



CALL FOR CALM ... IRAN, ISRAEL PRESSED TO AVOID ESCALATING CONFLICT

Kuwait prepared for any eventuality

Safety, stability eyed

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 7, (Agencies): The Kuwaiti Cabinet reviewed the precautions set by each government agency to address the accelerated developments of the security situation in the Middle East region.

At the beginning of the Cabinet meeting, held at Bayan Palace on Tuesday under the chairmanship of His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, the ministers were apprised of the messages to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah from leaders of some friendly countries.

The ministers reviewed the preparations made by their respective ministries to tackle any eventuality relating to the security and military escalations in the region, said Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Shereeda Abdullah Al-Mousherji.

The discussion focused on ways to secure the basic services and needs of the citizens and residents, ensure smooth operation of all public utilities, and protect the safety and stability of the country, he said following the meeting.

Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Ali Al-Yahya and other officials of his ministry briefed the meeting on a number of agreements and MoUs signed by Kuwait, on one hand, and some friendly countries, and regional and international organizations, on the other.

Al-Yahya made a presentation on the progress of the implementation of agreements on cooperation with China in such areas as clean energy, waste recycling, infrastructure of sewage treatment plants, and the development of Mubarak Al-Kabeer Seaport and the free economic zones.

The Cabinet decided to set up an interagency committee, led by Al-Yahya and consisting of representatives of competent agencies, to follow up the implementation of the agreements on cooperation and report to the cabinet on a monthly basis.

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KUNA photo

Kuwait's Undersecretary of the Ministry of Interior, Lieutenant General Sheikh Salem Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah with his Saudi counterpart Dr. Khaled Al-Battal.

Kuwait, Saudi Arabia upgrade security ties

RIYADH, Aug 7, (KUNA): Kuwait's Undersecretary of the Ministry of Interior, Lieutenant General Sheikh Salem Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, discussed with Saudi counterpart Dr. Khaled Al-Battal on Tuesday, enhancing the existing security cooperation between the two ministries.

In a statement, the Kuwaiti Ministry of Interior said that this came during a meeting between the two officials.

The statement added that during the meeting, ways to enhance the existing security cooperation between the two ministries were discussed, in addition to a number of topics of common interest.

Sheikh Salem also praised the fraternal relations between the two countries, expressing his sincere wishes for the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, its leadership, government and people, for further progress, prosperity and advancement, and appreciating the successes achieved in combating crime in all its forms within the framework of coordination and cooperation between the security agencies in the two countries.

Sheikh Salem also visited Naif Arab University for Security Sciences, where he was received by the President of the University, Dr. Abdulmajeed Al-Bunyan, and a visual presentation about the university took place, then visited the laboratories to learn about its capabilities.

During his visit to King Fahad Security College, Sheikh Salem was received by the Director General of the College, Major General Dr. Ali Al-Duaij, and a visual documentary about the college and the women's institute took place.

The Undersecretary also visited the General Directorate of Border Guards, where he was received by the Director General of Border Guards, Major General Shaya'a Al-Wadani.

Day by Day

THERE is an old saying, which says: 'If there is a will, there is a way'. We say: If there is a desire to solve the housing issue, and the problem of citizens' loans, then there is a way.

What is important is sincere desire, and that begins with amending the laws, including the problem of physical coercion. All of this has solutions. We stress on the old saying, "If there is a sincere desire, then there is a solution."

... Yet tomorrow is another day.

Zahed Matar



The Cabinet session in progress under the chairmanship of His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah (right).



PM Diwan photos

Tenders underway for 18 road repairs

By Mohammad Ghanem
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 7: Assistant Undersecretary for the Planning Sector at the Ministry of Public Works and official spokesperson of the ministry Ahmed Al-Saleh confirmed that the Central Agency for Public Tenders (CAPT) has referred the tenders for the maintenance of 18 roads to the ministry.

Al-Saleh made the announcement during the opening of the second phase of the roads and bridges project leading to the Avenues Mall on Wednesday, in cooperation with the Public Authority for Roads and Transportation (PART) and the General Traffic Department (GTD).

He said a committee is currently studying the offers of bidding companies, and then the offers will be submitted to CAPT as per the recommendation of the ministry and PART. The tenders will be awarded to the winning company once approval is obtained from the State Audit Bureau (SAB), followed by the contract signing, he added.

On the Abdul Razzaq Gateway maintenance project, Al-Saleh affirmed the work is ongoing at full speed; stressing will be completed within the next few months and the gate will be opened to pedestrians.

He added Minister of Public Works and Minister of State for Municipality Affairs Dr. Noura Al-Mashaan has been keen on expediting the completion of the project due to its importance to the mall, as well as removing all obstacles that halted the project for years.

"Since assuming the post, the minister has been committed to the implementation of a mechanism to organize the ministry's works and projects. The pending projects will not be completed without good planning and follow up," he asserted.

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'Exempt PAFN from mid-job fingerprint'

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

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 7: The Public Authority for Food and Nutrition (PAFN) Workers Union has asked the authority's Board of Directors to address the Civil Service Commission (CSC) in order to request for the exemption of employees in departments with external nature of work and those doing field work from the additional mandatory biometric attendance log in at the workplace during official working hours.

The newspaper obtained a copy of the letter of Chairman of the Board of Directors of the union Mubarak Al-Shammari to the board chairman and director general of PAFN, in which he said "the union confirms its cooperation and support for the decisions of the CSC and PAFN Board of Directors.

Without disrupting the work of some employees, it should be taken into consideration that the nature of work in some departments are external as employees usually carry out field work; including, but not limited to food inspectors, nutrition technicians and engineers.

Do these employees need to return to their administration for an additional biometric login during official working hours and then return to the sites where they are doing field work?!

Note that the inspectors clock in at 9:00 am, and then go out to inspect food establishments and other places where food is being sold."

'Regional situation precarious'

Minister asks army to be vigilant, ready

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 7, (KUNA): First Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defense, and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah said Wednesday that the developments in the regional situation require increased vigilance, readiness, and preparedness within the armed forces.

Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef emphasized in a press statement issued by the General Staff of the Army, after chairing a meeting with senior army commanders at the Ministry of Defense headquarters, the political leadership's keen support for all measures that ensure the military sectors in the country can effectively carry out their tasks and duties.

He stressed the importance of activating and enhancing permanent cooperation and coordination between all army units and military sectors in the country, which constitutes the cornerstone for advancing the level of our armed forces and increasing

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KUNA photo

First Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defense, and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah at his meeting with topmost army officials.

Al-Mubarak asks for statistics on abuse against children in schools

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

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 7: The Head of the National Bureau for Human Rights, Jassim Al-Mubarak, has called for providing statistics on the number of abused children.

He said in a statement, a copy of which was obtained by Al-Seyassah daily, that the National Bureau monitors cases of human rights violations, studies them, investigates the facts about them, and issues annual reports on the development of the human rights situation in Kuwait.

Al-Mubarak called on the Ministry of Education to provide him "as quickly as possible" with statistics showing the number of children abused in schools, complete with their ages and type of violence to which the child was exposed to.

He referred to Law No. (67) of 2015 regarding the National Bureau of Human Rights and Article No. (7), which stipulates the obligation of government agencies of all kinds, as well as non-governmental agencies, to assist the Bureau in performing its tasks and powers and to facilitate the means for it to obtain the data, information, or documents it needs related to his field of work and responding to his correspondence.

Syrian, Egyptian gang of visa peddlers nabbed

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 7: Under the directives of First Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defense, and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahd Al-Yousef, the Residency Affairs Sector, represented by the General Department of Residency Affairs Investigations - Search and Investigation Department, successfully apprehended a gang of six individuals, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

These individuals, of Syrian and Egyptian nationalities, were engaged in residency trading through the creation of fictitious companies, using forged

documents to bring workers into the country for illegal profits.

Workers were brought in for fees ranging from 350 to 1,000 dinars each. Residency affairs detectives were vigilant, ensuring the arrest of all involved, including sponsors and facilitators, whether citizens or otherwise. Legal action has been taken against them, and they have been referred to the competent authorities.

The Ministry of Interior reiterates its commitment to firmly addressing any form of residency trafficking and legal violations.

Expired ID Bedoun get 'visitor' status

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 7: The Ministry of Health has issued a new directive to hospitals regarding the treatment of illegal residents (bedoun) who hold expired ID cards, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

According to the latest circular, this category of residents will be classified as visitors in terms of health service fees if their ID cards have expired.

The circular, bearing Ministerial Resolution No. 294 of 2017, outlines the following procedures:

Fees for Health Services -- Non-Kuwaiti visiting patients and individuals not registered in the health insurance system will be charged for health services. The fees are set at 20 dinars for hospital accident visits and 30 dinars for outpatient clinic visits.

Medication Policy -- Medications will only be dispensed for patients needing treatment within the hospital, such as for observation, ward stay, or intensive care. Medications will not be provided for those visiting outpatient clinics or accident departments.

This policy aims to ensure clarity in billing procedures and adherence to regulations regarding non-Kuwaiti patients and individuals without valid health insurance.

NewsWatch

RIYADH: The Council of Ministers of Saudi Arabia gave thumbs up Tuesday for a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on news exchange between the Saudi Press Agency (SPA) and the Kuwait News Agencies (KUNA).

Acting Minister of Information Dr. Issam bin Saeed said in a statement that the meeting mulled the latest updates concerning the new cooperation that is built upon the MoU between KUNA and SPA, which was signed on the 7th of March, the SPA reported. (KUNA)

WASHINGTON: Five U.S. service members and two contractors were injured when two rockets hit a military base in Iraq, U.S. officials said Tuesday, providing a bit more detail about the Monday strike.

The officials said five of those injured were being treated at the al-Asad airbase and two were evacuated, but all seven are in stable condition. They did not provide details on who was evacuated. (AP)

ANKARA: Turkey on Wednesday filed a request with a U.N. court to join South Africa's lawsuit accusing Israel of genocide in Gaza, the foreign minister said.

Turkey's ambassador to The Netherlands, accompanied by a group of Turkish legislators, submitted a declaration of intervention to the International Court of Justice in The Hague.

With the development, Turkey, one of the fiercest critics of Israel's actions in Gaza, becomes the latest nation seeking to participate in the case. (AP)

Prayer Timings

Fajr 03:44 Asr 15:29
Sunrise .. 05:11 Maghrib .. 18:36
Zohr 11:54 Isha 20:00

Local

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

Expected weather for next 24 hrs:
By Day: Very hot with light to moderate freshening at times northwesterly wind, with speeds of 15-45 km/h causing rising dust over open areas and some high clouds will appear.

Weather

By Night: Hot to rather hot with light to moderate northwesterly wind, with speeds of 12-35 km/h.

Station	Max Exp	Min Rec
Kuwait City	47	37
Kuwait Airport	48	30

Abdaly	49	30
Jahra	48	33
Salmiyah	42	36
Jal Aliyah	49	31
Nuwaisib	47	30
Wafra	48	29

Other Voices

China to expand opening-up and pursue peaceful development path

By H.E. Zhang Jianwei

Ambassador of the People's Republic of China to the State of Kuwait

The Third Plenary Session of the 20th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (CPC), which was recently held in Beijing, has garnered global attention. This session was centered on advancing modernization with a Chinese approach and launching strategic initiatives to deepen reforms comprehensively. Its implications are significant for China's future development and offer new possibilities for the world. I would like to briefly explain this to our friends in Kuwait using two key terms.



Zhang

The first key term is "opening-up". Chinese President Xi Jinping said, "Opening-up is a driving force and an important force for the progress of human civilization and the only way for the world to prosper and develop." At present, anti-globalization, protectionism and unilateralism trends are on the rise, and the momentum of global economic recovery is insufficient. This requires all countries to adhere to the spirit of cooperation and openness to jointly maintain the global economic order and the security and stability of industrial chains of supply.

The opening-up policy is a distinctive feature of China's modernization. In recent years, China has significantly and more widely opened its door to the outside world. This includes establishing 22 pilot free trade zones, building the Hainan Free Trade Port, and pushing for the signing and the operation of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP).

China has also been reducing restrictions on foreign investment, easing entry barriers in service sectors such as telecommunications and healthcare, and actively promoting high-quality joint construction of the "Belt and Road" initiative. Additionally, China has built international economic and trade platforms like the China International Import Expo, the China International Fair for Trade in Services, and the China International Consumer Goods Expo.

China's commitment to openness has contributed over 30 percent to global economic growth, positioning it as a key driver of world prosperity. The session highlighted that China will continue to uphold its policy of opening up, persist in driving reform through this openness, and enhance its capacity to expand international cooperation based on China's huge market advantage. This approach aims to build a new, higher-level open economic system.

During the session, comprehensive plans were prepared to enhance the system and mechanisms for high-level opening-up across five areas:

- Expanding institutional opening-up with concrete steps,
- Deepening reforms in the foreign trade system,
- Improving the management of foreign and outbound investment systems,
- Optimizing regional opening-up strategies,
- Advancing the high-quality joint construction of the "Belt and Road" initiative.

This approach clearly signals China's commitment to expanding its high-level opening-up and offering new opportunities for global economic recovery and stable development.

The second key term is "peaceful development." Chinese President Xi Jinping described the path of peace-

ful development as China's response to international concerns about its growth and a reflection of the Chinese people's confidence and determination to achieve progress.

Confidence

This confidence and awareness stem from the deep roots of Chinese civilization, the Chinese people's understanding of their country's conditions and development goals, and their insight into global trends.

Peaceful development is an inevitable choice for China's modernization. As an old Chinese proverb states - "A country that advocates war is doomed, even if it is strong."

Unlike some Western countries that achieved modernization through war and colonialism, China is pursuing modernization with distinctive Chinese characteristics under the leadership of the Communist Party of China, through serious exploration and a commitment to peace, cooperation, and development.

In an era of global interdependence, China advocates for a concept of common, comprehensive, cooperative, and sustainable security, viewing the world as a stage for shared development rather than a battleground for competition.

In the Middle East, China does not seek selfish interests, engage in geopolitical rivalries, or divide spheres of influence. Instead, China maintains a spirit of equal and friendly partnership, respects the sovereign choices of countries in the region, and is prepared to contribute to regional peace through sincere cooperation.

It is worth noting that China's mediation has succeeded in achieving historic reconciliation between Saudi Arabia and Iran. It recently facilitated the signing of the "Beijing Declaration on Ending Division and Strengthening Palestinian National Unity" by 14 Palestinian factions, thus infusing new positive energy into efforts for security and stability in the Middle East.

Peace

During the session, it was affirmed that China will steadfastly and consistently pursue an independent foreign policy of peace, promote the building of a community with a shared future for mankind, and uphold the common values of humanity.

China will also implement the Global Development Initiative, the Global Security Initiative, and the Global Civilization Initiative, as well as advocate for global multipolarity characterized by equality and order, and promote economic globalization that is inclusive and beneficial to all.

China aims to lead the reform and development of the global governance system while firmly safeguarding its sovereignty, security, and development interests. Chinese-style modernization is committed to the path of peaceful development and will contribute positively to global peace and development.

China's comprehensive reforms and Chinese-style modernization will positively impact China-Kuwait relations. Under the wise leadership of both countries' leaders, bilateral relations have entered a new phase. There is significant potential for both countries to expand mutual openness and deepen practical cooperation, as they share common goals of peaceful development and enhancing regional security and stability.

China is eager to work with Kuwait to implement the important consensus reached by their leaders, align development strategies, push for mutually beneficial cooperation across various fields, and strengthen communication and coordination in international and regional matters.

Together, they aim to solidify the bilateral strategic partnership, promote the well-being of both peoples, and contribute to peace, stability, and development in the Middle East.

Vital to ensure smooth operations

Association of faculty members calls for approval of excess hours decision

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 7: The Association of Faculty Members for Applied Colleges, part of the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training, has urged the Civil Service Commission to approve the amended decision on excess hours, reports Al-Jarida daily.

This decision, approved by the authority's board of directors last September, is currently awaiting approval from the Civil Service Commission.

The association emphasized the importance of having the excess hours system approved before the academic year begins. This would enable the teaching staff, scientific departments, and scheduling committees to effectively plan and implement the new system. They highlighted that the proposed system does not involve additional financial costs to the

budget. The association also appealed to the Civil Service Council to recognize the significance of the largest educational institutions in the country and to act in accordance with their size and developmental role.

In related news, sources within the Applied Colleges indicate that the disbursement of faculty members' dues for the summer semester is nearing completion. The dues are currently undergoing auditing and will soon be transferred to the appropriate channels for official disbursement.

The successful implementation of the excess hours decision and timely disbursement of dues are crucial for ensuring smooth operations and supporting the academic staff in the upcoming year.

HH the Crown Prince and Prime Minister send greetings

HH the Amir congratulates Cote d'Ivoire on National Day

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 7, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent Wednesday a cable to President of Cote d'Ivoire Alassane Ouattara, congratulating him on his country's Independence Day.

In the cable, His Highness the Amir wished

the president good health and wellness, and the friendly country and people further progress and prosperity.

Meanwhile, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah sent a congratulatory cable to President Alassane

Ouattara on his country's Independence Day, wishing him good health and wellness.

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah also sent a cable to President Alassane Ouattara, congratulating him on the country's Independence Day.

'Kuwait committed to environmental rehabilitation by mangrove planting'

Kuwait receives 2,000 seeds from Oman



Ahmadi governor poses for a photo with KNPC delegation members.

Ahmadi governor receives KNPC team

Ahmadi Governor Sheikh Hamoud Al-Jaber welcomed Eng. Wadha Al-Khatib, CEO of the Kuwait National Petroleum Company, to a meeting today. The visit marked a congratulatory gesture to Governor Sheikh Hamoud on his new role, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The meeting, which also included Deputy CEO for Support Services Kholoud Al-Mutairi and Acting Director of Public Relations and Media Maryam Yassin, focused on exploring opportunities for enhancing cooperation,

strengthening community engagement, and advancing afforestation initiatives within the Ahmadi Governorate.

Governor Sheikh Hamoud praised the significant economic impact of the Kuwait National Petroleum Company, acknowledging its vital role in the region.

In response, Al-Khatib reiterated the company's commitment to supporting initiatives that benefit the Ahmadi Governorate, emphasizing their readiness to contribute to local development efforts.

GPF issues 193 recommendations for govt agencies to boost performance

By Abdulrahman Al-Shammari

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 7: The Government Performance Follow-up Agency (GPF) has issued 193 recommendations for government agencies to address and implement with the aim of enhancing government performance. These are based on directives issued by the Council of Ministers, which include specific observations and general recommendations for following up the implementation of ministerial decisions, particularly those pertaining to construction projects such as buildings or roads.

The recommendations also include the need to study the State Audit Bureau's report for the 2022/2023 fiscal year, which comprises 193 recommendations including seven special recommendations applicable to all the projects of the project implementing agencies.

Furthermore, 172 specific recommendations were given for individual projects, along with 14 general recommendations for all government agencies. These recommendations are implemented using three response models:

A - Response model for general recommendations.

B - Response model for special recommendations.

C - Response model for comments.

The report highlights the observations made by the agency during the monitoring of ministerial decisions.

The observations by GPF highlighted violations of the decree establishing the agency, as authorities failed to provide necessary documents indicating the status of implementing specific decisions.

This includes the Ministry of Education's handling of decisions to establish the Supreme Committee for monitoring the Horizon Schools project and to form a working team to enhance public education in Kuwait. It also includes the formation of a Joint Supreme Committee for Examinations in collaboration with relevant state institutions, an investigation committee for financial violations noted in the State Audit Bureau's 2022/2021 report, a committee for an investigation into financial misconduct at the National Center for Education Development, and a committee to study and oversee the implementation of future cooperation plans in education.

The GPF requested minutes and reports from committees that were not approved by their members or were not according to the working mechanisms. This includes the Ministry of Education and details pertaining to decisions regarding the formation of preparation committees for the start of the 2024/2023 academic year.

The GPF also highlighted instances when some committees did not fulfill their assigned tasks according to the decision, including:

1. The Public Authority for Housing Care, which was tasked with forming a committee to study and implement greenery in the housing projects currently underway.

2. The Ministry of Public Works, which was directed to establish an investigation committee to address failures highlighted in reports on preventing rainwater accumulation and sewage overflow.

3. The Ministry of Finance, which was tasked with forming a committee to review Law No. 98/2013 concerning the National Fund for the Care and Development of Small and Medium Enterprises.

4. The Ministry of Commerce and Industry, which was tasked with forming a fact-finding committee to study the findings in the final report, was to be extended by administrative Resolution No. 335/2021.

5. The Ministry of Electricity, Water, and Renewable Energy, which was directed to extend the formation of a fact-finding committee to address outstanding debts and responsibilities within the ministry.

6. The Ministry of Education, which was tasked with the formation of preparation committees for the 2023/2024 academic year.

7. Kuwait Municipality, which was tasked with forming an investigation committee to address issues raised in the final report by ministerial Resolution No. 183/2021.

The recommendations for following up on ministerial decisions stated the following:

1. All parties must adhere to Article 3 of Decree No. 346/2007 on the establishment of GPF. This includes providing the agency with necessary information, data, and studies. Cooperation and coordination with the agency in this regard are essential.

2. Committees established within agencies must fulfill their designated tasks as outlined in the decision related to their formation and within the specified duration.

3. Chairpersons and members of committees formed by ministerial decisions must commit to approving minutes of the meetings and final reports before submitting them to the concerned minister, according to the work mechanism.

4. Financial settlements must be made as necessary in the following cases:-

- Committees that were disbanded by decision
- Committees where some members were absent from sessions.
- Committees that did not convene for other valid reasons.

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 7: Dr. Abdullah Al-Zaidan, Deputy Director General for Technical Affairs at the Public Environment Authority, emphasized Kuwait's dedication to rehabilitating the local environment by continuing Gulf projects focused on cultivating mangrove plants. This effort is being carried out in collaboration with the Sultanate of Oman, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

In an interview with the Kuwait News Agency (KUNA), Al-Zaidan praised the contributions of the Environment Authority of Oman, particularly in providing Kuwait with mangrove seeds. During a recent visit to Oman, Al-Zaidan met with Suleiman Al-Akhzami, Director General of Nature Conservation at the Environment Authority of Oman, expressing appreciation for their ongoing efforts to improve environmental conditions both locally and across the Gulf region.

The visit to Oman resulted in Kuwait receiving two thousand mangrove seeds. These seeds were collected by the Omani Environment Authority and will be cultivated in the laboratories of the Kuwait Environment Authority before being planted in the Jahra Reserve. This initiative builds on successful cooperation between the two countries since 2018.

During the visit, Al-Zaidan also toured the Al-Qurm Reserve in Muscat and met with Badr Al-Busaidi, Head of the Wetlands Environments Department. Al-Busaidi highlighted that the reserve, declared a nature reserve in 1975, is the first site in Oman registered under the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands. The reserve covers a total area of 1,045,775 hectares, showcasing Oman's dedication to environmental preservation.

Dr. Abdullah Al-Zaidan, Deputy Director General for Technical Affairs at the Public Environment Authority, emphasized the significance of the Al-Qurm Reserve in Oman.

Instrumental

He noted that the reserve's natural forests are home to the Avicenna marina, a mangrove species uniquely adapted to the local climate. This reserve has been instrumental in Oman's National Mangrove Plantation Program, which aims to restore mangrove populations and support biodiversity since 2000.

During his visit, Al-Zaidan and his Omani counterparts discussed enhancing sustainable environmental development and enriching mangrove cultivation.

He highlighted that mangroves once thrived along the northern coasts of Kuwait Bay but were lost due to harmful human activities such as firewood cutting and overgrazing. The ongoing replanting efforts are crucial for adapting to global climate conditions, as mangroves are highly effective in reducing carbon dioxide levels, creating natural habitats, and protecting coastlines from erosion.

Al-Zaidan explained that mangroves offer several environmental benefits, including reducing CO2 levels at rates three to five times higher than tropical forests, and providing critical habitats for marine life. They also help purify seawater and mitigate the effects of climate change, aligning with Kuwait's sustainable development goals and international climate agreements.

The discussions included exploring ways for continued cooperation between Kuwait and Oman to achieve environmental sustainability and preserve natural resources.

Al-Zaidan expressed his gratitude to key figures in Oman's environmental sector, including Suleiman Al-Akhzami, Dr. Thuraya bint Saeed Al-Sariri, and Badr Al-Balushi, for their ongoing support and collaboration with Kuwait in tackling global climate challenges and finding sustainable environmental solutions.



Dr. Al-Zaidan with Al-Akhzami.

Master's program gets nod in nursing at Cape Town 'varsity

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 7: Dr. Adel Al-Adwani, Minister of Education and Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research, has approved the inclusion of the Master's Program in Nursing at the University of Cape Town to the list of higher education institutions in South Africa recommended by the National Authority for Academic Accreditation and Quality Assurance of Education, reports Al-Jarida daily.

The decision specifies that the program must adhere to the traditional education system with regular attendance throughout the academic week.

Moreover, the program should comply with the academic period required for granting the degree and must be offered by a college that has already graduated its first cohort.

This approval is effective immediately, and any conflicting previous decisions are overridden by this new directive. This move is aimed at ensuring that Kuwaiti students have access to accredited and high-quality education programs abroad.

'Respect boosts your prestige ... fear undermines your strength'

"RESPECT in our lives is a fundamental requirement and a pathway to improvement in all areas," columnist and former deputy director-general of Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) **Iqbal Al-Ahmed** wrote for **Al-Qabas** daily.

"Respect involves giving others their due without excess, in a way that upholds your own dignity and value. Appreciation for another person stems from recognizing their worth, rights, and dignity, fostering healthy and fruitful community relationships based on mutual trust.



Iqbal Al-Ahmed

"There's a significant difference between respecting and fearing your father, your teacher, or the law. Fear diminishes your capacity to grasp the essence of respect. Respect is about maintaining greatness in your words, actions, direction, and thinking, while fear makes you appear small.

"Respect upholds your prestige and standing, regardless of your status. In contrast, fear places you in a position of weakness. Respect signifies self-confidence and an understanding of the person, law, or situation in front of you.

"Educated, civilized, and advanced societies prioritize respect over fear, unlike backward societies, which tend to fear more than they respect. Respect is a culture cultivated by the home, school, places of worship, and public order.

"In Japan, for example, children learn from a young age to respect the elderly and the weak. On the bus, they give up their seats without hesitation. As adults, this behavior becomes second nature, requiring no law to enforce it because it is driven by respect, not fear.

"Respect is based on appreciation and admiration, while fear is rooted in apprehension. Fear may be necessary in emergencies to control behavior and prevent harm, but relying on fear constantly weakens societies, making them unstable and their legal actions temporary.

"This explains why people often respect the laws of other countries more than their own. In societies where respect precedes fear, laws are honored more genuinely. Conversely, in societies where fear is predominant, respect is secondary and fragile."

"The article's occasion is the announcement of a third fingerprint verification system to prove workplace attendance. If a culture of respecting work existed, such measures and expenses to ensure employees remain at their workplace during working hours would be unnecessary."

Also:

"When the First Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defense, and Minister of Interior, Sheikh Fahd Al-Yousef, directed the opening of visitor and family-joining visas for all nationalities, the primary goal, in addition to fostering a family atmosphere for expatriates to enhance their productivity, was to stimulate all markets, particularly the real estate market," columnist **Tarek Hamada** wrote for **Al-Anba** daily.

"This initiative aligns with Kuwait's efforts to diversify its sources of income beyond oil, following the example of its neighboring countries, and to curb the outflow of funds spent on foreign tourism as part of the 'Vision 2035'.

"Sheikh Fahd Al-Yousef, in his initial decisions after assuming responsibility, opened the door for expatriates to bring their families through family-joining visas or visit visas under specific regulations.

"When asked about the justifications, he transparently explained that the 'ban' had led to the loss of expertise in many vital sectors, especially the medical sector, resulting in a shortage of medical and nursing staff.

"Sheikh Fahd Al-Yousef was explicit in stating that visits have a specific number of days, and sponsors requesting the visit would be held accountable for ensuring the visitors leave on time, with penalties for any violations.

"Unfortunately, some expatriates deliberately violated these conditions, attempting to deceive the Interior Ministry by keeping their families beyond the allowed period, thus imposing a fair penalty.

"This clear breach of the agreed-upon conditions necessitated firm measures to deter such actions and send a message to all expatriates. The Ministry of Interior's procedures, necessitated by necessity, must not be exploited to violate the law and increase residency law violators.

"The ministry has begun addressing this issue firmly and effectively, resulting in decisive actions including the deporting of sponsors and sponsored persons. I believe the message is clear: any expatriate will now think twice before violating visit conditions, preventing a repeat of

previous abuses.

"Kuwait possesses the elements to attract tourists, such as the marine islands and the cultural tourism offered by Failaka Island, along with historical sites like the Kuwait Gates, Seif Palace, Red Palace, museums, Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Natural Reserve, and Jaber Al-Ahmad Marine Reserve, which are integral to eco-tourism.

"It is crucial for all ministries, especially the Ministry of Interior, to work towards translating these ambitious plans into actions that bring prosperity and economic benefits to Kuwait.

"Finally, human trafficking is one of the largest crimes globally in terms of financial returns, ranking as the third largest. Shortly after the World Day Against Human Trafficking on July 30, the Ministry of Interior announced the arrest of a gang specializing in trafficking residency permits through the establishment of fake companies, forgery, and document tampering. They brought in and transferred the residency permits of hundreds of workers in exchange for money.

"Trafficking in residency permits seriously damages Kuwait's reputation, and it is essential to combat this with determination and strength. All thanks to the Ministry of Interior and the Residency Investigation Department in particular.

"May God protect Kuwait from all harm under the leadership of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad and His Highness the faithful Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled. May God protect and care for them."

"Making a strong and correct decision at the right time is one of the most important qualities of an official who deserves the position. He appreciates the responsibility, works for the benefit of his country and citizens, and is not afraid of facing criticism for the right decisions," columnist **Talal Al-Saeed** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

"The citizens applauded for a long time and chanted loudly, 'Afiya ... Noura.' We are referring to Dr. Noura Mohammed Al-Mashaan, the Minister of Public Works and State Minister for Municipal Affairs, who made a decisive move that the 'Al-Mashrabeen' could not. She decided to terminate the services of all expatriates in Kuwait Municipality within just three days, clearing the way for Kuwaiti citizens to fill those positions.

"In this way, Dr. Noura has taken the first steps to liberate the country from the soft occupation that every Kuwaiti citizen suffers from. We hope the rest will follow in her footsteps so that the liberation is complete. We wished the decision had also included canceling the residency with a three-month grace period, after which those whose services were terminated would need to leave the country. Additionally, the decision should have emphasized that residency transfers to other parties, family members, or the private sector would not be permitted, ensuring that everyone would return to their home countries with honor and respect.

"If necessary, we will hold a group farewell party for them, similar to a group wedding. However, if the residency is transferred, those whose services were terminated will go out the door and come back to us through the window, under the item of rewards, or any other name on the basis that the State of Kuwait has become an alternative homeland, until each one of them cancels the idea of returning to their country permanently. Then we will not be well or evil will come! Long live Noura!

"How many Kuwaitis who are in dire need of a job will be appointed? Will they find a job opportunity after this courageous decision by the esteemed minister? All of them will pray to God Almighty for her due to her belief in the principle that the people of the country are more deserving of their country, and they are the ones who truly serve it sincerely, and serve its people, not the expatriates, who at best are involved in the profit, but are safe from loss.

"I wish the doctor responsible for the Civil Service Commission would make the same decision, and turn the scales of the eighth floor upside down, that floor that sends a petroleum engineering graduate to work in the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs to destroy the infrastructure of the country, and frustrate and kill citizens' ambitions.

"By the way, no one asked about that brilliant advisor at the Civil Service Commission who was caught in a case that blackens his face. Is he still working, or has another advisor of the same nationality taken his place?"

"Give my regards to 'Jadeela' Dr. Noura, granddaughter of Khaled Al-Mashaan (May God have mercy on him) who overcame imaginary barriers and took the difficult decision. May you be well Noura."

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



KUNA photo

Chief of the General Staff of the Kuwait Army, Lieut-Gen Pilot Bandar Al-Muzain, met on Tuesday with Brig-Gen Dr. Rashid Al-Marr, Head of the GCC Emergency Management Center at the General Secretariat of the Gulf Cooperation Council, to discuss ways to enhance joint cooperation.

Call 112

'Report damaged nat'l flags'

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 7: In a new initiative, the Ministry of Interior has introduced the Emergency Phone No. 112 for citizens to report damaged or dilapidated state flags.

Additionally, individuals can photograph these flags and send the images via WhatsApp to the General Department of Security Relations and Media at 91110999. This applies to flags displayed on both government and private buildings, as well as banners along the roads, reports **Al-Anba** daily.

This decision aligns with a directive from the Council of Ministers, which mandates that all government institutions and ministries must regularly inspect the Kuwaiti flag to ensure it is displayed correctly and is in good condition.

The ministry emphasized the importance of removing flags that do not meet the required specifications in terms of shape and general appearance. They highlighted that protecting and preserving the national flag is a collective responsibility, symbolizing the identity and pride of the Kuwaiti state. This responsibility extends to society, individuals, and institutions alike.

MoH probes 7 doctors over ethical violations, shuts six private clinics

Securitymen nab 70 violators of residency, labor laws

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

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 7: The Minister of Health Dr. Ahmad Al-Awadhi issued a decision to refer seven doctors for investigation and close six private health facilities, after some of these facilities published pictures that contradict the ethics, rules and principles of the medical profession.

Dr. Al-Awadhi referred the incident to the Medical Liability Authority, in implementation of the provisions of the law No. 70/2020 that regulate the medical profession and its auxiliary professions, patients' rights and health facilities, and the ministerial resolution No. 87/2023 regarding the controls for regulating medical advertisements in the private health sector.

The decisions were made in violation of the guidelines set forth by ministerial resolution No. 87/2023, which regulates medical advertisements in the private health sector. Specifically, Article 20 mandates that medical advertisements should display only the minimum of the patient's body necessary to convey medical information, ensuring modesty and adherence to public morals without exaggerating the display of the patient's body or its parts.

Inspection teams and specialized technical committees have identified violations, including the publication of images by some facilities that contradict the ethics, rules, and principles of the medical profession.

In this context, a decision has been made to refer seven doctors for investigation for similar violations.

The ministry reaffirms its commitment to ongoing inspection and oversight of health facilities to ensure that services are provided in accordance with professional principles and established rules.

The ministry calls for full adherence to the relevant standards and legislation, stressing that these measures aim to safeguard the health and safety of citizens, enhance the quality of health services in the country, and ensure that all health facilities operate in line with the highest international quality standards.

70 expats arrested: The Private Security, Residence Affairs Investigations, Public Security, and Women's Police sectors, under instructions from the Assistant Undersecretary for Private Security Affairs, Major General Abdullah Saffah, launched an expanded security campaign on the Sulabiya industrial area and the camel market, which resulted in the arrest of 70 violators of residency and labor laws, persons wanted by law and those wanted by the Sentences Enforcement Department, reports **Al-Seyassah** daily.

All those arrested have been referred to the competent authority.

Clarification on traffic violations status: The Ministry of Interior has affirmed that traffic violations are not permanently dismissed simply by being referred to court, as they are considered state assets, reports **Al-Seyassah** daily.

Lieutenant Colonel Abdullah Bu Hassan, Head of the Public Relations and Traffic Awareness Department at the General Traffic Department, clarified that referring traffic violations to court is a standard legal procedure. Violators have the right to contest the violation and decline settlement through the General Traffic Department.

Lieutenant Colonel Bu Hassan emphasized that traffic violations are not eliminated permanently, as they represent state revenue.

Masked man with a pistol in bid to rob money exchange

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 7: The Ministry of Interior yesterday issued a notice with the description of a mobile taxi driven by an unknown individual who attempted to rob a money exchange shop in Mahboula. The notice also indicated the possibility that the taxi driver's companion was armed, though it is unclear whether the weapon was real or fake.

According to security sources, the Operations Room of the Ministry of Interior received information about a masked man entering a money exchange shop with a pistol. He then demanded that the employees hand over the money, saying, "Bring it."

Afterward, the suspect exited the shop, got into a taxi, and instructed the driver to leave quickly.

The surveillance cameras installed in the shop captured all the details of the incident including the fact that the suspect did not manage to steal any money.

The sources indicated the possibility that the taxi may have stopped in front of the shop by chance.

They anticipated that the perpetrator would be apprehended within a few hours.

The sources affirmed that an investigation will be conducted to determine the circumstances of the incident and the authenticity of the weapon the suspect was carrying.

No phone calls are monitored: Mol

By **Munif Nayef**

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 7: Colonel Othman Al-Gharib from the Security Media Department of the Ministry of Interior says there is no truth to the claims that phone calls and WhatsApp calls are being monitored and recorded, as some social media sites have suggested. He described these claims as "unreasonable" and merely rumors.

In a statement on Kuwait TV, Colonel Al-Gharib explained that the Electronic Monitoring Department of the Security Media Department monitors publicly available information on social media, but maintains confidentiality for everyone.

He emphasized that the circulating rumors and recordings are incorrect and urged the public not to give credence to such misinformation.



Municipality photo

One of the abandoned vehicles being impounded.

27 abandoned vehicles seized in Khaitan

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 7: Director of the Public Sanitation and Road Occupancy Department at the Kuwait Municipality branch in Farwaniya Governorate **Mohammad Al-Jabaa** has confirmed the impounding of 27 abandoned vehicles in Khaitan, while 66 warning stickers were placed on other abandoned cars in the area, reports **Al-Jarida** daily.

In a press statement, Al-Jabaa disclosed the department has intensified the inspection tours to uncover violations and take legal measures against those proven

to have committed violations.

He stressed that the inspection team is keen on maintaining cleanliness in all areas under its responsibility, in addition to removing everything that distorts the aesthetic view and to regulate road occupancy through the field tours it conducts regularly to preserve the civilized appearance of the governorate.

He affirmed such inspections will continue, warning that the inspection team is not lenient in dealing with violations.

Purchase, sale policy violated

Authority cites 9 violations in gold, precious metals markets

By **Marwa Al-Bahrawi**

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 7: Personnel from the departments of Commercial Control and Precious Metals and the Public Authority for Industry organized a joint campaign that resulted in the issuance of 9 citations in the gold and precious metals markets in

the Capital Governorate.

The violations monitored by the joint committee centered on commercial fraud which included failure to abide by the purchase and sale policy.

The inspection teams have issued a show-cause notice for non-compliance with the requirements after reviewing the weights.



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Al-Mashaan approves Council resolutions, denies non-compliant development plans

Ministry assures
Jahra's water quality 'safe'

Minister ensures compliance with building codes

By Inaas Awadh
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff
KUWAIT CITY, Aug 7: Minister of Public Works and Minister of State for Municipal Affairs Dr. Noura Al-Mashaan has approved most of the decisions that the Municipal Council took in its third meeting for the third term on July 22, 2024. This is the last meeting of the council before its summer break.



Al-Mashaan

Al-Mashaan rejected two decisions of the council; one of which is approval of the request of the Al-Salhiya Real Estate Company regarding the development of their property -- Plot 72 on the survey plan described as JW Marriott Hotel (formerly the Meridian) located in Kuwait City, Qibla, Block 13.

This is done by converting the three floors following the service floor above the mezzanine floor from hotel rooms to commercial offices with separate commercial licenses, provided they are deducted from the commercial building percentage set for the property (62 percent commercial within the city), and without demanding any additional percentage after dispensing with the hotel rooms calculated from the original building percentage for the hotel. It stipulates that the executive body will amend

the building regulations to allow licensing according to the structural plan for mixed use within the city before licensing.

The minister justified her objection, stating that the decision violates the terms and conditions stated in Item 12 regarding the requirements and specifications for hotels in various areas in the country, attached to the regulations for organizing construction works in Ministerial Resolution No. 206/2009 and its amendments.

According to the structural plan, the recommendation to classify mixed use in a single commercial property within the city was adopted by the fourth structural plan, but there is no current legislation in this regard.

Since the fourth structural plan has not been issued to date, as stated in the last paragraph of the decision, which includes assigning the executive body to amend the building regulations to allow licensing; it is a violation of the regulations, systems and the third structural plan, hence, it cannot be applied as per the study book submitted by the executive body that is attached to the decision papers in the minutes of the meeting.

Al-Mashaan also voiced objection to the council's decision to address the complaint of a citizen regarding the attachment of his chalet to Nuwaiseeb, Plot 11, Block 3. She explained that the construction of the chalet in question is in accordance with the chalet construction system and is licensed in accordance with the requirements and specifications for chalet buildings, as attached to the construction works regulations and schedule as per Ministerial Resolution No. 206/2009 and its amendments, as well as the study submitted by the executive body and attached to the decision papers in the minutes of the meeting.



Al-Seyassah photo

Media and Awareness Team launches interactive 'Save' Pavilion at The Avenues Mall.

MEW's 'online' services down

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 7: The Ministry of Electricity, Water, and Renewable Energy's website has been non-functional due to a fiber malfunction, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

Sources indicated the technical teams were working to fix the issue to restore the website. The outage impacted several electronic services, including bill payments, issuing official certificates, and other online functions that customers rely on.

Explore how to cut waste

Ministry launches 'Save' pavilion to raise conservation awareness

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 7: The Ministry of Electricity, Water, and Renewable Energy has inaugurated the "Save" pavilion at The Avenues Mall to enhance public awareness about energy and water conservation, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

Eng. Khadija Mishari, Head of the Media and Awareness Team for Rationalizing Consumption and Renewable Energy Production, emphasized the ministry's dedication to educating

the public on conserving electricity and water. The "Save" pavilion is part of their strategy to engage directly with consumers, providing insights on modifying consumption behaviors.

The pavilion features a miniature house model that highlights various electrical appliances and efficiency tools, aimed at illustrating common wasteful practices and promoting better consumption habits.

By Mohammad Ghanem
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 7: In view of the newspaper's post about the quality of fresh water in some areas in Jahra Governorate on X platform Tuesday morning, the Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy announced that it is closely monitoring the quality of fresh water pumped into the network round the clock through the emergency centers in the six governorates.

The ministry reassured the public that the fresh water samples collected from various areas in the governorate have been tested and the water was found to be safe, affirming it is carrying out periodic maintenance of the water network to ensure good water quality.

It revealed that it had earlier received complaints from some customers in the governorate about the change in the color of fresh water supplied to their homes. It thanked the citizens for their cooperation in serving the public, clarifying that in the event of change in the quality of water or any other water issue, a report should be made through Hotline No.152 or the ministry's official accounts on social media platforms, while stressing the need to obtain information only from official sources.

Sources from the ministry vehemently denied the alleged contamination of drinking water in some areas in the governorate, as circulated by some X platform users. They said the ministry installed water connections, which led to the rush of water and the presence of a small percentage of turbidity within a short period and the quality of water returned to normal after that.

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Al-Seyassah photo

KFAED delegation in St Vincent and the Grenadines.

KFAED delegation on inspection mission

The Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development said that a delegation headed by Acting Director General Walid Al-Bahr checked on the progress of work on the agricultural and secondary roads project financed by the Fund in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The work, costing four million dinars is expected to be completed by the end of this year.

The Fund added that during the visit, the delegation met with the Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Finance, and representatives of the Ministry of Communication.

It is noteworthy that Saint Vincent and the Grenadines is located at the southern end of the eastern border of the Caribbean Sea, with an area of 389 square kilometers and a population of about 110,000 people.

Awqaf launches Masarra Volunteer Campaign to boost social solidarity

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 7: The Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs, through its Family Development Department, has initiated the "Masarra Volunteer Campaign" in collaboration with Namaa Charity and the Public Authority for Youth, reports Al-Seyassah daily quoting KUNA.

The campaign aims to enhance social solidarity and promote a culture of cooperation among community members.

The campaign specifically targets girls aged 18 to 35. It will involve a series of workshops and training courses focused on the importance of volunteer work and social solidarity.

The program includes motivational and awareness content distributed via the ministry's social media channels, as well as practical field visits to various government agencies to apply the skills learned.

The inaugural workshop, titled "Life," was led by Abeer Al-Hijris, Director of the Volunteer Department at Namaa Charity. The session highlighted the significance of volunteering, the principles governing it, and the challenges faced by female volunteers.

It also featured a video presentation showcasing various volunteer trips.

Dr. Najwa Al-Harees contributed to the workshop with a brief presentation on her personal volunteering journey. She shared insights into her humanitarian and volunteer work, emphasizing the positive impact it has had on her life.

The Masarra Volunteer Campaign reflects a commitment to fostering community involvement and enhancing the culture of volunteerism in Kuwait.



Al-Jarida daily photo

Student ambassadors at American International University.

Student ambassadors bolster AIU's new semester readiness

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 7: The American International University (AIU) is abuzz with excitement, as the first semester of academic year 2024/2025 is fast approaching; owing to the tremendous efforts exerted by student ambassadors, reports Al-Jarida daily.

These students play a pivotal role during the admission application period; because they are active in organizing orientation sessions for new students, leading the student support program, ensuring a smooth transition to the first semester, and conducting counseling sessions to make the entire process easy and stress-free for new students.

Assistant Director of Student Activities at AIU Nada Waliol praised these student ambassadors' dedication, confirming their positive impact on the scholarship applicants. She pointed out that they are an essential component of orientation sessions for new students; since they lead campus tours, host workshops and facilitate activities to help new students adjust to college life.

Faisal Kassab, a civil engineering student, said: "We want new students to feel that they belong here. Student ambassadors offer advice, share experiences, provide encouragement, and help new students navigate their academic and social lives."

AIU is now accepting admission applications for the first semester; urging prospective students to visit the campus from 8:00 am to 6:00 pm Sunday through Thursday, and from 10:00 am to 3:00 pm on Saturdays to know more about the university and the courses or services it offers.

Historical achievements and treasured collections featured

Al-Mutairi inaugurates museum to chronicle Kuwait's media legacy

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 7, (KUNA): Minister of Information and Culture Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi inaugurated the Media Museum at the ministry's building, which aims to shed light on the history and development of media in Kuwait. The museum features pictures of works that have shaped the public's memory in Kuwait and the region, the minister told KUNA on Wednesday. He described the Media Museum as a testament to a rich and distinguished media history, noting that its opening marks the culmination of ongoing efforts to document and preserve the history of media in our beloved country.

He highlighted that the museum includes various devices, such as cameras and audio equipment, that were used in the Ministry of Information's work and programs in the past. It also displays pictures of iconic artistic works that remain in the public's memory and several

awards won by the ministry through its internal and external participations.

Additionally, the museum houses a notable collection of pictures and television and radio works that were part of the journey of Kuwait TV and Radio, as well as old devices and equipment used by the ministry in its early stages.

He explained that the Media Museum documents the ministry's contributions to conveying events and information, and strengthening national identity by presenting shows that highlight the history and journey of Kuwaiti media.

The minister stated that the museum reflects the strategic objectives of the Ministry of Information to consolidate cultural, artistic, and media heritage with a modern and creative vision. He expressed his gratitude to everyone who contributed to the completion of this project and the valuable historical and cultural content it provides.



KUNA photo

The Minister of Information and Culture inaugurates the Media Museum in the Ministry.

Al-Omar urges better fisheries support

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 7, (KUNA): Minister of Commerce and Industry and Minister of State for Communications Affairs, Omar Al-Omar, stressed on Tuesday the importance of supporting the fisheries sector and activating the role of commercial control and consumer protection to ensure high-quality products.

This came in a press statement by the minister during an inspection tour of the fish market auction in the Sharq area to follow up on the progress of work and ensure adherence to technical standards.

Al-Omar praised the efforts exerted to develop and improve market services to serve everyone's interest,



Al-Omar

MoE to equip 19 schools with libraries in 7 residential areas

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 7: The Ministry of Education is set to enhance educational resources with the establishment of 19 new school libraries, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

Ahmed Al-Majidi, Director of the Libraries Department. These libraries will be located in new schools across seven residential areas, including Al-Mutlaa, Saad Al-Abdullah, Al-Wafra, Sabah Al-Ahmad, West Abdullah Al-Mubarak, Sabah Al-Nasser, and Jaber Al-Ahmad, in preparation for the upcoming academic year.

stressing the importance of the control role in enhancing citizens' confidence in local markets.

Under the directives of the Minister of Education and the Minister of Higher Education, the Libraries Department is focused on equipping these libraries with accredited information sources tailored to all educational levels.

The initiative aims to support students with their curricula and foster an enriching educational environment. By encouraging a love for reading and scientific research, the new libraries will play a crucial role in the academic development of both students and teachers.

Auctions for imported fish start after dawn daily, while auctions for local fish start immediately after Asr prayers.

KRCS begins new phase of distributing aid in Lebanon

BEIRUT, Aug 7, (KUNA): The Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) announced on Wednesday the latest phase of aid distribution to Lebanese people, displaced Syrians and Palestinians.

Relief Coordinator at the Lebanese Red Cross Society, Yousif Boutros, told KUNA that the KRCS began a new phase of distributing aid, consisting of 12,000 food rations, to Lebanese people, displaced Syrians and Palestinians.

Boutros added that the aid is to support displaced people in refugee camps in northern and southern Lebanon, as a result of the ongoing aggression with the Israeli occupation near the south since October.

He noted that KRCS continues the process of distributing aid to Lebanese villages and towns in southern Lebanon, which started last year, in light of the difficult security conditions, as well as their bread distributing project for thousands of people in need for years.

Minister asks

Continued from Page 1

the efficiency and ability of its members to face various circumstances and challenges.

The statement added that the meeting discussed developments related to the work mechanism and reviewed the most important programs, plans, and projects prepared by all military units.

The meeting was attended by Chief of General Staff of the Army Lieutenant General Pilot Bandar Al-Muzain and Deputy Chief of General Staff of the Army Major General Pilot Sabah Jaber Al-Sabah.

Tenders underway

Continued from Page 1

He pointed out that the halting of this project caused many accidents on the Fifth Ring Road, affirming this will greatly contribute to ongoing efforts to prevent accidents and address the traffic problem that mall visitors usually face. He revealed the fifth bypass bridge in front of the mall is the first exit towards Jahra and a U-turn to Salmiya.

He went on to say that in the last nine months; the first phase of the roads leading to the Avenues Mall was opened and this happened within a very short period. He stated that work was expedited with the full cooperation of the contractor after overcoming the obstacles that delayed the project.

Moreover, Al-Saleh confirmed the launching of an electronic application that allows officials to follow up orders, especially those related to maintenance contracts. "In the past, we had many meetings with government agencies and we came up with a new approach in place of the manual approach," he explained.

He revealed the electronic application will be available only to officials and employees of the ministry to follow up the construction projects, adding there is another electronic application for following up maintenance contracts.

Asked about the Fifth Ring Road Tunnel, Al-Saleh said PART is keen on completing this tunnel; indicating the project site has many facilities and old infrastructure works that are being dealt with, so the tunnel will be operational soon.

Kuwait prepared

Continued from Page 1

The Cabinet tasked the joint ministerial ad hoc committee on legal and economic affairs with mull the possibility of cancelling or merging some government bodies with a view to rationalizing expenditure, ending overlaps and addressing imbalances of the administrative system.

The committee is required to present a report to the cabinet in a month from now.

The Cabinet, after reviewing the recommendations of the ministerial committee on economic affairs regarding Kuwait national industrial strategy 2035, tasked the Public Authority for Industry with accelerating the implementation of the strategy.

Calling for calm in the Middle East, top U.S. national security leaders said Tuesday that they and allies are directly pressing Israel, Iran and others to avoid escalating the conflict, even as the U.S. moved more troops to the region and threatened retaliation if American forces are attacked.

"It's urgent that everyone in the region take stock of the situation, understand the risk of miscalculation, and make decisions that will calm tensions, not exacerbate them," Secretary of State Antony Blinken said at the close

of a meeting with Australian leaders.

At the same time, Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin noted the attack Monday on U.S. forces in Iraq by an Iranian-backed militia group, which injured seven personnel, and made it clear that the U.S. won't hesitate to respond.

"Make no mistake, the United States will not tolerate attacks on our personnel in the region," Austin told reporters at a press conference after the meeting. "And we remain ready to deploy on short notice to meet the evolving threats to our security, our partners or our interests."

He said an "Iranian-backed Shia militia group" conducted the attack, but officials are still trying to determine which one.

Blinken and Austin met with Australian Foreign Minister Penny Wong and Defense Minister Richard Marles at the U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland, to discuss efforts to expand military cooperation and broaden diplomatic efforts in the Asia Pacific.

But they led their remarks with calls for de-escalation and support for a ceasefire. "Australia also underlines the risks to all in the region of escalation and of miscalculation," said Wong, calling this a "decisive moment" for a cease-fire in the war between Israel and Hamas.

Their comments came as Hamas named Yahya Sinwar - a mastermind of the Oct. 7 attacks in Israel that set off the war - as its new leader, fueling fears that the announcement will provoke Israel and that tensions will escalate into broader war.

Tehran has also vowed revenge against Israel over the killing last week of Hamas' top political leader in Iran, and Lebanon's Hezbollah is threatening retaliation over an Israeli strike that killed one of the group's senior commanders in Beirut.

Blinken said further attacks will only perpetuate conflict, adding that "we've been engaged in intense diplomacy with allies and partners communicating that

Mol to review fee hike for Article 22 residency of parents

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 7: The Ministry of Interior is considering increasing the fees for the Article 22 residency of parents (fathers or mothers) of Article 24 residency holders, reports Al-Anba daily.

According to security sources, the General Department for Residency Affairs has requested consultation with the Legal Affairs Department regard-

ing the fees for transferring those holding Article 22 residency to their sponsor who holds Article 24 residency (the same sponsor).

Currently, the fee for renewing residency for those under Article 22 or transferring to Article 24 sponsors is just KD 10. On the other hand, the fee for mothers or fathers to join their family under sponsors with residency of

other articles (Articles 17, 18 or 19) is KD 250.

The Residency Affairs Department is seeking clarification about whether the current fee of KD 10 for the annual residency will remain or if the fees for renewing or transferring the residencies of family members of sponsors under Article 24 will be increased to be similar to the fees for other residencies.

KPC adopts rationalization measures to improve profit

CEO Sheikh Nawaf prioritizes cost control

By Najeh Bilal

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 7: The Board of Directors of Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC), headed by Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Sheikh Nawaf Al-Saud Al-Sabah, is currently focusing on the development of mechanisms to rationalize and regulate spending in oil companies affiliated with the corporation to balance the expenses and revenues in order to increase profits for fiscal 2024/2025.

Sheikh Nawaf Al-Saud Al-Sabah called for this step since he assumed responsibility for the corporation. When the price of oil declined recently, he realized that rationalization should be one of the priorities this year, especially since the profits of some oil companies affiliated with KPC declined in the 2023/2024 budget.

Meanwhile, sources revealed that KPC decided to focus on rationalization not only because the price of oil went down to \$75 per barrel; as the main reason is the reduction in the profits of the corporation in fiscal 2023/2024, when the net profits amounted to KD1.45 billion compared to KD2.6 billion in fiscal 2022/2023.

Sources pointed out this decline is beyond anyone's control as it is the result of Kuwait reducing its share in OPEC and the decline in oil prices in 2023 compared to 2022, which wit-



Lulu Kuwait's Director, Mohamed Haris, had the honor of meeting Sheikh Sabah Bader Sabah Al-Sabah, the Governor - Mubarak Al-Kabeer Governorate. During their meeting, Haris extended his best wishes to the Governor and expressed his heartfelt support for all future endeavors aimed at advancing Kuwait's growth and success.

nessed an improvement in oil prices after the world recovered from the Corona pandemic. Sources said KPC's profits reached KD 94.4 million in fiscal 2020/2021, then it jumped to KD 1.2 billion in fiscal 2021/2022.

Sources said KPC should compensate for the decline in revenues by relying on a policy of selling unprofitable foreign oil assets and projects through its foreign arms; such as Kuwait Petroleum International Company and Kuwait Foreign Petroleum Exploration Company.

They cited as an example the sale of KPC's share in the Norwegian offshore field, which achieved good profits that reached half a billion dollars, especially since the CEO of KPC focused on the importance of getting rid of foreign projects that burden profits -- projects with low

returns.

They said the rationalization of spending should include postponing the issuance of some tenders that are not related to maintenance and increasing production, reducing some non-urgent items, rationalizing participation in exhibitions and conferences especially the international ones, and relying on local research and studies offices as their costs are less than their foreign counterparts; considering this item costs the corporation a lot.

Sources suggested that KPC can further reduce spending by not expanding the new construction facilities that some oil companies are carrying out; in addition to reducing the volume of correspondence, advertising and some services related to social activities among many other measures.

Ministry of Health inaugurates a ambulance station at Boulevard

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 7: The Ministry of Health has inaugurated a new "ambulance station" within the Boulevard Complex, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

This initiative is designed to enhance the availability of immediate medical services for visitors to the mall, particularly during peak times and in emergencies.

The launch event was attended by Dr. Abdullah Al-Fars, Assis-

tant Undersecretary for Supporting Medical Services Affairs, and Dr. Ahmed Al-Shatti, Director of the Medical Emergency Department.

The new facility aims to provide swift medical response and support, ensuring that mallgoers have access to urgent care if needed. This step reflects the Ministry's commitment to improving emergency healthcare services and accessibility.

Cutting-edge treatments offered

Ministry of Health welcomes 11 int'l medical experts this month

By Marwa Al-Bahravi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 7: The Ministry of Health will host 11 doctors with international expertise this month, as part of its visiting doctors program.

In a press statement Wednesday, the ministry revealed that the goal of the visiting doctors program is not limited to examining medical cases; as it extends to discussing the latest medical developments, treatment methods, training, and to exchange experience with national medical and technical professionals.

It also advised those who want to see the list of visiting doctors, book an appointment, and upload the required data and reports to use the 'Kuwait-Health' platform or the unified gov-

ernment application 'Sahel'. It explained that this is for the concerned team to review the cases and reports, ensure that the specialization of the visiting doctor matches the need of the patient, and then the patient is contacted to set an appointment.

It added the patient can inquire about the visiting doctor to request advice or present the case through the specialized technical department in hospitals and specialized centers.

It affirmed that the visiting doctors program is a reflection of its commitment to host an elite group of international consultants in order to provide the best medical, therapeutic, research and training services; stating that the list of consultants includes internationally renowned medical professionals with various fields of specialization.

Ministry of Public Works handles 2,356 'emergency' reports in July

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 7: The Ministry of Public Works has announced that its emergency department managed a total of 2,356 reports throughout July, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

Among these, Jahra Governorate recorded the highest number of reports with 477, followed by Farwaniya Governorate 394, Capital 331,

Hawalli Governorate 206, Ahmadi Governorate 349, Mubarak Al-Kabeer Governorate 79, Expressways 255, Operations 58 and the Sanitary Engineering Sector 207 reports.

This reflects the ministry's ongoing commitment to addressing public concerns and maintaining effective emergency response services.

World News Roundup

Europe

Hotel collapse kills 2

UK calls on Musk to act responsibly

LONDON, Aug 7, (Agencies): The British government has called on **Elon Musk** to act responsibly after the tech billionaire used his social media platform X to unleash a barrage of posts that officials say risk inflaming the violent unrest gripping the country.

Justice Minister Heidi Alexander made the comments Tuesday morning after Musk posted a comment saying that "Civil war is inevitable" in the UK. Musk later doubled down, highlighting complaints that the British criminal justice system treats Muslims more leniently than far-right activists and comparing Britain's crackdown on social media users to the Soviet Union.



Musk

"Use of language such as a 'civil war' is in no way acceptable," Alexander told Times Radio. "We are seeing police officers being seriously injured, buildings set alight, and so I really do think that everyone who has a platform should be exercising their power responsibly."

Britain has been shaken by violence for more than a week, as police clashed with crowds spouting anti-immigrant and Islamophobic slogans in cities and towns from Northern Ireland to the south coast of England. The unrest began after right-wing activists used social media to spread misinformation about a knife attack that killed three girls during a Taylor Swift-themed dance event on July 29.

Prime Minister Keir Starmer, who has described the riots as "far-right thuggery," said after an emergency meeting with law enforcement officials and government ministers Tuesday that perpetrators will swiftly be punished.

Violence

More than 400 people have been arrested due to violence in more than two dozen towns and cities and about 100 have been charged, after Starmer announced plans to ramp up the criminal justice system.

An 18-year-old man who trashed police cars in Bolton, in northern England, on Sunday was believed to be the first person sentenced in the unrest. James Nelson got a two-month prison term Tuesday after pleading guilty in Manchester Magistrates' Court to criminal damage, police said.

Starmer deflected questions from reporters about Musk, saying his focus was on keeping communities safe.

The government is calling on social media companies, such as Musk's X, formerly known as Twitter, to do more to combat the spread of misleading and inflammatory information online.

Meanwhile, British police are gearing up for another night of violence amid concerns that far-right groups plan to target as many as 30 locations around the United Kingdom on Wednesday following a week of rioting and disorder.

Authorities are mobilizing about 6,000 specially trained officers to respond to disorder throughout the U.K., and London's Metropolitan Police Service said it would do "everything in our power" to protect the capital.

Germany hotel collapse kills 2: Part of a hotel on the Mosel River in western Germany collapsed, leaving two people dead and two others still trapped in the wreckage hours later, authorities said Wednesday.

Fourteen people were in the hotel in Kroev when one story of the building collapsed at about 11 p.m. Tuesday. Police said five were able to get out of the building unhurt because they weren't in the part that collapsed. But others were trapped.

Rescuers were able to contact some of them by cellphone. But getting to them proved to be difficult because the collapse of one story left two ceilings lying on top of each other, according to Joerg Teusch, fire and disaster protection inspector for the Bernkastel-Wittlich district.

Five people were rescued Wednesday. (AP)

Norway crown princess son faces charges: The eldest son of Norway's Crown Princess Mette-Marit is under suspicion for causing bodily harm and criminal damage, Oslo police said Wednesday.

Marius Borg Høiby is the stepson of the heir to the Norwegian throne, Crown Prince Haakon, and is the son of Mette-Marit from a previous relationship. He has no royal title or official duties.

On Sunday, officers responded to a disturbance in downtown Oslo and a man in his 20s was briefly detained. Police have confirmed it was Borg Høiby, 27, who faces preliminary charges of bodily harm and criminal damage, one stage short of formal charges, and was released. (AP)

Man gets 4 months for assaulting PM: A Polish man on Wednesday was sentenced to four months in jail for assaulting the Danish prime minister as well as separate sexual harassment charges. He will also be deported and banned from returning to Denmark for the next six years.

The unidentified 39-year-old man, held in pretrial custody since the assault, has been charged with punching Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen's right shoulder with a clenched fist, causing her to lose her balance but not fall. Frederiksen suffered whiplash at the time.

Ukraine launches attack in Kursk: The Russian Defense Ministry said on Tuesday that the Ukrainian forces launched a massive attack on the defense positions in Russia's Kursk region at 8:00 a.m. local time (0500 GMT).

In its Telegram channel, the defense ministry said that up to 300 soldiers from Ukraine's 22nd Mechanized Brigade, supported by 11 tanks and over 20 armored combat vehicles, attacked the Russian border defense positions near the settlements of Nikolaev-Daryino and Oleshnya.

Russian gov urges people to give blood: The head of Russia's Kursk border region on Wednesday urged local residents to donate blood amid blurry reports of an incursion by combatants from Ukraine.

Alexei Smirnov, Kursk's acting governor, said on Telegram that blood banks were stocking up because of the fighting.

"In the last 24 hours, our region has been heroically resisting attacks" by Ukrainian fighters, Smirnov wrote, adding that all emergency services were on high alert.



US Democratic presidential nominee Vice President Kamala Harris and her running mate Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz arrive at a campaign rally in Philadelphia on Aug 6. Harris introduced Walz to the nation at a raucous rally on Tuesday in battleground Pennsylvania that was aimed at building momentum for the newly minted Democratic presidential ticket in the sprint toward Election Day. (AP)

Politics

'Counties can do more to probe election results'

Kehoe wins GOP nom for governorship

COLUMBIA, Mo., Aug 7, (AP): Missouri voters have nominated Lt. Gov Mike Kehoe to be the Republican candidate for governor, making the governor's race his to lose.

Speaking to a crowd of supporters in Jefferson City, Kehoe described himself as an "underdog" and said people doubted his campaign from the start.

"We proved, once again, the American dream is still alive," Kehoe said.

Kehoe edged out Secretary of State Jay Ashcroft and state Sen Bill Eigel to win the GOP nomination, a huge advantage in a strongly conservative state currently without any Democratic statewide officials.

Kehoe will face off in November against state House Minority Leader Crystal Quade, who won the Democratic nomination.

Republican Gov Mike Parson is barred from seeking reelection by term limits.

The GOP fight for the governorship had appeared to be between Ashcroft, who comes from a Missouri political dynasty, and Kehoe, a powerhouse in fundraising who was endorsed by Parson to be his successor.

Recognition

Ashcroft had considerable name recognition after serving as secretary of state since 2017. His father, John Ashcroft, served as Missouri governor, a US senator and US attorney general under former president George W. Bush.

But Ashcroft performed poorly Tuesday, coming in third after Eigel.

"Unfortunately, tonight this campaign has come to an end," Eigel said at a suburban St. Louis watch party. "Our commitment to a bold conservative action has not."

Kehoe and his supporters poured money into his campaign and advertisements to make up for Ashcroft's lead in name identification. Roughly a week before Tuesday's primary, his campaign reported raising \$4.2 million over the election cycle, more than three times what Ashcroft raised.

Pro-Kehoe political action committee American Dream PAC also brought in more than \$7 million, more

than double the close to \$3 million raised by Committee 4 Liberty, which backs Ashcroft.

Kehoe assumed the lieutenant governor's seat in 2018. He was appointed to the position following a government reshuffling when former Gov. Eric Greitens resigned in the face of potential impeachment that year. Mike Parson was serving as lieutenant governor but ascended to the governor's office when Greitens left. Parson then tapped Kehoe to replace him as lieutenant governor. Kehoe had been serving as the second-highest ranking state senator at the time.

Kehoe was first elected to the state Senate in 2010 after years as a car dealership owner. As majority floor leader, he oversaw legislation that restricted unions and that Republicans said would help local businesses.

As lieutenant governor, Kehoe oversees work in the GOP-led state Senate, where Republican infighting played out dramatically this year.

On Tuesday, he called for unity.

"This campaign has also exposed some deep divisions within our party," Kehoe said. "So let me say this, the future of Missouri is too important for the Republican Party to be reduced to finger-pointing and name-calling."

Attorney General Andrew Bailey fought off a challenge from Trump lawyer Will Scharf to clinch the GOP nomination and, presumably, keep his seat.

Tuesday was voters' first chance to weigh in on Bailey, another Parson appointee named to the position after Eric Schmitt resigned to become a US senator in 2022.

Also:

TOPEKA, Kan: A former Kansas attorney general and failed candidate for governor has found at least initial success in his political comeback attempt, winning Tuesday's Republican primary for an open US House seat.

Former Kansas Attorney General **Derek Schmidt** prevailed in the primary in the 2nd District of eastern Kansas over **Jeff Kahrs**, a former top regional federal health official, and **Shawn Tiffany**, a rancher. Even though Kahrs worked in former Presi-

dent **Donald Trump's** administration, Schmidt won Trump's endorsement.

In the Democratic primary, former US Rep **Nancy Boyda**, who held the 2nd District seat in 2007 and 2008, defeated **Matt Kleinmann**, a public health advocate who was a member of the 2008 national champion University of Kansas men's basketball team.

Boyda won the nomination even though she riled up some party activists by positioning herself toward the political center for what she saw as a more viable general election campaign in the Republican-leaning district. She lost her 2008 race for reelection.

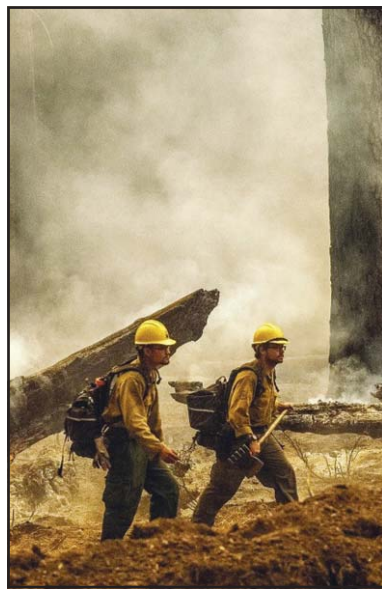
ATLANTA: Georgia's State Election Board voted Tuesday to require county election officials to make a "reasonable inquiry" before certifying election results to the state, signaling that fights about approving election results could intensify this November in the South's premier battleground state.

Supporters say the measure is needed because members of county election boards must swear statements that results are accurate and need to be able to adequately assure themselves that the totals are correct before doing so.

"Why one would not want to assume there is some oversight?" asked State Election Board member **Janice Johnston**, who was appointed to the panel by the state Republican Party. "It's the duty of the board to provide some oversight, in a fair way, in a reasonable way."

But opponents of the rule say it's an invitation to create post-election chaos and that the board is defying state law that says that county officials "shall certify" results, as well as more than a century of court precedent finding county officials have little wiggle room on the issue.

"The proposed rule changes will give authority to local election officials to halt the counting of votes and slow down, or even outright refuse certification if they contend there are any irregularities, essentially making the certification of election results discretionary," said House Minority **Whip Sam Park**, a Democrat from **Lawrenceville**.



Firefighters pass smoke from a backfire as crews work to protect the Mill Creek community in Tehama County, Calif on Aug 6. Several homes burned on Aug 5 as a fast-moving wildfire torched a California hillside community, triggering evacuations while hundreds of firefighters tried to control the blaze. (AP)



Iscol



Adams

America

Quake hits Southern Calif: An earthquake northwest of Los Angeles shook a large swath of Southern California on Tuesday night, but there were no immediate reports of damage.

The US Geological Survey said the 5.2 magnitude temblor struck at 9:09 p.m. and was centered near Mettler, an unincorporated area in Kern County about 85 miles (137 kilometers) from downtown Los Angeles.

Authorities in Los Angeles and other affected communities were checking for any damage to infrastructure.

The earthquake was felt at Dodger Stadium in the middle of the seventh inning of a baseball game between the Los Angeles Dodgers and the Philadelphia Phillies, but the quake garnered no discernible reaction from the crowd.

The Kern County Fire Department said in a social media post that firefighters in the area would survey their districts. (AP)

Oklahoma plane crash kills 4: Four people were killed when a small airplane crashed Tuesday afternoon in Oklahoma City, local authorities said.

The plane crashed about 1:30 pm at Sundance Airport, a small airport on the outskirts of the city, according to Oklahoma City Fire Capt John Chenoweth. He said the National Transportation Safety Board and the Federal Aviation Administration were notified of the crash.

The FAA said in preliminary statement that the aircraft was a single-engine Beechcraft BE33 that crashed while taking off from the airport and the NTSB will be in charge of investigating.

NTSB spokesperson Keith Holloway wrote in an email that the airplane was a Beech F33A, though the information is preliminary. NTSB investigators are expected to be on the scene tomorrow to examine the aircraft, Holloway added. (AP)

Drones used to warn NYers: Gone is the bullhorn. Instead, New York City emergency management officials have turned high-tech, using drones to warn residents about potential threatening weather.

With a buzzing sound in the background, a drone equipped with a loudspeaker flies

over homes warning people who live in basement or ground-floor apartments about impending heavy rains.

"Be prepared to leave your location," said the voice from the sky in footage released Tuesday by the city's emergency management

agency. "If flooding occurs, do not hesitate."

About five teams with multiple drones each were deployed to specific neighborhoods prone to flooding. **Zach Iscol**, the city's emergency management commissioner, said the messages were being relayed in multiple lan-

guages. They were expected to continue until the weather impacted the drone flights.

Floods have been deadly for New Yorkers living in basement apartments, which can quickly fill up in a deluge. Eleven people drowned in such homes in 2021 amid rain from the remnants of Hurricane Ida.

"You know, we live in a bubble, and we have to meet people where they are in notifications so they can be prepared," New York City Mayor **Eric Adams** said at a press briefing on Tuesday. (AP)

Debby swirls over Atlantic: Tropical Storm Debby is taking a breather Wednesday over the western Atlantic Ocean but it isn't done dousing the coastal Carolinas before it slowly marches north.

Debby was expected to restrengthen and turn north toward the South Carolina coastline for a second landfall late Wednesday or early Thursday, weather officials said. The storm carried the threat not only of additional rainfall but also of tornadoes in coastal sections of the Carolinas spreading north into southeast Virginia on Thursday.

The slow-moving storm drenched coastal cities in Georgia and South Carolina late Monday into Tuesday, stirring up tornadoes and submerging streets with waist-high floodwaters. The storm has dropped more than a foot (30 centimeters) of rain in some places already and could dump staggering rain totals of up to 25 inches (64 centimeters) in places by the time it ends. (AP)



A fire department vehicle stands in front of a collapsed hotel in Kroev, Germany on Aug 7. Part of a hotel on the Mosel River in western Germany collapsed, leaving two people dead and several others trapped in the wreckage, authorities said on Wednesday. (AP)

Lat/Am

Noboa delivers weapons

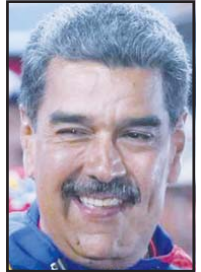
Nations in 'talks' with Venezuela govt, oppn

CARACAS, Venezuela, Aug 7, (Agencies): Since Venezuela's disputed presidential election nine days ago, officials from Brazil, Colombia and Mexico have been in constant contact with representatives of both Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro and opposition candidate Edmundo González, seeking a solution to the country's political crisis.

The three nations, whose current leftist presidents are Maduro allies, are holding conversations with both sides, a senior Mexican official who has been part of the discussions told The Associated Press. The official declined to characterize that as formal mediation.

The three countries are recommending that the government and the opposition follow Venezuelan laws and appear before the appropriate institutions to appeal any part of the process, the official said. That recommendation, however, is a tall ask for the opposition, because Venezuela's ruling party controls every aspect of government, including the justice system, and uses it to defeat and repress real and perceived opponents.

The official spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss the contacts and declined to identify the Venezuelan government and opposition representatives participating in the discussions. The official also would not say whether González's team has signaled its willingness to formally appeal the results of the July 28 election.



Maduro

Rejecting

Unlike many other nations that have either recognized Maduro or González as the winner, the governments of Brazil, Colombia and Mexico have taken a more neutral stance by neither rejecting nor applauding when Venezuela's electoral authorities declared Maduro the winner at the ballot box.

Meanwhile, González will not appear before the country's high court Wednesday for a hearing related to an election audit requested by President Nicolás Maduro, his campaign confirmed to The Associated Press. Venezuela's Supreme Tribunal of Justice on Monday ordered González - the candidate of the opposition coalition - Maduro and the other eight candidates in the July 28 presidential election to attend hearings scheduled through Friday.

The hearings follow days of global criticism of Maduro and his loyal National Electoral Council over the election results. Electoral authorities declared Maduro the winner but have yet to produce voting tallies.



Bolivia prez proposes referendum: Bolivia's socialist President Luis Arce said Tuesday national referenda would be held soon on the removal of politically combustible fuel subsidies and on the constitutionality of presidential reelections, offering for the first time a concrete path out of the country's economic morass and political limbo.

Arce did not give a date for the votes in his speech from Sucre, the southern historical capital, as Bolivia marked the 199th anniversary of its independence. He defended the referenda proposal as a way to dispel some of the uncertainty Bolivians have endured for months, promising that the populist gesture wasn't about "electoral calculations or personal ambitions."

"It's time for the people, together with their government, to choose the path we wish to follow in view of the bicentennial," Arce said.

A plan to vote on the elimination of fuel subsidies comes as incensed truckers and other protesters have blockaded roads leading to Bolivian cities in recent weeks over the scarcity of diesel, which is more than 80% imported. Fuel shipments from Bolivia's key ally Russia were stranded by a rainstorm last week at a Chilean port, adding to pressures on Arce's administration.



Argentina ex-prez accused of abuse: The ex-partner of former Argentine President Alberto Fernández has accused him of physically and emotionally abusing her, according to an Argentine court order issued Tuesday. The allegations shocked the country and threaten to further stain the reputation of the moderate leftist whose government many Argentines blame for deepening an economic crisis.

In the judicial order obtained by The Associated Press, the Buenos Aires federal court opened a criminal investigation into the accusations of "psychological terrorism," phone harassment and physical abuse against Fernández from Fabiola Yáñez, his former partner of at least eight years and the mother of his second child.

The order said Yáñez, who testified by phone from her home in Madrid, has decided to press charges against Fernández for threatening and "psychologically intimidating" her daily and causing her "minor injuries in a context of gender-based violence." The document did not give further details about her accusations of physical violence.



Noboa delivers weapons to police: Ecuadorian President Daniel Noboa on Tuesday delivered 1,782 rifles to the national police to bolster its capacity to fight organized crime plaguing the South American country. The weapons include 1,752 5.56 caliber rifles and 30 high-precision rifles.

At an official event in Duran in southwest Guayas province, Noboa ratified the government's support for the police force, which along with the armed forces stepped up anti-crime operations after the president in January declared the country in a state of "internal armed conflict" against criminal gangs classified as "terrorists." "We have fought different criminal groups, arrested leaders of highly dangerous terrorist groups and seized drugs and weapons, and we remain firm in the fight against mafias. We are not going to stop until we achieve freedom for all of Ecuador," the president said.



Mexico road accident kills 9: At least nine people were killed and 12 others injured in a road accident on Tuesday near the municipality of Guadalupe Victoria in the central Mexican state of Puebla, local authorities said.

According to a report from the General Coordination of Civil Protection of Puebla, the accident occurred when two vehicles collided head-on at kilometer 4 of the highway from San Luis Atexcac to Guadalupe Victoria.

The injured were taken to Hospital General Guadalupe Victoria for treatment. One of the vans was carrying passengers, according to witnesses. Puebla Governor Sergio Salomon expressed his condolences on his social networks to the bereaved families.



People gather in front of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) headquarters during a protest rally in Dhaka, on Aug 7. Inset: Nobel laureate Muhammad Yunus waves goodbye to the media at Charles de Gaulle airport in Roissy, north of Paris on Wednesday. (AP)

Bangladesh's interim govt to take oath on Thursday: military chief

Bangladesh's military chief said Wednesday that an interim government headed by Nobel laureate Muhammad Yunus would be sworn in on Thursday night as he returns from Paris to take over the administration and try to restore stability in the country, after an uprising forced former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to step down and flee to neighboring

India. Gen. Waker-Uz-Zaman said in a televised address late Wednesday afternoon that those responsible for the violence since Hasina's resignation would be brought to justice.

The military chief, flanked by the chiefs of navy and air force, said that he spoke to Yunus and would

receive him at the airport on Thursday. Zaman said he was hopeful that Yunus would take the situation to a "beautiful democratic" process. Speaking to reporters in Paris, Yunus said "I'm looking forward to going back home and seeing what's happening there, and how we can organize ourselves to get out of the trouble that we are in." (AP)

Asia

Thai court dissolves progressive Move Forward Party

US, Australia and Philippines stage drills

MANILA, Philippines, Aug 7, (Agencies): The United States, Australia, Canada and the Philippines held air and naval maneuvers Wednesday in what they said was a show of force to promote the rule of law in the disputed South China Sea, where China has increasingly asserted its territorial claims. In an apparent response, China said it conducted air and sea combat patrols on the same day.

Adm. Samuel Paparo, who heads the US Indo-Pacific Command, and top military and defense commanders from Australia, Canada and the Philippines said in a joint statement that they "stand together to address common maritime challenges and underscore our shared dedication to upholding international law and the rules-based order." They said they were staging the two-day exercises to uphold unhindered passage in the Indo-Pacific region.

China has long claimed much of the South China Sea, a key global trade and security route, and vowed to defend its territorial interests at all costs. Its claims overlap those of smaller coastal states, including the Philippines and Vietnam, hampering their access to traditional fishing areas and disrupting oil and gas exploration in their internationally recognized exclusive economic zones.

"The naval and air force units of participating nations will operate together, enhancing cooperation and interoperability between our armed forces," the commanders said. "The activity will be conducted in a manner that is consistent with international law and with due regard to the safety of navigation and the rights and interests of other states."

Also:

MANILA, Philippines: Philippine authorities have seized homemade explosives and equipment used for dynamite fishing in Zamboanga City in the southern Philippines, the military said on Tuesday. The Philippine Navy said a team

Helicopter with five 'on board' crashes in mountains of Nepal

KATHMANDU, Nepal, Aug 7, (Agencies): All five people on board a helicopter were killed when it crashed Wednesday in the mountains just northwest of Nepal's capital, authorities said.

The bodies of four men and a woman were pulled from the wreckage, said Krishna Prasad Humagai, the government administrator of Nuwakot district.

Police and army rescuers reached the area and two rescue helicopters were also sent to assist in the operation, the official said.

The crash site is in the Suryachaur area, which is just northwest of Kathmandu, and is on a mountain covered by forest.

The helicopter had taken off from Kathmandu international airport at 1:54 p.m. local time and was heading towards the town of Syaprubeshi.

The helicopter, an Eurocopter AS350 belonging to Nepal-based Air Dynasty, had lost contact with the

tower just three minutes after take-off, according to a statement from the Civil Aviation Authority of Nepal.

The four passengers are Chinese nationals, and the pilot is a Nepali man, officials said.

Also:

ISLAMABAD: Romina Khurshid Alam, coordinator to the Pakistani prime minister on climate change and environmental coordination, has said the country has been focusing on empowering women to enhance community resilience amid climate change challenges.

As the world grapples with increasing frequency and intensity of natural disasters, women have a role to play in disaster risk reduction, and their unique contributions are essential for building resilient communities and ensuring effective disaster preparedness, Alam said while addressing a seminar on disaster risk reduction on Tuesday.



BANGKOK: A court in Thailand on Wednesday ordered the dissolution of the progressive Move Forward Party, which finished first in last year's general election, saying it violated the constitution by proposing an amendment of a law against defaming the country's royal family.

The Constitutional Court said it voted unanimously to dissolve the party because its campaign to amend the law was considered an attempt to overthrow the nation's constitutional monarchy.

The Move Forward Party was unable to form a government after topping the polls because members of the Senate, at that time a conservative military-appointed body, refused to endorse its candidate for prime minister.



Former leader of Move Forward Party, Pita Limjaroenrat, (center), arrives at Constitutional Court in Bangkok, Thailand on Aug 7. A court in Thailand on Wednesday ordered the dissolution of the progressive Move Forward Party, which finished first in last year's general election, saying it violated the constitution by proposing an amendment of a law against defaming the country's royal family. (AP)



Moussi



Tshisekedi

Africa

Tunisia oppn figure sentenced: A potential presidential candidate in Tunisia has been sentenced to two years in prison, marking another setback to the country's fledgling opposition challenging President Kais Saied as he seeks a new term.

Abir Moussi, a 49-year-old lawyer and the head of the right-wing Free Destourian Party, was arrested in October after criticizing the electoral process and presidential decrees guiding it, alleging a lack of transparency.

Following a complaint by the North African nation's election authority, she was found guilty of violating a controversial anti-fake news decree outlawing spreading information that slanders or harms others. The law has been widely used to prosecute those who criticize authorities. Moussi's lawyer Nafaa Laribi told The Associated Press on Tuesday that she still intends to run in the Oct. 6 pre-sidential election, and that, unlike other candidates, nothing in Monday's sentence prevents her from running.

Laribi said Moussi's morale remained high, and he planned to appeal.

The sentence is the latest in a growing crackdown that observers have said is politically motivated against Saied's critics, regardless of political affiliation.

With Moussi and other leading opposition figures in prison, Saied is expected to face little election competition in what was once the Middle East and North Africa's most progressive democracy. (AP)



Congo's prez slams Kabila: Congo's President Felix Tshisekedi accused former leader Joseph Kabila of backing a US-sanctioned coalition of rebel groups during an interview with a private radio station on Tuesday.

"Joseph Kabila boycotted the election and is preparing an insurrection because he is the AFC," Tshisekedi said, referring to the Alliance Fleuve Congo, a political-military movement launched in December with the aim of uniting armed groups, political parties and civil society against Congo's gov-

ernment. He did not provide any evidence to support his claim.

Tshisekedi's accusation follows the AF announcement of sanctions against the AFC last month. Washington accused the alliance of seeking to overthrow Congo's govern-

ment and fueling conflict in the east of the country. It said the main member of the alliance, the renowned rebel group M23, is already under US sanctions.

Tshisekedi, along with US and UN experts, accuse neighboring Rwanda of giving military

backing to M23. Rwanda denies the claim, but in February it effectively admitted that it has troops and missile systems in eastern Congo to safeguard its security, pointing to a buildup of Congolese forces near the border. Congo and Rwanda last week agreed to a cease-fire that began on Sunday following talks mediated by Angola. (AP)



Niger breaks off ties with Ukraine: Niger will break off diplomatic ties with Ukraine "with immediate effect," Amadou Abdramane, spokesman for the Niger military government, announced on national television on Tuesday.

He said in a statement that the move was taken because of Kyiv's "support for terrorist organizations," and called the UN Security Council to make a ruling on Ukraine's "aggression."

The statement said that "considering the seriousness of the situation, and the recognized and assumed involvement of Ukraine in the aggression of Mali," the Nigerien government, in solidarity with the Malian government and people, decided to break off "with immediate effect" diplomatic relations with Ukraine, and the referral to the UN Security Council with a view to ruling on the Ukrainian "aggression" and its sponsors. On Sunday, Mali's transitional government said it would sever diplomatic relations with Ukraine "with immediate effect," citing Ukraine's acknowledged involvement in an act of aggression against Mali. (Xinhua)



This aerial drone photo taken on Aug 7, 2024 shows emergency workers attempting to seal a dike breach in Tieling, northeast China's Liaoning Province. The dike breach at a river in northeast China's Liaoning Province was sealed at 4:27 am on Wednesday after emergency workers had worked around the clock to repair it, according to local authorities. (Xinhua)

Country	Index	Change	Closing pts
SAUDI	TASI	+50.55	11,729.71
DUBAI	DFMGI	+60.35	4,197.67
JAPAN	Nikkei 225	+414.16	35,089.62
PHILIPPINES	PSEI	+101.93	6,535.17
EGYPT	EGX 30	+417.78	28,628.19

Country	Index	Change	Closing pts
PAKISTAN	KSE 100	-71.35	77,086.82

Business

Boursa Kuwait recovers after early sharp decline

General market index up 1%

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 7: The Boursa Kuwait experienced a notable recovery during the 3rd session of the week, following a sharp decline earlier in the day. Here's a summary of the market movements, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The recovery of the Kuwait Stock Exchange today indicates resilience, but market participants remain cautious as they await further economic indicators and potential impacts on future trading sessions.

The General Market Index recovered 1 percent or 68.54 points to close at 6,995.87 points. The session saw a liquid-

ity of 59.2 million dinars with 224.4 million shares traded through 15,856 transactions. Out of 126 traded stocks, 87 gained, 27 lost, and 12 remained unchanged.

The Premier Market Index unincreased by 1.07 percent or 80.89 points, ending the session at 7,624.57 points. This sector saw liquidity of 50.4 million dinars, with 156.8 million shares traded through 10,971 transactions. Among the 34 traded stocks, 27 gained, 5 lost, and 2 remained unchanged.

The Main Market Index rose by 0.59 percent or 34.46 points to close at 5,898.78 points. The liquidity for this segment was 8.1 million dinars, with 67.6 million shares traded through 4,885 transactions. Out of 92 traded stocks, 60 gained, 22 lost, and 10 remained unchanged.

85% of GCC executives prioritize innovation

GCC firms prioritize innovation despite readiness 'challenges'

DUBAI, Aug 7: Companies in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) prioritize innovation more than ever – with 85% of senior executives in the region ranking it among their organizations' top priorities, slightly above the global average. This strong commitment to innovation reflects the region's ambition to lead the global knowledge economy. A new report released by Boston Consulting Group (BCG) highlights this positive trend while noting opportunities for GCC firms to enhance their innovation readiness.

For its annual innovation study, Innovation Systems Need a Reboot, BCG assessed companies' innovation maturity and surveyed senior innovation executives worldwide, including those in the GCC region.

While innovation continues to demonstrate value, the study shows that innovation systems globally need a reboot. Innovation priority remains at an all-time high, with 83% of global companies ranking it as a top-three prior-



Faisal Hamady, Managing Director & Partner



Thiabult Werle, Managing Director & Partner

ity. However, innovation readiness has sharply declined worldwide, from 20% two years ago to 9% last year and just 3% this year globally. This global trend is even more pronounced in the GCC, where firms exhibit even lower innovation readiness than the global average. The study reveals that while GCC organizations prioritize innovation at a higher level than their global counterparts, they face greater challenges in translating that ambition into readiness. This aligns with global patterns where companies across various regions are struggling to match their innovation priorities with practical readiness, though the gap appears more significant in the GCC.

"We are seeing GCC organizations prioritize innovation, with 85% of executives ranking it highly. However, converting this ambition into readiness remains a challenge," said Faisal Hamady, Managing Director and Partner at BCG. "To close this gap, it is crucial to strengthen the link between innovation and business strategy. Organizations must benchmark processes, align them with strategic goals, and leverage Generative AI while addressing talent constraints and rising capital costs."

Talent Challenges in a Changing Landscape

When GCC business leaders were asked to rank the challenges facing their innovation teams, talent pool constraints emerged as one of the top concerns, alongside the rising cost of capital.

"The GCC is in flux when it comes to attracting top talent," noted Thiabult Werle Managing Director and Partner at BCG. "While Dubai, Abu Dhabi, and Riyadh have all ranked highly as cities of choice for global talent, the region is still in the nascent stages of building its talent pool. However, as we've seen with many initiatives in the GCC, if you build it, they will come. The rapid development of innovation ecosystems in these cities will likely accelerate talent attraction in the coming years."

The study also highlighted the need for a broader ecosystem approach to innovation in the GCC, recognizing the crucial role of public sector leaders and national strategies in driving innovation alongside corporate efforts.

Generative AI Adoption on the Rise

The study found that 84% of GCC firms are starting to use Generative AI (GenAI) to drive innovation, reflecting the region's embrace of cutting-edge technologies. However, as with global trends, most organizations are still in the early stages of GenAI adoption.

"GenAI presents a significant opportunity for GCC innovators to boost efficiency and bring fresh perspectives to their organizations," said Managing Director and Partner, Faisal Hamady. "As the region continues to invest in digital transformation and AI capabilities, we expect to see more widespread and sophisticated use of GenAI in innovation processes."

Six Key Recommendations for Linking Innovation with Business Strategy

Practical foresight in strategy is crucial for GCC companies to succeed. Companies can position themselves at the forefront of their industries by being proactive, anticipating future trends, and aligning innovation efforts with strategic goals. To improve innovation readiness and link innovation with business strategy, BCG recommends focusing on six key elements:

- Executive ownership: Ensure innovation is championed by the CEO or other prominent members of the C-suite.
- Clear sense of purpose: Develop a shared story on the purpose of innovation and how it supports the company's strategy.
- Focus on competitive advantage: Explicitly focus on opportunities where the organization has an explicit right to win.
- Specified domains: Center the innovation portfolio on areas that support the overall strategy.
- Target portfolio structure: Create a vision for how resources should be deployed across the innovation portfolio.
- Quantified objectives: Establish a fact-based perspective on how innovation contributes to financial goals.

Looking Ahead

As GCC economies diversify towards knowledge-based sectors, strategic innovation becomes crucial. By addressing current challenges and aligning innovation with business strategy, GCC companies can compete globally and drive regional economic growth. Leveraging emerging technologies like GenAI while maintaining a clear strategic vision will be instrumental. To close the readiness gap, leaders in the GCC need to sharpen the link between innovation and strategy while leveraging AI. Additionally, putting in an outsized effort to address talent constraints and funding challenges, especially in light of rising capital costs, will be critical. This approach will improve innovation readiness, enhance talent attraction, and accelerate technological advancement, positioning the GCC as a global innovation hub.

'Digital' currency market rebounds with Bitcoin rise

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 7: Following a period of severe losses, the cryptocurrency market has rebounded strongly, driven by a sharp rise in Bitcoin, the dominant player in the sector, reports Al-Jarida daily.

This surge has led to a substantial increase in the combined market value of cryptocurrencies, which grew by \$143 billion in the last few hours of trading.

Bitcoin (BTC), the leading cryptocurrency saw a remarkable recovery, with its value rising by 13 percent in recent hours despite experiencing a weekly decline of 16 percent.

Bitcoin is currently trading at approximately \$55,955 and has a market capitalization of \$1.1 trillion, accounting for 55.67 percent of the total cryptocurrency market.

Ethereum (ETH), the second-largest cryptocurrency by market value gained 16.2 percent recently, although it remains 23.8 percent lower for the week.

Ethereum is trading at around \$2,526, with a market cap of \$303.9 billion, holding a 15.32 percent market share.

Tether (USDT): This stablecoin's price has remained steady at \$1, with a market value of \$114.6 billion, representing a 5.77 percent share of the total crypto market.

Binance Coin has experienced a 19.4 percent gain in the past few hours, though it has declined by 14.5 percent over the week. It is trading at \$489.27 with a market cap of \$71.47 billion, covering 3.60 percent of the market.

Solana (SOL) saw a notable 25.5 percent increase recently, despite a weekly drop of 21.4 percent. It is currently priced at \$143.27, with a market cap of \$66.7 billion, making up 3.36 percent of the total cryptocurrency market.

The cryptocurrency market faced intense volatility last week, with Bitcoin's value dropping below \$50,000 amid fears of a US recession following a disappointing July jobs report.



Financial Results H1 2024

81 Million
KD Normalized Net Income Growth **11%**

REVENUE

↑ 2%

945

KD Million

EBITDA

↑ 1%
Normalized EBITDA Growth

325

KD Million

EPS

19

FILS

CUSTOMERS

47.8

Million

The Board of Directors declared an interim dividends of 10 fils per share for the first half of 2024, to the shareholders already registered in the company's register on the record date of Tuesday 1/10/2024.

The Corporate Action Time Schedule:

Cum Date*	26/9/2024
Ex Date	29/9/2024
Record Date	1/10/2024
Payment Date	6/10/2024

- Cash dividends will be transferred to the bank accounts of the shareholders, who are registered in the electronic transfer service for the distribution of profits, as of Sunday 6/10/2024.

- Shareholders who were not able to register in the electronic transfer service for the distribution of profits, shall contact the local banks to register in this service or through their electronic services, according to the instructions issued by the Kuwait Clearing Company.

* Cum-Dividend Date:

The last day on which the share must be purchased so that the shareholder is registered in the company's register on the record date and therefore is entitled to receive dividends.

Zain Group Q2 2024 normalized net income growth soars 55% to reach KD 52 million

Board declares interim dividend of 10 fils per share

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 7: Zain Group, a leading provider of innovative technologies and digital lifestyle communications operating in eight markets across the Middle East and Africa, announces its consolidated financial results for Q2 and six months ended June 30, 2024. Zain served 47.8 million customers at the end Q2 2024, an exceptional 13% increase from Q1 2024, as 5 million customers return to the network, due to the network stabilization efforts being carried out in Sudan.

In Q2 2024, Zain Group generated consolidated revenue of KD 479 million (USD 1.6 billion), up 4% compared to Q2 2023. Normalized EBITDA grew 13% YoY to reach KD 178 million (USD 579 million), reflecting an EBITDA margin of 37%. Normalized net income growth soared 55% to reach KD 52 million (USD 170 million) reflecting an earnings per share of 12 fils. Normalized EBITDA and net income growth for Q2 2024 is arrived at by adjusting the number range claim in Q2 2023.

For H1 2024, Zain Group generated consolidated revenue of KD 945 million (USD 3.1 billion). Normalized EBITDA grew 1% YoY to reach KD 325 million (USD 1.1 billion), reflecting an EBITDA margin of 34%. Normalized net income growth for the first six months was 11% reaching KD 81 million (USD 265 million), reflecting earnings per share of 19 fils (USD 0.06). Normalized EBITDA and net income growth for H1 2024 is arrived at by adjusting the number range claim and Tower transaction gain in H1 2023.

Key Operational Notes for Q2 and H1 2024

1. The Board declares an interim dividend of 10 fils per share for the 4th consecutive year, that will be payable to entitled shareholders on 6 October 2024.

2. Zain KSA announces cash dividend of SAR 449 million (USD 120m). Zain Group received USD44m.

3. In comparative terms, Q2'24 net-profit growth is impacted by Kuwait number range claim in Q2'23

4. Q2 2024 includes USD 20 million impairment of network assets in Sudan

5. Overall Q2 revenue grew 4% YoY despite the network and distribution operational challenges in Sudan, where by network services and coverage are gradually improving

6. Sudan recovery plan and new data center sees over 5 million customers returning to the network resulting in 13% increase in total Group customers compared to Q1'24

7. Currency devaluation in Sudan negatively impacted H1'24 key financial KPIs (currency devalued from SDG 596 per 1 USD in June'23 to SDG 1,799 per 1 USD by end of June '24)

8. H1 2024 data revenue grew 1% YoY to reach USD 1.2 billion, representing 39% of Group revenue

9. Over the six months, Zain Group invested USD 159million in CAPEX (tangible and intangible)

10. Operations in Kuwait, KSA, Bahrain and Jordan witness impressive H1 2024 growth in 5G revenues

11. Fintech services witness exponential growth for H1 2024 as total revenue increased 24% YoY, with transaction value increasing 56%

12. Enterprise revenue for H1 2024 up 9% as ZainTECH and local B2B teams secure multiple deals including the integration of the STS acquisition during H1 2024

13. Digital operators Yaqoot in KSA, and Oodi in Iraq, report customer growth of 8% and 37% respectively

14. Digital services including Dizlee API platform add gaming and streaming services to drive growth and expand the customer base

15. Zain wins Best Corporate Governance Award 2024 by World Finance; Leadership in SDGs Award 2023; and Championship Award in Women Empowerment 2024 at the 9th Annual Global Good Governance Awards organized by Cambridge IFA

16. Zain publishes its 13th annual sustainability report, entitled "A Pathway to Value Creation"

Commenting on Q2 and H1 2024 results, Chairman of the Board of Directors of Zain Group, Mr. Osamah Al Furaih said, "The Board is pleased with the sound financial and operational performance of the company given the exceptional socio-economic and currency challenges that management is having to contend with, particularly in Sudan. We remain resolute in our focus to implement effective environmental, social, and governance (ESG) practices, further seeking and developing multiple new lucrative business verticals, and preparing the company for the next phase of sustainable growth in driving shareholder value."

"Given the performance in H1'24, combined with our strong balance sheet and financial solvency, the Board is pleased to declare a fourth consecutive half-year dividend of 10 fils per share, in accordance with our annual minimum dividend policy of 35 fils per share.

Mr. Bader Al-Kharafi, Zain Vice-Chairman and Group CEO commented, "The resilient Q2'24 performance that saw a solid 79% net profit increase compared to Q1'24, is a result of our focus on accelerating revenue and customer growth, and implementation of numerous cost optimi-



Osamah Al Furaih, Zain Chairman



Bader Al-Kharafi, Zain Vice Chairman and Group CEO

- Chairman, Osamah Al Furaih: "Board is focused on dealing with socio-economic challenges and preparing the company for the next phase of sustainable growth in driving shareholder value"
- Vice Chairman & Group CEO, Bader Al-Kharafi: "Resilient performance due to accelerating revenue growth, cost optimization and mitigating initiatives implemented, setting the scene for a solid year"
- Comparatively, the Q2 2024 net-profit is impacted by the one-off gains from settlement of Kuwait Number range claim in Q2 2023
- Group consolidated EBITDA for H1 2024 reaches USD 1.1 billion (KD 325 million)
- Data Revenue grew 1% to represent 39%

- of total Group Revenue for H1 2024
- Digital Operator entities Yaqoot and Oodi driving healthy customer and revenue growth
- Fintech services witness YoY revenue growth of 24% for H1 2024
- Enterprise revenue up 9% for H1 2024 as ZainTECH and local B2B teams secure key clients
- Zain Omantel International expanding partnerships and subsea cables to drive revenue growth
- Zain recognized as having the 'Best Corporate Governance' in Kuwait
- Zain publishes its 13th annual sustainability report, entitled "A Pathway to Value Creation"

Group Key Performance Indicators (KD and USD) for the second quarter (Q2) of 2024

Total Managed Active Customers	47.8 million
Revenue	KD 479 million (USD 1.6 billion)
EBITDA	KD 178 million (USD 579 million)
EBITDA Margin	37%
Net Income	KD 52 million (USD 170 million)
EPS	12 fils (USD 0.04)

Group Key Performance Indicators (KD and USD) for the first six months (H1) of 2024

Revenue	KD 945 million (USD 3.1 billion)
EBITDA	KD 325 million (USD 1.1 billion)
EBITDA Margin	34%
Net Income	KD 81 million (USD 265 million)
EPS	19 fils (USD 0.06)

zation and mitigating initiatives across all our operations. This has set the scene for a solid year. It's unfortunate that the unavoidable currency devaluation in Sudan continues to impact an otherwise impressive operational quarter."

"We are seeing areas of positivity in Sudan where the persistent turnaround efforts of the team there saw 5 million customers recently return to the network, a remarkable achievement given the exceptional circumstances. Our mitigation efforts that focus on network service availability and customer initiatives are paying off."

"We are laser focused on fostering the growth of our integrated digital solutions arm, ZainTECH, in cooperation with our operational B2B teams, geared towards making Zain the digital transformation partner of choice

for governments and businesses regionally. The recent opening of ZainTECH offices in KSA and the integration of STS into our enterprise ecosystem adds enormous capabilities to offer transformative solutions and delivers great value for clients."

"Our fintech entities in KSA, Iraq, Jordan, and most recently in Bahrain, as well as our pure digital operators in KSA and Iraq are witnessing healthy revenue and customer growth. We will continue to expand these lucrative areas of the business across our footprint and look forward to launching fintech services in Kuwait later this year."

Al-Kharafi concluded, "As a leading entity listed on the Premier Market in Kuwait, Zain believes sound cor-

- Strong performance by all major operations saw Q2 2024 Group net profit soar 79% vs. Q1 2024
- Q2 2024 revenue grew 4% YoY reaching KD 479m (USD 1.6 billion)
- Compared to Q1-24, Zain customer base soared 13% during Q2 2024 to reach 47.8 million
- Zain Group received cash dividend of USD44 million from Zain KSA
- Mourning the unfortunate passing of Zain KSA CEO, Eng. Sultan Bin Abdulaziz AlDeghaither

porate governance plays a significant role in providing long-term sustainable value to all stakeholders. It was a gratifying achievement to be recognized as possessing the 'Best Corporate Governance' practice in Kuwait for four consecutive years by World Finance Publishing House. This milestone justly rewards our Investor Relations, Corporate Governance, and Sustainability teams' high ethical standards, transparency, and professionalism towards all our stakeholders."

Financial KPIs of key markets for 3-month & 6-month period ending 30 June 2024

Kuwait: Zain Group's flagship operation maintained its market leadership, with its customer base increasing 1% to reach 2.7 million. For the Group's most profitable operation, revenue for the quarter grew 9% to reach KD 93 million (USD 303 million), Normalized EBITDA grew 11% to reach KD 37 million (USD 122 million), reflecting an EBITDA margin of 40%. Normalized net income grew 17% YoY to reach KD 24 million (USD 78 million). Despite the intense competition, the operator continues to expand and grow its leading nationwide 5G network capturing the largest 5G customer base and revenue market share in the country. Normalized EBITDA and net income 'growth' for Q2 2024 is arrived at by adjusting the number range claim in Q2 2023 (KD 24.68 million).

Saudi Arabia: Revenue for the quarter grew by 7% YoY to reach USD 680 million, while EBITDA reached USD 208 million, reflecting an EBITDA margin of 31%. Net income for the quarter reached USD 28 million. The operator's 5G network covering over 66 cities saw data revenue represent 40% of total revenue and customers served stood at 9 million.

Iraq: Revenue for the quarter jumped 13% YoY to reach USD 263 million, EBITDA grew by 28% reaching USD 115 million, reflecting an EBITDA margin of 44%, with net profit soaring 196% to reach USD 39 million. H1-2024 data revenue grew 29% representing 38% of total revenue. Operator's customer base reached 19 million customers maintaining its market leading position.

Sudan: Revenue for the Q2 2024 when compared to Q1 2024 increased 41% to reach USD 71 million, with strong EBITDA growth of 195% when compared to Q1 2024 reaching USD 34 million, reflecting an EBITDA margin of 49%. Net income for the quarter grew 51% when compared to Q1 2024, reaching USD 33 million. Customer base increased 92% to reach 10 million, up from 5.2 million last quarter due to the robust recovery plan and new data center in Port Sudan.

Due to the rapidly developing situation in Sudan, Q2 2024 performance has been compared with Q1 2024, as any comparison with Q2 2023 would distort the results due to the rapidly evolving conditions in Sudan coupled with the effects of significant currency devaluation in Sudan.

Jordan: Q2 2024 Revenue grew 4% to reach USD 137 million, EBITDA grew by 3% and reached USD 56 million, reflecting an EBITDA margin of 41%, while net income for the period reached USD 17 million. With the ongoing expansion of 5G, FTTH and 4G services across the country, H1-2024 data revenue grew 7% representing 51% of total revenue. Zain Jordan served 4 million customers, up 5% maintaining its market leadership.

Bahrain: Revenue for the quarter was stable at USD 50 million. While EBITDA grew 12% QoQ to reach USD 16 million, reflecting an EBITDA margin of 32%. Net income increased 3% to reach USD 3.6 million, with H1-2024 data revenue growing by 6% to represent 46% of total revenue. END

Contact Group Investor Relations at IR@Zain.com
For additional information, including detailed supplemental schedules, financial statements, and details about our investor call, please visit www.zain.com/en/investor-relations

A message from the Board of Directors on the passing of Eng. Sultan AlDeghaither, Zain KSA CEO

It is with great sadness that the Board of Directors of Zain Group extends its sincere condolences and sympathy on the passing of our dear colleague and brother, Eng. Sultan bin Abdulaziz AlDeghaither, Zain KSA CEO. May God bless his soul and give his loved ones and the entire Zain family strength in overcoming this sudden grief.

He will forever hold a place in all our hearts, and we wholeheartedly acknowledge his remarkable achievements and invaluable contribution to Zain KSA over the years, where he rose from being one of the first employees of the operator to become its CEO, taking the operation and its people to new heights.

Among his many achievements include implementing a strategic transformation plan that turned around the company into achieving historical levels of profitability and paying dividends. Moreover, he placed Zain KSA and the Kingdom on the global 5G map with the launch of the 3rd largest 5G network in world and largest in the Middle East, pushing boundaries and offering the Kingdom's community state-of-the-art high-speed connectivity accompanied by dynamic digital solutions and services.



Zain HQ Building

Philippines manufacturing output sustains growth

The performance of manufacturing production in the Philippines sustained its growth in June 2024, the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) said Wednesday.

Based on the preliminary results of a monthly survey, the PSA said the year-on-year value of production index (VaPI) and the volume of production index (VoPI) increased by 2.2 percent and 2.5 percent in June, respectively.

The PSA said the VaPI rose at

a slowed annual rate of 2.2 percent in June 2024 from a yearly increase of 2.3 percent in May, bringing the average VaPI growth rate from January to June this year to 0.5 percent.

In June 2023, the VaPI yearly growth rose 2.7 percent.

The PSA attributed the slower annual increase in the VaPI in June to the decline in the manufacture of basic metals, which decreased to 17.5 percent during the month from

an annual decrease of 3.1 percent in May.

The manufacture of basic metals contributed 28.5 percent to the downtrend of VaPI for the manufacturing section in June. Other primary contributors to the slower increase of VaPI were the annual decrease in the manufacture of transport equipment, and the slower annual increase in the manufacture of coke and refined petroleum products. (Xinhua)

Tesla is recalling more than 1.6m cars in China

Tesla is recalling 1.68 million cars in China for a remote software upgrade to ensure that they warn the driver when the trunk is not locked shut, China's market regulator said.

The announcement late Tuesday also said that vehicles with faulty trunk latches will be repaired free of charge. The recalls affect some imported Model S and Model X vehicles and domestically

made Model 3 and Model Y cars manufactured between Oct. 15, 2020 and July 17, 2024.

The recall notice said that an unlocked trunk lid could open during driving, interfering with the driver's vision. It did not say whether that had ever happened to any Tesla cars. The U.S.-based electric vehicle maker will fix the problem through a remote software

upgrade, the State Administration for Market Regulation said.

China is a major market and production base for Tesla while also a source of growing competition from Chinese EV makers. The company reported a sharp decline in second-quarter net income last month, as sales fell despite price cuts and low-interest financing. (AP)

Markets recovered much of their losses on Tuesday

Carry trades & how they contributed to this wk's global market mayhem

BANGKOK, Aug 7, (AP) — The mayhem that swept across world markets this week was partly caused by a market strategy known as the "carry trade."

Japan's benchmark Nikkei 225 plunged 12.4% on Monday and markets in Europe and North America suffered outsized losses as traders sold stocks to help cover rising risks from investments made using cheaply financed funds borrowed mostly in Japanese yen.

Markets recovered much of their losses on Tuesday. But the damage lingers.

They were jolted by a combination of factors, including dread of a possible recession in the United States, the world's largest economy, and worries that technology shares have shot way too high this year.

But the scale of the declines was exaggerated by the rush to sell U.S. dollars due to carry trade deals that had helped drive markets to record levels.

Carry trades involve borrowing at low cost in one currency to achieve higher returns from investments in another

currency. One of the most recent examples has been to borrow Japanese yen, expecting the currency to remain cheap against the U.S. dollar and for Japanese interest rates to remain low. The borrowed funds would then be invested in U.S. stocks and Treasury bonds in anticipation of a higher return.

The key factor behind a carry trade is a difference in interest rates. The Bank of Japan has kept interest rates at or near zero for years, trying to encourage more spending and spur economic growth. Last week, it raised its main interest rate from nearly zero.

Higher interest rates tend to boost the value of a nation's currency, and the Japanese yen surged against the U.S. dollar. Traders scrambled to sell higher risk, dollar-denominated assets to cover suddenly higher borrowing costs, plus losses from foreign exchange rate changes and losses in asset values as share prices plunged.

Also, hedge funds that conduct carry trades use computer models to help maximize their returns versus their

risks. They needed to sell shares to maintain acceptable risk profiles.

Carry trades tend to make the most sense when foreign exchange rates are relatively stable and investors can tap into higher yielding market opportunities, like the recent runups of stock prices in places like the United States.

The recent market upheavals obliged traders to cover their debts by buying yen and other carry trade currencies and selling relatively more of the higher risk assets they bought under more favorable conditions. Also, carry trades are very lucrative when stocks or other investments are rising, but losses can snowball when thousands of traders are pressured to sell stocks or other assets all at once. "A massive global carry trade unwind was the spark that lit the fuse for this market Armageddon," Stephen Innes of SPI Asset Management said. "One defining characteristic of these self-perpetuating market melts is the vicious cycle where a sell-off increases realized vola-

tility."

The gap between the main interest rate in Japan, now at 0.25%, and the Federal Reserve's benchmark rate of 5%-5.25% is still wide but is likely to narrow as the Fed cuts rates and Japan raises its rates. Financial markets appeared to have calmed Tuesday, with Japan's Nikkei 225 index gaining 10.2% and other markets mostly higher.

Analysts are divided over whether this bout of volatility in the markets has passed or if there is more to come. Regardless, carry trades have been used for decades. They contributed to a meltdown in Iceland's financial sector in 2007-2008 where investors borrowed in yen or Swiss francs to take advantage of high Icelandic interest rates. During this latest market upset, Mexico, another focus of the yen carry trade, has seen its peso fall more than 6%. The popular but potentially complicated trading strategy is likely to remain a wild card for investors, especially in times of high market volatility.

US Energy Dept awards \$2.2 bln to strengthen the electrical grid

Bid to meet growing demand for power

The Department of Energy on Tuesday announced \$2.2 billion in funding for eight projects across 18 states to strengthen the electrical grid against increasing extreme weather, advance the transition to cleaner electricity and meet a growing demand for power.

The money will help build more than 600 miles of new transmission lines and upgrade about 400 miles of existing lines so that they can carry more current.

Energy Secretary Jennifer Granholm said the funding is important because extreme weather events fueled by climate change are increasing, damaging towers and bringing down wires, causing power outages.

Hurricane Beryl made landfall in Texas on July 8 and knocked out power to nearly 3 million people, for example. Officials have said at least a dozen Houston area residents died from complications related to the heat and losing power.

The investments will provide more reliable, affordable electricity for 56 million homes and businesses, according to the DOE. Granholm said the funds are the single largest direct investment ever in the nation's grid.

"They'll help us to meet the needs of electrified homes and businesses and new manufacturing facilities and all of these growing data centers that are placing demands on the grid," Granholm said in a press call to announce the funding.

It's the second round of awards through a \$10.5 billion DOE program called Grid Resilience and Innovation Partnerships. It was funded through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law of 2021. More projects will be announced this fall.

Among the ones in this round, more than 100 miles of transmission line in California will be upgraded so that new renewable energy can be added quickly and as a response to a growing demand for electricity. A project in New England will upgrade onshore connection points for electricity generated by wind turbines offshore, allowing 4,800 megawatts of wind energy to be added, enough to power about 2 million homes.

The Montana Department of Commerce will get \$700 million. Most of that will go toward building a 415-mile, high-voltage, direct current transmission line across Montana and North Dakota. The North Plains Connector will increase the ability to move electricity from east to west and vice versa, and help protect against extreme weather and power disruptions.

The Virginia Department of Energy will get \$85 million to employ clean electricity and clean backup power at two data centers, one in-state and one



Central Maine Power transmission lines stretch above the treetops in Pownal, Maine, on Oct. 6, 2021. (AP)

Airbnb's 2nd quarter profit fell 15% despite its revenue rising 11% on stronger bookings

NEW YORK, Aug 7, (AP) — Airbnb says its profit fell 15% in the second quarter from a year earlier, as higher income taxes cut into the short-term rental giant's bottom line even as bookings and revenue rose.

The profits fell short of Wall Street's expectations and Airbnb's stock tumbled 16% in after-market trading.

The San Francisco-based company reported on Tuesday net income of \$555 million, or 86 cents per share, for the three months ended June 30. That compares with net income of \$650 million, or 98 cents per share, in the same quarter last year.

Analysts' consensus estimates called for earnings of 91 cents per share, according to FactSet.

Revenue rose 11% from a year earlier to \$2.75 billion, slightly higher than what analysts forecast.

The vacation-rental platform said it booked 125.1 million nights and experiences in the second quarter, a 9% increase from a year earlier.

The average daily rate rose 2% to

in South Carolina. The DOE chose this project because the data centers will be responsive to the grid in a new way: They could provide needed electricity to the local grid on a hot day, from batteries, or reduce their energy use in times of high demand. This could serve as a model for other data centers to reduce their impact on a local area, since they place such high demand on

\$170. The company said it expects that to increase modestly on an annual basis in the third quarter.

While booking growth was strong, management said that in July it noticed that many customers were opting to reserve an Airbnb property within a couple of weeks of when they need to stay, rather than doing so months in advance.

"We are seeing shorter booking lead times globally and some signs of slowing demand from U.S. guests," CEO Brian Chesky said during a conference call with analysts. "We're watching these trends closely, along with the impact any macroeconomic pressures might be causing."

The company factored the trend into its third-quarter outlook. Airbnb predicts third-quarter revenue between \$3.67 billion and \$3.73 billion, which would be below Wall Street's forecast of \$3.84 billion, according to FactSet.

The company said that its seeing more customers are sign up for Airbnb rentals to mark holidays and other special events, noting that the week of July

4th was Airbnb's single highest week of revenue ever in North America.

Nights booked at Airbnb rentals in the Paris region around the Olympics through the end of the second quarter were more than double the same period last year, with a 37% increase in active listings, the company said.

Airbnb is working to draw more people to sign up with the company to host guests in order to beef up its supply of short-term rentals. Its active listings exceeded 8 million in the second quarter. The company, which in May rolled out Airbnb Icons, a promotion that gives its customers a chance at overnight stays in exotic settings, is also culling less appealing listings from its site. Since April 2023, it has removed more than 200,000 listings "that failed to meet our guests' expectations," Chesky said.

He said the company plans to roll out new products and services every year, starting in October, with a new co-hosting marketplace that he believes will boost listings on the site.

the grid, according to the department.

"These investments are certainly a step in the right direction and they are the right types of investments," said Max Luke, director of business development and regulatory affairs at VEIR, an early-stage Massachusetts company developing transmission lines capable of carrying five times the power of conventional ones. "If you look at the

scale of the challenge and the quantity of grid capacity needed for deep decarbonization and net zero, it's a drop in the bucket."

According to Princeton University's "Net-Zero America" research, the United States will need to expand electricity transmission by roughly 60% by 2030 and may need to triple it by 2050. (AP)

Musk's X sues advertisers over alleged boycott

WICHITA FALLS, Texas, Aug 7, (AP) — Elon Musk's social media platform X has sued a group of advertisers, alleging that a "massive advertiser boycott" deprived the company of billions of dollars in revenue and violated antitrust laws.

The company formerly known as Twitter filed the lawsuit Tuesday in a federal court in Texas against the World Federation of Advertisers and member companies Unilever, Mars, CVS Health and Orsted.

It accused the advertising group's brand safety initiative, called the Global Alliance for Responsible Media, of helping to coordinate a pause in advertising after Musk bought Twitter for \$44 billion in late 2022 and overhauled its staff and policies. Musk posted about the lawsuit on X

on Tuesday, saying "now it is war" after two years of being nice and "getting nothing but empty words."

X CEO Linda Yaccarino said in a video announcement that the lawsuit stemmed in part from evidence uncovered by the U.S. House Judiciary Committee which she said showed a "group of companies organized a systematic illegal boycott" against X. The Republican-led committee had a hearing last month looking at whether current laws are "sufficient to deter anticompetitive collusion in online advertising."

The lawsuit's allegations center on the early days of Musk's Twitter takeover and not a more recent dispute with advertisers that came a year later.

In November 2023, about a year after Musk bought

the company, a number of advertisers began fleeing X over concerns about their ads showing up next to pro-Nazi content and hate speech on the site in general, with Musk inflaming tensions with his own posts endorsing an antisemitic conspiracy theory.

Musk later said those fleeing advertisers were engaging in "blackmail" and, using a profanity, essentially told them to go away. The Belgium-based World Federation of Advertisers and representatives for CVS, Orsted, Mars and Unilever didn't immediately respond to requests for comment Tuesday.

A top Unilever executive testified at last month's congressional hearing, defending the British consumer goods company's practice of choosing to put ads on platforms that won't harm its brand.

Imports pick up pace

China's exports grow 7 pct in July, less than forecasts

BANGKOK, Aug 7, (AP) — China's exports rose 7% in July from a year earlier, below economists' forecasts for growth closer to 10% as trade tensions and weakening growth in the United States and other major markets weighed on demand.

Chinese leaders have ramped up investment in manufacturing to rev up an economy that stalled during the pandemic and is still growing more slowly than hoped. But moves to tame inflation by raising interest rates have bit into consumer demand in affluent Western countries.

Imports climbed 7.2% to \$215.9 billion, picking up momentum on stronger trade with other Asian countries that now supply many industrial components, materials and consumer products to China. Exports to the United States rose 2.4% year-on-year while shipments to Southeast Asian countries, now Beijing's biggest trading partner overall, jumped 11%.

Exports totaled \$300.6 billion in July, expanding at the slowest pace in three months and leaving a trade surplus for July of \$84.7 billion. That was down from a record \$99.1 billion the month before, but the surplus rose nearly 8% in January-July

from the same period a year earlier. During the first seven months of the year, China's exports climbed 4% from a year earlier, while imports were up a lackluster 2.8% as growth in consumer demand remained muted.

China's exports are forecast to weaken in coming months as sharp hikes in U.S. and European tariffs on electric vehicles take effect. As reports said freighters have been seen carrying big shipments of vehicles to European ports to try to beat those duties, exports of vehicles rose 18% in the first seven months of the year from the same period in 2023.

The rebound in imports in July is likely to take hold as the government moves to support consumer demand and revive China's ailing property sector. Zichun Huang, China economist at Capital Economics, said in a report.

"We expect import volumes to rise further in the coming months. The leadership appears more worried about the near-term outlook compared to a few months ago, and has signaled a step-up in fiscal spending. This is likely to boost construction activity, driving up demand for industrial commodities," Huang said.

Microsoft hits back at Delta

WASHINGTON, Aug 7, (AP) — Microsoft is joining cybersecurity software firm CrowdStrike in fighting back against Delta Air Lines, which blames the companies for causing several thousand canceled flights following a technology outage last month.

A lawyer for Microsoft said Tuesday that Delta's key IT system is probably serviced by other technology companies, not Microsoft Windows.

"Your letter and Delta's public comments are incomplete, false, misleading, and damaging to Microsoft and its reputation," Microsoft lawyer Mark Cheffo said in a letter to Delta attorney David Boies.

Cheffo said Microsoft was trying to determine "why other airlines were able to fully restore business operations so much faster than Delta."

The comments represent an escalating fight between the tech companies and the Atlanta-based airline.

Delta CEO Ed Bastian said last week that the global technology outage that started with a faulty upgrade from CrowdStrike to machines running on Microsoft Windows cost the airline \$500 million. Bastian raised the threat of legal action.

On Tuesday, Delta said it has a long record of investing in reliable service including "billions of dollars in IT capital expenditures" since 2016 and billions more in annual IT costs. It declined further comment.

CrowdStrike has also disputed Delta's claims. Both it and Microsoft said Delta had turned down their offers to help the airline recover from the outage last month. Microsoft's lawyer said CEO Satya Nadella emailed Bastian during the outage, but the Delta CEO never replied.

Disney returns to profit in Q3

NEW YORK, Aug 7, (AP) — Disney returned to a profitable third quarter as its combined streaming business started making money for the first time and the movie Inside Out 2 did well in theaters. Operating income for the entertainment segment nearly tripled to \$1.2 billion thanks to better performances from its direct-to-consumer and content sales/licensing and Other segments.

The Walt Disney Co. said Wednesday that its direct-to-consumer business, which includes Disney+ and Hulu, reported a quarterly operating loss of \$19 million, which was smaller than its loss of \$505 million a year earlier. Revenue climbed 15% to \$5.81 billion.

For the period ended June 29, Disney earned \$2.62 billion, or \$1.43 per share. A year earlier it lost \$460 million, or 25 cents per share.

Stripping out one-time gains, earnings were \$1.39 per share, easily topping the \$1.20 analysts polled by Zacks Investment Research expected.

Revenue for the Burbank, California, company rose 4% to \$23.16 billion, beating Wall Street's estimate of \$22.91 billion.

The company made \$254 million in operating income from content sales and licensing helped by the strong performance of Inside Out 2 at movie theaters, which is now the highest-

grossing animated film of all time.

Disney said Wednesday that the original Inside Out, which came out in 2015, helped drive more than 1.3 million Disney+ sign-ups and generated over 100 million views worldwide since the first Inside Out 2 teaser trailer dropped.

The combined streaming businesses, which includes Disney+, Hulu and ESPN+, achieved profitability for the first time thanks to a strong three months for ESPN+ and a better-than-expected quarterly performance from the direct-to-consumer unit.

Disney said in May that it expected its overall streaming business to soften in the third quarter due to its platform in India, Disney+Hotstar. The company also said at the time that it anticipated its combined streaming businesses to be profitable in the fourth quarter, so the money-making quarter was a surprise.

In the Experiences division, which includes theme parks, revenue climbed 3% in the third quarter. International rose 5%. Domestic parks and experiences operating income fell 6%, while international operating income edged up 2%.

Disney said that the decline in operating revenue for domestic parks and experiences was because of increased costs driven by inflation, technology spending and new guest offerings.

'Game Jam' kicks off August 7 for a 4-day event

Warba sponsors National Cultural Challenge for Electronic Games

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 7: Warba Bank announced its sponsorship of the National Cultural Challenge Electronic Games Program 'Game Jam', which begins on August 7 and continues for 4 days at the Ishbeliya Public Library.

Commenting on this event, Ayman Salem Al-Mutairi, Director Marketing and Corporate Communications at Warba Bank, said: "We are pleased to sponsor this program as it is an important step in Warba Bank's strategy to enhance the shared vision with the public sector and contribute positively to the strategic transformation of sustainable development through the National Challenge Program for E-Culture."

Al-Mutairi highlighted Warba Bank's keenness to sponsor such events to achieve institutional flexibility and create an environment that stimulates creativity through the continuous change and development program that Warba Bank implements, which supports the changing methodology to enhance institutional capacity to improve the cultural scene in Kuwait.

Al-Mutairi stated that at Warba Bank, we are always proud to be the most attractive to national manpower, providing them the capabilities to hone their skills and work on developing them, in addition to spreading the culture of technological investment among Kuwaiti youth, which contributes to enhancing development and growth in technology and innovation among them.

He pointed out that Warba Bank is considered one of the most important banks that ambitious Kuwaiti youth place in their career priorities due to the work environment that the Bank provides for more creativity, innovation and encroaching the youth.

Al-Mutairi concluded his statement by saying that Warba Bank has designed a prepaid card to target e-sports enthusiasts, which carries many exclusive advantages and discounts matching the needs and requirements of this segment, noting that the card was launched after the Warba Bank team noticed the increasing global and local interest in e-sports, and the Bank's desire to expand in providing many banking services and offers to e-sports enthusiasts.

For her part, the official spokesperson for the Public Authority for Youth, Asrar Zakaria Al-Ansari, confirmed that partnerships and cooperation between the public and private sectors contribute to achieving sustainable development through projects that serve the youth community and meet its needs, in addition to achieving integration by combining the expertise and resources of the two sectors in a way that serves the progress and excellence of Kuwaiti youth and develops their strategic skills.

Al-Ansari explained that the Authority's support for the National Cultural Challenge Electronic Games Program 'Game Jam' is the result of the memorandum of understanding that the Authority signed months ago with the National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters regarding building a joint strategic partnership to enhance the creative economy among Kuwaiti youth, expressing her thanks to Warba Bank for their sponsorship of Game Jam, which expresses their belief in the importance of investing in the talents of Kuwaiti youth in technical fields.

She added that such events encourage national talents in the fields of game development and design and



Omaima Ahmed Al-Saad



Asrar Al-Ansari



Ayman Al-Mutairi

Al-Saad:

- This program aims in its first season to enhance cultural innovation, teamwork and technical skills.
- "Warba" is considered the leading bank in adopting solutions to develop work mechanisms and tools for creativity and innovation.

enhance the local electronic games industry, as well as contribute to building a local electronic games community of players and developers, which stimulates digital sports activity and develops the infrastructure for the electronic games.

For her part, the Director of the National Cultural Challenge Electronic

Al-Ansari:

- Partnerships and cooperation between the public and private sectors contribute to achieving sustainable development through projects that serve the youth community.
- The Authority's support for the National Cultural Challenge 'Game Jam' is the result of the Memorandum of Understanding.

Games Program 'Game Jam', Omaima Ahmed Al-Saad, thanked Warba Bank for sponsoring this program as the leading bank in adopting solutions to develop

Al-Mutairi:

- The Bank's sponsorship of the challenge program aims to enhance the shared vision with the public sector and contribute positively to the strategic transformation of sustainable development.
- We are keen to sponsor these events to achieve institutional flexibility and create a stimulating environment for creativity.

and accelerate the work mechanism by addressing the best standards and tools of creativity and innovation to raise the level of performance and improve the

institutional work system in addition to controlling the quality of service.

Al-Saad explained that the program aims in its first season to enhance cultural innovation, teamwork and technical skills while providing a platform for emerging game developers to showcase their talents through an intensive and creative competition in which participants create an electronic game within 48 hours based on a specific cultural topic.

Regarding the conditions for registration in the program, Al-Saad explained that the contestant must have one of the following skills: programmer/game developer/2D/3D graphic designer/story or game content writer, and the contestant's age must range between 16 and 35 years.

She added that among the conditions is that the submitted work must not have been done previously, and that work on the game must be done during the competition period. It is also prohibited for members of the National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters or members of Warba Bank and the Public Authority for Youth, and academics participating in preparing for the event or members of the arbitration committee or mentors in charge of the challenge to participate in this competition/challenge as a contestant.

Warba Bank is one of the banks that has achieved great successes in a short period, as it occupied a leadership position in the field of Islamic digital banking services for individuals, and it is one of the largest local banks in the number of shareholders, and these are among the most prominent components that make the Bank close to all members of society.



Afrah Al-Arbash with the students during the award ceremony.

Bank invests in future generations with summer program

ABK hosts summer training program on coding and digital transformation for staff's families

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 7: Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait organized its annual summer program for staff's children and relatives to train them on coding and digitization in cooperation with the Australian University of Kuwait which goes in line with ABK's commitment to support youth and provide them a chance to benefit and get more knowledge during summer break.

The program was held over two weeks at the Australian University of Kuwait premises witnessing a wide participation from staff's children and relatives. The Program offered the trainees an opportunity to learn about the latest developments in the world of coding and digital transformation, which recently gained great significance across all fields, through multiple workshops that introduced the trainees to a wide pool of essential information around the technological developments in the banking industry and all sectors in Kuwait and



Ms. Afrah Al-Arbash, GM of Human Resources at ABK.

around the world.

Commenting on this occasion, the General Manager of Human Resources at Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait, Afrah Al-Arbash said "We make sure to organize

a special program for staff's relatives every year as part of wellbeing strategy creating opportunities that are inclusive of our employee's family members contributing to the growth of their relatives."

Al-Arbash added that ABK worked hand in hand with The Australian University of Kuwait to present a program that is rich with knowledge and essential training on the topic of digitization and digital transformation which gained great significance across all fields today thus gaining great significance to the Bank, pointing out that the program aims to build new generations who are capable to benefit from the digital transformation of the state.

She explained further that the initiative allowed trainees to discover their capabilities through the presenting various practical exercises in addition to emphasizing the importance of teamwork in order to achieve common goals and implement plans according to

the specified timeline while influencing youth and encouraging them to explore the latest technologies in digitization and digital transformation and the best ways to benefit from them.

Al-Arbash revealed that Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait continues to invest in the future generation as part of its national responsibility as a pioneering financial and banking institute in Kuwait, indicating that the Bank will continue to organize more training programs on different topics in the future which will contribute to raising its competitive position in the banking sector in Kuwait.

Concluding her statement, Al-Arbash expressed gratitude to those who participated in the program, praising the interaction of trainees and hoping for the cooperation to continue between the two parties in future in a way that contributes and reflects positively to staying up to date with the technological developments on all levels.

Developing national talents

KIB renews its training program for graduates

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 7: Kuwait International Bank (KIB) announced the relaunch of the field training and part-time work project for recent graduates, in collaboration with the Union of Consumer Co-operative Societies. This initiative is part of the Bank's social responsibility program and its strategy to play a role in training and qualifying national talents while contributing to the work of the sales and customer service sector within KIB's Retail Banking Department.

Commenting on the renewed program, Musab Al-Shalan, Deputy General Manager- Retail Banking Department at KIB, said: "We are proud to participate in offering this important training program for another year. We regard it as an outstanding opportunity for students and recently graduated Kuwaiti youth interested in receiving professional practical training and developing their skills in the banking sector. This step demonstrates our commitment to participating in and unifying collective efforts to enhance sustainable development standards by providing the appropriate experience that qualifies ambitious youth to integrate seamlessly into the local job market. Over the course of 60 days, KIB will provide a monthly cash reward and performance incentives to the participating trainees, in addition to awarding them accredited certificates at the end of the program, proving their successful participation."

Al-Shalan emphasized that fieldwork training will enrich the participants' experience and develop their skills through practical application in the banking sector. During the training, they will benefit from the expertise of their colleagues and keep up with the latest professional job requirements, which help prepare them to embark on their journey in the private sector job market. Moreover, he pointed out that working in the banking sector will help young people develop their ideas, hone their abilities, and invest their immense energy, es-

pecially at the beginning of their professional careers.

On his part, Abdulaziz Al-Shammari, Head of Central Sales at KIB, said: "The field training project will help equip young national talents with strong analytical, communication and interpersonal skills, among other vital skills, to help them thrive in different banking sector specialties. This initiative aligns with the Bank's vision to enable and encourage students and young graduates to join the banking field by paving the way for them to start a successful career built on solid foundations, making them invaluable to the sector."

Al-Shammari further explained the qualification criteria required for the program, noting that participants include Kuwaiti nationals who are fresh university, college or high school graduates with a diploma certificate or high school degree. Those who wished to join the program submitted their applications at the headquarters of the Union of Consumer Co-operative Societies.

It is worth mentioning that KIB spares no effort in participating in all community activities and events aimed at supporting Kuwaiti youth and enhancing the level of job opportunities available to them. The Bank also aims to equip them with the necessary skills to help achieve their professional ambitions in various sectors, especially the banking sector.



Al-Shammari



Al-Shalan

'Fekrety' and 'Datathon' competitions foster skill development

Gulf Bank continues 'GB Talks' to drive innovation

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 7: Gulf Bank is excited to announce the continuation of its "GB Talks" series, reaffirming its commitment to fostering innovation and creativity among its employees and the community. This series aims to empower innovation and promote a data-driven culture through two key initiatives: the "Fekrety" innovation competition for employees and the "Datathon" competition, open to all.

The "Fekrety" and "Datathon" competitions are integral to Gulf Bank's strategic efforts to drive positive changes in data and analytics, stay ahead with the latest banking technologies, and empower specialists in these areas. These initiatives also aim to support the youth in developing their professional skills.

Mr. Aws Al-Ansari, Innovation Strategy Senior Manager at Gulf Bank, emphasized, "At Gulf Bank, we recognize the importance of innovation and creativity among our employees. They are one of our greatest assets in advancing our banking business and supporting the community through various initiatives, particularly in the technology sector."

Al-Ansari added, "These competitions provide participants with the opportunity to acquire new skills in innovation, which they can apply in their current roles or academic pursuits. Additionally, the 'Datathon'



A file photo of the previous competitions.

competition will help participants in selecting their future academic and career paths. Open to all ages, this competition reflects our commitment to nurturing Kuwaiti talent and future generations. Promoting innovation has positive impacts across all economic and social fields."

He further stated, "The goal of the 'Datathon' competition is to foster a culture of data within the community, build a network of data enthusiasts in Kuwait, and create significant opportunities for participants to connect

and collaborate professionally in the future."

In alignment with Kuwait's Vision 2035, "New Kuwait," Gulf Bank remains committed to promoting innovation and creativity among its employees and the broader community. This commitment is demonstrated through advanced strategic initiatives both within the bank and throughout the wider community.

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

Gulf Bank is committed to maintaining robust developments in sustainability at environmental, social and governance levels through diverse sustainability initiatives, strategically selected to benefit the Bank both internally and externally. Gulf Bank supports Kuwait Vision 2035 "New Kuwait" and works with various parties to achieve it.

'KFH Visa ... Your Train is Waiting'

KFH launches new summer campaign

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 7: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) has launched a new summer campaign targeting holders of VISA debit, credit, and prepaid cards. Titled "With KFH Visa ... Your Train is Waiting!", the campaign will run for two months from the beginning of August until the end of September.

Two draws will be held during the campaign period to select winners who will embark on a luxurious 7-star trip aboard the Belmond Train. Winners will have the opportunity to choose between an Asia Trip encompassing Singapore and Malaysia, or a Europe trip exploring France and Italy.

KFH Executive Manager Credit and Charge Card Products, Talal Al Arbeed said that the recently launched summer campaign underscores KFH's commitment to providing customers with the best benefits. It also demonstrates the bank's ongoing dedication to rewarding card usage while prioritizing customer security and convenience.

He added that the campaign includes two draws, each with six winners. Each customer will have one chance to enter the draw for each one (1) Kuwaiti Dinar spent of the total local purchasing trans-

actions (including the purchasing made through online websites in Kuwaiti Dinar). Furthermore, the customer will have 10 chances to enter the draw for each one (1) Kuwaiti Dinar of the total purchasing transactions spent overseas (including purchasing made online in foreign currencies).

"Withdrawal transactions, whether conducted within or outside Kuwait, as well as cards issued after the campaign's launch, will not be eligible for the draw," explained AlArbeed.

He added that winning customers will enjoy several privileges as part of a package that includes: one companion for each winner, round-trip business-class tickets, a suite stay on the Belmond Train, accommodation in a 5-star hotel during the trip, and KD 2,000 pocket money deposited into the winning card's balance.

He indicated that the campaign in-

volves using KFH Visa cards within Kuwait to encourage online transactions, modernize payment methods, and facilitate secure and efficient fund transfers. This initiative stimulates sales while enhancing customer satisfaction through security and convenience in their banking experience.

He pointed out that launching the campaign coincides with the summer holiday and travel season, leading to a high demand for round-the-clock credit card use. "KFH has implemented comprehensive measures to optimize the card usage experience for customers by developing automated banking card systems and software, enhancing service devices, and improving card quality. These initiatives prioritize the needs of both cardholders and merchants, with the ultimate goal of delivering an exceptional banking experience to our customers," added AlArbeed.

He stressed KFH's keenness to enhance its cooperation with Visa to execute other positively impacting campaigns to boost its customers' satisfaction, usage rates, expand market share and strengthen its leadership in the banking cards market.



Al Arbeed

Swift leads the 2024 MTV Video Music Award nominations

NEW YORK, Aug 7, (Agencies): It's Taylor Swift's world, and the MTV Video Music Award nominations are the latest proof.

"The Tortured Poets Department" singer once again tops the VMA noms with 10 - eight for her "Fortnight" music video and nods in the artist of the year and best pop categories. She's followed by her "Fortnight" collaborator Post Malone, who is nominated along with Swift eight times and earned his ninth nom for his country hit "I Had Some Help," featuring Morgan Wallen.

Rounding out the artist of the year category nominees announced Tuesday are Ariana Grande, Bad Bunny, Eminem, Sabrina Carpenter and SZA.

Swift took home nine VMAs last year, bringing her total to an impressive 23. That places her just behind Beyoncé, who has 28 (two with Destiny's Child) and just ahead of Madonna, who has 20 awards, and Lady Gaga, who has 19.

The 2024 MTV VMAs will air live on Sept. 10 at 8 p.m. Eastern.

Grande, Carpenter and Eminem are tied with six nods; Megan Thee Stallion and SZA have five each. Blackpink's LISA, Olivia Rodrigo and Teddy Swims follow with four nominations.

This year marks 29 first-time nominees, which include Wallen, Carpenter and Swims as well as Benson Boone and Tyla - the latter boast three nominations each.

Also nominated for the first time in 2024 are Chappell Roan, Coco Jones, Gracie Abrams, Jelly Roll, Jessie Murph, LE SSERAFIM, Morgan Wallen, Rauw Alejandro, RAYE, Sexyy Red, Shaboozey, Tyla, Tyler Childers, Victoria Monet and more.

The VMAs will be held at the UBS Arena on New York's Long Island. Fan voting begins online Tuesday across 15 gender-neutral categories and ends Aug. 30.

Voting in the best new artist category will remain active throughout the show.



Scores of young musicians from the Beijing Youth Orchestra of China and the National Youth Orchestra of the United States of America jointly staged a concert in New York on Tuesday.

Young American musicians started the concert with A Western Fanfare by **Eric Ewazen**, followed by their Chinese counterparts' performance of the ancient Chinese tune A Moonlit Night on the Spring River.

Then, young musicians jointly presented Goin' Home, based on **Antonin Dvorak's** Symphony No. 9 and Octet in E-flat major, Op. 20 IV. Presto by **Felix Mendelssohn**.

The concert concluded with You and Me, the official theme song of the 2008 Beijing Olympics composed by **Chen Qigang**, to pay

tribute to the Olympic spirit, the shared emotion of human beings and the power of unity.

The joint performance under the auspices of the Chinese Consulate General in New York marked an in-depth exchange between young Chinese and US musicians, who joined others in World Orchestra Week (WOW!) organized by Carnegie Hall.

As many as 700 young musicians from five continents presented their respective performances at Carnegie Hall, had a massive "play-in" at the Javits Convention Center and participated in peer exchange workshops at New York University.

The young musicians would remain connected and friends for life thanks to their experience at World Orchestra Week, said **Sir Clive Gillingson**, executive and artistic director of Carnegie Hall, before the start of the concert.

"We cherish the friendship with US counterparts in the field of culture and arts ... I'd like to work with Sir Clive Gillingson in the future to turn more beautiful ideas into reality, enhance Sino-US cultural exchanges and better connect peoples of the two countries," said **Wang Ning**, president of China's National Center for the Performing Arts in a video message.

Beijing Youth Orchestra is a new ensemble jointly curated in June by China's National Center for the Performing Arts and the Beijing Municipal Education Commission.

Variety



This image released by Neon shows Dan Stevens in a scene from 'Cuckoo.' (AP)

Film

Stevens shines with wonderfully sinister role

A stylish nightmare in 'Cuckoo'

By Lindsey Bahr

Let's get one thing out of the way first: I did not entirely understand everything that happens in "Cuckoo," a new indie horror in theaters Friday.

This could be more of a me problem than with the storytelling, but there are a lot of strange things happening at this particular Alpine resort. It's run by a bespectacled German hotelier named Herr König, played with an off-kilter menace by Dan Stevens.

Some of the occurrences are underexplained, others underexplored. Herr König seems particularly worried about things that happen after dark, but not so much about guests wandering into the reception and general store in a wobbly stupor and vomit. Are they drunk? Sick? Should someone help them? All we get is: "It happens." The hospital, too, is eerily empty. Sonic vibrations often ripple through the land, causing scenes to repeat until reaching a violent crescendo. And no one seems to listen to or care about anything 17-year-old Gretchen (Hunter Schafer) has to say, no matter how banged up she gets. The quick escalation of her injuries, and the widening disinterest of her father, approaches comedy.

Ambiguity can be wonderful for mystery and world-building; it can also be frustrating. And more often than not, detailed explanations just make everything lamer. "Cuckoo" dips into all of the above. Even so, it is undeniably fascinating, original and even occasionally fun, in a very twisted and deranged way in which laughter is your involuntary response to something horrifying. In her captivating lead performance, Schafer really goes through it, both physically and emotionally.

It also features Stevens sporting tiny, rimless glasses with sinisterly scandi-cool monochrome outfits, and a screaming ghoul with Hitchcockian glamour in a hooded trench and white-framed oval sunnies. Rarely is it a bad idea for a horror film to lean into style, and "Cuckoo" fully commits.

"Cuckoo" is the brainchild of German director Tilman Singer, but credit also goes to Singer's predecessors: The works of David Lynch and Dario Argento among them. Gretchen is a reluctant resident in the idyllic, modern home with her detached father (Martin Csokas), stepmother (Jessica Henwick) and mute half-sister Alma (Mila Lieu). She

leaves increasingly desperate messages on her mother's answering machine in America.

It's certainly an exaggerated but apt portrait of a new family where the remnants of the old are treated like a nuisance. When Alma starts having seizures during the vibrations, which no one but Gretchen seems to remember or acknowledge, the parents' attention turns fully to the young girl. They can barely be bothered to care about Gretchen's miraculous survival of a horrifying car wreck; Alma is in the same hospital because of the episodes.

As with many horrors, the big reveals were, for this critic, a little underwhelming - a strained attempt at a unifying theory for this weird place that doesn't add much ultimately. And yet the emotional connection to Gretchen and her complex relationship with Alma does pay off in unexpected ways.

Memorable

Also, Stevens deserves special acknowledgement for his contributions to "Cuckoo." This is a man who could have easily languished in blandly handsome leading man roles and instead is becoming one of our great character actors. He is regularly the best and most memorable part of whatever he's in just by his sheer commitment to going there, whether it's his Hawaiian shirt wearing titan veterinarian in "Godzilla x Kong," his Russian pop star in "Eurovision" or any number of his deranged horror characters. He and Schafer, always a compelling presence, make "Cuckoo" very much worth it. They exist far too comfortably in this dreamy, nightmarish world dreamt up by Singer that is well worth a watch.

"Cuckoo," a Neon release in theaters Friday, is rated R by the Motion Picture Association for "language, brief teen drug use, bloody images, violence." Running time: 102 minutes. Two and a half stars out of four.



The 37th Hundred Flowers Awards, known as China's "audience awards," were announced Sunday, with two films that pay homage to China's rich cultural heritage taking home three major awards.

Founded in 1962, the awards reflect the preferences and opinions of Chinese moviegoers, making it one of

the country's most historic and influential film awards. This year's awards were decided by 101 audience judges who voted live during the ceremony.

At the awards ceremony, the film "Chang'an," an animated hit from last summer that tells the story of the enduring friendship between two legendary poets, won the Excellent Film Award, while the fantasy epic "Creation of the Gods I: Kingdom of Storms" secured two awards: Best Supporting Actor and Best New Talent.

In recent years, a series of Chinese films that celebrate traditional Chinese culture have garnered growing attention. From "Chang'an" and "Creation of the Gods I: Kingdom of Storms" to "White Snake," "Full River Red," and "Ne Zha," these films have sparked widespread interest.

"Chang'an," for example, earned over 1.7 billion yuan (about 232.9 million U.S. dollars) during the summer of 2023, becoming the second-highest-grossing animated film in Chinese history. "Creation of the Gods I: Kingdom of Storms" achieved box office takings of over 2.2 billion yuan.

These blockbusters span genres such as history, mythology and fantasy, blending traditional Chinese culture, including classical poetry, painting, dance, music and intangible heritage such as dragon dances and the Sichuan opera.

Lu Shaoyang, a professor at Peking University's School of Journalism and Communication, said these films either adapt Chinese historical and mythological stories or draw from folk tales and idioms, resonating deeply with Chinese audiences due to their strong cultural foundations.

"Traditional stories are immensely rich and offer a wealth of inspiration for our creations, with many gems still to be uncovered," said **Li Jiakai**, director of the animated film "White Snake: Afloat," which adapts a Chinese folk tale and will hit the screen on Aug. 10.

The films also blend modern sensibilities and aesthetics, appealing to audiences of various ages, Li added.

"Chinese animated films such as 'Ne Zha' and 'Chang'an' use ancient mythological stories but delve into modern themes during their creation, allowing audiences to empathize," said **Ma Hua**, vice dean of the Animation School of Beijing Film Academy. (Agencies)

LOS ANGELES: Billy Ray Cyrus and Firerose are now divorced.

The dissolution of their seven-month marriage was finalized Monday by a Williamson County judge in Tennessee three months after Cyrus filed for divorce.

Cyrus, 62, cited irreconcilable differences and "inappropriate marital conduct" when he filed for divorce from the 36-year-old, whose legal name is **Johanna Rose Hodges**.

In a statement to The Associated Press, Cyrus' lawyers, **Rose Palermo** and **Jason Talley of Cheatham Palermo & Garrett**, said he and Hodges reached a settlement Friday, adding that Cyrus is "relieved to put this nightmare behind him."

"I'm just very relieved... and giving thanks today to breathe a sigh of relief," Cyrus said in a statement. "It's unfortunate... it played out this way."

"It was a matter of the heart. Love is blind... that's for sure. B.R.C., his statement concluded.

Cyrus' lawyers claimed in their statement that Hodges legally changed her last name to Cyrus before mediation, which they say Cyrus feels "validates his assertion that his ex-wife's sole impetus for marrying him was to obtain his last name."

Hodges' lawyers did not immediately return requests for comment. The court documents show neither party will pay spousal support, and much of the division of assets is based on ownership before the two married.

At the time of the initial May filing, Cyrus was also seeking an annulment due to fraud on Hodges' part, saying in the filing that he would not have married Hodges "had he known" about the alleged fraud. The filing gave no further details on the alleged inappropriate conduct or fraud but said each should be able to keep property that they own separately.

After getting married in October 2023, the musicians lived in Tennessee and released several songs together. According to the court documents, Cyrus will turn over ownership, master rights and copy-right interests, as well as royalties, to Hodges for the music and intellectual property they created together before and during their marriage.

Cyrus has been married twice

before, notably to **Tish Cyrus**, with whom he shares five children, including musician and actor **Miley Cyrus**. They divorced in 2022 after nearly three decades together. They had previously called off divorce proceedings in 2010 and 2013.

The 2022 divorce kicked off a highly publicized rift in the Cyrus



Firerose



Cyrus

family. When Miley won her first Grammy Award in February, she said, "I don't think I've forgotten anyone" after a long list of thank-yous and shoutouts to her family that included her mother, who was in attendance, but excluded her father and onetime "Hannah Montana" co-star. (AP)



BEIJING: Chinese comedy "Successor" remained on top of the daily box office chart on the Chinese mainland with a revenue of 32.62 million yuan (4.57 million U.S. dollars) on Tuesday, according to the China Movie Data Information Network.

Featuring comedy stars **Shen Teng** and **Ma Li** and directed by

Yan Fei and **Peng Damo**, the film tells the story of a wealthy couple who deliberately fakes a challenging environment for their son in order to foster his personal growth.

It was followed by domestic historical drama "Decoded," which raked in 16.79 million yuan on its fourth day of screening. (Xinhua)

Record-breaking mission hopes to raise fund for cancer research

Teen flying solo around the world to help kids with cancer

GENEVA, Aug 7, (AP): A Chinese American teen is vying to become the youngest person to fly solo to all seven continents in a quest that also aims to drum up donations for research into childhood cancer.

Ethan Guo, who turned 19 last month, began his quest in May in Memphis, Tennessee. He made multiple overnight stops and visited seven countries to get to the Swiss city of Geneva on Tuesday, before jetting off toward Heraklion in Greece.

The plan is to cover 50,000 miles (80,000 kilometers) over 100 days with stops in 60 countries. He hopes attention to the journey will drum up donations and raise up to \$1 million for cancer research, an ambition born of the Stage-4 blood cancer diagnosis for a cousin of his.

That prompted the tousled-haired teen to reach out to St. Jude Children's Research Hospital based in Memphis.

"We came up with the idea of ... how we can work on this together," Guo said, "how we can make this world a better place."

So far, he has raised about \$20,000, but he's convinced he will draw more donations.

A press handler for Guo showed The Associated Press an email exchange with an official at Guinness World Records Ltd. about the teen's hope to become the youngest person to fly solo to seven continents. The London-based



American pilot Ethan Guo poses for the photographer in Geneva, Switzerland, Tuesday, Aug. 6, 2024, before his take off from Geneva Airport for attempting a world record solo flight to all seven continents. (AP)

company did not immediately respond to an email from the AP seeking comment.

Guo started learning to fly at age 13, and four years later had his pilot's license, but insurance companies balked at covering a minor for his adventure, so he had to wait. He has clocked 700 flight hours and flown to all of the 48 contiguous states in the U.S.

On the tarmac near Geneva airport, Guo said only about one in 10 of the

companies he pitched to become sponsors actually came through.

Logos of companies large and small adorn Guo's modified four-seater Cessna 182. Visitors can track his progress on the website flightagainstcancer.com.

Born in Tianjin, China, and currently living in West Palm Beach, Florida, Guo said he wanted to become a pilot to challenge himself. He foresees a career in business and tech, not aviation.

Sadness remains high in girls

Small gain in US teen mental health: survey

NEW YORK, Aug 7, (AP): There are small signs of improvement in the mental health of US teenagers, a government survey released Tuesday said, but the share of students - particularly girls - feeling sad and hopeless remained high.

From 2021 to 2023, the portion of high school students who reported feelings of persistent sadness or hopelessness declined from 42% to 40%, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention report. More than 20,000 students were surveyed at school in the spring of 2023.

Among girls, the percentage reporting persistent sadness or hopelessness fell from 57% to 53%. The

share of girls reporting they had seriously considered attempting suicide edged downward from 30% to 27%.

The COVID-19 pandemic disrupted many school activities, increased isolation among youth and may have contributed to the 2021 findings on mental health. But long-term trends also reflect a worsening of mental health among teenagers, particularly girls.

Social media's emphasis on appearance and body image contributes to the pressures on girls' mental health, said Dr. Anisha Abraham of Children's National Hospital in Washington, D.C., and a spokesperson for the American Academy of Pediatrics.

In 2023, 77% of students said they used social media several times a day, with girls more likely than boys to use social media that often. Sixteen percent of high school students said they'd been electronically bullied during the past year through texting, Instagram, Facebook or other social media.

"Open conversations at home with caregivers and parents are really important," Abraham said. Parents who notice teens feeling hopeless or pulling away from normal activities should take those signals seriously and make sure they "get in for counseling or further screening."

Guo's parents were worried about his project and actively tried to stop him, forcing him to do it on his own with help from volunteers, sponsors and other supporters, he said.

He understands the risks. "Through my experiences - like an

engine failure on the very beginning of the trip ... I was forced to face the fact that I could die at any point of the trip," he said.

He's made preparations like stocking the plane with cold-weather gear for Antarctica, a survival kit if he gets

stranded in the desert, and an inflatable raft if he lands in an ocean.

"I'll be lying to tell you if I wasn't scared," Guo said. "But every day I reaffirm myself. I say 'This is what I believe in.' (...) So I'm going to fight on until the very end."

Rare wooden hearse found in 1,000-year-old tomb

Fossils suggest tiny hobbits lived on Indonesian island 700,000 years ago

WASHINGTON, Aug 7, (Agencies): Twenty years ago on an Indonesian island, scientists discovered fossils of an early human species that stood at about 3 1/2 feet (1.07 meters) tall - earning them the nickname "hobbits."

Now a new study suggests ancestors of the hobbits were even slightly shorter.

"We did not expect that we would find smaller individuals from such an old site," study co-author Yousuke Kaifu of the University of Tokyo said in an email.

The original hobbit fossils date back to between 60,000 and 100,000 years ago. The new fossils were excavated at a site called Mata Menge, about 45 miles from the cave where the first hobbit remains were uncovered.

In 2016, researchers suspected the earlier relatives could be shorter than the hobbits after studying a jawbone and teeth collected from the new site. Further analysis of a tiny arm bone fragment and teeth suggests the ancestors were a mere 2.4 inches (6 centimeters) shorter and existed 700,000 years ago.

"They've convincingly shown that



This photo provided by Yousuke Kaifu shows an arm bone fragment excavated on the Indonesia island of Flores. (AP)

hobbits that lived in the area, or from an even more primitive human predecessor. More research - and fossils - are needed to pin down the hobbits' place in human evolution, said Matt Tocheri, an anthropologist at Canada's Lake-

head University.

"This question remains unanswered and will continue to be a focus of research for some time to come," Tocheri, who was not involved with the research, said in an email.

Also:

HOHHOT: Archaeologists have found an unusually large hearse buried alongside a tomb in north China's Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region. This discovery sheds light on the unique custom of burying hearses during the Liao Dynasty (916-1125).

The wooden carriage was unearthed from a burial pit accompanying an aristocrat's tomb in Kailu County in the city of Tongliao, said the region's institute of cultural relics and archaeology.

The carriage body measures 7 meters long and over 2 meters wide, a relatively rare size, said Ma Hai, curator of Kailu county museum, which participated in the tomb's excavation.

The pit also saw the discovery of more than 30 vehicle accessories, including gilded bronze bells, bronze tassels and silver plates.

China launches rocket with 18 satellites

NASA delays next crew launch to resolve Boeing capsule problems

NEW YORK, Aug 7, (AP): NASA is delaying its next astronaut launch to buy more time at the International Space Station for Boeing's troubled new crew capsule.

The space agency said Tuesday it's bumping SpaceX's four-person flight from this month to next. It's now targeted for Sept. 24 at the earliest. Officials said that will give them more time to analyze thruster and leak problems that hit Boeing's Starliner capsule after its June liftoff, its first with a crew on board.

Tuesday marked the two-month point at the space station for Starliner's test pilots, Butch Wilmore and Sunita Williams, who should have been back by mid-June. NASA is weighing all its options for returning the two veteran astronauts, including a ride home in a SpaceX capsule.

"NASA and Boeing continue to evaluate the spacecraft's readiness, and no decisions have been made regarding Starliner's return," NASA said in a statement. Further details were expected at a news conference set for Wednesday.

Only two docking ports at the space station can accommodate U.S. astronaut capsules and, right now, both are occupied before the next SpaceX crew can arrive. Russia has its own parking places for its Soyuz capsules.

The latest setback means the four astronauts who flew up with SpaceX in March now also face a longer mission than planned.

Over the past several weeks, Boeing has conducted thruster test firings on the ground as well as in space to better understand why five thrusters failed ahead of Starliner's June 6 arrival at the space station. All but one came back online. Helium leaks in the capsule's propulsion system also cropped up.

Citing the testing, the company late last week said: "Boeing remains confident in the Starliner spacecraft and its ability to return safely with crew."

Boeing and SpaceX topped NASA's list for astronaut taxi service to and from



This photo provided by NASA shows the Starliner spacecraft docked to the Harmony module of the International Space Station, orbiting 262 miles above Egypt's Mediterranean coast, on June 13, 2024. (AP)

the space station, after the shuttles retired in 2011.

NASA signed contracts worth billions with both companies in order to have a backup in case one of them got sidelined by an accident.

SpaceX launched its first crew in 2020; the upcoming flight will be its 10th astronaut flight for NASA. It's also sent a few private crews into orbit.

Boeing has had to overcome multiple Starliner problems over the years. The company had to launch an empty Starliner twice before committing to a crew, repeating the initial flight test because of bad software and other issues. The delays have cost the company more than \$1 billion.

Also:

TAIPEI, Taiwan: China says it launched a rocket Tuesday carrying a constellation of a reported 18 satellites as part of efforts

to assert its presence in space.

The satellites were carried aboard a Long March-6 carrier rocket from the Taiyuan Satellite Launch Center in north China's Shanxi Province early on Tuesday afternoon.

The official Xinhua News Agency said the rocket had reached its pre-programmed orbit without incident. China's space program has launched numerous crewed missions, put a space station into orbit with a revolving crew of three astronauts aboard and sent a rover to the Moon that has brought back rocks and soil.

It has also launched the Beidou System of satellites for national security, communications and scientific purposes, seen as an alternative - or possible competitor - to the GPS system widely used for navigation that is mainly helmed by China's strategic rival, the United States.

US bans pesticide over risks to unborn babies

LOS ANGELES, Aug 7, (Xinhua): In a historic move, the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced on Tuesday that it has taken emergency action to suspend all registrations of the pesticide dimethyl tetrachloroterephthalate (DCPA), also known as Daclhal.

The agency cited severe health risks to unborn babies. This marked the first time the EPA has employed such emergency measures in nearly four decades.

The suspension came after years of efforts by the Biden-Harris Administration to assess and address the dangers posed by DCPA. According to

the EPA, exposure to DCPA during pregnancy can lead to changes in fetal thyroid hormone levels, potentially resulting in "low birth weight, impaired brain development, decreased IQ, and impaired motor skills later in life, some of which may be irreversible."

EPA Assistant Administrator Michael Freedhoff emphasized the situation's urgency, stating, "DCPA is so dangerous that it needs to be removed from the market immediately."

The agency's primary concern is that pregnant individuals may be unknowingly exposed to the pesticide, putting their unborn children at risk.

DCPA primarily controls weeds in crops such as broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, and onions.

The EPA's risk assessment, released in May 2023, found that some pregnant individuals handling DCPA products could be exposed to "4 to 20 times greater than what EPA has estimated is safe for unborn babies."

The emergency order followed years of data collection and analysis. AMVAC Chemical Corporation, the sole manufacturer of DCPA, had been required to submit various studies since 2013 but failed to provide all the necessary data promptly.

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The Netherlands, Spain into semis

NANTERRE, France, Aug 7, (AP): Spain and the Netherlands advanced to the semifinals of the women's water polo tournament at the Paris Olympics.

Spain rolled over Canada for an 18-8 victory, and the Netherlands beat Italy 11-8 in the second quarterfinal. The European powers will face off on Thursday at Paris La Defense Arena.

Australia played Greece and the United States faced Hungary in the final two quarterfinals of the day. The U.S. is going for an unprecedented fourth consecutive gold medal.

Spain, which lost to the U.S. in the Tokyo final, improved to 5-0 at the Olympics. It has outscored its opponents 69-44 so far.

Elena Ruiz scored four times in the quarterfinal win, and Bea Ortiz continued her strong tournament with three more goals. Martina Terre made 12 saves.

Anni Espar Llaquet sparked a 4-0 run for Spain when she scored with 4:58 left in the first quarter. Ortiz's goal made it 6-1 in the final seconds of the period.

WATER POLO

"We knew if we gave Canada a chance they would be in the game, so we had to start very strong and be confident with our game," Espar Llaquet said.

Verica Bakoc scored five goals for Canada on five shots. Canada dropped to 1-4 heading into a classification game on Thursday.

"We play a little sport in a big country (and) there's not enough people playing," Axelle Crevier of Canada said. "I feel proud to compete against nations like Spain who have many water polo players."

The Netherlands earned its fourth win of the Olympics. Its only loss came in a penalty shootout against Australia.

Simone van de Kraats, Brigitte Sleeking, Vivian Sevenich and Lieke Rogge each scored two goals on Tuesday.

The Netherlands carried a 6-5 lead into the fourth quarter. Sevenich and Rogge then scored to make it 8-5 with 5:35 to go.

Van de Kraats helped close it out when she made it 11-7 with 1:03 left.

Claudia Marletta scored three goals for Italy. Dafne Bettini and Valeria Palmieri each had two.

Zain Premier League Clubs Coaches and Professionals



Nebojsa Jovic

Kuwait Club:

Coach: Nebojsa Jovic - Montenegro

Professionals: Yahya Jabrane - Ayemen Abou El Fath (Morocco) - Yassine Khenissi (Tunisia), Mohammed Marhoun (Bahrain), Arsene "Malik" Zola (Congo).



Nasser Al Shatti

Al Arabi:

Coach: Nasser Al Shatti - Kuwait
Professionals: Anayo Iwala (Nigeria) - Ahmed Khaldi - Sofiane Bouchar (Algeria) - Hamza Khaba (Morocco).



Mohammed Al Mishaan

Al Qadisiya:

Coach: Mohammed Al Mishaan - Kuwait

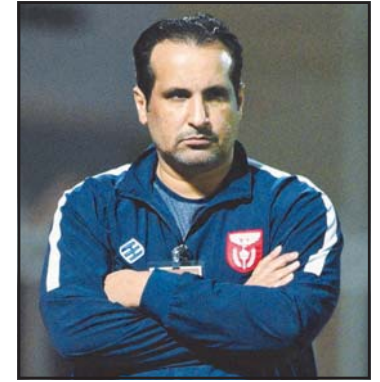
Professionals: Igor Rossi (Brazil) - Daniel Gibola (Nigeria) - Mohammed Soula (Libya) - Mehdi Barahma - Ismail Khafi (Morocco).



Ante Misha

Al-Salmiya:

Coach: Ante Misha - Croatia
Professionals: Imad Louati (Tunisia) - Younes Al-Najjar (Morocco) - Alex Lima (Brazil) - Al-Sanousi Al-Hadi (Libya) - Sang Pierre (Guinea).



Dhafer Al-Adwani

Al-Nasr:

Coach: Dhafer Al-Adwani - Kuwait

Professionals: Bernardo Villar (Brazil) - Karar Amer (Iraq) - Zakaria Al-Wardi (Morocco) - Carlos Ventura (Dominican) - Onanuga Babatunde (Nigeria).

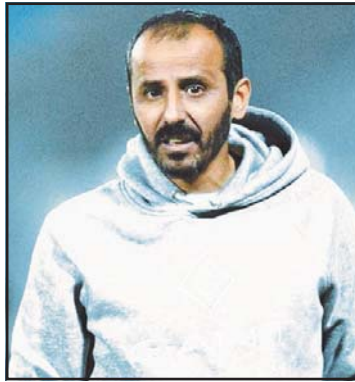


Firas Al-Khatib

Al-Fahaheel:

Coach: Firas Al-Khatib - Syria

Professionals: Calixto Breno - Victor da Silva - Rodrigo Yuri - William Barros (Brazil) - Ado Robin (Ivory Coast).



Mohamed Dahilis

Kazma:

Coach: Mohamed Dahilis - Kuwait

Professionals: Reda Bencha (Algeria) - Rafael Guimaraes "Dodo" (Brazil) - Ahmed Ersan (Jordan) - Hansel Zapata (Colombia).



Florin Matruc

Khaitan

Coach: Florin Matruc - Romania

Professionals: Chima Akas - Emmanuel Mbah - Prince Obos (Nigeria) - Luis Fernando (Brazil) - Donovan Eyulu (Cameroon).

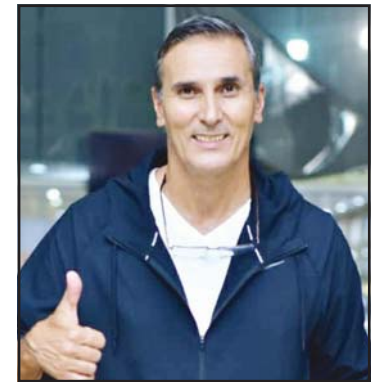


Goran Matkovic

Yarmouk:

Coach: Goran Matkovic - Serbia

Professionals: Mario (Italy) Ayoub Lakhdar - Habib Dahmani (Morocco) - Kayali Koné (Ivory Coast) - Reza (Iran).



Joao Mota

Tadamon

Coach: Joao Mota - Portugal

Professionals: Casimir Ninga (Chad) - Boubacar Djalo (Portugal) - Aboubacar Keita - Mami Saher - Ibrahima Gueye (Senegal).

Best of the Rest

Ream leaves Fulham: United States defender Tim Ream is leaving Fulham after nine years with the English club to join Charlotte FC in Major League Soccer.

Fulham announced the departure of Ream on Wednesday, with the London team describing the 36-year-old center back as a "legend" and an "outstanding servant." (AP)

Rodri, Morata banned: Rodri and Alvaro Morata were banned Wednesday for Spain's first match as the new European champion after singing about a sovereignty claim on Gibraltar at the title celebration last month.

Morata and Rodri led thousands of fans singing "Gibraltar is Spanish" in Madrid, a day after the 2-1 win over England in the European Championship final. (AP)

West Ham sign Rodriguez: West Ham said Tuesday it has signed Argentina midfielder Guido Rodriguez on a free transfer.

Rodriguez joins the Hammers after his previous deal with Real Betis expired earlier this summer after 4 1/2 seasons with the Spanish club.

"I feel like it's every footballer's dream to play in the Premier League, and I was very excited when I heard that West Ham were interested in me," he said. (AP)

Sophia Smith's extra-time goal sends USWNT into the Olympic final with a 1-0 victory over Germany

Brazil stun Spain 4-2

LYON, France, Aug 7, (AP): Sophia Smith scored in extra time and the United States earned a spot in the gold medal match at the Paris Olympics with a 1-0 victory over Germany.

The Americans, undefeated in France under new coach Emma Hayes, will be vying for their fifth gold medal in their sixth appearance in the Olympic women's soccer final.

The United States will play Brazil Saturday in Paris. Smith broke the scoreless stalemate five minutes into extra time, out maneuvering defender Felicitas Rauch and German goalkeeper Ann-Katrin Berger.

After netting her third goal of the tournament, Smith fell to the ground in celebration and joined in an embrace with teammate Mallory Swanson.

SOCCER

At the final whistle, the U.S. players ran downfield to embrace goalkeeper Alyssa Naeher.

The Americans had routed Germany 4-1 in the group stage earlier in the tournament. The U.S. Women's National Team has missed out on the finals at the last two Olympic tournaments, eliminated in the quarterfinals in 2016 in Rio de Janeiro and relegated to the bronze-medal match at the Tokyo Games three years ago.

Germany was missing veteran captain Alexandra Popp because of an illness. Popp was the only current German player who was also on the squad that won the gold medal in 2016.

Lea Schuller, who scored two goals against Zambia in the group finale to send Germany through to the quarterfinals, was absent because of an inflamed right knee.

The United States recalled defender Tierna Davidson to the game-day roster after she missed the last two games with a leg contusion. Defender Emily



United States' Emily Sonnett fights for the ball with Germany's Laura Freigang during a women's semifinal soccer match between the United States and Germany at the 2024 Summer Olympics at Lyon Stadium in Decines, France. (AP)

Sams, activated in Davidson's absence, returned to the alternate list.

Midfielder Sam Coffey, who missed the quarterfinals after yellow card accumulation, returned against German.

There were few chances on either side in the opening half. Klara Buehl forced U.S. goalkeeper Naeher into a diving save in the 29th minute but she was offside. For most of the match, Germany hunkered down on defense in the absence of Popp and Schuller.

Rose Lavelle had a chance for the U.S. early in the game but her attempt went straight into Berger's arms.

Mallory Swanson broke down the field in the 62nd and had a clear look at the goal but shot into the side netting.

The game seemed to open up in the last 20 minutes of regulation. Janina

Minge got off a shot in the 73rd but it was easily saved by Naeher. Some five minutes later, Lindsey Horan's header was caught by Berger.

Swanson appeared to break through in the 85th but she was called back for offside.

The United States was in the semifinals after a hard-fought 1-0 win in extra time against Japan. Trinity Rodman scored the lone goal, her third of the tournament.

Germany advanced on penalties after a scoreless draw with Canada in the quarterfinals. Berger stopped two Canada attempts then converted on her own penalty kick to win it.

The U.S. has won 27 of its 38 games against Germany. The last time the teams faced each other in the Olymp-

pic semifinals was in 2004 when the Americans won 2-1 and went on to win the gold medal.

Brazil will meet the United States in the final of the Olympic women's soccer tournament after beating world champion Spain 4-2.

Gabi Portillo, Adriana and Kerolin struck at Stade de Marseille after an own goal from Irene Paredes had put the two-time silver medalist in an early lead.

Victory means Brazil great Marta should get the chance to end her glittering international career by competing for gold after being suspended for the quarterfinals and semifinals.

The 38-year-old Marta has said her sixth Olympics will be her last major tournament with the national team.

"We just knew what we came to do

today, and it was a final for us today," said Angelina, who was leading the Brazil team. "So, we were just very determined and we just came for the win."

Angelina said the Brazil squad needed to "celebrate a little bit" but quickly focus on the final.

"It was a big win. Again, Spain is an amazing team and we knew that," she said. "So now we need to rest and we need to study a lot, and see what we can do against the U.S."

Spain won't get the chance in Paris to further cement its place at the top of women's soccer by adding Olympic gold to the World Cup it won last year. But there's plenty still to play for at the Paris Games.

"We keep fighting for something super nice and it will continue to be the Olympics until the end," Spain forward Jennifer Hermoso said. "A bronze medal is also very difficult to get."

Paredes' sixth-minute own goal put Brazil in control and Portillo doubled the advantage in the fourth minute of first-half stoppage time.

Adriana's header in 71st underlined Brazil's dominance.

Salma Paralluelo pulled a goal back for Spain with a header in the 85th and almost immediately Alexia Putellas struck the bar with a shot from outside the area.

Kerolin made it 4-1 in the first minute of stoppage time - shooting through Coll's legs - before Paralluelo got her second in the 12th minute of stoppage time. By then, though, it was too late for Spain to mount a comeback.

Brazil will play the four-time champion U.S. women's national team in Saturday's final at Parc des Princes in Paris.

Spain plays Germany in Lyon for bronze.

Brazil has been twice beaten in an Olympic final by the U.S. - at Athens 2004 and Beijing 2008.

It secured a place in the final for the third time after making amends for a 2-0 loss to Spain in the group phase at the Paris Games.

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Sprint powerhouse with only one silver medal

Jamaica has had more injuries than medals at Paris

SAINT-DENIS, France, Aug 7, (AP): The midpoint of the Olympic track meet used to be time for Jamaican sprint stars - Usain Bolt, Shelly-Ann Fraser-Pryce and all the rest - to catch

their breath, recover from their victory parties, then start gearing up for more.

This year in Paris, there hasn't been much to celebrate, and there's a sense that it could be years, not days, until the good times start rolling again for the Caribbean nation known for sun, sand and sprints.

After Tuesday, which marked the halfway point of the action at the Stade de France, Kishane Thompson's silver in the 100 meters was the only medal the Jamaican team had won on the track.

And in a twist hardly anyone on the island could have ever imagined, Jamaica actually had more medals from field events (two) than from sprinting.

"I know the world is used to Jamaica winning, and Jamaica always celebrating," said Asafa Powell, the Jamaican legend who held or shared the 100-meter world record for nearly three years before Bolt broke it when

Shericka Jackson and Fraser-Pryce, all in their 30s, all pulled out of their Olympic sprints with injuries. They made up the entire 100-meter podium in Tokyo in 2021.

The team that won 15 of the 24 Olympic medals in the women's 100 and 200 between 2008 and 2021 will go home with none this year. It will mark the first time since 1976 the country hasn't won a women's medal in either of those events.

"I think people appreciate us more when they see a down period like this," said Powell, who is in town hanging at the PUMA house, which used to be party central for Jamaica at the Olympics.

ATHLETICS

he surged onto the scene in 2008. "But believe me, it's going to happen again." It almost happened this time. Thompson's quest to become Jamaica's next Olympic male sprint champ came a scant .005 seconds short.

For the women's program, the problem has simply been getting a contender to the starting line.

Elaine Thompson-Herah,

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Indian wrestler Vinesh Phogat disqualified

Indian wrestler Vinesh Phogat was disqualified Wednesday hours before her finals in the women's 50kg freestyle match at the Paris Olympics, officials said. According to the Indian Olympic Association (IOA), Phogat was disqualified for being overweight.

She was all set to take on Sarah Hildebrandt of the United States for the gold medal. "It is with regret that the Indian contingent shares news of the disqualification of Vinesh Phogat from the Women's Wrestling 50kg class. Despite the best efforts by the team through the night, she weighed in a few grams over 50kg

this morning," IOA in a statement said. "No further comments will be made by the contingent at this time. The Indian team requests you respect Vinesh's privacy." Phogat was found to be overweight by 100 grams during the weigh-in Wednesday morning.

On Tuesday night Phogat defeated World and Olympic 50kg champion Yui Susaki in the opening round. She then got the better of Oksana Livach of Ukraine, before beating Yuseylis Guzman Lopez of Cuba in the semifinal, on her way to become India's first woman wrestler to reach the Olympics final. (Xinhua)



China's Wang Manyu plays against Taiwan's Chien Tung-Chuan during a women's teams quarterfinal table tennis match at the 2024 Summer Olympics in Paris, France. (AP)

Australia's Trew 'wins' title in women's park skateboarding

PARIS, Aug. 7, (AP) — Australia's Arisa Trew scored a 93.18 on her final run to win gold in women's park skateboarding at the Paris Olympics.

The 14-year-old Trew was in third place before she executed a superb third run, highlighted by a 540 - a trick with 1½ rotations in midair - to vault into first.

Japan's Cocona Hiraki was in front through two rounds after scoring a 91.98 on her first run, but she had dropped to third going into her final chance. The 15-year-old responded with her best run of the day, a performance that had the crowd oohing with each of her completed

tricks, to post a 92.63 and earn her second silver medal.

Hiraki was just 12 when she won silver when the sport debuted at the Tokyo Olympics.

Hiraki edged Britain's Sky Brown, who earned a 92.31 on her third run to take bronze for the second Olympic medal for the 16-year-old. She became the country's youngest medal winner in Tokyo when she also won bronze in the event at 13 years, 28 days old.

Brazil's Dora Varella finished fourth at 89.14, and Heili Sirvio of Finland was fifth at 88.89.

American Bryce Wettstein, who blew bubbles as she was introduced and strummed a ukulele between runs, was sixth at 88.12.

Tokyo gold medalist Japan's Sakura Yosozumi, who is 22, did not qualify for the finals after posting a best score of 79.70 in the prelims to finish 10th.

"The feelings I had this time were different," she said. "There were a lot of spectators, and I really wanted to defend my title. I was more nervous than last time, which affected my performance. My body didn't move as I wanted, and I couldn't do everything I planned." China's Hao-hao Zheng finished 18th out of 22 skateboarders with a score of 63.19. At 11 years old, Zheng is the youngest athlete in the Paris Games and the youngest athlete ever to compete for China in the Olympics.

She said she wasn't too nervous entering the competition, but that being the youngest competitor out there was a bit daunting.

"I'm quite scared of colliding with the other skaters because I feel smaller, and I could easily get pushed out," she said. "I'm just trying my best to survive out there."



Arisa Trew of Australia reacts after her run during the women's skateboarding park final at the 2024 Summer Olympics in Paris, France. (AP)

Spain rule mixed marathon relay



Gold medalists Spain's Alvaro Martin and Spain's Maria Perez pose with the Paris 2024 Olympics mascot, 'Phryges' during a ceremony at the end of the marathon race walk relay mixed at the 2024 Summer Olympics in Paris, France. (AP)

PARIS, Aug. 7, (Xinhua) — Alvaro Martin and Maria Perez claimed Spain's first athletics gold medal of the Paris Olympics by winning the mixed marathon race walk relay on Wednesday.

Martin and Perez finished in two hours, 50.31 minutes, ahead of Ecuador's Brian Pintado and Glenda Morejon, who took silver in 2:51:22.

Australia's Rhydian Cowley and Jemima Montag claimed bronze in 2:51:38.

"It has been an incredible day," Perez said. "This [victory] is not only ours, but of all the Spanish race walkers." Perez has now completed the trifecta of career gold medals at the Olympics, world championships and European championships.

"I feel very special because it's the first time that the triple crown has been achieved by an athlete from Spain and I'm fortunate enough to have shared it with Alvaro," the 28-year-old said.

WALKING

It marked the second medal for both Martin and Perez in Paris. Martin clinched bronze in the men's 20km walk while Perez grabbed silver in the women's 20km event.

Martin said the knowledge that this would be his last appearance at the Olympics had given him extra motivation.

"It was an incredible race because we knew that it was very hard to try to get another Olympic medal," Martin said. "But I was with Maria, and she did the best that she could. This is amazing, this is history, not only for us but for Spanish race walking as well." Paris 2024 marked the mixed marathon race walk relay's debut at the Olympics.



Yuka Saso, of Japan, plays out of a bunker on the 14th green during the first round of the women's golf event at the 2024 Summer Olympics at Le Golf National, in Saint-Quentin-en-Yvelines, France. (AP)



Julie Vanloo (35), of Belgium, drives under Maria Conde (22), of Spain, during a women's quarterfinal game at Bercy Arena at the 2024 Summer Olympics in Paris, France. (AP)

Miroslaw clinches gold after twice breaking world record

Lijuan settles for silver

LE BOURGET, France, Aug. 7, (AP) — Two world records, one Olympic gold medal.

Aleksandra Miroslaw of Poland capped her dominant performance at the Paris Games by winning the gold in women's speed climbing on Wednesday.

It was her first Olympic medal after just missing out on the podium with a fourth-place finish in Tokyo three years ago.

The gold came two days after she twice broke the women's world record, which now stands at 6.06 seconds.

"It means a lot," Miroslaw said. "It's the first time for speed climbing and also for me here. I have my flag and I was standing



Gold medalist Aleksandra Miroslaw of Poland celebrates on the podium after winning the women's speed climbing competition at the 2024 Summer Olympics in Le Bourget, France. (AP)

on the podium, hearing my na-

tional anthem. It was just amazing."

She won the final in 6.10, beating the 6.18 time of silver medalist Deng Lijuan of China. Aleksandra Kalucka of Poland won the bronze.

SPEED CLIMBING

"It was a close final," said Miroslaw, the 2023 bronze medalist at the world championships. "I just focused on myself and my run. I didn't look on the right side, on the times, just focused on myself."

American Emma Hunt, the silver medalist at worlds last year, failed to contend for a medal after slipping in her quarterfinal run.

"Just overthinking and not in

the moment. And that's what I'll take from this," Hunt said. "And I'll try to be more present in the future."

Hunt's teammate Sam Watson is a favorite in the men's speed event on Thursday. He is the world record holder in the event.

Miroslaw broke the women's world record for the first time at the Tokyo Games, then did it nine other times since then.

Sport climbing debuted in Tokyo with a combined event that included speed, boulder and lead. In Paris, there was a medal for speed and another for boulder and lead combined.

"It doesn't mean that it was easier," the 30-year-old Miroslaw said. "But after Tokyo I just focused on the Paris Olympics and on doing my job as good as I can."



Saudi Arabia's Dunya Ali M Abutaleb competes with Thailand's Panipak Wongpattankit in a women's 49kg Taekwondo quarterfinal match during the 2024 Summer Olympics, at the Grand Palais in Paris, France. (AP)

Paris Olympics wind down

Los Angeles swings into planning for 2028

PARIS, Aug. 7, (AP) — From the City of Love to the City of Angels, planning for the 2028 Los Angeles Olympics is well underway and organizers are paying close attention to what's worked, and what hasn't, so far in Paris.

It will be LA's third time hosting the Olympics - the last time was 40 years ago - and first time hosting the Paralympic Games.

Janet Evans remembers sitting in the stands at the Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum during the opening ceremony for the 1984 Summer Olympics as a 12-year-old.

"I remember watching those athletes march out behind their country's flags in their beautiful opening ceremony uniforms and thinking, 'I want to do that,'" Evans said.

That was before she went on to win four gold medals and set world records as a U.S. Olympic swimmer. Now, as chief athlete officer for LA2028, the organizing committee bringing the games to LA, she is focused on giving a voice to athletes and their concerns.

"Having lived in three Olympic Villages and having competed in three Olympic Games ... it's really

important to understand what the athletes are experiencing," Evans said.

Much of the focus will be on hearing from athletes about their concerns after the Games are over.

But Evans said some of the concerns that have been floated in the last few weeks - reports of uncom-

fortable beds, limited air conditioning and food shortages - won't be an issue in LA, which plans to house the athletes on the UCLA campus.

"We feed thousands of students a day. UCLA houses thousands of students a day and so we're tried and tested and true," she said.

"I eat the food once a week, at least, at UCLA, which is delicious. So I can vouch for that."

As for concerns specific to Los Angeles, top of mind for many is the gridlocked traffic on freeways and streets in the City of Dreams and Hollywood.

Evans said the plan is to work around some challenges by making deliveries for athletes late at night, work with companies to implement a more robust work-from-home plan for employees in the Southern California region for the duration of the Games and institute "Olympic lanes" to ensure athletes can "get from point A to point B quicker."

The official handoff to Los Angeles will take place on Sunday evening during the closing ceremony in Paris.

Evans hopes the buildup in the next four years and LA's own opening ceremony will inspire a new generation of spectators to follow their dreams.

"That's what the Olympics do - they change people's lives," Evans said.

"I think that's why everyone loves the Olympics. It brings people together."



Hampton Morris of the United States competes during the men's 61kg weightlifting event at the 2024 Summer Olympics in Paris, France. (AP)



Gabrielle Thomas, of the United States, reacts after winning the gold medal in the women's 200 meters final at the 2024 Summer Olympics in Saint-Denis, France. (AP)

Sports

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Yarmouk face Tadamon

Zain Premier League begins with showdown between Kuwait Club and Al-Qadisiya

By Hassan Musa

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 8: The title holder Kuwait Club and Al-Qadisiya will kick off the 63rd edition of the Zain Premier League at 8:30pm today, facing off at the Friendship and Peace Stadium in the tournament's first round.

The round continues tomorrow with two matches. Yarmouk and Al-Tadamon, will meet at Abdullah Al-Khalifa Stadium at 7:05 pm, followed by Khaitan against Al-Fahaheel at Nasser Al-Osaimi Stadium at 9:29 pm.

The round concludes the day after

tomorrow with two matches. Al-Arabi will play Kazma at 7:05 pm at Mohammed Al-Hamad Stadium, and Al-Salmiya will face Al-Nasr at the Friendship and Peace Stadium at 9:29 pm.

Kuwait Club has the most championships, having won the tournament 19 times. Rivals Al-Qadisiya and Al-Arabi each have 17 titles, while Kazma and Al-Jahra have won the title four and one times, respectively.

This season, the tournament starts earlier than usual, typically beginning in late August or early September. The early start is due to Kuwait's commitments in the 2026

World Cup qualifiers, with matches scheduled for September, October, and November. Additionally, Kuwait will host the "Gulf 26" from December 21 to January 3, pausing competitions in early November for the Gulf Championship.

SOCCER

All eyes will be on the Friendship and Peace Stadium in Adailiya tonight for the "hot" match between Al-Qadisiya and Kuwait Club, the highlight of this round's matches. Fans are eagerly anticipating an exciting game, given the talent in both

teams, including local players and professionals.

Kuwait Club has dominated recent seasons, winning four out of the last five league matches against Al-Qadisiya, with one draw. Al-Qadisiya's last victory over Kuwait Club was in May 2021 with a 3-1 scoreline.

This match holds significant importance for both teams. A win would provide great motivation and a psychological edge, especially for Al-Qadisiya, who has struggled against Kuwait in recent years. For Kuwait Club, it's an opportunity to reaffirm its superiority and show that their success is no fluke.



A file photo of players battling for the ball.

US earn a rare medal

Li repeats as Oly champ

PARIS, Aug 7, (AP) — Li Fabin of China defended his Olympic weightlifting title on Wednesday, winning the men's 61-kilogram division, while Hampton Morris became the first American man to earn a weightlifting medal at the Games in four decades.

After going into the competition as the overwhelming favorite to repeat, the 31-year-old Li set a Games snatch record by lifting 143 kilograms (315 pounds) on his third and final attempt. That paved the way to gold for Li, who set the top Olympic snatch and overall marks in this category three years ago when winning in Tokyo.

WEIGHTLIFTING

Already with a big lead, Li lifted 167 kilograms (368 pounds) in the clean and jerk to seal it with a score of 310.

Morris got the bronze medal, failing on a world record attempt in the clean and jerk but ending up at 303. The last U.S. men's weightlifting medalists were Mario Martinez and Guy Carlton in the 1984 Los Angeles Games.

Theerapong Silachai of Thailand got the silver for medal. Morris slipped on his first clean and jerk attempt. The 20-year-old slid the bar forward a few feet on his second try, which was successful at 172kg.

Four-time Olympic medalist Eko Yuli Irawan of Indonesia, the oldest weightlifter in the category at age 35, injured his right hip or leg on his unsuccessful final lift. He limped off with assistance after failing to make a lift in the clean and jerk, preventing him from extending his lead as his country's most decorated Olympian.

The 61kg (134.48 pound) class is one of just five at the Paris Games after a reclassification and reduction from seven divisions in Tokyo. The start of the first event was delayed more than 20 minutes because of unspecified technical maintenance.

American Jourdan Delacruz competes in the women's 49-kilogram division later Wednesday. Tokyo



Li Fabin of China celebrates on the podium during the medal ceremony for the men's 61kg weightlifting event at the 2024 Summer Olympics in Paris, France. (AP)



Bronze medalist Hampton Morris of the United States celebrates on the podium during the medal ceremony for the men's 61kg weightlifting event at the 2024 Summer Olympics in Paris, France. (AP)

Olympic gold medalist Hou Zhihui of China is considered the weightlifter to beat.

China also has top contenders Luo Shifang in the women's 59kg and Shi Zhiyong in men's 73kg on Thursday and Li Wenwen in the women's +81kg on Sunday, when weightlifting wraps up.

Bahrain's Winfred sets Oly record to win 3,000m steeplechase gold



Winfred Yavi of Bahrain celebrates after the women's 3000m steeplechase final of Athletics at the Paris 2024 Olympic Games in Paris, France. Inset: Yavi celebrates after the women's 3000m steeplechase final. (Xinhua)

Thomas seizes 200m crown as Hocker pulls shocker

PARIS, Aug 7, (Agencies): Bahrain's Yavi Winfred broke the Olympic record to win gold in the women's 3,000m steeplechase at the Paris Games.

The 24-year-old completed the grueling event in 8 minutes, 52.76 seconds, eclipsing the previous Games record of 8:58.81 set by Russian Gulnara Samitova-Galkina at the Beijing 2008 Olympics.

Uganda's Peruth Chemutai took silver in 8:53.34 and Kenyan Faith Cherotich claimed bronze in 8:55.15.

"This is a dream come true. It has been such a hard journey to get to this point," said Winfred, the reigning world champion. "I am so happy for me but also for the Bahraini people and the federation who have supported me since I started working with them."

Winfred admitted that she was confident about claiming the gold medal before the race. "In the final, I was expecting something good. I just felt good about the race. I believed in myself that I have that finishing speed."

The United States' Gabrielle Thomas claimed the women's 200m crown while Canada's Camryn Rogers also won gold to usher in a new era for the women's hammer throw at the Paris Olympics.

ATHLETICS

Thomas showed blistering speed after the bend to finish the 200m final in 21.83 seconds, 0.25 seconds ahead of Saint Lucia's Julien Alfred, who took silver after her gold in the 100m on Saturday. Thomas' compatriot Brittany Brown claimed bronze, 0.12 seconds further back.

It completed a steady rise to the top for 27-year-old Thomas, who had clinched bronze in this event at the Tokyo 2020 Games and silver at the

2023 world championships.

Rogers, 25, announced a changing of the guard as she secured hammer throw gold with a best effort of 76.97 meters.

The U.S.'s Annette Echikunwoke grabbed silver with 75.48 and China's Zhao Jie took bronze with 74.27. Three-time defending champion Anita Wlodarczyk could only manage fourth, having dominated the event since the London 2012 Games.

The Pole was aiming to become only the third athlete in history - after Carl Lewis in long jump and Al Oerter in discus - to win the same individual athletics event at four consecutive Olympics.

There were three other gold medals decided in an enthralling night of athletics at the Stade de France.

Greece's Miltiadis Tentoglou successfully defended his Olympic title by winning the men's long jump with a best leap of 8.48 meters, 0.12 ahead of Jamaica's Wayne Pinnock, who took silver.

Italy's Mattia Furlani took bronze with a jump of 8.34 meters.

The race was billed as a bar brawl between the two baddest 1,500-meter

runners in the world.

Nobody figured the little-known American guy would sneak up on both of them, steal the show and take the Olympic gold medal with him.

Cole Hocker threw a jolt into track, first catching up to -- then slipping his way past -- fierce rivals Jakob Ingebrigtsen and Josh Kerr to pull the upset of the Games with an unexpected victory in a much-hyped showdown that wasn't supposed to involve him.

Hocker bettered his personal best by nearly 3 seconds to win in an Olympic-record 3 minutes, 27.65 seconds.

"If you've been following my season, you knew I was capable of it," Hocker said. "But still, things had to go my way today."

Taking advantage of a blistering early pace set by Ingebrigtsen, the 23-year-old product of University of Oregon pulled from fifth, to third, then finally to first, over the final 300 meters to pass the gassed-out favorites.

This was supposed to be all about a chance for the defending Olympic champion (Ingebrigtsen) and the reigning world champion (Kerr) to

finally settle a feud that's been brewing for over a year. Kerr said the race would be "one of the most vicious and hardest 1,500s the sport's seen in a very long time."

Instead, the guy taking home the \$50,000 winner's check was an up-and-comer who was listed as much as a 30-1 long shot. Kerr finished second by .14 seconds. Another American, Yared Nuguse, was third, and Ingebrigtsen faded to fourth.

"It was a deafening noise. I've never heard that in a stadium before," Hocker said of the 80,000 screaming fans in the Stade de France. "I kind of lost feeling in my body and it didn't feel like the Olympics anymore until it did."

About an hour after that surprise came an American victory most people saw coming when Gabby Thomas powered through the curve to win the 200-meter title in 21.83 seconds.

Her .25-second margin over 100 champ Julien Alfred was .11-second bigger than Hocker's, even though Thomas raced half a lap and Hocker nearly four.

Hocker, who recorded his previous personal best of 3:30.59 at Olympic trials this summer, is only the second U.S. man to win the metric mile at the Olympics over the last 112 years. Matt Centowitz took gold in 2016.

All eyes for this one were trained on Ingebrigtsen, the defending champion out of Norway who came in with a point to prove, and Kerr, the Scotsman who beat him last year at world championships.

Ever since, Kerr and Ingebrigtsen poked at each other. Among the salvos that stuck was Kerr's assertion that Ingebrigtsen only wins races with pacesetters, which are not allowed at major events like the Olympics.

Against that backdrop, Ingebrigtsen darted to the front quickly and ran there for the first 3 1/2 laps, while Kerr traded between second and third, getting ready for his typical windup and a potential slingshot past the Norwegian over the closing stretch, much the way he did last year.



Cole Hocker, of the United States, center, chases Jakob Ingebrigtsen, of Norway, and Josh Kerr, of Britain, left, during the men's 1500-meter final at the 2024 Summer Olympics in Saint-Denis, France. (AP)

KFA's acting Chairman meets referees ahead of new season

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 8: Acting Chairman of the Kuwait Football Association Board of Directors, Haif Al-Mutairi, met with referees at the Jaber Al-Ahmad International Stadium meeting hall, which was also attended by Board Member Jamal Al-Otaibi and the Association's Secretary-General Salah Al-Qanai.

During the meeting, Al-Mutairi emphasized the Board's support for the referees in the upcoming competitions, particularly with the Zain Premier League starting today. He highlighted the impressive performance of the referees last season,

both in local and international competitions, and encouraged them to continue striving for excellence.

"We trust their ability to achieve further successes, building on their previous accomplishments," said Al-Mutairi.

SOCCER

He also praised the Referees Committee for its exceptional guidance, preparation for its exceptional guidance, and organization of numerous courses and workshops, which have significantly contributed to the referees' development.



Al-Mutairi and Al-Otaibi pose with the referees.