted Saudi Arabia's belief in the importance of sports, its positive impact on individuals, and its vital role in strengthening ties between peoples, fostering communica-

tion between different cultures, and building bridges between societies worldwide.

King Salman noted that under Saudi Vision 2030, which prioritizes investment in the sports sector, the Kingdom is proud to submit its bid to host the 2034 FIFA World Cup™. Saudi Arabia will work collaboratively with the international community to host this significant sporting event, aimed at advancing football globally.

He reiterated Saudi Arabia's status as a leading global sporting destination, saying, "We are confident that the Kingdom's prepared capabilities and potential, alongside the efforts and cooperation of the international community, will achieve our common goals and create a bright and dazzling future for football, in addition to creat-

ing a positive legacy that extends beyond 2034."

Saudi Arabia's bid to host the 2034 World Cup includes plans for the tournament to take place in five cities — Riyadh, Jeddah, Al-Khobar, Abha, and Neom — with 48 teams competing across 15 stadiums. Notably, King Salman Stadium in Riyadh is slated to host the opening and final matches of the World Cup. The Saudi Press Agency detailed that the World Cup will be held in these five cities, showcasing the Kingdom's readiness and enthusiasm for hosting the event.

Saudi Arabia detailed a massive stadium building project Wednesday to host the 2034 World Cup in men's soccer, with one venue 350 meters (yards) above ground in a planned futuristic city.

A 46,000-seat stadium in the Neom megaproject along the Red Sea coast is "designed to stand out among the world's most iconic landmarks," according to the first overall World Cup plan published by Saudi soccer officials.

The Neom stadium is set to link to a network of tram-like vehicles running in "horizontal transport corridors ... placed at 30, 150, 250, 350 and 450 meters above ground," the Saudi plans stated.

The World Cup project includes a previously announced plan for a stadium atop a 200-meter (yard) cliff near the capital Riyadh, with an entire wall of LED screens that opens out to views of the city.

Riyadh is set to have eight of 15 stadiums of at least 45,000 seats, the tournament plan said, with four in the Red Sea city Jeddah and one each in Al Khobar, Abha and Neom.



King Salman bin Abdulaziz

Al-Roumi ready for 800m race

Al-Daihani eyes strong start

PARIS, Aug 1: Kuwaiti shooter Mohammed Al-Daihani is set to compete in the Skeet competition today as part of the Paris 2024 Olympic Games, which continue until August 11.

Al-Daihani aims to make a strong impression in his Olympic debut by advancing through the qualifying rounds and reaching the finals. However, this will be a challenging feat given the presence of the world's top shooters. The competition begins at 10:30 am at the Châteauroux Center.

Al-Daihani qualified for the Paris Olympics after securing third place and winning the bronze medal in the men's individual Skeet competition at the Kuwait Asian Championship. He prepared for the Olympics in

training camp and competing in the Belgium International Athletics Championship. She has been training at the Stade de France International according to her allocated sessions.

Secretary General of the Kuwait Athletics Federation, Hussein Dashti, praised Amal Al-Roumi for her dedication to representing Kuwait on the international stage. He noted that she has maintained an intensive daily training regimen since the Tokyo Olympics to improve her technical level and set personal records in international and continental championships. Al-Roumi's official preparation plan began in May in cooperation with the Kuwait Olympic Committee and the Public Authority for Sports.

SHOOTING

Châteauroux, France.

The Skeet competition features significant Arab participation, including top contenders such as Egypt's Azmi Mehelba, who is competing in his fourth Olympic Games after participating in 2012, 2016, and 2020. Other notable participants include Egypt's Omar Ibrahim, Qatar's Rashid Al-Athba, and Palestine's George Salhi.

Amal Al-Roumi will kick off her Olympic campaign at 5:40 pm, participating in the preliminary qualifiers for the women's 800m race at the Stade de France International.

Al-Roumi joined the Kuwaiti delegation at the Olympic Village last Tuesday after completing her



Mohammed Al-Daihani

Algeria boxer wins 1st fight in Paris as 'opponent' quits

VILLEPINTE, France, Aug 1, (AP): Imane Khelif of Algeria won her opening Olympic boxing bout Thursday when opponent Angela Carini of Italy quit after just 46 seconds.

Khelif was disqualified from the 2023 world championships after failing an unspecified gender eligibility test, and her presence at the Paris Olympics has become a divisive issue.

Carini and Khelif exchanged only a few punches before Carini walked away and abandoned the bout — an extremely unusual occurrence in Olympic boxing. Carini's headgear apparently became dislodged at least once before she quit. Carini didn't shake Khelif's hand after the decision was announced but cried in the ring on her knees.

Afterward, a still-tearful Carini said she quit because of intense pain in her nose before the opening punches. Carini, who had a spot of blood on her trunks, said she wasn't making a political statement and was not refusing to fight Khelif.

"I felt a severe pain in my nose, and with the maturity of a boxer, I said 'enough,' because I didn't want to, I didn't want to, I couldn't finish the match," Carini said.

Carini further said she is not qualified to decide whether Khelif should be allowed to compete, but she had no problem fighting her.

"I am not here to judge or pass judgment," Carini said. "If an athlete is this way, and in that sense it's not right or it is right, it's not up to me to decide. I just did my job as a boxer. I got into the ring and fought. I did it with my head held high and with a broken heart for not having finished the last kilometer."

Khelif is an accomplished amateur who won a silver medal at the International Boxing Association's 2022 world championships. The same governing body disqualified her from last year's championships

shortly before her gold-medal match because of what it claimed were elevated levels of testosterone.

The 25-year-old entered the ring at the North Paris Arena to a chorus of cheers, but the crowd was confused by the bout's sudden end. Khelif, who fights again Saturday, didn't speak to reporters.

"I am heartbroken because I am a fighter," Carini said. "My father taught

BOXING

me to be a warrior. I have always stepped into the ring with honor and I have always (served) my country with loyalty. And this time I couldn't do it because I couldn't fight anymore, and so I ended the match."

Khelif and Lin Yu-ting of Taiwan suddenly have received massive scrutiny for their presence in Paris after years of amateur competition.



Algeria's Imane Khelif, (right), defeated Italy's Angela Carini in their women's 66kg preliminary boxing match at the 2024 Summer Olympics in Paris, France. (AP)

Marchand pulls off one of most 'audacious' doubles



Leon Marchand, of France, competes in the men's 200-meter breaststroke final at the 2024 Summer Olympics in Nanterre, France. (AP)

Zhanle sets first world record of Games

NANTERRE, France, Aug 1, (AP): Turns out, those comparisons to Michael Phelps weren't farfetched at all when it comes to Léon Marchand.

They certainly weren't a burden for the 22-year-old Frenchman.

Marchand completed one of the most audacious doubles in swimming history Wednesday night, winning the 200-meter butterfly and the 200 breaststroke about two hours apart in front of a home crowd cheering his every stroke.

Two grueling races. Two very different strokes. Two Olympic records. Two gold medals.

Take that, Phelps, who did several doubles of his own while claiming a record eight golds at the 2008 Beijing Olympics.

Thrilling the French fans and claiming the spotlight even on a night when Katie Ledecky romped to another gold medal, Marchand notched his second and third victories at La Defense Arena and stamped himself — with the Olympics not even a week old — as one of the faces of the Games.

After rallying to beat world-record holder and defending Olympic champion Kristóf Milák in the 200 fly with a finishing kick for the ages, Marchand made it look easy in the 200 breast.

"Léon! Léon! Léon!" they screamed, a chant that was sure to carry on through the night in Paris.

Trailing most of the way in the 200 fly, Marchand surged past the Hungarian Milák on the final lap to finish with an Olympic record of 1:51.71, touching first by just four-hundredths of a second.

Marchand's final lap was nearly

0.66 faster than anyone else in the field — and 1.26 clear of Milák.

The bronze went to Canada's Ilya Kharun.

Following up his dominating victory in the 400 individual medley on Sunday, Marchand waved one finger and shook his head just a bit, as if he couldn't quite believe what he had done.

After a boisterous rendition of "La Marseillaise," the other two medalists walked slowly around the pool, getting their pictures made.

Not Marchand. He hustled back to the practice pool. There was another race to go.

The American star made the most of her guest appearance on The Marchand and Show by romping to her seventh individual Olympic gold medal — she also has a relay gold — and 12th medal overall with a runaway victory in the 1,500 freestyle.



Pan Zhanle, of China, poses with his gold medal after winning the men's 100-meter freestyle final at the 2024 Summer Olympics in Nanterre, France. (AP)

The 27-year-old Ledecky tied fellow Americans Dara Torres, Natalie Coughlin and Jenny Thompson for the most medals ever by a female swimmer. Ledecky already held the mark for most individual gold medals by a woman coming into these games.

Ledecky led right from the start and steadily pulled away, touching in an Olympic-record 15:30.02 in an event

SWIMMING

that joined the women's program at the Tokyo Games in 2021.

This was similar to the race three years ago: Ledecky far in front and everyone else racing for a silver.

France's Anastasiya Kirpichnikova finished nearly a half lap behind but thrilled the home fans by claiming the second spot on the podium in 15:40.35.

The bronze went to Germany's Isabella Gose at 15:41.16.

After starting the Paris Games with a bronze in the 400 freestyle, this result looked more familiar for Ledecky.

She was clearly thrilled to be on top again, splashing the water and pumping her fist several times walking across the deck — a rare show of emotion for a stoic athlete who performs with machine-like efficiency.

As Ledecky was walking off the deck with her gold medal, it was time for Marchand to go for his second of the night. No problem. He blew away the field in the 200 breaststroke with an Olympic record of 2:05.85, knocking off another champion from Tokyo.

Australia's Zac Stubblety-Cook settled for the silver this time, nearly a second behind in 2:06.79. Claiming the bronze was Casper Corbeau of the Netherlands.

Marchand climbed out of the pool and stared at the scoreboard. He tussled his mop of curly hair a few times, then threw his arms in the air.

His work was done, at least for a few hours. Next up is the 200 individual medley, which begins with heats Thursday morning.

Nearly lost in all the hoopla was China's Pan Zhanle setting the first world record of these Games, breaking his own mark in the 100 freestyle.

He won in 46.40, easily knocking off the mark of 46.80 he set in February at the world championships in Doha.

It was an impressive performance given the shallow pool at La Defense Arena, which has been cited as the big reason no world records fell over the first four days of the meet.

Australia's Kyle Chalmers claimed the silver and David Popovici of Romania nabbed the bronze.