



olympics

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Tough conditions for job protested

By Najeh Bilal

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 8: Trade union sources in the oil sector stressed the need for the Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) to intervene to put an end to the complex and difficult conditions set by private oil companies for appointment, especially those in which KPC has significant shares.

They explained that EQUATE Petrochemical Company's recent announcement about job opportunities did not specify that applicants must be Kuwaiti, despite the Petrochemical Industries Company (PIC), a subsidiary of KPC, holding a 42.5 percent stake. This raises concerns about the role of the Kuwaiti company in this process.

The announcement has generated widespread reactions regarding the challenging requirements for these positions. While a Bachelor of Science in Accounting is a basic requirement, the additional conditions are difficult. They are - applicants must have five to eight years of accounting experience, experience in financial reporting according to local and international standards, practical experience in accounting settlements, expertise in preparing and reviewing financial statements, and proficiency in accounting software and ERP systems (such as SAP). Advanced Excel skills are also required.

Preference will be given to candidates with experience from internationally recognized auditing firms and those holding accounting qualifications like CPA or ACCA.

The sources indicated that the advertisement may have been designed to target specific individuals.

Reinforced shelters ward off Iran bombs

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times special report

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 8: In the face of potential threats from Iran, the Israelis rely heavily on a network of shelters that have been developed and refined over the past five decades.

These shelters are designed to withstand most conventional missile attacks, providing a crucial line of defense against the possibility of being hit by cruise and ballistic missiles.

Despite the gravity of the threat, daily life in Israel continues with a sense of resilience. Summer activities for children proceed as planned, grocery stores remain stocked, and there are no military-imposed restrictions on public gatherings.

This sense of normalcy is partly due to the confidence in Israel's robust multi-layered defense system, which has successfully intercepted nearly 300 missiles and drones in recent attacks, according to reports from the Wall Street Journal.

The extensive network of shelters, which are simple and readily available, plays a key role in this defensive strategy. Approximately 65 percent of the Israelis have a designated bomb shelter in their home or apartment.

These shelters, built and improved over Israel's 76-year history, provide a sense of security to the population. As Ofer Shabtai, a Tel Aviv resident, expressed, despite the potential for chaos, the presence of these shelters offers a feeling of safety.

This preparedness and the continued enhancement of defensive measures reflect Israel's commitment to protecting its citizens amid ongoing regional tensions.

The newspaper report traces the history of shelter construction in Israel, noting that cities began building an underground network of public shelters in the 1970s to protect residents from air raids. In 1991, Iraq, led by Saddam Hussein, launched dozens of "Scud" missiles at Israel, causing damage to cities like Tel Aviv and Haifa. In response, the following year, Israel passed a law mandating that every building must have a shelter.

Since the early 1990s, these shelters have primarily protected Israelis from short-range missiles fired from Gaza or Lebanon. However, they now face the threat of cruise missiles and ballistic missiles with larger warheads launched from thousands of miles away.

According to the Israeli official, the current infrastructure is designed to protect against long-range missile attacks, as they are built to withstand the blasts and shrapnel from Scud missiles from Iraq.

Apartment shelters are designed to remain standing as fortified towers even if the building collapses, although a direct hit on the shelter could be fatal due to the small surface area. Nonetheless, the official noted that this is unlikely.

Today, about one-third of Israelis do not have a bomb shelter in their buildings or live near a public shelter they can reach before being hit by a missile. These people typically live in poorer areas, including rural regions, Arab minority communities in Israel, and low-income neighborhoods in cities where buildings were constructed before shelter regulations were implemented.

In densely populated Tel Aviv, residents have about 60 seconds to reach a shelter after hearing an air raid siren, while those living near the borders with Gaza or Lebanon have less than 10 seconds to find shelter.

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E-media owners face law if outlet misused, warns Info

Zero tolerance for fake, manipulated news

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

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 8: Assistant Undersecretary for the Press, Publishing and Publications Sector at the Ministry of Information Lafi Al-Subaie has warned electronic media owners against handing over their licenses to other people to manage the content without their supervision and monitoring.

In a television interview on the '35 Program' with presenter Ahmed Al-Masoudi, Al-Subaie stressed that "the ministry will not absolve the administrator in the event of publishing incorrect news and it will apply full legal measures against the owner. The media is more dangerous than any other means." He added that he contacted some administrators of electronic media after they published some news. "I was surprised that they did not know about the publication," he revealed.

He stated that the number of licenses granted to visual and audio media totaled 11; while in the Press Sector, there are 118 licenses for periodicals, seasonal, daily and advertising magazines, and 460 licenses for electronic media." He clarified that the law does not limit the issuance of such licenses despite their large number.

He also disclosed that the Press, Publishing and Publications Sector has withdrawn the licenses of 68 media outlets since 2016 in accordance with law; while some owners requested the cancellation of the license when they found it was useless due to the many complaints filed against the owner of the media outlet by individuals and embassies after the publication of incorrect news.

Al-Subaie explained that the accountability over celebrities' personal accounts is not as per the ministry's procedures, because it is done by other bodies. He affirmed the Unified Media Law is a civilized law and there is full partnership with the concerned authorities.

He said one of the official directives is to apply the law on all media outlets without causing injustice to anyone. He asserted that whoever violates the law is held accountable. "Some newspapers, media outlets and channels were referred to the Public Prosecution without discrimination, as the ministry looks at the

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NewsWatch

GAZA: At least 22 Palestinians fell martyred and 77 others injured in the past 24 hours after Israeli occupation forces committed four massacres against families in different parts of the Gaza Strip.

According to local health authorities on Thursday, casualties' numbers are likely to rise, as there are many under the rubble not accounted for as of yet. (KUNA)

SANAA: A Yemeni official said Wednesday that 30 people have been killed and hundreds displaced in flooding in the southern city of Hodeidah following several days of heavy rains.

Hodeidah Gov. **Mugammad Qahim** told Houthi rebel-controlled Masirah TV that the floods displaced people from 500 homes. Five people were missing, he said. (AP)

CAIRO: Egypt's Civil Aviation Ministry said Wednesday it has ordered Egyptian airlines to avoid Iranian airspace for three hours the following day after a notice from Tehran to do so because of military exercises.

The warning comes amid soaring tensions in the region following last week's assassination of Hamas' leader in Tehran. The Egyptian ministry said the warning came in a notice sent by Iran to all commercial airlines. (AP)

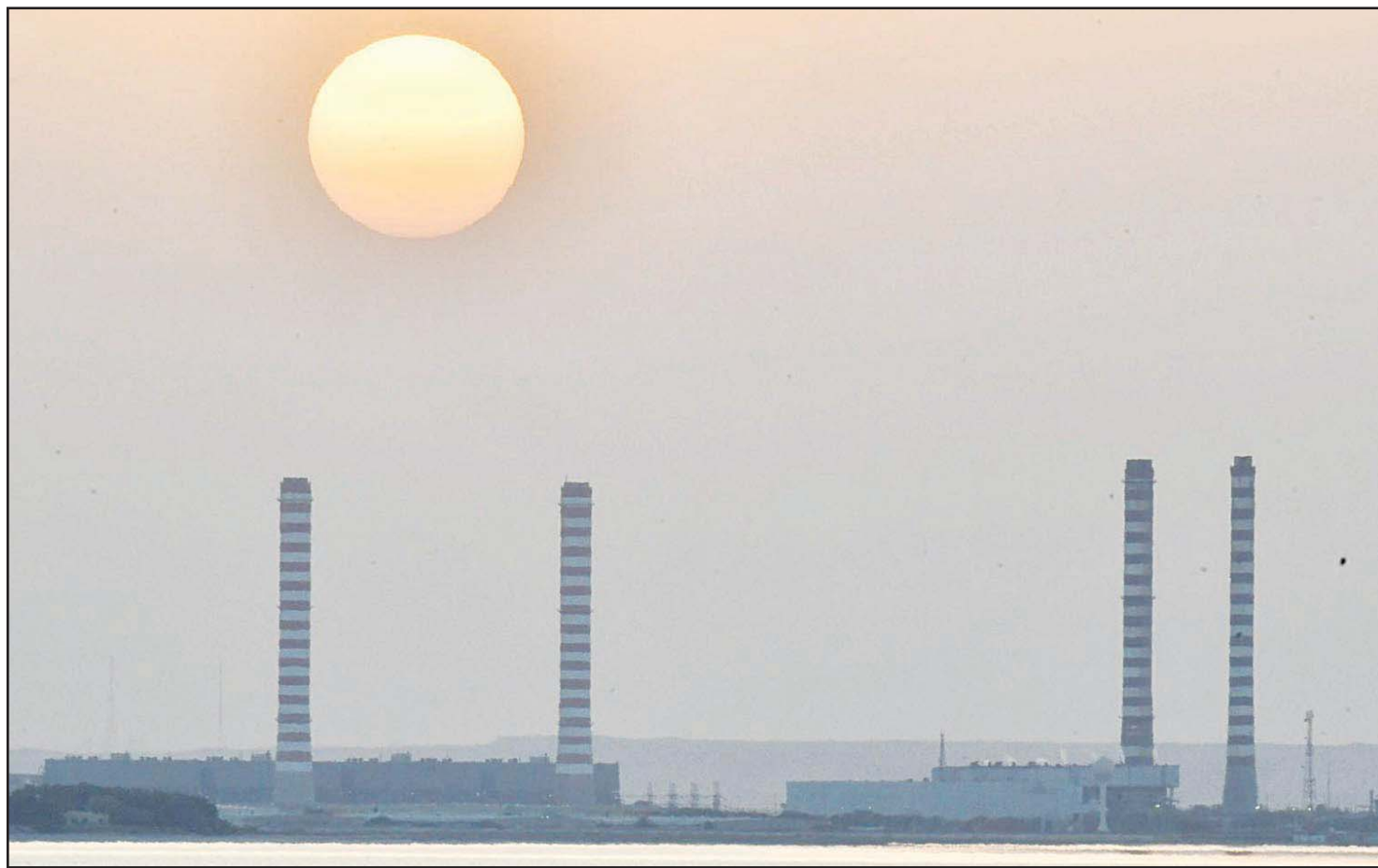


Photo by Mohammad Morsi

The sun sets on the horizon as seen opposite the Doha Power Plant in north Kuwait. Dust and hot weather is expected to prevail over the weekend.

Minister reassures abundant stock of foodstuff available in all co-ops

By Fares Al-Abdan

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 8: Dr. Amthal Al-Huwailah, Minister of Social Affairs, Family and Childhood Affairs, and Minister of State for Youth Affairs, has reassured the public about the stability of the strategic stock in Kuwait.

During a recent visit to the Union of Consumer Cooperative Societies, she emphasized that the stock levels are adequate and available in all cooperative societies, thanks to ongoing coordination with relevant authorities to ensure sufficient supply.

Accompanied by Acting Assistant Undersecretary for the Cooperative Sector Ahmed Al-Enezi, Minister Al-Huwailah was welcomed by Musab Ahmed Al-Mulla and other

members of the Union's Board of Directors.

Her visit underscored the government's commitment to the directives of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled, and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmed Al-Abdullah in supporting and developing civil society institutions to enhance citizen well-being.

Minister Al-Huwailah highlighted the importance of innovation and renewal in community services. She noted that the Union of Cooperative Societies is more than just a provider of goods; it plays a crucial role in improving the quality of life and developing residential neighborhoods.

Positive competition among cooperative societies to offer integrated services at reasonable prices aligns with the comprehensive vision of citizen welfare, she said, emphasizing on the issue of prioritizing the nation's and citizens' interests is fundamental and that safeguarding public funds is a national duty.

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72-hour termination notice time to disrupt work at municipality

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 8: The Kuwait Municipality faces uncertainty following ministerial decision to terminate expatriate employees following the three-day deadline set by the Minister of Works and Minister of State for Municipal Affairs, Dr. Noura Al-Mashaan, reports Al-Jarida daily.

The Municipality is preparing for significant changes since the minister's decision mandates the termination of all expatriate employees with university qualifications in the municipality, including those in legal, engineering, accounting, and administrative roles, as well as expatriate legal advisors.

The municipal authorities are awaiting a formal decision from the Director of the Kuwait Municipality, Eng. Saud Al-Dabbous, regarding the implementation of this decision.

Municipal sources have expressed concerns that the short 72-hour period for the termination of services may disrupt the municipality's operations. They argue that

this time-frame is insufficient to prepare and train new Kuwaiti employees to fill the vacated positions.

The sources revealed that municipal agencies are currently reviewing the decision from a legal standpoint to determine the best course of action.

This review is crucial given that many expatriate employees have contracts through the CSC. Previously, the municipality had coordinated with the CSC to implement a gradual replacement plan aimed at increasing the number of national employees without disrupting operations.

To address the expected challenges, the Municipality plans to provide training courses for newly appointed national staff in engineering, supervisory, administrative, and finance roles. This is seen as necessary to ensure a smooth transition and effective performance in the municipal departments.

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KUNA photo

The Minister of Information and Culture and the Bahraini Minister of Tourism sign the executive program of the tourism cooperation agreement between the two countries.

Kuwait, Bahrain sign pact to boost tourism relations

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 8, (KUNA): Minister of Information and Culture Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi stated that cooperation with the Bahraini Ministry of Tourism is ongoing and continuous to develop the vital and important tourism sector in both countries to serve their interests.

In a statement to Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) on Wednesday, following a meeting with Bahraini Minister of Tourism and Chairperson of the Board of Directors of the Bahrain Tourism and Exhibitions Authority, Fatima Al-Sayrafi, on the occasion of her visit, Minister Al-Mutairi affirmed that the historical Kuwaiti-Bahraini relations are solid and enduring under the leadership of both countries.

He added that the bilateral relations between the two countries are "complementary

and fraternal," overflowing with love, brotherhood, cooperation, and joint work between the two wise leaderships and peoples. He expressed his happiness with this visit, which is part of a series of ongoing fraternal visits aimed at enhancing mutual understanding and discussing frameworks for constructive cooperation on common issues related to the tourism sector and related fields.

He praised the development of the tourism sector in Bahrain, which has been highlighted this year by Manama being named the Gulf Tourism Capital for 2024. He emphasized that tourism has become a major industry and a development sector that supports national economies and enhances the growth of the national product.

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'Avoid sun in peak time, avert stroke'

By Marwa Al-Bahrawi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff and Agencies

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 8: The Ministry of Health organized a public awareness campaign titled "Climate Change ... Enhance Your Health" yesterday in the presence of the Director of the Health Promotion Department Dr. Abeer Al-Baho and Sheikhha Sheikhha Al-Abdullah, as part of its efforts to raise awareness about the harmful effects of climate change.

In a press statement issued on the sidelines of the campaign, Dr. Al-Baho affirmed the importance of avoiding outdoor activities during the peak hours from 11:00 am to 4:00 pm to avoid the health problems caused by extremely high temperatures and heat stress.

She stressed that there are some habits that everyone should adopt during times of extreme heat, such as drinking sufficient amounts of water, avoiding excessive physical activities outside, wearing loose light-colored clothing, staying under the shade, wearing hats and sunglasses, and regularly taking showers.

During a lecture this morning at the Promenade Mall as part of the awareness campaign "Climate Change ... Enhance Your Health" initiated by the National Committee to Combat the Effects of Climate Change and Environmental Disasters, Dr. Al-Baho explained that the event features medical consultations on climate change.

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MoCI, PAM join heads to tackle Art. 19 issue

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 8: The Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MoCI), in collaboration with the Public Authority for Manpower, is developing new internal regulations to address issues related to residency materials, including Article 19. This move aims to simplify the process and improve coordination with various government agencies, reports Al-Jarida daily.

This is being done to streamline the management of residency materials and Article 19, which concerns residency requirements for expatriates. This effort aims to ease the process of transitioning partners from Article 18 to Article 19.

The Ministry received the suspension order based on a request from the Public Authority for Manpower. The Ministry is now reassessing the controls and regulations affecting individuals under different residency articles.

The goal is to reconcile existing licenses and facilitate the transition of partners and managers to Article 19.

There are concerns that the temporary suspension of the establishment, renewal, and amendment of companies and institutions -- along with restrictions on residency and visa entries -- could lead to capital flight.

The circular's impact could potentially disrupt business operations and financial stability.

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Prayer Timings

Fajr	03:45	Asr	15:29
Sunrise ..	05:12	Maghrib ..	18:35
Zohr	11:54	Isha	19:59

Local

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

Expected weather for next 24 hrs:
By Day: Very hot and relatively humid over coastal areas with light to moderate freshening at times northwesterly wind to light variable wind, with speeds of 10-40 km/h.
By Night: Hot to rather hot with

Weather

light to moderate northwesterly wind, with speeds of 12-32 km/h and some scattered clouds will appear.

Station	Max Exp	Min Rec
Kuwait City	48	37

Kuwait Airport	48	33
Abdaly	48	32
Jahra	49	36
Salmiyah	44	36
Jal Aliyah	47	33
Nuwaisib	45	31
Wafra	48	31

New room equipped with advanced radiology tech, interventional devices

Ministry opens second hybrid operating room at Jaber Hospital

By Marwa Al-Bahravi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 8: The Ministry of Health has introduced the second hybrid operating room at Jaber Hospital, blending traditional surgical capabilities with cutting-edge interventional radiology technologies.

A consultant for vascular and arterial surgery at Jaber Hospital Dr. Ahmad Amir explained that the new operating room is equipped with advanced radiology technologies and interventional devices.

It enables both traditional surgeries and radiation-based interventions simultaneously, creating a safer surgical environment and reducing the risk of complications. It eliminates the need to transfer patients in critical conditions between radiology rooms and operating rooms for various interventions.

The range of operations that can be performed in this room includes orthopedic and spine surgeries, vascular surgeries, arterial catheterizations, endoscopic surgeries of the liver and pancreas, brain

surgery, cerebral arterial catheterizations, and trauma surgeries.

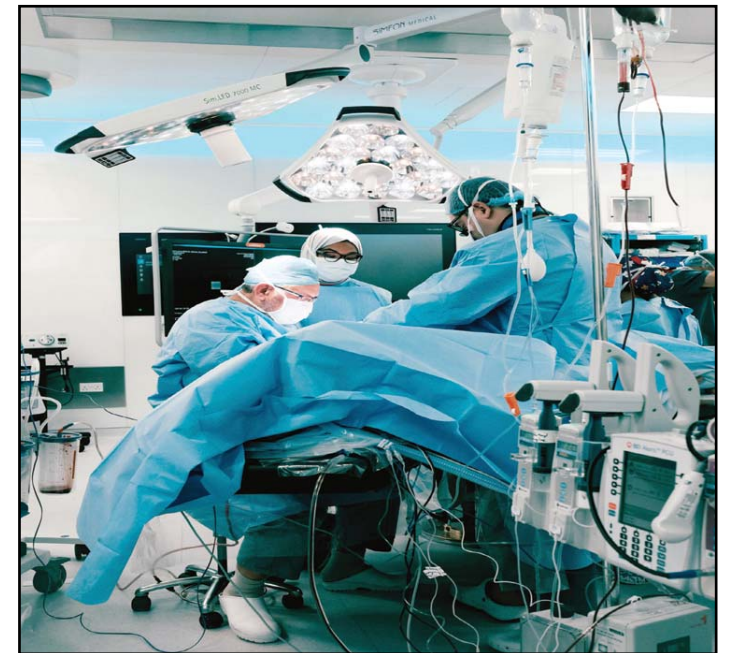
Dr. Amir stressed that equipping the room for brain and spine surgeries, alongside arterial catheterization, makes it one among the most advanced technologies globally, and allows for the treatment of many previously incurable diseases using minimally invasive methods.

Meanwhile, Head of the Surgery Department at Jaber Hospital Dr. Sulaiman Al-Muzaidi stated that the opening of this new room reflects Jaber Hospital's commitment to delivering top-notch healthcare services and adopting the latest medical technologies. This enhancement reinforces the hospital's status as one of the leading medical centers in the region.

She commended the Minister of Health Dr. Ahmad Al-Awadhi, and the Undersecretary of the ministry Dr. Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi for their significant support and efforts in advancing the health sector. Their contributions have been instrumental in equipping the hospital with cutting-edge technologies, ultimately improving patient care.



The operating room equipped with the latest interventional radiology technology.



Doctors in action in the operating room.

MoH photos



Kuwait's FM Al-Yahya meets with the Secretary-General of the Gulf Cooperation Council Al-Budaiwi.

FM meets GCC Sec-Gen Al-Budaiwi

Kuwait's Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Al-Yahya met on Thursday with the Secretary-General of the Gulf Cooperation Council, Jassim Al-Budaiwi.

During the meeting, they discussed strengthening joint Gulf action and the latest regional and international developments. (KUNA)

Other Voices

The 'functional Zionist' entity

By Ahmed alsarraf

Israel's population is 9 million, supported by twice that amount abroad. Israel's area is 22,000 km², compared to 13 million km² for Arab countries, and nearly half a billion Arabs.

Israel is characterized by a very developed investment, industrial, agricultural and military economy, and a parliamentary democracy, compared to 22 Arab countries with very poor economic and military structures, with a few financially wealthy ones.

The majority of Arab countries are characterized by their complete dependence on traditional agriculture and foreign aid, with widespread illiteracy in many of them, and dictatorships rule most of them, and people have no real value in them!

In light of the above data, it is impossible for Israel to coexist with its surroundings, even after 100 years, even if all the current ruling regimes accept peace, as there is no guarantee in the future that any of them will not return to their previous existential hostility towards it.

Therefore it is forced, perhaps forever, to remain strong and heavily armed, rejecting peace, except on its terms, and it will prevent others from possessing nuclear weapons or economic, industrial, and military progress in particular, and it will work hard to make the Arab countries, especially those with high population density, under its control, and their peoples its workers.

It will also continue its plan aimed at eliminating the "myth" of the Palestinian state, and rejecting any human presence of them near it, and it will continue to eliminate them, either by killing, expulsion, displacement, or settlement, far from it, so that they completely forget the dream of returning to their state, and this is what dozens of Zionist leaders and politicians have previously declared and sought to implement, with all blatant frankness.

We repeat that we are not with Hamas, and we have never been with its ideas or philosophy, but when the ex-

istence of its people is threatened with extinction, as is clear from the plans of the Jews over a hundred years, then it has no choice but to wage an armed uprising, and to repeat it, as it is a defense of existence and dignity, and this is what hundreds of peoples have done before it, so why should the Palestinians be blamed then?

As for some saying that the revolution against tyrants must be from everyone, and not from a faction within it, this represents the height of absurdity, and contradicts all the attempts at liberation that we have known!

Mark Perlmutter, MD, an American volunteer physician in Gaza (12/7/2024), says that in one week he saw more children dismembered and their heads smashed in his entire life as a physician, as a result of buildings coming crashing down, or as a result of being hit by shrapnel the size of a thumb, extracted from the heads and bodies of children as young as eight years old.

He also found two sniper bullets in the chest of more than one child. How can a sniper, described by his country as the best in the world, target children with such precision? He also saw others hit by two bullets to the head, with great precision. According to him, this cannot happen by accident!

After all this evidence of the Zionists' rejection of any compromises with the Palestinian people, and after the Knesset passed a law preventing the establishment of an independent Palestinian state, and the continuation of the humanitarian disasters in Gaza, and the clarity of the Zionist plan to annihilate them, a "functional Zionist" from our own people comes to mock the Palestinian struggle and demand that they surrender and accept coexistence with the Zionists, knowing full well that the Zionists do not want that in the first place.

Therefore he must stop giving lessons in patriotism to anyone who rejects his demands. And since he is not that stupid to stand with the Zionists with such vulgarity and lack of shame, he is therefore a marketer of their ideas and a beneficiary party, and his marketing of the idea or innovation of "religious coexistence" is nothing but evidence of something.

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Around 2,000 citizens rejected or denied job offers in govt agencies

CSC enforces rules to address job offer refusals

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 8: According to informed sources, a total of 1,900 Kuwaiti men and women who were nominated by the Civil Service Commission (CSC) for jobs in government agencies either refused the job opportunities that were offered to them or their applications were rejected by those agencies, reports Al-Anba daily.

They explained that CSC had anticipated this issue and took steps to prevent certain government agencies from refusing to appoint the nominated individuals. A circular was sent to ministries and government agencies to confirm that nominations for any government agency are made in accordance with the Civil Service Council's approval.

CSC notified these agencies that the Civil Service Commission's decision was based on the needs for various positions and specializations submitted by the agencies, which were determined after informing them of the allocated financial grades. Sending the names of citizens nominated for employment to government agencies was done after these agencies added their needs to the integrated systems in CSC.

It also issued another circular to ministries, institutions, and government agencies, outlining the mechanism and controls for submitting job requirements. This included details on distributing approved job titles according to classified groups and the number of vacancies across financial grades.

The sources concluded by saying, "For these reasons, ministries, institutions, and government agencies are required to accept the appointment of those nominated by CSC."

Mol restructures Central Market's board of directors

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 8: The Undersecretary of the Ministry of Interior, Lieutenant-General Sheikh Salem Al-Nawaf, has issued Decision No. 3099 of 2024, which details the restructuring of the board of directors for the Central Market serving Ministry of Interior employees, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The new board will be headed by Lieutenant-General Eng. Tawhid Al-Kandari as Chairman, with Vice President Major General Eng. Iyad Al-Haddad supporting his role. The restructuring also includes several prominent leaders within the Ministry.

The Ministry of Interior has indicated that the newly formed board has already convened a meeting under Al-Kandari's leadership.

The primary focus of the meeting was to address key topics related to the market's management and to enhance the services provided to the ministry's employees. The board emphasized the need for continued effort and dedication to improve the market's operations and meet the needs of its members effectively.



Ahmadi Governor Sheikh Hamoud Jaber chairs the meeting.

Al-Seyassah photo

Ahmadi Governorate committed to developing historical, heritage buildings: Sheikh Hamoud

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 8: Ahmadi Governor Sheikh Hamoud Jaber Al-Ahmad emphasized the commitment to ongoing efforts to rehabilitate and develop historical and heritage buildings in Ahmadi Governorate, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

This statement was made during a meeting held yesterday at the General Diwan of Ahmadi Governorate. The meeting was attended by the Secretary-General of the National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters, Dr. Muhammad Al-Jassar, the Acting Assistant Secretary-General for

the Antiquities and Museums Sector, Muhammad bin Redha, the Chief Specialist Engineer, Eng. Walid Al-Asfour, the Senior Architectural Specialist and Director of the Development Project, Eng. Batoul Ashour, the Architectural Engineer of the Development Project Team, Nasser Ashour, and the Senior Architectural Engineer, Rabab Kazem.

During the meeting, the governor was briefed on the latest developments in the rehabilitation project of the old Ahmadi market.

Dr. Muhammad Al-Jassar provided

ed a visual presentation that included a detailed explanation of the stages of the project's implementation and the mechanism for its execution in coordination and cooperation with several relevant government agencies.

Sheikh Hamoud Al-Jaber praised the efforts of the National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters in completing this national project, stressing the need for cooperation from all concerned governmental and community agencies to preserve historical and cultural landmarks and buildings in the State of Kuwait.

Proposal to allow industrial plot mezzanines for office use

By Inaas Awadh

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff and Agencies

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 8: Municipal Council member Fahad Al-Abduljader on Thursday submitted a proposal to grant a license to investors in industrial plots to use the mezzanine of their buildings as an administrative office through the coordinated efforts of the Kuwait Municipality, Public Authority for Industry (PAI) and the Kuwait Fire Force (KFF).

Al-Abduljader explained in the preamble of his proposal that this is in accordance with the schedule of requirements and specifications for buildings in warehouse, service, craft, commercial and industrial areas as per Ministerial Resolution No. 567/2016, which stipulates the requirements and specifications for mezzanines.

This includes allowing the use of mezzanines as offices as follows: an office for the owner of the plot according to the purpose for which the plot is designated and only one commercial license is issued to him, and an office for the owner of the activity on the ground floor provided it is connected to an internal staircase and only one commercial license is issued as well; hence, the need to allow the investors in industrial plots to establish their own administrative offices in the plots they rent.

Al-Najat dispatches aid: Kuwait's Al-Najat Charity dedicated sheltering supplies and nutritional aid to

Investment opportunities in Kuwait growing: China

TOKYO, Aug 8, (KUNA): Kuwait provides an abundance of opportunities for investment across numerous fields, a Chinese official said on Thursday, citing Beijing's increasing involvement in Kuwaiti development projects as part of broader bilateral cooperation.

China looks forward to propel cooperation with Kuwait to even greater levels, which includes bolstering bilateral trade, which was worth a record high of USD 23 billion last year, Chinese National Committee of Political Consultative Conference member Cai Guanxin told Kuwaiti ambassador to Beijing Jassem Al-Najem during talks.

The Kuwaiti envoy spoke of the "solidity" of bilateral relations, citing economic and cultural ties as the ones to have seen the most tangible growth, he said.

In a testament to Beijing's growing significance to Kuwait, the en-

relieve a thousand affected families, urgently dispatched on Thursday to Yemen following the recent floods.

Head of the resources and PR department at Al-Najat, Abdullah Al-Shehab told KUNA that the urgent relief is worth 50 thousand Kuwaiti dinars and is an extension of the continuous efforts to aid and relieve various countries especially neigh-



Ambassador of Kuwait in Beijing, Al-Najem, meets with Dr. Cai Guanxin.

voys said China remains Kuwait's perennial trade partner, having held the distinction for "nine years in a row," he added.

bordering countries.

Al-Shehab explained that the dispatched aid to Yemen is comprised of one thousand food baskets, some 250 sheltering supplies including tents and mattresses, and 250 portable water tanks. The distribution process was coordinated with local concerned and official bodies, he added.

LOCAL

National Guard holds its workshop on implementing corporate governance

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 8: The National Guard, in collaboration with the Civil Service Commission, held its inaugural workshop under the title 'Implementing Corporate Governance in the National Guard', reports Al-Seyassah daily.

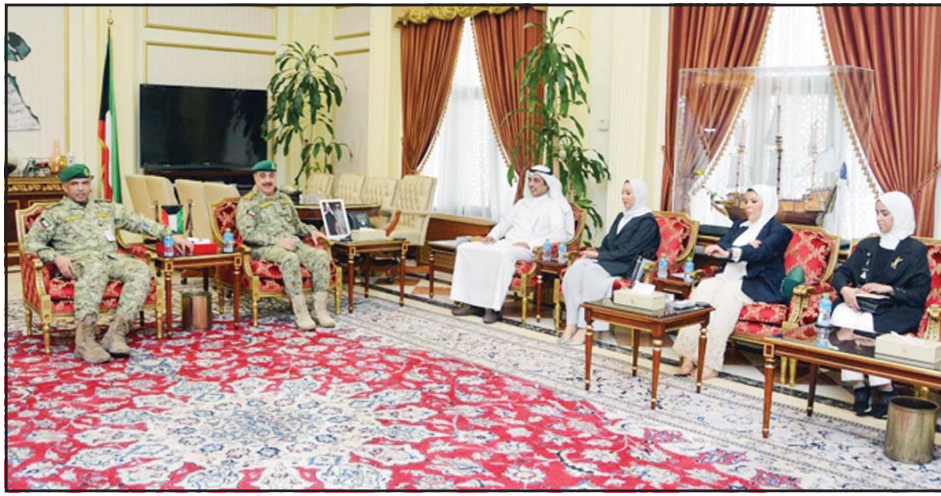
This introductory session was held to familiarize participants with the principles and practices of corporate governance and was attended by key figures from both institutions.

Lieutenant General Hashem Al-Rifai, Undersecretary of the National Guard, welcomed the CSC delegation comprising Badour Al-Badr, Director of the Coordination and Follow-up Office, and Anwar Al-Dahoum, Supervisor of the Employment Affairs Control Department.

Their presence underscored the collaborative effort between the National Guard and the Civil Service Commission in advancing governance standards.

In his opening remarks, Al-Rifai conveyed the appreciation of the National Guard leadership, including Chief His Highness Sheikh Salem Al-Ali and Deputy Chief Sheikh Faisal Al-Nawaf. He emphasized the National Guard's commitment to implementing corporate governance principles as part of its strategic goals outlined in the guiding document "National Guard 2025: Protection and Support."

Major General Dr. Faleh Shuja, Assistant for Operations and Training, elaborated on the importance of governance principles in enhancing the performance of government institutions. He highlighted that these principles are central to the development plan, focusing on integrity, account-



Lieutenant General Hashem Al-Rifai receiving the Civil Service Commission delegation. Mol photo

ability, and the rule of law.

The workshop featured a presentation by Anwar Al-Dahoum, the Corporate Governance Trainer from the Civil Service Bureau. Al-Dahoum discussed the fundamentals of corporate governance, including its significance in improving administrative structures within government institutions, the necessary rules and procedures for implementation, and the roles of responsible parties.

Lieutenant Colonel Dr. Abdulrahman Rabah

Manhal, another Corporate Governance Trainer, provided a visual presentation detailing the steps the National Guard is undertaking to incorporate governance practices.

The session concluded with Major General Dr. Faleh Shuja honoring the Civil Service Bureau participants for their contributions. The workshop marked a significant step in the National Guard's ongoing efforts to enhance governance standards and align with its development objectives.

Two citizens' 3 year jail upheld for stealing cables from heritage site

149-kg expired food items seized from pastry shop



Encroachments being dismantled at 'Kilo 34' in Wafra. Al-Seyassah photo

Municipality removes encroachments

The Public Relations Department of Kuwait Municipality said the Violations Removal Department team in the Ahmadi Governorate during comprehensive campaign to remove illegal encroachments on state property in the "Kilo 34" area of Wafra dismantled a makeshift feed market and several other unauthorized structures built on state property, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The campaign targeted various types of violations, reinforcing the municipality's commitment to preserving state property and ensuring regulatory compliance.

This initiative is part of ongoing efforts by the Kuwait Municipality to manage and rectify encroachments, maintain public spaces, and uphold the integrity of state lands.

Assault, threat to force marriage charges

Snooping ex-fiancé caught on camera

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 8: A man is facing charges of assault, threatening to force marriage, and unlawful entry into a residence, reports Al-Rai daily. He secretly installed cameras on the exterior walls of his ex-fiancée's neighbor's house, broadcasting her movements online.

Driven by his obsession, the man installed cameras on the walls of a neighboring house in Farwaniya Governorate to spy on his ex-fiancée, monitoring her movements for an entire week.

However, the residents of the house noticed something was amiss. Their own security cameras captured the masked intruder as he attempted to retrieve his surveillance equipment under

the cover of darkness. Upon reporting the incident, they discovered that the man was the former fiancé of their neighbor's daughter.

The man's identity was uncovered through the very surveillance cameras he had used to spy. The authorities were called, and he was apprehended for unlawfully entering the premises.

This wasn't his first offense. The ex-fiancée had already filed a complaint against him, accusing him of assault and threatening her to force a marriage. The man, when questioned, admitted to being determined to marry her, but he was taken into custody pending further investigation into both cases.



A photo during the training session. Mol photo

Bid to boost skills of Kuwaiti employees

US experts train 75 on airport, customs control

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 8: The American advisory team from US Customs and Border Protection recently conducted a specialized training course 'International Control at the Airport and Air Cargo' at Kuwait's General Administration of Customs training center, reports Al-Jarida daily.

This course, held from July 7 to 25, 2024, included three training sessions for 75 inspectors from the administration. The training, led by two experts from US Customs and Border Protection, was divided into theoretical and practical components.

The aim was to enhance the skills and knowledge of Kuwaiti customs employees by sharing advanced inspection techniques and methodologies used by US Customs.

The course focused on improving methods for combating the spread of drugs, weapons, and terrorism, and aimed to enhance effective inspection procedures for detecting drugs and smuggled goods in air cargo and passenger operations. The General Administration of Customs emphasized the importance of such training for experience exchange and the implementation of best practices in international control.

By Jaber Al-Hamoud, Marwa Al-Bahrawi
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff and Agencies

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 8: The Court of Cassation upheld the verdict issued by a lower court, which sentenced two Kuwaiti citizens to three-year imprisonment for stealing cables from a popular heritage site in Salmi.

According to security sources, Salmi police officers were patrolling Salmi Kilo-65 area when they saw two vehicles, one without a license plate, and the other a van. As soon as they saw the police officers, they fled from the scene. However, the police officers managed to stop the van driver, and checked the van to find a large number of cables. The van driver was accompanied by another individual, and both appeared to behave in a disoriented manner.

When the suspects were asked where they came from, they confessed that they were at the heritage site. When they were questioned further, they said they were able to enter by breaking the gate with the help of the motorist who managed to flee, with the intention of stealing the cables and then selling them to some shops. When their data was checked, it was revealed that they were citizens. Upon searching their car, a bottle containing a liquid suspected to be liquor was found along with tools used to cut cables and iron fences.

149-kg expired food items seized: Director of the Capital Governorate Inspection Department Ali Hashem Al-Kandari has confirmed the seizure and destruction of 149 kilograms of expired food items during an inspection tour at a pastry shop in Shuwaikh residential area.

In an exclusive statement to the newspaper, Al-Kandari disclosed that the Shuwaikh Food Inspection Center (B) Team, headed by Maha Ali Al-Ghoul with inspectors Zainab Abdul-Jalil Qasim, Manar Badr Al-Ateeq and Farah Khalaf Al-Enezi, conducted several inspection tours in some cooperative societies in accordance with the work plan in Shuwaikh. This resulted in the issuance of citations for several violations and destruction of 149 kilograms of food items found to be unfit for human consumption.

He said the violations include selling food items that are unfit for human consumption, trading food without obtaining a health certificate, hiring workers without a health certificate, using space beyond the licensed area, operating a food facility despite the expiry of the health license, and failure to display the health license in a visible place.

68 law violators arrested: The Ministry of Interior continues its security campaign against those who violated the Residency and Labor laws -- the latest of which was spearheaded by Assistant Undersecretary for Special Security Affairs Major General Abdullah Safah in Hawally, Sulaibiya Industrial Area and Kabad where a total of 68 expatriates were arrested for violating the aforementioned laws and absconding, reports Al-Anba daily quoting a source from the security sector.

According to the source, the campaign started in Hawally where checkpoints were established at the entrance and exit points for one hour and a half. This resulted in the arrest of 19 expatriates who violated the Residency and Labor laws.

A similar campaign in Sulaibiya Industrial Area led to the arrest of 20 expatriates -- some of whom violated the abovementioned laws, while others are wanted by law for absconding.

In Kabad, the officers set up checkpoints and raided the camel market; resulting in the arrest of 29 expatriates -- some violated the Residency Law and others are wanted by law for absconding. The source confirmed the continuation of such campaigns until the complete elimination of illegal workers and violators.

Police imposter beats up expat: An expatriate, born in 1993, has filed a report at Mutlaa Police Station; stating that an unknown person impersonated police and beat him, reports Al-Anba daily.

The complainant told police that an unknown person stopped him in Mutlaa, Block Three, as the latter wanted to overtake. The suspect then introduced himself as a police officer and beat the complainant who provided police with details of the vehicle of the suspect. A case of assault and impersonating a detective was filed and then referred to Jahra Governorate Investigation and Inquiry Department to interrogate the suspect in order to verify the expatriate's report.

Citizen assaulted near his house: A citizen sustained injuries when two persons assaulted him near his house, reports Al-Anba daily.

The citizen told police that he was inside his vehicle near his house when a car pulled over and the driver forced him to stop. Then, the driver and his companion forced him out of his vehicle, beat him and pushed him to the ground. He said he knows the assailants only by their first names, without clarifying his relationship with them.

A misdemeanor case was registered and the police officers have been instructed to arrest the suspects.

Registration period extended: Due to the great volunteer demand and joining the honor of military service, the Army General Staff (Manpower and Administration Authority) has announced the extension of the registration period for the non-commissioned officers course and the personnel course until Aug 22, 2024, reports Al-Jarida daily.

diwaniya ديوانية

A DIGEST OF PUBLIC OPINION

War means loss for all ... is a major conflict imminent?

"THERE is increasing talk these days about the imminent outbreak of a comprehensive war in the region, fueled by the rapid succession of developments and the intertwining of facts with rumors and targeted campaigns within the framework of mutual psychological warfare between warring and conflicting parties," columnist Mishari Melfi Al-Maqra wrote for Al-Anba daily.

"Social media and the media are filled with analyses suggesting that war is imminent or inevitable, with some even calling for the declaration of war without any constraints. Consequently, the situation has become open to all possibilities, and we have reached a stage where it is impossible to predict the developments of the coming days and hours

"In fact, what the region is witnessing these days will likely follow one of two scenarios. The first scenario posits that all the indicators of tension, the heating up of discourse and fronts, and the talk of comprehensive war are merely propaganda rhetoric designed to deliver threatening messages to external actors and appear strong while reassuring the home front and gaining its support.

"Under this scenario, the rules of engagement remain unchanged without expanding the war, as everyone realizes that total war is not as easy as some claim. I do not believe that any of the conflicting parties or their allies are ready for war or desire it, because if it occurs, it will consume everything in its path and leave destruction and devastation from which the region and its people will suffer for many years and decades.

"The second and worst scenario, which we hope will not happen, is the outbreak of a truly comprehensive regional war, especially given the current provocations, tensions, escalation, and mutual threats.

"As it is often said, most fires start from small sparks; what appears today as a limited danger may turn into great destruction and lethality, changing the face of the region and threatening its present and future. If war breaks out and the situation spirals out of control, no one will be able to manage it.

"The resulting catastrophe will be unprecedented, with multiple parties intervening to settle their scores, leaving everyone as losers with varying degrees of loss. Therefore, it is in everyone's interest to work on de-escalation, not increasing tensions in the region, and to avoid war.

"In light of this tense atmosphere, the escalating threats, and the possibility of a regional war breaking out, we salute and appreciate the statement from the General Staff of the Kuwaiti Army, affirming that it will not allow the country's airspace to be used or penetrated, nor its territory to be a launch pad for attacks on any brotherly and friendly countries.

"We also extend our greetings and appreciation to all the people of Kuwait for their adherence to national unity, not being swayed by rumors, and their concern for the interest of their country above all narrow interests and affiliations. We hope to continue on this path, exercising greater caution and avoiding debates and calls for war that sow discord among

the people."

Also:

"The head of the Civil Service Commission recently announced that the government will hire 1,500 fresh graduates during the current application period, fill more than 8,500 jobs within a month, and provide thousands of government jobs over the next few years. While these decisions have their benefits, they also present challenges," columnist Fawaz Ahmed Al-Hamad wrote for Al-Qabas daily.

"On the positive side, the employment decision is commendable, and the government deserves gratitude for creating job opportunities.

"However, it also presents a contradiction to Kuwait's development vision, New Kuwait 2035, which aims to support the private sector and encourage young people to work in it rather than the government sector. This shift is intended to reduce the burden on the state's general budget.

"In recent years, the government has increased salaries for its employees to the point where they now compete with those in the private sector. Additionally, financial crises and economic shocks from 2008 through the COVID-19 pandemic have slightly weakened the private sector.

"Many companies faced difficult periods of recession, leading to the dismissal and termination of many Kuwaiti employees.

"As a result of these layoffs and the increase in government salaries, a trend of job migration emerged, with many private sector employees moving to the government sector in search of stability and job security. Government salaries have become competitive with those of the private sector.

"The Kuwaiti private sector still requires development and support from the government, not just through government tenders. Authorities such as the Public Private Partnership Projects Authority, the Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority, and state property laws related to the BOT system currently repel investors and fall short of expectations.

"The government's monopoly in many sectors has significantly weakened the private sector. Therefore, the government must reconsider how it presents its projects to involve the private sector and improve the business environment, which remains discouraging to both the private sector and foreign investors.

"Kuwait faces a lack of storage areas and free zones, underdeveloped transportation channels, insufficient electrical capacity to accommodate population density and urban construction, bureaucracy, and project launch delays.

"The railway project exemplifies these issues -- while other Gulf countries have completed their railway projects, Kuwait has been working on it for over 10 years without implementation, despite numerous statements.

"The government needs to break its monopolies in various sectors, facilitate the business environment, accelerate the mechanism for launching development projects, and involve the private sector in these projects.

"Additionally, the government must legislate necessary laws to protect private sector employees from dismissal and termination, especially during financial shocks, to encourage a reverse migration of employment from the government sector to the private sector, akin to all developed countries."

— Compiled by PFX Fernandes

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PAHW approves KD253m Salmi housing project at higher costs

Questions over bid selection linger

By Mohammed Al Musleh
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff



Al-Seyassah photo
Saud Al-Dabbous, Director-General of the Municipality poses for a photo with Workers Union members.

Municipality Director's 'quick response' to shift allowance issue earns Union's praise

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 8: Sabah Al-Oqab, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Kuwait Municipality Workers Union, expressed appreciation for the prompt and cooperative response from Saud Al-Dabbous, Director-General of the Municipality, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

Al-Oqab lauded Al-Dabbous for his readiness to address the Union's concerns regarding the reduction of shift allowances for employees under Decision No. 1104/2024.

In a statement, Al-Oqab highlighted the commitment of Al-Dabbous to working with the Union to find solutions for reinstating the allowances and establishing a fair mechanism for their redistribution.

His efforts to ensure coordination were commendable for his open-door policy and willingness to listen to employee grievances, which contributes to improved productivity and the protection of employees' rights.

The Union also emphasized its support for municipality employees and urged those affected by the decision to visit the Union's headquarters in Hawalli Square during working hours (5:00 pm to 8:00 pm) for further assistance.

Al-Oqab thanked Al-Dabbous for his understanding and dedication to enhancing job stability and maintaining an effective workflow within the municipality.

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 8: After a wait of over six months, the Public Authority for Housing Welfare has approved the first two tenders for the completion of 3,345 homes in the affordable housing project in Salmi, with a total value of 253 million dinars. This initiative aims to serve as an alternative to the Taima and Sulaibiya areas.

Sources informed Al-Seyassah that the Central Tenders Committee opened bids from various companies on January 25, but awarding the contracts faced significant delays, despite the Public Authority for Housing Welfare (PAHW) sector being exempt from prior oversight by the Audit Bureau and other regulatory bodies.

According to the sources, the first tender for the construction and completion of 1,777 homes, public buildings, and lighting works was awarded at the third-lowest bid of 126.2 million dinars, even though the lowest bid was 123.2 million dinars.

Similarly, the second tender, which involved constructing 1,568 homes, was awarded at the fourth-lowest price of 126.9 million dinars, despite the lowest bid being 116.7 million dinars.

The sources raised questions regarding the decision-making process, asking why PAHW accepted bids from companies that were not the lowest and had delays in their previous work.

They also inquired about the reasons for the prolonged delay in awarding the tenders, despite the prior exemption from oversight, and why higher bids were chosen over lower, more competitive ones.

Sheikh Faisal lauds Al-Kandari's contributions

'Media role vital for solutions and addressing youth issues'

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 8: Advisor at the Amiri Diwan Sheikh Faisal Al-Hamoud recently met with Amani Al-Kandari, a prominent Kuwaiti broadcaster and media figure known for her dedication to her work with Kuwait TV and Radio, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

During their discussion, Sheikh Faisal Al-Hamoud emphasized the crucial role of media in proposing solutions and addressing youth issues.

He highlighted the importance of utilizing media platforms to positively impact society and foster constructive dialogues on various topics.

The meeting also acknowledged Al-Kandari's contribution to media with her engaging and diverse programs that tackle social topics and local issues. Sheikh Faisal praised her efforts in using media as a tool for societal betterment.

In response, Al-Kandari expressed



Al-Seyassah photo
Sheikh Faisal Al-Hamoud with Amani Al-Kandari

her gratitude for the warm reception and support from Sheikh Faisal Al-Hamoud, recognizing him as a strong advocate for youth development and empowerment.

Dr Al-Rashid promotes hands-on learning

Higher Institute of Energy spearheads practical training for technical careers

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 8: Dr. Khaled Al-Rashid, Director of the Higher Institute of Energy at the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training, provided an overview of the institute's offerings and its role in preparing students for careers in various technical fields, reports Al-Jarida daily.

Speaking during the launch of the 'My Beginnings Are Right' campaign Dr. Al-Rashid emphasized the institute's commitment to practical and theoretical training.

The Higher Institute of Energy offers 28 specializations across five training departments: electrical power, mechanical power, water resources, electrical networks, and chemical processes.

In addition, the institute provides general courses through a supportive department. Dr. Al-Rashid highlighted that the institute is well-equipped to accommodate students from both scientific and literary backgrounds who have



Al-Jarida daily photo
Dr. Khaled Al-Rashid, Director of the Higher Institute of Energy.

completed their high school education.

Students accepted into the institute will first undergo an introductory semester, followed by two years of specialized study and field courses.

The institute prioritizes practical training, with 60% of the curriculum focused on hands-on experience in its 57 laboratories and workshops, while the

remaining 40% is dedicated to theoretical lectures.

Dr. Al-Rashid encouraged students to apply, noting that the institute's programs align with the needs of the labor market, including key sectors such as the Ministry of Electricity, Water, and Renewable Energy.

The institute holds academic accreditation for all its specializations from the American Academic Accreditation Corporation for Engineering and Technology, ensuring that its programs meet high international standards.



Sheikh Athbi Al-Athbi, Governor of Farwaniya, welcomes Ayoub Khan Yunusov, Ambassador of the Republic of Uzbekistan to Kuwait.

Farwaniya Governor receives Uzbek envoy

Sheikh Athbi Al-Athbi, the Governor of Farwaniya, welcomed Ayoub Khan Yunusov, the Ambassador of the Republic of Uzbekistan to Kuwait, in his office at the governorate's headquarters this morning. During the meeting, Sheikh Athbi

praised the strong bilateral relations and close cooperation between Kuwait and Uzbekistan.

Both sides discussed ways to further enhance collaboration across various fields and at all levels.

Upload and verify with QR codes

Media sector employees must submit post-secondary certificates by Aug 24

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 8: The Ministry of Information has announced that August 24th will be the final day for citizens and residents working in the media sector to submit their post-secondary school certificates. Employees must use the designated QR code provided by the Ministry to upload their documents. This step is necessary for the Ministry to coordinate with the Ministry of Higher Education to finalize the equivalency procedures, reports Al-Anba daily.

According to Administrative Circular No. 8/2024, issued on July 24, 2024, the submission process applies to those who obtained their qualifications between January 1, 2000, and the date of the circular. Employees are instructed to log in to the Ministry's official certificate verification website, authenticate their identity using the "My Identity" application, and upload a photocopy of their academic qualification. Those with qualifications from government educational institutions in Kuwait only need to upload the certificate. However, if the qualification was obtained from outside Kuwait, it must be accompanied by an equivalency issued by the Ministry of Higher Education.

PAAET urges scholarship cancellations by Aug 11

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 8: The Deanship of Admission and Registration at the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training has announced the deadline for students who have applied for admission to the 'Applied School' and have also been accepted into internal scholarships, reports Al-Jarida daily.

Students who have been accepted into internal scholarships and have not canceled their acceptance must submit a certificate from the Supreme Council of Private Universities confirming the cancellation of their scholarship admission.

This certificate must be dated no later than Sunday, Aug 11, and must be submitted to the authority before Monday, August 19.

The Deanship emphasized that any cancellations of admission will not be acknowledged unless submitted in paper form to the authority.



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Interactive books launched

MoE adds digital curricula to primary, intermediate levels

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

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 8: In line with the digital transformation that the government is keen on completing in all State departments, educational sources revealed that the ministry has started introducing the 'digital curricula' in primary and intermediate stages – Grade Four to Grade Nine; in addition to the inclusion of Artificial Intelligence and Cybersecurity in the Grade 10 curriculum.

Sources disclosed that the ministry will include Robotics in the intermediate stage curriculum on a trial basis in two schools -- one for boys and the other for girls -- in all educational districts. Sources affirmed that the annual plan of the ministry includes the review, amendment and development of curricula and reference books in line with the latest educational, technical and information developments.

Sources stated that the ministry, in cooperation with a training institute, continuously organizes courses in the field of cybersecurity and the use of robots in competitions at the State level; as well as the level of Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries and the world.

Sources added the ministry keeps pace with technological developments by using devices for the new curricula and programs in schools like the QR

codes for reference books, especially the scientific contents of these books and preparation of educational resources to support books that can be added with the same QR code.

They affirmed the ministry has practically influenced the school environment with concepts related to artificial intelligence, cybersecurity and digital transformation. They cited the ministry's adoption of digital fingerprint devices to monitor attendance in schools and the digital surveillance cameras, which made the students live in a digital environment.

They pointed out that the ministry has transformed reference books into interactive books and curricula that are compatible with technological developments and serve the educational process; as all categories in the educational body -- teachers, department heads, administrators and about 450,000 students access the digital curricula through their tablets. They also confirmed the use of the 'Teams program, which has become essential in all levels of education.

They added that cybersecurity awareness campaigns have had a positive impact on introducing students to the new curricula that include artificial intelligence in school activities, and in general, the technical guidance competitions for computers at the ministry level to highlight creativity in schools -- whether the students or the teachers.

E-media owners

Continued from Page 1

content without misleading the public. We do not own the companies and applications that use social media sites, but we have to regulate them not by imposing restrictions, but by setting limits according to the law."

Al-Subaie indicated that they contacted the production companies and it was confirmed that the ministry has no disagreement in terms of stirring up controversy in television series, but the method of presentation and treatment is important to the ministry to ensure that the Kuwaiti society and families are not offended and the regions of the country are not mentioned. "We will never accept this," he stressed.

Asked about the so-called social media chaos, Al-Subaie clarified there is no chaos, but chaos lies in those who use this method -- whether individuals or media outlets, especially since there is no distinction between advertising and media news. "There must be clear limits to the use of media, with a distinction between highlighting the problem and defaming people. Some do not understand what freedom is, which should not tolerate infringement on people's dignity. It is a responsibility for the license holder who must have self-censorship over publication," he added.

He pointed out some owners and proprietors of electronic media outlets have started to obtain information from unreliable sources or present unprofessional reports. He emphasized that the goal of publishing content should be for the benefit the people or solve a problem, considering some people conduct interviews with fictitious individuals and attribute statements to them despite not holding any position or responsibility; hence, the need to verify and filter information before publishing.

He confirmed the sector's work during the election period has become easier and more organized with the media. "We were able to prevent insulting candidates by withdrawing the identities of some media professionals within the framework of implementing the law," he elaborated.

He stated the sector focuses on the content presented through the media outlet, not the people. He said media work is institutional, such that the focus could be on wrong things, but it should not reach the point of defamation and personalization.

He went on to say that the sector met a group of parents after some media outlets interviewed them that led to their exposure to bullying. "They were informed about the method through which their rights are obtained legally," he affirmed.

He cited the violations committed by some media outlets, such as announcing the Eid holiday before the meeting of the Moon Sighting Authority, without consulting the concerned authority. "This is not considered a journalistic scoop," he concluded.

72-hour

Continued from Page 1

This decision follows two similar past initiatives aimed at reducing the number of expatriate employees in the municipality.

In 2020, former Minister Walid Al-Jassem had issued a decision to cut the number of expatriate employees by half.

This was followed by a phased plan under former Minister of Municipality, Dr. Rana Al-Fares, which began in 2022. The plan involved terminating 33 percent of expatriate employees, with specific exemptions for certain categories, including non-Kuwaiti employees with Kuwaiti mothers, children of Gulf Cooperation Council nationals, and other designated groups.

Kuwait, Bahrain

Continued from Page 1

For her part, Minister Al-Sayrafi emphasized that her visit aims to strengthen cooperation in tourism promotion and marketing between the

two brotherly countries, within the framework of enhancing Gulf tourism cooperation. She noted the deep ties between the two countries, built on a solid history and strong fraternal bonds.

She highlighted the importance of exploring ways to advance Bahraini-Kuwaiti relations towards broader horizons of cooperation and progress, achieving more joint accomplishments and successes in various development fields, particularly in tourism and inter-tourism between the two countries and peoples. She also pointed out that the Kingdom of Bahrain, as the Gulf Tourism Capital for 2024, is eager to launch joint tourism packages to enhance the Gulf identity, provide an integrated tourism experience for visitors, and promote the Arabian Gulf region as a single destination.

The Bahraini Minister of Tourism arrived in the country earlier today on an official visit to the State of Kuwait.

Minister reassures

Continued from Page 1

The Minister expressed strong support for initiatives that bolster the social role of cooperative societies and enhance regional development through community-driven initiatives.

"Achieving citizens' aspirations requires a unified effort and creativity in providing solutions and services," Al-Huwailah said and added, "The future is shaped today through our collective efforts and dedication."

During her visit, Al-Huwailah was updated on the Union's preparations to maintain the strategic stock and its availability in cooperative societies. She also reviewed the progress of work within the Union's departments and acknowledged the vital role the Union plays in serving the community and contributing to sustainable development.

MoCI, PAM

Continued from Page 1

The Circular No. 11 of 2024 includes provisions related to Articles 17, 18, 19, 20, 22, and 24. The Ministry is working to align existing licenses with these new regulations, which are based on the PAM decision No. 2802 dated March 1, 2023.

The Ministry is expected to finalize and implement the new regulations after coordination with relevant agencies, aiming to address the challenges posed by Circular No. 11 and mitigate its impact on the business environment.

The Ministry of Commerce and Industry has admitted that its recent decision to suspend expatriate licenses and the renewal of companies has contributed to capital migration out of the country, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

This acknowledgment comes in response to an article published by Al-Seyassah titled 'Intrusive Government Decisions for the Private Sector'.

Official spokesman Abdullah Al-Harz confirmed during an interview with the Al-Akhhbar channel that the statement regarding the circular's negative consequences is "100 percent true."

The circular temporarily halts the establishment and renewal of companies until it is verified that expatriates involved fall under "Article 19" of the residency regulations.

Al-Harz criticized the logic of requiring individuals holding "Article 18" residency, who are employees, to also act as employers.

Reinforced shelters

Continued from Page 1

Overall, Tel Aviv, Israel's economic capital, has 168 underground shelters and 356 public shelters. Shelters are also present in educational institutions and other municipal buildings, with their locations available on the city's website.

Orange signs in the streets guide people on how to reach them. The average public shelter is about 100 square yards and can accommodate around 200 people in basic conditions.



University students in Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) journalism training program.

KUNA photo

KUNA wraps up news reporting basics course

The Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) Center for Media Development concluded a training course titled "Basics of Writing News Reports" on Thursday. This course was part of the agency's ninth edition of its journalism training program for university students.

The week-long course covered various aspects, including the theoretical fundamentals of writing news reports, their types, linguistic usage, and logical connections in information. It also addressed artistic forms and templates for producing news reports. Additionally, the course highlighted

common mistakes in Arabic, introductory verbs, and the art of creating and formulating news headlines, along with general practical exercises.

KUNA launched its ninth journalism training program for university students last Thursday with an informative meeting for the trainees. This meeting introduced them to the training program's schedule, which includes both theoretical and practical components, as well as field visits to various state institutions and bodies. The program is set to continue until September 1. (KUNA)

MoSA plans cost-sharing 'revamp' for Umrah trips

Co-ops may cover 70% of expense

By Fares Al-Abdan

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 8: According to well-informed sources within the Ministry of Social Affairs, the ministry is actively exploring the possibility of revising the current regulations governing Umrah trips organized by cooperative societies.

At present, the existing decision mandates a 50-50 split in the cost of these trips, with half of the expense being borne by the shareholder and the remaining half covered by the cooperative society.

The sources revealed that significant changes are on the horizon following a series of meetings between officials from the Union of Consumer Cooperative Societies (UCCS) and ministry representatives.

The proposed revision suggests a substantial adjustment to the cost-sharing arrangement, whereby the cooperative society would cover 70 percent of the trip's total cost, while the shareholder would be responsible for the remaining 30 percent.

Further discussions have introduced several alternative proposals for consideration, including one in which the cooperative society would bear as much as 80 percent of the trip's cost, leaving only 20 percent for the

MoE acts to protect and retrieve 'e-devices' data

By Abdulrahman Al-Shemmari

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 8: In a move to protect its data from accidents or disasters at the National Center that is affiliated with the Central Agency for Information Technology (CAIT), the Ministry of Education has provided an alternative storage to save and retrieve data.

Sources stated that the Information Systems Center Administration in the ministry is fully responsible for managing data and user records for all electronic devices and systems through national professionals. Sources added this endeavor is aimed at keeping pace with the rapid digital transformation and to provide electronic services in educational institutions.

shareholder.

However, this particular option has not garnered widespread support.

Currently, cooperative societies are awaiting the finalization of the revised decision before moving forward with the necessary arrangements for organizing Umrah trips.

These trips are expected to be presented to shareholders in the near future, pending the official confirmation of the new cost-sharing structure.

KOC targets full Jurassic 'gas output'

By Najeh Bilal

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 8: According to informed sources, the Kuwait Oil Company (KOC) is currently improving the units at its Jurassic facilities to operate at full capacity while continuing with the Jurassic drilling operations.

The company aims to raise the production capacity of non-associated gas from 570 million cubic feet to nearly one billion cubic feet per day in the coming years, thereby reducing Kuwait's dependence on gas imports. This goal has seen progress, with the company achieving an increase in non-associated gas production to over 600 million cubic feet per day in early 2024.

The commissioning of Jurassic 4 and 5 in late 2023 and early 2024 has contributed to an additional production of approximately 150 million cubic feet per day in non-associated gas processing for the company.

The sources said KOC has developed a well-thought-out plan to improve all oil and gas production mechanisms by relying on the latest digital technology that raises production to its full capacity.

They indicated that KOC relies on implementing several advanced programs in the field of drilling in order to increase the capacity and improve the performance of the oil reservoirs that are discovered, which contributes to increasing the company's production of crude oil.



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World News Roundup

Europe

Puigdemont back

Police in Britain remain on 'alert'

LONDON, Aug 8, (AP) — British anti-racism campaigners filled the streets of towns and cities across the country and police put on a massive show of force, largely stifling a threatened wave of far-right demonstrations.

Carrying signs saying "Refugees Welcome" and chanting "Who's streets? Our streets," people turned out in force on Wednesday to protect asylum service centers and the offices of immigration attorneys that had been listed as potential targets for hard-right attacks.



Rowley

The government also declared a national critical incident, putting 6,000 specially trained police on standby to respond to any disorder. Police said that protests and counter-protests were largely peaceful, though a small number of arrests were made.

"The show of force from the police and, frankly, the show of unity from communities together defeated the challenges that we faced," Commissioner **Mark Rowley**, the head of London's Metropolitan Police Service, said Thursday. "It went off very peacefully last night, and the fears of extreme right disorder were abated."

While authorities welcomed the relative calm, police and government officials remain on alert after misinformation about a knife attack that killed three young girls in the English seaside town of Southport fanned days of violence. More than 400 people have been arrested around the country after anti-immigrant mobs clashed with police, attacked mosques and overran two hotels housing asylum-seekers.

Police were prepared for further unrest after far-right activists circulated a list of more than 100 targets that might be targeted on Wednesday, including the offices of immigration lawyers and others offering services to migrants. But it failed to materialize.

The government has pledged to track down and prosecute those responsible for the disorder, including people who incite violence online.

Among the first to be convicted was Derek Drummond, 58, who was sentenced to three years in prison after admitting to violent disorder and punching a police officer in the face in Southport on July 30.

Ex-Catalan leader back in Spain: Police launched a manhunt in Barcelona on Thursday for ex-Catalonia leader **Carles Puigdemont**, a celebrated separatist who seven years after fleeing Spain sensationally returned to the country despite an outstanding arrest warrant.

Puigdemont had previously announced his intention to be in Spain on a day that Catalonia's parliament is due to swear in a new president. The 61-year-old fugitive initially lived in Belgium after bolting from Spain in 2017, but his latest place of residence wasn't known.

Puigdemont kept his travel plans secret before setting out to the wealthy Catalan region in northeastern Spain. He gave a speech in front of a large crowd of supporters in central Barcelona under the noses of police officers, who made no attempt to detain him.

After his speech, in a cloak-and-dagger moment, Puigdemont went into an adjacent marquee tent. There, he hurried out of an exit and jumped into a waiting car that sped away, according to an Associated Press photographer who witnessed his departure.

Catalan police arrested one of their own officers on charges of aiding Puigdemont's getaway, the force's press office told The Associated Press. No further details were available.

Authorities, who may have wanted to avoid confrontation with the crowd of several thousand separatist supporters, had set up a police cordon at the nearby regional parliament where Puigdemont was expected to go afterward.

'Fighting continues in Ukraine incursion': A top official in the Kursk region of Russia that borders Ukraine said Thursday that fighting is continuing in an area where Ukrainian forces made a significant incursion this week.

Ukrainian officials haven't commented on the scope of the operation around the town of Sudzha. But Kursk's acting deputy governor, **Andrei Belostotsky**, said that Russian forces are fighting to prevent Ukrainians from advancing further into the region.

"The enemy has not advanced a single meter, on the contrary, it is retreating. The enemy's equipment and combat forces are being actively destroyed. We hope that in the near future... the enemy will be stopped," Belostotsky said, according to state news agency RIA-Novosti.

Russian President **Vladimir Putin** on Wednesday described the incursion as a "large-scale provocation."

Putin met with his top defense and security officials to discuss what he called the "indiscriminate shelling of civilian buildings, residential houses, ambulances with different types of weapons." He instructed the Cabinet to coordinate assistance to the Kursk region. The fighting is about 500 kilometers (320 miles) from Moscow.

Belarus political prisoners' relatives complain: A wave of disappointment swept over opposition activists in Belarus last week as the biggest East-West prisoner swap since the Cold War unfolded and they learned it included none of the hundreds of political detainees who've been locked up for years by its authoritarian leader.

That dismay is especially poignant since Friday marks the fourth anniversary of the 2020 election - widely seen at home and abroad as fraudulent - that gave President **Alexander Lukashenko** his sixth term. That disputed balloting touched off the biggest protests and crackdown on dissent in Belarus in its post-Soviet history.

The Viasna human rights group estimates Belarus has about 1,400 political prisoners, including its founder and Nobel Peace Prize laureate **Ales Bialiatski**. Like many top opposition figures, Bialiatski is being held incommunicado.

"I am happy to see the Russians released, but I'm shocked that no one remembered about the fate of Belarusian political prisoners," Bialiatski's wife, **Natalia Pinchuk**, told The Associated Press.

"I hope it was just the first round of the game involving the West, and Belarusians will also be freed following representatives of Russia."

The only prisoner freed from Belarus in the Aug. 1 swap was **Rico Krieger**, a German medical worker who was arrested there last year on terrorism charges. He was among 16 imprisoned Westerners and Russian dissidents traded for eight Russians held abroad.



US Republican vice presidential nominee Sen. JD Vance speaks at a campaign event at Shelby Township Police Department on Aug 7, 2024, in Shelby Township, Mich. (AP)

Politics

'Life goal to ensure Trump never steps in WH again'

Harris and Walz say they're 'joyful warriors'

ROMULUS, Mich., Aug 8, (AP) — US Vice President **Kamala Harris** declared herself and her new running mate, Minnesota Gov **Tim Walz**, "joyful warriors" against Donald Trump on Wednesday as they spent their first full day campaigning together across the Midwest. They got an unusual glimpse of how hotly contested the region would be when they overlapped on a Wisconsin tarmac with Republican vice presidential nominee **JD Vance**.

The Democrats visited Wisconsin and Michigan, hoping to shore up support among the younger, diverse, labor-friendly voters who were instrumental in helping President **Joe Biden** win the 2020 election.

Harris told the day's first rally in Eau Claire, "As Tim Walz likes to point out, we are joyful warriors." Contributing to that feeling, the Harris campaign said it had raised \$36 million in the first 24 hours after she announced Walz as her running mate.

The vice president said the pair looks at the future with optimism, unlike Trump, the former president and Republican White House nominee, whom she accused of being stuck in the past and preferring a confrontational style of politics - even as she criticized her opponent herself.

Suggests

"Someone who suggests we should terminate the Constitution of the United States should never again have the chance to sit behind the seal of the United States," Harris said, her voice rising.

Dan Miller, from Pelican Lake, Wisconsin, who was among 12,000-plus Eau Claire rally attendees, said Biden "has been an incredible president, but he just isn't the same messenger."

"And sometimes you need a better messenger," Miller said. "And that's Kamala."

Later, at an evening event in an airport hangar outside Detroit where the campaign announced a crowd of 15,000, Michigan Gov. **Gretchen Whitmer** - herself frequently mentioned as a future presidential candidate - declared, "We need a strong

woman in the White House and it's about damn time."

"This election's going to be a fight," Harris told the same event. "We like a good fight."

The swing was especially important for Harris since Biden's winning coalition from four years ago has shown signs of fraying over the summer - particularly in Michigan, which has emerged as a focal point of Democratic divisions over Biden's handling of the Israel-Hamas conflict.

Race

With the president now out of the race, leaders of the Arab American community and key unions say they are encouraged by Harris' running mate choice.

Lingering dissensions were nonetheless on display during Harris' Michigan speech, when she was interrupted by protesters opposing Israel's fighting with Hamas. At first, Harris said to those trying to disrupt her, "I am here because I believe in democracy and everybody's voice matters."

That was a response similar to Biden's, who often said when interrupted at his rallies that protesters should be allowed to speak before being removed by security. Harris, however, then quickly pivoted to a tougher tack, continuing, "But I am speaking now." That sparked cheers from most of the audience.

"If you want Donald Trump to win, then say that," the vice president continued over the protesters. "Otherwise, I'm speaking."

Those demonstrating were eventually led away, but not before a tense confrontation between Harris supporters and protesters who screamed at one another.

Trump, meanwhile, has emphasized appealing to Midwestern voters with his choice of Vance, an Ohio senator, as his running mate. Vance bracketed the Harris-Walz ticket with Michigan and Wisconsin appearances of his own Wednesday.

He overlapped enough that while Harris was still greeting a group of Girl Scouts who came to see her arrive

at Chippewa Valley Regional Airport in Wisconsin, Vance's campaign plane landed nearby and was taxiing in the distance. Harris posed for a group picture with the girls around the same time Vance was deplaning, and he began walking over to Air Force Two, trailed by his security detail.

The vice president eventually climbed into her motorcade, and it pulled away before they could interact. Still, the pair came so close to doing so was unusual given the carefully scripted nature of campaign schedules.

Also:

WASHINGTON: **Nancy Pelosi's** influence can be seen all across the Democratic Party shakeup that in a few short, agonizing weeks has reengineered the 2024 presidential ticket and the race for the White House.

It was Pelosi who publicly encouraged President **Joe Biden** to make a decision about his reelection campaign when he had already insisted he had no plans to step aside. Once he exited and endorsed **Kamala Harris** atop the ticket, it was Pelosi who was a big fan of her future running mate, **Tim Walz**.

For the House speaker emerita the upheaval is less about Biden, a friend of 40 years, and more about Republican **Donald Trump**, the former president she refers to as "Bozo," "a snake-oil salesman," "what's his name" and the "Creature from the Black Lagoon."

"How can I say this in the nicest possible way: My goal in life was that man would never step in the White House again," Pelosi said, slapping the table with every word.

Pelosi spoke Wednesday with reporters and columnists about her new book, "The Art of Power, My Story as America's First Woman Speaker of the House," which calls for an end to political violence in the U.S. But it's this final unwritten chapter of Pelosi's career that shows the soft power she still wields that can change the course of history.

Over and again, Pelosi declined to detail her conversations with Biden during this tumultuous period, or if the conversations happened at all.



An anti-immigration protester, center, speaks to police officers in North Finchley, London on Aug 7, as anti-immigration groups targeted dozens of locations throughout the country following a week of rioting and disorder fueled by misinformation over a stabbing attack against young girls. (AP)



Trudeau



Biden

North America

Man held after threatening PM: Canadian police have arrested a man after he allegedly made threats against Prime Minister **Justin Trudeau** online.

Police say the man made violent threats against Trudeau, the police and security personnel who might attempt to interfere with his plans in an online video. RCMP made the arrest with help from the York Regional Police in Ontario.

Dawid Zalewski, 33, of no fixed address, is facing two counts of uttering threats.

"Threats to our national security can come in many forms and Canada is not immune," the RCMP said in a press release Wednesday.

"We are aware of the heightened security environment for public officials and the danger this presents for all Canadians. Our No. 1 priority has been, and will always be, the safety and security of Canadians." (AP)

Ex-1st lady of Virginia Gilmore dies: **Roxane Gilmore**, a teacher and professor who served as first lady of Virginia during her husband **Jim Gilmore's** term as governor from 1998 to 2002, died Wednesday. She was 70.

The former governor announced his wife's death on social media and said she died after a long illness. He did not disclose the cause.

Virginia's current governor, Republican **Glenn Youngkin**, said in a written statement that **Roxane Gilmore's** "friendly and down to earth demeanor will be missed, as will her smile, laugh, humor and wit. But all these wonderful qualities will be long remembered."

Youngkin credited her with overseeing an extensive renovation of the Executive Mansion in Richmond, the longest continuously occupied governor's home, during her time as first lady. (AP)

Alabama copter crash kills 1: A helicopter crash at a military base in Alabama on Wednesday afternoon killed one person and injured another, military officials said.

An AH-64 Apache helicopter crashed during routine flight training on Fort

Novosel Army base, about 94 miles (151 kilometers) south of Montgomery, according to a statement from the U.S. Army Aviation Center of Excellence and Fort Novosel.

The crash killed the flight instructor, while a US Army student pilot was airlifted to a hospital for additional evaluation, according to the statement.

Dale County Coroner **John Cawley** identified the deceased instructor pilot as **Daniel Munger**, 46, who was a contractor and retired from the Army.

Military authorities did not immediately provide any information about the circumstances of the crash. The statement said the accident is under investigation.

"Our primary concern is the welfare



A wildfire rages in Sibenik, Croatia on Aug 6. (Xinhua)

and health of the student pilot and care and concern for the family of the deceased." Maj. Gen. **Clair A. Gill**, U.S. Army Aviation Center of Excellence and Fort Novosel commanding general, said in a statement emailed to The Associated Press. (AP)

'Biden hired by Romanians': **Hunter Biden** was hired by a Romanian businessman accused of corruption who was trying to "influence US government policy" during Joe Biden's term as vice president, prosecutors said in court papers Wednesday.

Special counsel **David Weiss's** team said **Hunter Biden's** business associate will testify at the upcoming federal tax trial of the president's son about the arrangement with the executive, **Gabriel Popoviciu**, who was facing criminal investigation at the time in Romania.

The allegations are likely to bring a fresh wave of criticism of **Hunter Biden's** foreign business dealings, which have been the center of Republicans' investigations into the president's family. **Hunter Biden** has blasted Republican inquiries into his family's business affairs as politically motivated, and has insisted he never involved his father in his business.

An attorney for **Hunter Biden** didn't immediately respond to a request for comment Wednesday. (AP)

Asia

Vietnam landslides kill 9

'Strong' quake hits off southern Japan

TOKYO, Aug 8, (Agencies): A powerful earthquake struck off Japan's southern coast on Thursday, triggering a tsunami advisory that urged residents to stay away from the coastline. Nine people were injured, most of them slightly, but there were no reports of serious damage.

The Japan Meteorological Agency said the quake registered magnitude 7.1 and was centered in waters off the eastern coast of Japan's southern main island of Kyushu at a depth of about 30 kilometers (18.6 miles).

The quake most strongly shook Nichinan city and nearby areas in Miyazaki prefecture on Kyushu island.

The agency said tsunami waves of up to 50 centimeters (1.6 feet) were detected along parts of Kyushu's southern coast and the nearby island of Shikoku about a half hour after the quake struck. The tsunami advisory was lifted from most coastlines except those along the Miyazaki prefecture.

Seismologists at the agency held an emergency meeting to analyze whether the quake had affected the nearby Nankai Trough, the source of past devastating earthquakes. They later issued an assessment that the potential for a future quake in the area from Kyushu to central Japan is higher than previously predicted. The agency said it will continue to closely watch movements of plates near the Nankai Trough.



Hayashi

Danger

That does not mean there's an imminent danger of a big quake in the near future, but they urged residents on the coasts along the trough - which spans about 500 kilometers (310 miles) - to review their quake preparedness. University of Tokyo seismologist Naoshi Hirata, a member of an expert panel, told a joint news conference with JMA officials.

Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshimasa Hayashi said officials were assessing possible injuries or serious damage, though none were immediately reported. He urged residents of the affected region to stay away from the coastline.

Australia, NZ trade barbs: The removal of basic Māori phrases meaning "hello" and "New Zealand" from a Māori lunar new year invitation to an Australian official was not a snub of the Indigenous language by New Zealand's government, Prime Minister Christopher Luxon said Wednesday, seemingly joking that it instead reflected the "incredibly simple" language required when speaking to Australians.

Luxon's defense in Parliament of the lawmaker who ordered the removal of the Māori words from an invitation sent to Australia's arts minister was an attempt to rebuff criticism that his government is anti-Māori, as it seeks to reverse policies favoring Indigenous people and language. The prime minister appeared to indulge in a favorite pastime of New Zealanders, who enjoy a friendly rivalry with their closest neighbor.

"In my dealings with Australians, it always pays to be incredibly simple and clear and use English," Luxon said, referring to the invitation sent to Tony Burke.

Ripostes between lawmakers across the Tasman have precedent. In the most famous example, a New Zealand leader, Rob Muldoon, quipped in the 1980s that New Zealanders who migrate to Australia "raise the IQ of both countries."

Vietnam landslides kill 9: Nine people have been killed with seven others injured in landslides and floods triggered by torrential rains in Vietnam's northern mountainous region in August, Vietnam News Agency reported on Thursday.

As many as 121 houses were damaged during the period from Aug. 1 to 8, while 10 houses had to be urgently relocated, the report said, citing the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development.

About 170 locations in the region were eroded, causing traffic congestion, said the report. Heavy rain is forecast to continue until Aug. 17 in the northern region, according to the National Center for Hydro-meteorological Forecasting.

Natural disasters in the Southeast Asian country left 111 people dead and missing since early this year until Aug. 5, the highest number reported for the same period in five years, said the National Steering Committee for Natural Disaster Prevention and Control.

Indonesia tanker ship catches fire, 5 dead: A tanker ship caught fire Wednesday off Indonesia's Bali island, leaving five crew members dead and 15 others injured, officials said.

The tanker Elisabeth with 21 crew on board caught fire at Gili Tepekong in Bali's Karangasem district while traveling to West Nusa Tenggara province, police said.

A crew member said that when the tanker neared Gili Tepekong, an explosion occurred near the crew's living area. The chief officer found the helmsman lying on the deck with burns on his body, Karangasem police Chief Nengah Sadiarta said. The tanker stopped moving and then a second explosion occurred, he said.

'Nkorea continues to install mines': North Korea has continued to install land mines and barriers within the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) separating the two Koreas despite recent heavy downpours and mine explosions, Yonhap News Agency reported Thursday, citing Seoul's Defense Ministry.

The North has deployed large numbers of troops in front-line areas to plant mines and erect walls presumed to be anti-tank barriers since April, according to the report. Such activities within the DMZ have continued to be detected even after mine explosions and as seasonal rains recently battered the North, the ministry said in a policy report to the National Assembly.

'Nkorean crossed border to defect': South Korean media says one North Korean resident escaped to the South across waters on the western portion of the border between the two countries and expressed intent to resettle in the South.

South Korea's Yonhap news agency, citing anonymous military sources, said the unidentified individual crossed an estuary where the Han River meets the Yellow Sea and was taken by South Korean troops at the South's border island of Gyeongdo.

South Korean Defense Minister Shin Won-sik, when asked about the report during a parliamentary session, said South Korea's National Intelligence Service was investigating related matters but didn't elaborate.



Nobel laureate Muhammad Yunus speaks to the media after his arrival at the airport in Dhaka, Bangladesh on Aug 8. (AP)

Subcontinent

Heir apparent to Sri Lanka Rajapaksa family to run in poll

Yunus returns to B'desh to lead interim govt

DHAKA, Bangladesh, Aug 8, (AP): Bangladesh's next leader Muhammad Yunus arrived home Thursday from an overseas trip and will take office later in the day, as he looks to restore calm and rebuild the country following an uprising that ended the 15-year, increasingly autocratic rule of former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

Yunus landed at Dhaka's Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport on Thursday afternoon and was welcomed by the country's military chief, Gen. Waker-Uz-Zaman, who was flanked by navy and air force heads.

Some of the student leaders who led the uprising against Hasina were also present at the airport to welcome him. They had earlier proposed Yunus as interim leader to the country's figurehead president, who is currently acting as the chief executive under the constitution.

In his first comments after his arrival, he told a news briefing that his priority would be to restore order.

"Bangladesh is a family. We have to unite it," Yunus said, flanked by the student leaders. "It has immense possibility."

He urged all to stop violence and promised not to resort to any repressive measures against anyone.

Security was tight at the airport to ensure Yunus' safe arrival, as the country has experienced days of unrest following the downfall of Hasina on Monday. President Mohammed Shahabuddin will administer the oath-taking ceremony on Thursday night when Yunus is expected to announce his new Cabinet.

Calm

Before leaving Paris, where he was attending the Olympics, Yunus appealed for calm in Bangladesh amid tensions over the country's future.

Hasina's son Sajeeb Wazed Joy, who acts as an adviser to his mother, vowed Wednesday that his family and the Awami League party would continue to be engaged in Bangladesh's politics - a reversal from what he'd said earlier in the week after Hasina stepped down Monday and fled to India.

Yunus was named as interim leader following talks among military officials, civic leaders and the student activists who led the uprising against Hasina. Yunus made his first public comments in the French capital on Wednesday before boarding a plane to return home.

Yunus congratulated the student protesters, saying they had made "our second Victory Day possible," and he

said Wednesday.

The Poles were arrested Monday in the northern Kano state "because of where they were found during the protests and for displaying foreign flags," said Peter

applied to them and other stakeholders to remain peaceful, while condemning the violence that followed Hasina's resignation.

"Violence is our enemy. Please don't create more enemies. Be calm and get ready to build the country," Yunus said.

Bangladesh's military chief, Gen. Waker-Uz-Zaman, said in a televised address on Wednesday that he expected Yunus to usher in a "beautiful democratic" process.

Yunus, who was awarded the 2006 Nobel Peace Prize for his work developing microcredit markets, told reporters in Paris: "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."

Indicate

Asked when elections would be held, he put his hands up as if to indicate it was too early to say.

"I'll go and talk to them. I'm just fresh in this whole area," he said.

A tribunal in Dhaka earlier on Wednesday acquitted Yunus in a labor law violation case involving a telecommunication company he founded, in which he was convicted and sentenced to six months in jail. He had been released on bail in the case.

The president had dissolved Parliament on Tuesday, clearing the path for an interim administration that is expected to schedule new elections.

Yunus has been a longtime opponent of Hasina, who had called him a "bloodsucker" allegedly for using force to extract loan repayments from rural poor, mainly women. Yunus has denied the allegations.

In a span of weeks since July 15, more than 300 people died in violence in Bangladesh. Rising tensions in the days surrounding Hasina's resignation created chaos, with police leaving their posts after being attacked. Dozens of officers were killed, prompting police to stop working across the country. They threatened not to return unless their safety is ensured. The looting of firearms was also reported in local media.

The chaos began in July with protests against a quota system for government jobs that critics said favored people with connections to Hasina's party. But the demonstrations soon grew into a broader challenge to Hasina's 15-year rule, which was marked by human rights abuses, corruption, allegations of rigged elections and a brutal crackdown on her

opponents.

Rajapaksa to run in Sept poll:

The man who is considered the heir apparent to the powerful Rajapaksa family in Sri Lanka will contest the presidential election in September, his political party said Wednesday, in an apparent bid to regain his family's lost power after a humiliating setback two years ago during an unprecedented economic crisis in the Indian ocean island nation.

The Sri Lanka People's Front said the 38-year-old lawyer Namal Rajapaksa, the eldest son of former strongman president Mahinda Rajapaksa, will be its candidate in the Sept. 21 election, the first since the nation plunged into its worst economic crisis.

The election is seen as key to Sri Lanka's efforts to conclude a critical debt restructuring program and completing the financial reforms agreed to under a bailout program by the International Monetary Fund.

The nominations for polling will be accepted on Aug. 15.

The Rajapaksa family has dominated Sri Lankan politics since the country gained independence from Britain in 1948, producing a dozen lawmakers from three generations spanning seven decades. Mahinda Rajapaksa ruled as president from 2005 to 2015, appealing to the nationalist sentiment of the island's Buddhist-Sinhalese majority.

Pakistan rains death toll 154:

The death toll from nearly six weeks of monsoon rains and floods across Pakistan has risen to 154, officials said Thursday, as downpours continued in much of the country, inundating some villages.

More than 1,500 homes have been damaged since July 1, when the monsoon rains began, the National Disaster Management Authority said. Orchards in remote areas of the southwestern Baluchistan province were damaged, and rains flooded many streets in the eastern city of Lahore.

The Pakistan-administered portion of the disputed Himalayan region of Kashmir has also been battered by rains, causing landslides.

Many of the 154 deaths occurred in the eastern Punjab and northwestern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa provinces, according to the disaster agency and provincial authorities.

Pakistan is in the middle of the annual monsoon season, which runs from July through September. Scientists and weather forecasters blame climate change for heavy rains in recent years.



Police stand outside a damaged building following an earthquake in Miyazaki, western Japan on Aug 8. A powerful earthquake struck off Japan's southern coast on Thursday, triggering a tsunami advisory. (AP)



Nyusi



Saied

Africa

Tunisia prez appoints new PM: Tunisian President Kais Saied Wednesday appointed Social Affairs Minister Kamel Maddouri as the new Prime Minister, replacing Ahmed Hachani, according to the president's office.

The Tunisian presidency did not provide further details on this decision. It came two months before the presidential elections scheduled for Oct. 6, when Saied will seek a second five-year presidential term.

Maddouri was born in 1974. He was appointed social affairs minister on May 25, 2024, as part of a partial government reshuffle. Before that, he was the chairman of the National Health Insurance Fund.

Ahmed Hachani was appointed prime minister in August last year. (Xinhua)

Nyusi to end 10-yr term: Mozambican President Filipe Nyusi said Wednesday that he will end his ten-year term as president with a sense of duty fulfilled.

"We fulfilled the mission entrusted to us by the people. We had achievements that constitute our legacy," he said while addressing the nation regarding the general state of affairs at the parliamentary headquarters in Maputo, the capital of Mozambique. In his final report since taking office in 2015, the president said the country has witnessed a significant expansion of national infrastructure and electrification efforts. The illiteracy rate has dropped, with a notable increase in the number of girls attending school.

The president said that almost 100 percent of teachers now receive specific psycho-pedagogical training, a significant improvement compared to 2019.

Nyusi also addressed the country's management of COVID-19, polio, conjunctivitis, and other diseases, which garnered international recognition for their effective handling. The rates of malnutrition among children and maternal and infant mortality have also decreased in the past three years. "Electrification has reached 66.6 percent, up from 51 percent, even as the population grew from 20 million to over 30 million inhabitants over the last years," said Nyusi.

Nyusi also underscored the significance of mineral resource exploitation, mentioning that gas exports have started in the northern region. (Xinhua)

Nigeria detains Polish students:

Nigerian security forces have detained seven Polish nationals, including six students and a lecturer, for allegedly displaying Russian flags during protests against economic hardship in the West African nation, Nigerian and Polish authorities



Vietnamese missile frigate Tran Hung Dao heads to a naval port in the city of Zhanjiang in south China's Guangdong Province on Aug 7. The frigate arrived on Wednesday, marking the start of a five-day visit. During the visit, the Chinese and Vietnamese navies will organize ship tours, deck receptions, cultural exchanges, joint exercises, and other activities. (Xinhua)

Afunanya, a spokesman for the Nigeria secret service, at a meeting of diplomats hosted by Nigeria's foreign affairs ministry in the capital, Abuja.

Afunanya did not say if the Poles being

detained were participating in the protests when they were arrested, nor was there any evidence of their involvement presented at the meeting. (AP)

Protesters call for Ruto resignation: Police hurled tear gas at protesters calling for the president's resignation in the Kenyan capital on Thursday as a new Cabinet was sworn in.

The protests in Nairobi were organized by activists upset with President William Ruto even after he dismissed almost all of his ministers and added opposition members to what he called a "broad-based" government.

Businesses in the city were closed and public transport vehicles remained out of the central business district where they normally operate. Police also mounted roadblocks on roads leading to the city. The president's office, where the new ministers were sworn in on Thursday morning, also remained cordoned off.

Major towns and cities including the lake-side city of Kisumu - an opposition stronghold that has previously witnessed protests - remained calm with some residents telling journalists they were not protesting because the opposition figures had been incorporated into the new Cabinet.

Civil society groups, along with the Law Society of Kenya, called in a joint statement for the upholding of human rights during demonstrations. (AP)

Change	Closing pts	Change	Closing pts		
PHILIPPINES - PSEI	+14.10	6,549.27	SAUDI - TASI	-62.59	11,667.12
EGYPT - EGX 30	+122.63	28,750.82	DUBAI - DFMGI	-1.73	4,195.94
PAKISTAN - KSE 100	+882.43	77,969.25	JAPAN - Nikkei 225	-258.47	34,831.15

Business

US leads in project count, Russia tops in Capex with \$61.5 bln

Arab oil & gas sector attracts \$406 bln in FDI over 22 years, reports Dhaman

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 8: The Arab Investment & Export Credit Guarantee Corporation (Dhaman) revealed that the oil and gas sector in Arab countries attracted 610 projects implemented by 356 foreign and Arab companies in the region with capex of around \$406 billion between January 2003 and May 2024, i.e. about 22 years.

In its first sectoral report on the oil and gas sector in Arab countries for 2024, launched today at its headquarters in Kuwait, Dhaman explained that the US came first as the most important investor in the Arab region in the oil and gas sector in terms of number of projects, with 85 projects representing 14% of the total. Russia topped the list in capex with \$61.5 billion accounting for 15.2% of the total, according to the database of world FDI projects.

Based on four core pillars in the sector: outlook for production and foreign trade till 2030, foreign projects, the sector's investment and business risk assessment, the report added that FDI projects in the oil and gas sector in the period (2003-2024) were geographically concentrated in UAE, Egypt, Iraq, Saudi Arabia and Qatar, representing 63.8% of the total (389 projects), 71% of the capex (\$288 billion) and 68.2% of the new jobs (79.2 thousand jobs).

The report noted that the top 10 companies accounted for roughly 18% of the newly implemented projects, 43.5% of the capex and 34.8% of the total new jobs. Russia's Rosatom Group came first in terms of capex with over \$30 billion making up about 7.4% of the total, while Royal Dutch Shell and UAE's Dana Gas groups topped the list of key founders with 14 projects, accounting for 2.3% each.

In terms of the Arab oil and gas sector's investment and business risks and incentives according to Fitch Ratings Agency in 2024, they are measured by four main indicators: risk and incentive indicators (country) and (industry) in the exploration phase, and risk and incentive indicators (country) and (industry) in the refining phase. According to the average results of the four indicators, UAE, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Iraq, Egypt, Kuwait and Oman came

متوسط مؤشرات مخاطر وحوافز قطاع النفط والغاز في الدول العربية لعام 2024										
Average Oil & Gas Risk/Reward Indices in Arab Countries for 2024										
Ranking according to average	Country	المؤشر المتوسط	مؤشر مخاطر حوافز صناعة التكرير في دولة المصنوع	مؤشر مخاطر حوافز صناعة التكرير في دولة المصنوع	مؤشر مخاطر حوافز صناعة التكرير في دولة المصنوع	مؤشر مخاطر حوافز صناعة التكرير في دولة المصنوع	مؤشر مخاطر حوافز صناعة التكرير في دولة المصنوع	مؤشر مخاطر حوافز صناعة التكرير في دولة المصنوع	الدولة	الترتيب وفق المتوسط
		Average	Oil & Gas Downstream Risk/Reward Index	Oil & Gas Downstream RRI, Rewards	Oil & Gas Downstream RRI, Risks	Oil & Gas Upstream Risk/Reward Index	Oil & Gas Upstream RRI, Rewards	Oil & Gas Upstream RRI, Risks, 2024		
1	U A E	30.7	34.0	33.9	34.6	27.4	26.2	38.1	الإمارات	1
2	Saudi Arabia	33.0	31.8	30.7	41.5	34.2	33.3	43.0	السعودية	2
3	Qatar	38.4	40.4	41.3	31.8	36.4	36.6	34.0	قطر	3
4	Iraq	40.1	37.3	33.0	76.4	42.9	40.3	65.9	العراق	4
5	Egypt	44.9	46.6	44.8	62.8	43.2	42.6	48.0	مصر	5
6	Kuwait	46.4	43.6	42.8	51.3	49.2	49.5	47.0	الكويت	6
7	Oman	48.8	44.0	45.1	34.3	53.6	55.8	33.5	سلطنة عمان	7
8	Algeria	50.5	47.3	45.1	67.4	53.7	52.3	66.4	الجزائر	8
9	Bahrain	56.9	56.9	57.9	47.6	البحرين	9
10	Mauritania	58.7	67.8	65.7	86.6	49.6	47.8	66.3	موريتانيا	10
11	Libya	58.8	62.7	59.7	90.4	54.9	50.9	91.3	ليبيا	11
12	Tunisia	64.6	64.6	65.1	59.9	64.7	66.9	44.8	تونس	12
13	Sudan	66.7	63.5	60.3	92.0	70.0	70.4	66.3	السودان	13
14	Yemen	67.5	63.3	60.1	91.7	71.7	72.3	66.0	اليمن	14

Oil & gas risk/reward indices in Arab countries.

respectively as the best Arab countries in view of lower risks and higher incentives, followed by Algeria, Bahrain, Mauritania, Libya, Tunisia, Sudan and Yemen.

Regarding the outlook for reserves, production and export of oil, gas and petroleum products, proven oil reserves in the Arab region, according to Fitch, are expected to decrease to 704 billion barrels in 2024 representing 41.3% of the global total amid forecasts of their continuous decline by 7% to 654.5 billion barrels in 2030.

Fitch also forecasted that proven natural gas reserves in the Arab region would reach around 58 trillion

cubic meters, accounting for 26.8% of the global total, but expected to fall by 7.5% to 53.53 trillion cubic meters in 2030.

At the production level, the report projected the Arab countries' production of crude oil, compressed gas and other liquids to rise by 6.4% to 28.7 million bpd in 2024, then up to 33 million bpd in 2030. The crude oil refining capacity is also expected to increase to 11.3 million bpd in 2024, making up 10.7% of the global total, then up to 11.4 million bpd in 2030, buoyed by the high refining capacity of Iraq and UAE. The report also anticipated that Arab hydrocarbon exports will hit 23.5

million oil equivalent barrel (OEB) per day in 2024, then up to 27 million OEB per day in 2030, as a result of an expected increase in four Gulf countries, Iraq and Libya.

Based in Kuwait, the Arab Investment & Export Credit Guarantee Corporation (Dhaman) was established in 1974 as a multilateral institution that comprises all Arab countries and four joint Arab financial institutions. It provides specialized insurance services against credit and political risks with a view to facilitating the inflow of foreign direct investments into Arab countries and promoting Arab exports and imports.

Oil price up to \$76.75 pb

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 8, (KUNA): The price of Kuwaiti oil went up 47 cents to USD 76.75 pb on Wednesday, compared to USD 75.28 pb the day before, said Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) Thursday.

On a global scale, the price of the Brent crude futures' contracts went up USD 1.85 to settle at USD 78.33 pb, as did the West Texas Intermediate crude, up USD 2.03 to USD 75.23 pb.

New wells and facility connections

KOC surpasses production targets at Umm Naqa Field

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 8: The Kuwait Oil Company has achieved impressive results for the fiscal year 2023-2024. The company reported a daily production of approximately 22,140 barrels from the Umm Naqa field, surpassing the target of 15,000 barrels per day, reports Al-Jarida daily.

This success has allowed for modifications to the development of the lower Umm Naqa Faris reservoir, including drilling additional wells and connecting them to the production facility.

Significant efforts by the North Kuwait Directorate include productivity at the Sabriya/Bahra fields increased by over 300,000 barrels per day, a level maintained since April 2023 and productivity in the Zir layer at the Rawdhatain field was raised by approximately 16,000 barrels per

day through new wells and production layer adjustments.

Additionally, a strategic 36-inch diameter pipeline has been operationalized to supply crude oil to Mina Abdullah, aligning with the anticipated demand increase due to the environmental fuel project.

This pipeline will help manage the reduced demand for crude oil production in light of Kuwait's OPEC quota commitments.

The company has also moved the scheduled maintenance for Gathering Centers 24 and 03 to the fiscal year 2023-2024 from 2025. This adjustment is expected to better meet production demands.

The following table outlines key major projects in the company's operations, designed to provide technical solutions and address future challenges.

8% profit increase for Q1 2024

NAPESCO inks tender deal worth KD 15 mln

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 8: The National Petroleum Services Company (NAPESCO) has secured a significant tender contract valued at 15 million Kuwaiti dinars, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

This agreement involves joint operations for coiled pipe services and related activities over a five-year period.

According to a statement released by the Kuwait Stock Exchange, NAPESCO anticipates a profit margin of approximately 10 percent from this contract, contingent on

successful implementation and project progress.

In financial performance news, NAPESCO reported an 8 percent increase in profits for the first quarter of 2024, reaching 2.38 million dinars compared to 2.22 million dinars in the same period of 2023.

Founded in January 1993 and listed on the Kuwait Stock Exchange since October 2003, NAPESCO specializes in well drilling within the energy sector and operates out of Kuwait City.

Boursa Kuwait sees gains amid renewed confidence

H1 performance boosted by bank profits

By Mohammed Shendi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff and Agencies

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 8: The Boursa Kuwait experienced notable gains yesterday, with the general index rising by 61.6 points to reach 7057 points, marking an increase of 0.8 percent. The trading volume saw 4,183 million shares exchanged through 13,741 transactions, totaling 47.5 million dinars (approximately \$8.144 million). This uptick was driven by active buying in leading stocks.

The main market index also showed a positive trend, rising by 63 points to hit 82,5961 points, an increase of 1 percent. This was supported by trading of 64.9 million shares through 5,094 transactions, with a total value of 10.2 million dinars (about \$31.1 million).

The market value of the stock exchange market surged by approximately 364 million dinars to 41.729 billion dinars up from 41.365 billion dinars seen during the previous session.

This resurgence in market value was fueled by a recovery of investor confidence, following the impact of the Black Monday crisis and fears of a US recession.

Traders, encouraged by the stabilizing economic indicators and perceived investment opportunities at lower stock prices, adjusted their financial positions accordingly.

The Premier Market Index rose by 64.2 points to reach 7,688 points, up 0.8 percent. This was achieved through trading 118.5 million shares across 8,647 transactions, valued at 37.2 million dinars (about \$113.4 million).

In addition, the Main 50 Index saw a gain of 72.3 points, reaching 95,5824 points, an increase of 1.2 percent. It was supported by the trading of 43.2 million shares through 3,268 transactions, totaling 7.8 million dinars (about \$23.7 million).

Sector performance was varied, with ten sectors rising, led by consumer goods with a 5.32% increase. Conversely, the technology and insurance sectors saw declines of 0.93% and 0.19%, respectively, while the healthcare sector remained stable.

On the stock level, 90 stocks rose, with "Cinema" leading at an 8.91% increase. Meanwhile, 34 stocks declined, led by "Markaz" with a 5.28% decrease, and 5 stocks remained stable.

The Warba Bank's stock topped trading activity by volume with 15.94 million shares traded, while KFH stock led in liquidity with a value of 7.87 million dinars, despite a slight decrease of 0.28%.

In the first half of 2024, the Boursa Kuwait experienced net foreign inflows amounting to 57.70 million dinars (\$188.62 million). This influx of foreign investment occurred alongside net selling transactions by local and Gulf investors. Foreign investors, encompassing individuals, institutions, companies, and investment funds, continued to show strong support, recording net purchases of 57.70 million dinars.

This was against the backdrop of a total sales value of 1.02 billion dinars compared to purchases worth 1.07 billion dinars.

Local investors, across various categories, recorded net sales of 11.94 million dinars, with total purchases of 5.45 billion dinars against sales of 5.47 billion dinars. Gulf investors also displayed a mixed performance, buying shares

worth 121.33 million dinars but facing sales totaling 167.09 million dinars, resulting in net sales of 45.76 million dinars. Local investors remained the most active in the Boursa Kuwait during the first half of 2024, representing over 82% of trading activity. They were followed by foreign investors and Gulf investors.

In the Over-the-Counter (OTC) trading sector, 3.2 billion shares were traded through 4,905 deals, totaling 234 million dinars (approximately \$713.7 million) during 2023. Al-Mawazi Financial and Economic Consulting Company reported that the number of companies on the OTC platform increased from 88 in 2018 to 131 by the end of 2023.

The total capital of companies registered on the OTC platform grew at an annual rate exceeding 5%, reflecting the stability and growing investor confidence in the platform. In 2023, the participation rate of listed companies on the platform reached 84%, with 110 companies actively trading throughout the year.

Moreover, companies compliant with Islamic law represented 49% of the total capital of active companies on the platform.

The Boursa's OTC platform is proving to be a pivotal mechanism for private unlisted companies, family-owned businesses, and startups seeking to expand their capital. This platform offers an efficient and supportive market environment for companies that are not listed on the main exchange or have had their shares delisted.

The OTC platform plays a crucial role in providing these companies with access to capital, facilitating exit strategies for investors, and enabling companies to repurchase their own shares. This alternative market serves as a significant avenue for companies to manage their financial needs and investor relations effectively.

For private and family-run enterprises, as well as new startups, the OTC platform offers a valuable opportunity to engage with investors and enhance their financial standing without the regulatory demands of the main stock market. Its flexible nature supports a range of financial strategies and operational needs, making it a key resource for businesses aiming to grow and adapt in a dynamic economic environment.

Also:

KUWAIT CITY: Economists attributed Boursa Kuwait's balanced performance, for the first half of the year, to banks and other leading companies' profits, as well as what followed it of board recommendations, saying this reflected positively on market indices.

Al-Dorra Group's **Waleed Al-Houti** told KUNA that the summer season marks a time of calm in the market as the buying and selling movement slows down, clarifying that this reflected by trading numbers of KD 35-40 million (approx. USD 107 to 122 million).

Al-Houti described these numbers as subpar, saying that they are aspiring for more, especially considering current market announcements of cash dividend distributions, as well as market response to such profits.

On his part, Assets Management Deputy Manager at Al Safat Investment Company **Talal Al-Yousef** told KUNA that Boursa dealings were strong in the beginning of the year, but are waning and indices reverting to balanced positions, yet surrounding circumstances are leading to a state of fluctuation.

Long-term & short-term deposit ratings upgraded to A2/P-1

Moody's upgrades Commercial Bank of Kuwait's ratings

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 8: Moody's Ratings (Moody's) has today upgraded Commercial Bank of Kuwait K.P.S.C.'s (CBK) long- and short-term deposit ratings to A2/P-1 from A3/P-2 and changed the outlook on the bank's long-term deposit ratings to stable from positive. We also upgraded CBK's long-term Counterparty Risk Assessment (CR Assessment) to A1(cr) from A2(cr) and long-term Counterparty Risk Ratings (CRR) to A1 from A2. We also affirmed the bank's short-term CR Assessment and short-term CRRs at P-1(cr) and P-1 respectively. The rating upgrades were driven by our decision to upgrade the bank's Baseline Credit Assessment (BCA) and Adjusted BCA to baa3 from ba1.

Ratings Rationale

Upgrade of the Bank's Standalone BCA

The upgrade of CBK's BCA to baa3 reflects the bank's significantly improved asset quality and profitability, further supported by its very strong loss absorption capacity. The upgrade also captures the bank's strong liquidity buffers which mitigate the risks of a concentrated funding profile and increased reliance on market funding.

Improved Asset Quality

The primary driver of today's rating action is CBK's strong track record in maintaining a zero Non-Performing Loan (NPL) rate. This achievement stems from a policy initiated in 2018, whereby the bank decided to write off all NPLs. As a result of this approach, the bank's provisioning cost (loan loss provisions to average gross loans) reached a high of 3.8% for 2019 and 3.1% for 2020. More recently however, the provisioning cost has receded drastically and the bank is now recording write backs due to recoveries of already provisioned bad loans. Going forward, we expect net provisioning cost for CBK to remain below its domestic peers supported by continued recovery efforts and strong operating conditions for banks in Kuwait.

At the same time, the bank's stage 2 loans, while compare unfavorably with local peers, are also improving and stood at 14.2% of gross loans as of March 2024 compared to their recent peak of 16.3% in 2021.

Stronger profitability supported by improved margin, healthy fee-based income and recoveries

Today's upgrade also reflects CBK's stronger profitability which we expect to be sustained going forward, driven by strong margin and relatively low cost of risk. The bank's net income to tangible assets has improved to 2.7% in 2023 (2.6% for the first quarter 2024), up from a break-even position in 2020 and 2019 due to high provisioning cost. At this level, which we believe it will be sustained in the future, the bank's profitability is at the highest amongst Kuwaiti banks and compares favorably to its global peers.

CBK's stronger profitability is supported by its improved margin. The bank's net interest margin (NIM) increased to 2.7% in the first quarter 2024 and 2.6% in 2023 as compared to 1.7% in 2020. The corporate nature of its loan book where loans reprice frequently, combined with the low-cost current and savings accounts balances (55% of total deposits as of December 2023) support CBK's margin.

CBK's non-interest income continues to be a significant contributor to its bottom line, contributing 33% of operating income for the first three months of 2024 and compares favorably with domestic peers. Furthermore, recoveries have also been a key driver for the improved profitability. CBK's provisions were aggressive since the introduction of their zero-NPL policy in 2018 but now some of these earlier provisions are being recovered or reversed.

Strong core capital supported by sizeable loan loss reserves

CBK's tangible common equity to risk weighted assets ratio of 14.6% as at March 2024 is amongst the highest in the system. This relatively high capitalization reflects the bank's elevated loan concentrations which remain a credit weakness.

CBK's loss absorption capacity is further supported by

the sizeable loan loss reserves which stood at 6.8% of gross loans at the end of March 2024 and provide a substantial cushion to absorb expected losses. We expect CBK to maintain its high capital buffers supported by solid internal capital generation.

The bank's BCA also reflects deposit concentration from government and government-related entities which subjects the bank to event risk in case of funding stress, a common feature to most banks in Kuwait. However, these deposits have proven to be sticky over multiple credit cycles across the Kuwaiti system. The bank's liquidity buffers are strong and amongst the highest in the system with liquid assets making 40% of tangible banking assets.

Upgrade of long-term ratings

The upgrade in the bank's long-term deposit ratings to A2 from A3 reflects the upgrade of the BCA to baa3 and our unchanged assumption of a very high probability of support from the Government of Kuwait (A1, stable) which continues to translate into four notches of uplift from the bank's BCA. The very high support is driven by the Kuwaiti authorities' track record of supporting all banks that encounter difficulties.

Rating outlook

The stable outlook on the long-term deposit ratings captures our expectation that the bank will continue to report strong asset quality and improved profitability, while maintain a strong loss-absorption capacity. These strengths will balance the risks associated with high concentration risks on both sides of the balance sheet. It also supports our view that the economic conditions in Kuwait will remain supportive of the bank's strong asset quality and liquidity indicators over the outlook horizon.

Factors that could lead to an upgrade or downgrade of the ratings

CBK's ratings could be upgraded in the event that it demonstrates further and sustainable improvements in its standalone financial fundamentals as exhibited by (1) higher core equity; (2) reduced credit concentrations; and (3) sustaining profitability at strong level with lower volatility.

CBK's ratings could be downgraded in the event of the following: (1) reversal in the profitability trend; (2) deterioration of asset quality and (3) a weakening of the bank's capital and liquidity position.

Principal Methodology

The principal methodology used in these ratings was Banks Methodology published in March 2024 and available at <https://ratings.moody's.com/rmc-documents/409852>. Alternatively, please see the Rating Methodologies page on <https://ratings.moody's.com> for a copy of this methodology.

The local market analyst for this rating is Ashraf Madani, +971 (423) 795-42.

Regulatory disclosures

For further specification of Moody's key rating assumptions and sensitivity analysis, see the sections Methodology Assumptions and Sensitivity to Assumptions in the disclosure form. Moody's Rating Symbols and Definitions can be found on <https://ratings.moody's.com/rating-definitions>.

For any affected securities or rated entities receiving direct credit support/credit substitution from another entity or entities subject to a credit rating action (the supporting entity), and whose ratings may change as a result of a credit rating action as to the supporting entity, the associated regulatory disclosures will relate to the supporting entity. Exceptions to this approach may be applicable in certain jurisdictions.

For ratings issued on a program, series, category/class of debt or security, certain regulatory disclosures applicable to each rating of a subsequently issued bond or note of the same series, category/class of debt, or security, or pursuant to a program for which the ratings are derived exclusively from existing ratings, in accordance with Moody's rating practices, can be found in the most recent Credit Rating Announcement related to the same class of Credit Rating.

CEZ says its net profit in H1 '24 totaled \$912m

The dominant Czech power company CEZ said on Thursday its net profit totaled 21.1 billion Czech crowns (\$912 million) in the first half of the year, down 5% from the same period a year earlier.

CEZ attributed the result to lower profits from commodity trading and the impact of maintenance of its two nuclear power plants.

It said it expects net profit for

the entire year to total 25 billion to 30 billion Czech crowns.

The Czech state has an almost 70% stake in the company.

CEZ's 2023 net profit was 29.6 billion Czech crowns, down more than 63% from the previous year, which saw record profits.

The country's main electricity producer attributed the decline to a windfall tax on profits introduced as energy prices rose.

In 2022, the company's profit soared on an enormous rise in prices caused by the Russian invasion of Ukraine, higher profits from commodity trading on foreign markets and high operational reliability of its power plants.

That resulted in record dividends of 145 Czech crowns per share.

CEZ previously said it expected dividends between 39 and 52 crowns per share. (AP)

S. Korea's think tank revises down growth outlook for '24

South Korea's state-run think tank on Thursday revised down the Asian economy's growth outlook for this year by 0.1 percentage point.

Real gross domestic product (GDP), adjusted for inflation, was forecast to expand 2.5 percent in 2024, according to the Korea Development Institute (KDI).

It was down 0.1 percentage point compared to the previous estimate unveiled three months earlier.

The KDI forecast was equivalent to the outlooks from the Bank of Korea (BOK) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

The country's real GDP shrank 0.2 percent in the second quarter from three months earlier after soaring 1.3 percent in the first quarter.

Export was predicted to go up 7.0 percent this year, higher than the previous growth estimate of 5.6 percent amid rising demand

for locally-made semiconductors.

Growth estimates for private consumption and facility investment were cut to 1.5 percent and 0.4 percent each from the previous forecasts of 1.8 percent and 2.2 percent.

Construction investment was projected to decrease 0.4 percent in 2024, while outlook for this year's consumer price inflation was lowered to 2.4 percent from the previous 2.6 percent. (Xinhua)

Result helped by record returns on foreign investments

Japan logs current account surplus of \$87 bln in H1 of '24

TOKYO, Aug 8, (Xinhua): Japan posted a current account surplus of 12.68 trillion yen (about 87 billion U.S. dollars) in the first half (H1) of 2024, helped by record returns on foreign investments amid the yen's depreciation and a smaller trade deficit, government data showed Thursday.

Japan's trade deficit nearly halved to 2.61 trillion yen in the January-June period as imports grew 1.1 percent to 53.22 trillion yen and exports climbed 6.7 percent to 50.61 trillion yen, the Finance Ministry said.

The surplus in the current account balance, one of the widest gauges of international trade, expanded nearly 60 percent in the first half, data showed.

During the reporting period, the

country saw a record 17.78 million foreign visitors, with its travel surplus hitting a record 2.6 trillion yen, meaning the amount spent by foreign visitors in Japan exceeded what Japanese spent overseas, according to the ministry.

Meanwhile, the services trade deficit shrank 15.4 percent to 1.75 trillion yen.

In June alone, Japan's current account surplus stood at 1.53 trillion yen, up 0.9 percent from the year before to the second-highest level for the month.

June's trade surplus expanded nearly 70 percent to 556.3 billion yen, lifted by continued export growth. Exports went up 5.9 percent to 9.17 trillion yen, while imports increased 3.4 percent to 8.61 trillion yen.

Country facing budget crunches

Chinese tax collectors descend on companies

BEIJING, Aug 8, (AP): Chinese authorities are chasing unpaid taxes from companies and individuals dating back decades, as the government moves to plug massive budget shortfalls and address a mounting debt crisis.

More than a dozen listed Chinese companies say they were slapped with millions of dollars in back taxes in a renewed effort to fix local finances that have been wrecked by a downturn in the property market that hit sales of land leases, a main source of revenues.

Policies issued after a recent planning meeting of top Communist Party officials called for expanding local tax resources and said localities should expand their "tax management authority and improve their debt management."

Local government debt is estimated at up to \$11 trillion, including what's owed by local government financing entities that are "off balance sheet," or not included in official estimates. More than 300 reforms the party has outlined include promises to better monitor and manage local debt, one of the biggest risks in China's financial system.

That will be easier said than done, and experts question how thoroughly the party will follow through on its pledges to improve the tax regime and better balance control of government revenues.

"They are not grappling with existing local debt problems, nor the constraints on fiscal capacity," said Logan Wright of the Rhodium Group, an independent research firm. "Changing central and local revenue sharing and expenditure responsibilities is notable but they have promised this before."

The scramble to collect long overdue taxes shows the urgency of the problems.

Chinese food and beverage conglomerate VV Food & Beverage reported in June it was hit with an 85 million yuan (\$12 million) bill for taxes dating back as far as 30 years ago. Zange Mining, based in western China, said it got two bills totaling 668 million RMB (\$92 million) for taxes dating to 20 years earlier.

Local governments have long been squeezed for cash since the central government controls most tax revenue, allotting a limited amount to local governments that pay about 80% of expenditures such as salaries, social services and investments in infrastructure like roads and schools.

Pressures have been building as the economy slowed and costs piled up from "zero-COVID" policies during the pandemic.

Economists have long warned the situation is unsustainable, saying China must beef up tax collection to balance budgets in the long run.

Under leader Xi Jinping, the government has cut personal income, corporate income, and value-added taxes to curry support, boost economic growth and encourage investment - often in ways that favored the rich, tax scholars say. According to most estimates, only about 5% of Chinese pay personal income taxes, far lower than in many other countries. Government statistics show it accounts for just under 9% of total tax revenues, and China has no comprehensive nationwide property tax.

Finance Minister Li Fo'an told the official Xinhua News Agency that the latest reforms will give local governments more resources and more power over tax collection, adjusting the share of taxes they keep.

"The central government doesn't have a lot of responsibility for spending, so it doesn't feel the pain of cutting taxes," said Cui Wei, a professor of Chinese and international tax policy at the University of British Columbia.

The effectiveness of the reforms will depend on how they're implemented, said Cui, who is skeptical that authorities will carry out a proposal to increase central government spending. That "will require increasing central government staffing, and that's an 'organizational' matter, not a simple spending matter," he said.

"I wouldn't hold my breath," Cui

said.

Sudden new tax bills have hit some businesses hard, further damaging already shaky business confidence. Ningbo Bohui Chemical Technology, in Zhejiang on China's eastern coast, suspended most of its production after the local tax bureau demanded 500 million yuan (\$69 million) in back taxes on certain chemicals. It is laying off staff and cutting pay to cope.

Experts say the arbitrary way taxes are collected, with periods of leniency followed by sudden crackdowns, is counterproductive, discouraging companies from investing or hiring precisely when they need to.

"When business owners are feeling insecure, how can there be more private investment growth in China?" said Chen Zhiwu, a finance professor at the University of Hong Kong's business school. "An economic slowdown is inevitable."

The State Taxation Administration has denied launching a nationwide crackdown, which might imply past enforcement was lax. Tax authorities have "always been strict about preventing and investigating illegal taxation and fee collection," the administration said in a statement last month.

As local governments struggle to make ends meet, some are setting up joint operation centers run by local tax offices and police to chase back taxes. The AP found such centers have opened in at least 23 provinces since 2019.

Both individuals and companies are being targeted. Dozens of singers, actors, and internet celebrities were fined millions of dollars for avoiding taxes in the past few years, according to a review of government notices.

Internet livestreaming celebrity Huang Wei, better known by her pseudonym, Weiya, was fined 1.3 billion yuan (\$210 million) for tax evasion in 2021. She apologized and escaped prosecution by paying up, but her social media accounts were suspended, crippling her business.

The hunt for revenue isn't limited to taxes. In the past few years, local authorities have drawn criticism for slapping large fines on drivers and street vendors, similar to how cities like Chicago or San Francisco earn millions from parking tickets. Despite pledges by top leaders to eliminate fines as a form of revenue collection, the practice continues, with city residents complaining that Shanghai police use drones and traffic cameras to catch drivers using their mobile phones at red lights.

Outside experts and Chinese government advisors agree that structural imbalances between local and central governments must be addressed. But under Xi, China's most authoritarian leader in decades, decision-making has grown more opaque, keeping businesses and analysts guessing, while vested interests have pushed back against major changes.

"They have a hermetically sealed process that makes it difficult for people on the outside to know what is going on," says Martin Chorzeppa, senior fellow at the Peterson Institute for International Economics.

Beijing has been reluctant to rescue struggling local governments, wary it might leave them dependent on bailouts. So, the central government has stepped in only in dire cases, otherwise leaving local governments to resolve debt issues on their own.

"In Chinese, we have a saying: You help people in desperate need, but you don't help the poor," said Tang Yao, an economist at Peking University. "You don't want them to rely on soft money."

Economists say intervention may be required this time around and that the central government has leeway to take on more debt, with a debt-to-GDP ratio of only around 25%. That's much lower than many other major economies.

Accumulated total non-financial debt, meanwhile, is estimated at nearly triple the size of the economy, according to the National Institution for Finance and Development and still growing.

Financial markets on WS and around the globe are 'falling'



A pair of traders work on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange, Tuesday, Aug 6, 2024. (AP)

Here's what to know about how we got here

NEW YORK, Aug 8, (AP): Markets on Wall Street and around the world are in a mini-panic. Worried about a slowing U.S. economy, investors sent the market in Japan to its worst day in decades and have sliced billions in market value off some of the world's biggest technology companies. They've turned a relatively calm year in markets on its head.

For most of the year, investors worldwide drove stock markets higher, convinced that central banks were successfully, if haltingly, getting inflation under control, and buoyed by a healthy U.S. economy and the promise of artificial intelligence.

That confidence has taken a hit the past few days. Weak readings on the job market, manufacturing and construction last week sparked worries about a U.S. economic slowdown and criticism that the Federal Reserve waited too long to cut rates. Meanwhile, the Bank of Japan raised rates, causing turmoil in Japan's markets. On Monday, the Nikkei plunged more than 12%, its worst drop since 1987.

Investors are now listening to warnings that Apple, Nvidia and other Big Tech stocks have gotten too expensive. On Friday, the tech-heavy Nasdaq composite went into a correction, which is a 10% decline from its most recent high. It dropped an additional 3.4% Monday.

Traders in the U.S. are betting the

German economy still troubled despite the rebound of 'manufacturing orders'

FRANKFURT, Aug 8, (Xinhua): The manufacturing industry in Germany recorded a surprise growth in the volume of new orders in June while other indicators remained mixed, indicating a fragile recovery of the economy.

Real (price-adjusted) new orders in manufacturing in June were 3.9 percent higher than in May, according to provisional figures released on Tuesday by the Federal Statistical Office. Previously, new orders had declined for five months in a row.

At the same time, new orders in manufacturing in the second quarter of this year were 1.4 percent lower than in the first quarter.

The automotive industry orders recorded the biggest monthly growth of 9.3 percent from May to June.

Industrial production increased by 1.4 percent in June month on month. The biggest growth - 7.5

percent - was once again recorded in the automotive industry compared to the figure in May.

However, analysts have cautioned against reading too much into the improved June statistics, saying it remains early to predict an economic turnaround on the horizon after recessions in the past two years.

The increase should not be "overestimated" and "only signals bottoming out," said Joerg Kraemer, the chief economist of Commerzbank. Describing the increase as a "positive surprise," Kraemer noted that the June reading was just a "countermovement to the sharp drops in orders in May."

Other indicators depict a grimmer picture for the German economy, which was the worst performer among major European Union economies in 2023.

A survey from the ifo Institute for Economic Research published on

Wednesday showed that a steady decline in orders has been a key factor impeding the German economy.

A growing number of companies involved in the survey conducted by the ifo Institute for Economic Research, a Munich-based economic think-tank, reported a lack of new orders in July. In the manufacturing industry, 43.6 percent of the respondents confirmed the lack of new orders, as opposed to 39.5 percent in June.

"Almost every industry is affected," said Klaus Wohlrabe, deputy director of the Center for Macroeconomics and Surveys at ifo.

Another survey released by ifo on Monday showed that the sentiment in the German automotive industry darkened further in July.

On top of these, the Purchasing Managers' Index in Germany has fallen to 43.20 points in July from 43.50 points in June.

Federal Reserve will lower rates by half a percentage point in September instead of the usual quarter point. Some are calling for an emergency rate cut. The heaviest selling has been in small companies that make most if not all their sales and profits in the U.S. Prices for oil and other commodities fell because of the economic worries.

However, there are opposing voices saying the sell-off is a good thing because stock prices had risen too high.

For individual investors, it's not time for rash decisions, but a moment to make sure their investments are properly diversified, experts say.

Here's a look at what's driving the turbulence in markets:

Starting in 2022, the Fed rapidly raised interest rates to combat a spike in inflation. It's maintained its key rate at 5.4% for about a year. As part of its inflation fight, the Fed also aimed to cool down a red-hot labor market.

Investors thought the Fed and other central banks were on track, even though inflation remained somewhat above their targets - in the Fed's case, 2%. The European Central Bank and the Bank of England cut rates once and the Fed signaled it was prepared to start cutting rates in September.

Despite some signs of cooling, the U.S. economy kept chugging along even with higher rates, outpacing Europe and Asia. Then came last week's economic reports.

Action tied to a door plug blowing off a 737 Max

FAA doubles enforcement cases against Boeing

WASHINGTON, Aug 8, (AP): A federal Aviation Administration official said Wednesday that the agency has 16 pending enforcement cases against Boeing, half of which have been opened since a door plug blew off a 737 Max in midflight.

The increase in cases was disclosed Wednesday during a National Transportation Safety Board hearing into the accident, which happened during an Alaska Airlines flight on Jan. 5.

Brian Knaup, who helps manage FAA's oversight of Boeing, said one of the open cases involves the removal of parts that have already been installed on airplanes in production.

That is apparently what caused the mistake that led to the Alaska Airlines accident: Bolts that were removed to open the door plug for maintenance workers were not replaced when the panel was closed and the plane left a Boeing factory near Seattle.

Knaup's comment came near the end of a two-day hearing that included discussion of Boeing's poor tracking of parts-removal jobs. The company failed to document who opened the door plug, and the missing bolts were never found.

Another FAA official overseeing Boeing, Bryan Kilgroe, said he is kept awake at night wondering "especially considering all that has happened since

Jan. 5, is why is it so difficult to sustain a corrective action for the long term?" Boeing said it had no comment.

The safety board released testimony by Boeing employees who said they were pressured to build planes too quickly and not raise safety concerns.

NTSB Chair Jennifer Homendy cited two employees who worked on aircraft doors where the Alaska Airlines plane was assembled and claimed they were moved to other areas - "Boeing prison" and "a cage" - after the door-plug blowout.

"What sort of impression does that give your employees if you sideline them ...? It is retaliation," Homendy

said. She said "sidelining" the two workers runs against Boeing's policy, which is not to retaliate against workers for unintentional mistakes.

Homendy said the NTSB will survey workers at Boeing's factory in Renton, Washington, where the Alaska Airlines plane was produced, about the company's safety culture.

Representatives from Boeing and key supplier Spirit AeroSystems described their "safety management systems," which encourage employees to voluntarily report safety concerns without fear of punishment. Boeing officials touted their "Speak Up" program for reporting concerns about quality and safety.

New service allows customers to print cards within 3 minutes

KFH introduces instant card printing service at self-banking stations

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 8: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) has announced offering instant credit and prepaid card printing service through KFH Go self-banking stations located in different branches across Kuwait. This service enables customers to print their cards 24/7 in a fast and secure manner.

The service is an extension of the latest achievement in instant printing of credit and prepaid cards, a first in the Kuwaiti banking sector. Today, KFH customers can print all types of banking cards directly through its devices, showcasing KFH's technological prowess and commitment to enhancing customer experience with pioneering services.

Meshal Mandani, Senior Manager of Digital Channels at KFH said: "Our services are now more accessible to all customers. Following the successful launch of this service at our Khiran Mall and Airport branches, KFH has expanded this service to all KFH Go self-banking stations throughout Kuwait."

Explaining the process, he pointed out that printing and activating the card entails two simple options. The first one is by sending a QR code through KFH online application. A second option is to enter your civil ID into the device, follow the necessary steps, and receive an OTP via SMS with the highest security standards.

Mandani emphasized that this service is part of KFH's pioneering banking services offered



Meshal Mandani

through ATMs to credit and prepaid cardholders. The aim is to provide them with the best banking experience through its digital channels, including the KFH Online app, KFH Go smart branches, or ATMs.

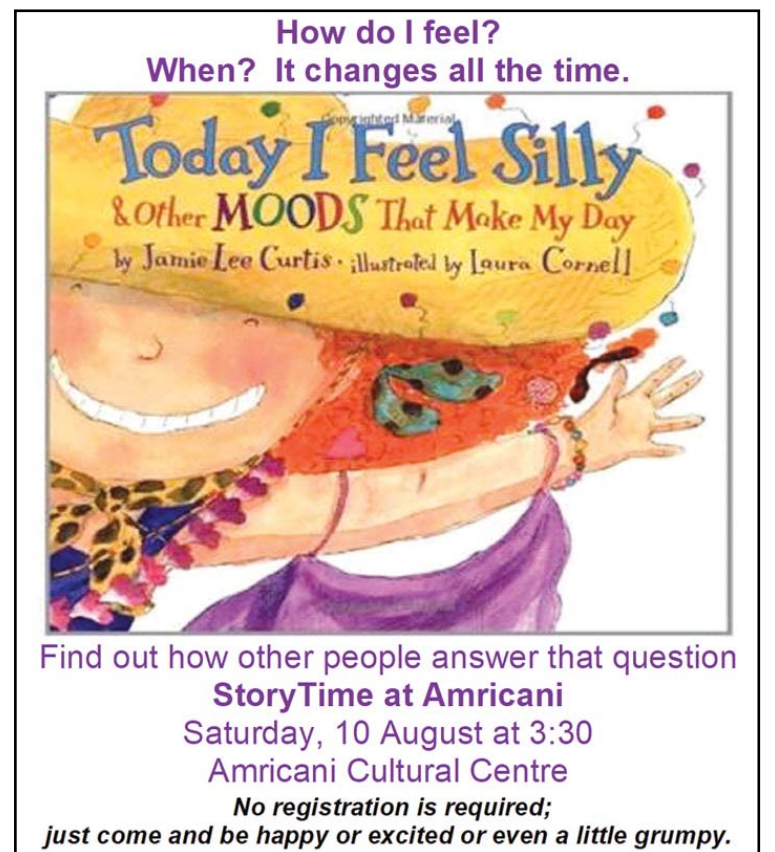
Additionally, Mandani said that KFH is the first bank in Kuwait to introduce instant banking card issuance using a Hybrid Solution powered by NCR, allowing customers to print their own banking cards within 3 minutes, 24/7 through several options, either via self-service using the civil ID or by using their smart phones and the QR code.

For the second time at the local banking level, KFH maintains its leadership by introducing instant credit and prepaid card issuance through its ATMs without prior request. This service is now accessible at all branches and selected shopping malls, solidifying KFH's position as the leader with the largest network of available devices in Kuwait.

It is worth noting that KFH provides a comprehensive package of digital banking services that confirms its leadership in the banking industry, e.g., a secured account opening service for non-KFH customers machines and printing cheque books through XTM devices, the first of its kind in Kuwait. In response to the developments of smart devices, KFH offers its service through smart watches enabling customers to complete their transactions through ATMs.

KFH offers a range of online banking services including personal financing requests, instant payments through WAMD, local and international money transfers, investment deposits, gold account opening and trading, chequebook requests, cheque deposits, financing transaction and installment tracking, investment plan viewing, as well as balance and deposit inquiries.

The new service exemplifies KFH's commitment to harnessing the latest fintech innovations to provide exceptional banking experiences that meet the highest customer quality standards.



How do I feel?
When? It changes all the time.

Find out how other people answer that question
StoryTime at Amricani
Saturday, 10 August at 3:30
Amricani Cultural Centre
No registration is required;
just come and be happy or excited or even a little grumpy.

DAI poster

KIB reveals monthly 'draw' winners of 'Win with KIB Rewards' campaign

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 8: Kuwait International Bank (KIB) has announced the draw winners of its new 'Win with KIB Rewards' campaign for the month of July. Running monthly until the end of the year, the campaign aims to reward customers who use KIB's Banking App to open an Al Dirwaza account, issue a Multicurrency prepaid card, or open a deposit investment of any kind. The third batch of winners who won 15,000 reward points each are Hmoud Saad Almutairi, Hamzah Abbas Bahroh, Wadhwa Abdullah Alnabari, Halah Bader

Halawah, Mejbil Hulees Alharbi, Maher Shereef Ahmad, Yahya Jassim Awwad, Ali Fahad Alshammari, Omar Faleh Alshammari and Abdullah Saad Albouls.



Nawaf Al-Khrayef

Commenting on the occasion, Nawaf Al-Khrayef, Assistant General Manager of the Retail Banking Department at KIB, said: "We are delighted to congratulate the third group of winners in this exceptional campaign, which is a great opportunity to reward our customers for their loyalty. We will continue our efforts to provide innovative banking



KIB campaign

solutions that meet their aspirations and fulfill all their needs, enhancing their overall banking experience and lifestyle, in line with our 'Bank for Life' slogan." He added: "At KIB, we remain committed to adopting a comprehensive strategy aimed at providing the best banking benefits, particularly with regard to the KIB Rewards Program, in addition to encouraging all customer segments to use our digital platforms to complete their financial transactions with utmost convenience and ease."

Customers can qualify for and participate in the draws by using the KIB Banking App to open an Al Dirwaza account, issue a Multicurrency prepaid card, or open a deposit investment of

any kind. Winners can redeem their reward points on KIB's rewards online market platform, which features an extensive list of participating outlets, including electronics services, retail products, and e-vouchers, and much more.

In addition to this and numerous other campaigns, KIB offers a wide variety of products with unparalleled benefits. Those who open an Al Dirwaza account can enjoy weekly and monthly draws, with one chance to enter the draw for every KD 1 deposited, culminating in a Mega Draw. The Multicurrency prepaid card offers a great deal of flexibility, allowing customers to use six currencies simultaneously and choose from a total of 12 currencies. Additionally, deposits starting from KD 1,000 are given competitive profit rates.

The Bank encourages its customers to stay informed about the campaign's latest developments and news, as well as to learn more about the KIB Rewards Program, by following its social media accounts and visiting its website.

It is worth mentioning that KIB spares no effort in launching initiatives and campaigns that reward its customers, while continuously striving to enhance the quality of its banking products and services. The Bank aims to elevate its banking experience by complementing digital financial solutions with attractive rewards, maintaining its leading position as a reliable partner in the market.

Kuwaiti freelancers embrace digital nomad lifestyle

Digital nomad trend soars post-pandemic, saving costs for firms

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 8, (KUNA): The job market has dramatically changed in recent years, especially with the introduction of numerous technologies, including the ones during the coronavirus pandemic, which allowed for the proliferation of the "digital nomad".

Though no one knows when the aforementioned term was first coined, scientist Tsugio Makimoto and journalist David Manners popularized it in the 1997 book of the same name. The book predicted the invention of an individual communication device that would enable employees to work from anywhere in the world.

This is now largely achieved, as digital nomads in the 21st century use their skills to work via laptops, social media, and mobile phones.

The book claimed people did not imagine that working remotely could be achieved; however, due to current circumstances, remote work is booming. The book also predicted that in the future, working remotely would be as regular as working in an office. However, artificial intelligence could make working remotely significantly easier.

The digital nomad trend is on the rise and increasing significantly since the coronavirus pandemic in 2020 and one of the perks of not having employees show up at work was saving cost.

In order to reduce expenses, companies had to change to working remotely to save money by renting a smaller low-cost workplace and communicating with most of their employees remotely for some tasks that did not necessarily require their physical presence. Numerous companies were financially drained during the pandemic, and according to a Forbes article published in April 30, 2021, Google and most other large corporations told their employees to work from home.

"An unintended consequence of this remote work trend was the significant savings realized both companies and workers.

The article added, "Bloomberg reported that Google, according to regulatory filings, saved about USD 268 million in expenses in the first quarter of 2021. This was achieved by cutting down costs related to promotions, travel, entertainment, and in-office perks offered to workers."

Back to the digital nomads, two Kuwaiti freelancers: Fajer Al-Rifai and Abdullah Al-Sanousi followed suit, becoming part of the ever-growing trend.

Al-Sanousi, an ambitious young man specializing in graphic design and passionate about travel, thought traditional jobs prevented him from traveling and discovering, so he became a digital nomad and replaced his human team with Artificial Intelligence.

He worked from home or abroad. All he needed was an Internet connection and a computer to work.

Speaking to KUNA, Al-Sanousi believed the best way to work was to



Digital nomad Abdullah Al-Sanousi



Digital nomad Fajer Al-Rifai

be more productive and open to ideas, especially since he was a designer and needed cognitive and cultural diversity.

Sometimes, people may achieve three times their income in one month, and in that situation, financial wisdom was always to keep savings money, Al-Sanousi added.

However, Al-Sanousi argued that working remotely has disadvantages compared to a traditional job, and digital nomads' incomes needed to be more stable for one to survive.

Meanwhile, Fajer Al-Rifai is a Managing Partner in FTL Legal Services in Kuwait -- a law firm specializing in commercial, financial, and technology law. She provides legal advice online and offers courses on becoming a digital nomad.

Al-Rifai pointed out that the one of

the most significant advantage of being a digital nomad was the freedom to travel and find a spot around the world that was fit for her to make it a place to work. She loved Mexican culture and found the country a suitable place to set up shop.

As for disadvantages, she said that sometimes matters get more complicated and the solution to such problem was to find a supportive community. In retrospective, Al-Rifai said some people do better in an office environment rather than being a digital nomad.

Eventually, working remotely has pros and cons, and it depends on the person.

Both Al-Rifai and Al-Sanousi agreed that to start as digital nomads, individuals should define their goals and what financial freedom means and create a plan based on such premise.

Bank simplifies entry for draws with KD 10 deposit minimum

ABK announces Ghadah Abdullah AlBassam as Alfouz draw winner

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 8: Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) is excited to announce Ghadah Abdullah Al-Bassam as the winner of Alfouz KD 10,000 weekly draw on Monday 5 AUGUST 2024. The draw took place in the presence of a Ministry of Commerce and Industry representative, ensuring transparency.

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

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

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



ABK's Alfouz draw winner

ABK encourages everyone to open an Alfouz draw account or increase their balance to participate in the upcoming weekly draw, which is scheduled to take place on Monday 12 August 2024.

Open an Alfouz account today and enjoy increased opportunities to win

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

New program aligns with modern media and learning methods

Kuwait's first national e-games challenge launches with 70 youth participants

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 8, (KUNA): The first cultural national challenge program for e-games kicked off on Wednesday, with the participation of 70 male and female youth.

Speaking to KUNA in a statement, Director General of the National Council for Culture, Arts and Literature (NCCAL) Dr. Mohammad al-Jassar said the council is organizing this challenge for the first time as a start for next challenges in the same field.

He expressed his delight at youth's participation in this challenge, which constitutes a chance for them to be acquainted with each other.

The move also enables the participants to share expertise and knowl-



Photos during the gaming challenge.



edge, he added.

Meanwhile, Director General of the Youth Public Authority Nasser al-Sheikh said the challenge is a chance for the authority to learn about the skills and energy of youth, affirming that paying attention to youth is a national duty.

Omaima al-Saad, an NCCAL official, told KUNA that the program comes to keep pace with media development, and orientation of youth and children on how to acquire knowledge.

She noted that book has no longer been the source of information, adding that modern methods offer information in an easy and simple manner.

E-games challenge is one of the creative economic tools, she stated.

People

Rapper Nelly arrested and accused of having illegal drugs

LOS ANGELES, Aug 8, (AP) — Rapper Nelly was arrested early Wednesday at a St. Louis-area casino, and the Missouri Highway Patrol said an officer found four illegal ecstasy pills on him. The rapper's attorney said an "overzealous" officer targeted him and conducted an improper search.

The arrest occurred about 4:45 a.m., and Nelly, 49, was held and then released by police in Maryland Heights, Missouri, the patrol said in a brief online report. The St. Louis suburb is home to the Hollywood Casino and Hotel, and Nelly's attorney, Scott Rosenblum said in a statement Wednesday evening that the rapper, who grew up in the area, visits it frequently.

Online Missouri court records show that Nelly, whose birth name is Cornell Haynes II, was cited in June 2018 in Maryland Heights with operating a vehicle without proper proof of insurance. A judge issued a warrant in December 2023, and it remained outstanding.

Rosenblum said Nelly had won several casino jackpots and when he sought to collect them, the officer who would have supervised the transaction "needlessly" ran a search for warrants. Once the officer found the outstanding warrant, he cuffed Nelly's hands behind his back and "felt compelled" to "parade him through the casino in front of other customers," Rosenblum said.

Nelly's attorney called what the officer found "alleged 'ecstasy'" and said the officer did not have probable cause to justify searching him. Nelly wasn't notified of the warrant and did not know about it, Rosenblum said.

"I am 100% confident this case will go nowhere," Rosenblum said. "And we will be asking for an inquiry into this officer's conduct."

The Highway Patrol's report provided no details about the arrest, and Maryland Heights police did not respond to a call Wednesday seeking comment.

Performances

Rosenblum said that in similar circumstances, "any other citizen would have been told to address it and allowed to go on their way."

Nelly, a three-time Grammy Award winner, is known for hits like "Hot in Herre" and "Just A Dream." He's had four No. 1 hits and received nine Billboard Music Awards. He recently wrapped up a series of performances with Janet Jackson as a special guest on her tour.

He won Grammy Awards in 2002 for Best Rap/Sung Collaboration and Best Male Solo Rap Performance, and his "Nellyville" was nominated that year for both Best Rap Album and Album of the Year. He also won a Grammy the following year for Best Rap Performance by a Duo or Group the following year for "Shake Ya Tailfeather."

Beyond his recording career, Nelly has appeared in a number of films and television series, including the sports film "The Longest Yard" and a BET reality series featuring his family. The artist announced in April he was engaged to singer and actor Ashanti and the pair is expecting a baby.

In April 2015, Nelly was arrested and faced felony drug charges in

Tennessee after a bus he was traveling in was pulled over east of Nashville by the Tennessee Highway Patrol. He later pleaded guilty to a misdemeanor charge and was able to have his record expunged after less than a year of probation.

Nelly was also arrested in October 2017 in Auburn, Washington, south of Seattle, after a woman alleged he had sexually assaulted her on his tour bus. Rosenblum said then that the allegations were fabricated. The woman sued Nelly, who countersued, and they settled their legal claims in September 2018.

Also:

DOVER, Del.: The rock band Journey has compiled an impressive list of hits over the past 50 years, but the song that might now be resonating the loudest for some band and crew members is "Separate Ways."

The latest in a series of legal disputes with band founder and lead guitarist **Neal Schon**, longtime keyboardist **Jonathan Cain** is asking a Delaware judge to resolve a deadlock involving Freedom 2020, a company formed three years ago to oversee tour-related finances.

According to court filings, Schon is president of Freedom 2020, but he and Cain each holds a 50% stake in the company. In a petition filed last week, Cain said he and Schon "fundamentally disagree" on the management and operation of the company. He wants the court to appoint a custodian to act as an independent, deadlock-breaking director.

Variety



This image released by Sony Pictures shows Blake Lively in a scene from 'It Ends With Us.' (AP)

Film

Lively's movie balances romance and melodrama

'It Ends With Us' tackles big issues

By Mark Kennedy

Lily Bloom and Ryle Kincaid don't really meet-cut. On a rooftop in Boston, he announces himself by angrily kicking a patio chair. She's up there trying to come to terms with her abusive father's death. They talk about marshchino cherries, gun violence and flirt. There's something off about this pair. But there's also an obvious attraction.

So begins the uneven movie adaptation of Colleen Hoover's best-selling 2016 novel "It Ends With Us" starring Blake Lively, which tries to balance the realities of domestic violence inside a rom-com and a female-empowerment movie. All suffer in the process.

It veers too close to melodrama, with suicide, homelessness, generational trauma, child murder, unintended pregnancy and never-forgotten love all touched on and only half digested. Set in Boston, it never even pulls from that city's flavor.

The film centers on Lively's Lily, a flower shop owner who finds herself in the middle of a complicated love triangle between hunky neurosurgeon Ryle - Justin Baldoni, who also directs - and her hunky high school sweetheart, Atlas, played with hand-dog cuteness by Brandon Sklenka.

There are red flags about Ryle but they aren't obvious until they're strung together, which takes, literally, years. Credit to the filmmakers for not making the potential abuser so easy to wave a red flag about.

The most powerful thing about "It Ends With Us" is the after-effects of domestic violence and how they un-moore those who witness or survive it. This could have been tightened or highlighted more. (The end credits direct viewers to the anti-domestic violence group No More.)

Baldoni perfectly balances menace and seduction, operating in the zone between assertive and psychotic. And his direction is good, with an ability to summarize scenes quickly and move the plot elegantly, although he does have a fondness for too many music-led montages.

Lively is fine here, veering dangerously close to Manic Pixie Dream Girl with her cute flower sketches and love of shabby chic, but perks up at the end. She wears a lot of rings and a lot of florals but can also stun a room in a cut-out dress.

The script by Christy Hall has some terrible clunkers - "This man runs through women like candy," someone says at one point - but nicely maneuvers around the book's weird spots, like making Lily's dad's funeral a flashback instead of an odd recreation on the rooftop.

But "It Ends With Us" doesn't end quickly enough - more than two hours drag - with tangents and poor editing, like sudden scene cuts that leave viewers looking for clues to where they are.

And we have so many questions, like how Lively's character got onto the roof of that luxury highrise in the first place. And what's with Lily's best friend - Jenny Slate, clearly stealing the movie - who wears Valentino dresses and carries a purse that costs the same as a small car? She clearly doesn't need a retail job, but works at the flower shop anyway?

And what's with the weird relationship with Carhartt - check out the copycat logo appearing and disappearing from jackets and jumpsuits - apparently trying to show the wearers as down-to-earth working class folks, when they are not.

The movie's adoration of wealth and luxury - from a Mercedes to million-dollar apartments and fancy dinner reservations - I guess are attempts to show that domestic violence isn't confined to sports bars and factories.

What's very funny is that Lily clearly has a type: Both her paramours are dark-haired buff dudes who favor tight black T-shirts, have stubble beards and adore her. When they fight - and they do - it's actually hard to tell them apart.

The bursting soundtrack - with Thom Yorke's "Dawn Chorus," Lewis Capaldi's "Love the Hell Out of You" and Brittany Howard's "I Don't" - represented - has the undeniable presence of Lively's bestie Taylor Swift, who has lent her "My Tears Ricochet." When Lily and Ryle finally hook up for the first time, she warns him: "Don't let me regret this." She will, of course. And a few others who are part of this film probably will, too.

Also:

NEW YORK: The New York Film Festival on Tuesday unveiled the main slate for its 62nd edition, with selections including **Sean Baker's** Palme d'Or-winning "Anora," **Pedro Almodóvar's** "The Room Next Door"

and **Mati Diop's** "Dahomey."

Thirty-three features will make up the central lineup of the annual festival presented by Film at Lincoln Center. The main slate is particularly international this year, with films hailing from 24 countries, and including 19 directors making their debut in the festival's most prestigious section.

The festival, as previously announced, will kick off Sept. 27 with **RaMell Ross's** "Nickel Boys," an adaptation of **Colson Whitehead's** Pulitzer Prize-winning 2019 novel. Almodóvar, making his 15th appearance in New York's main slate, will present "The Room Next Door," starring **Julianne Moore** and **Tilda Swinton**, as the festival centerpiece. **Steve McQueen's** "Blitz," about the bombing of London in World War II, will be the closing night film.

A number of prize-winners from May's Cannes Film Festival will be making their U.S. or North American premieres. Along with "Anora," that includes "Grand Tour," by **Miguel Gomes**, winner of Cannes' best director; **Payal Kapadia's** "All We Imagine as Light," winner of the Grand Prix; **Rungano Nyoni's** "On Becoming a Guinea Fowl," a standout from Un Certain Regard; and "The Seed of the Sacred Fig," from the dissident Iranian filmmaker **Mohammad Rasoulof** who fled his home country to unveil his film.

"The festival's ambition is to reflect the state of cinema in a given year, which often means also reflecting the state of the world," said **Dennis Lim**, the festival's artistic director, in a statement. "The most notable thing about the films in the main slate - and in the other sections that we will announce in the coming weeks - is the degree to which they emphasize cinema's relationship to reality. They are reminders that, in the hands of its most vital practitioners, film has the capacity to reckon with, intervene in, and reimagine the world."

Also are tap are **Paul Schrader's** "Oh, Canada," with **Richard Gere** and **Jacob Elordi**, Chinese filmmaker **Jia Zhangke's** "Caught by the Tides" and David Cronenberg's "The Shrouds," as well as a pair of highlights from Cannes sidebars: **Roberto Minervini's** American Civil War drama "The Damned" and Carson Lund's baseball elegy "Eephus." (AP)

SEOUL, South Korea: Suga, a member of K-pop sensation BTS, apologized Wednesday for driving an electric vehicle while intoxicated.

His label, Big Hit Music, said **Min Yoon-gi**, famously known as Suga, was driving an "electric kickboard" Tuesday night when he fell while parking it. A police officer spotted him and administered a breathalyzer test which Suga failed, leading to his license being revoked and a fine, the label added.

An electric kickboard refers to a type of vehicle without a seat. However, police told local media Suga's vehicle had a seat and resembled an electric scooter under traffic law. The type of vehicle affects the penalty for drunk driving.

Yongsan Police Station in Seoul reportedly booked him for violating the Road Traffic Act. It's currently unclear whether the police have begun the investigation process. Multiple calls to the station's spokesperson went unanswered.

The K-pop star issued an apology on Weverse, an online fan platform, saying he was driving after consuming alcohol at dinner.

"I come to you with a very heavy heart and deep apologies for disappointing you with this regrettable incident," Suga wrote on Weverse. "I thought complacently that it was a short distance, not realizing I was not allowed to ride the electric scooter while intoxicated, breaking the road traffic act."

Suga has been doing his mandatory military service as a social service agent since September 2023. Such agents typically work regular work hours and are allowed to return home after work hours.

Big Hit Music, his label, also apologized, stating: "He will accept any disciplinary measures from the place of duty regarding actions that caused social controversy as a social service worker."

According to the spokesperson from the Military Manpower Administration, the incident will not impact his current status as an agent since it happened outside of official working hours.

In **South Korea**, all able-bodied men must serve in the army, navy or air force for 18-21 months

under a conscription system established due to threats from rival **North Korea**.

Individuals with certain physical or mental conditions may instead serve for 21 months at non-military institutions such as welfare centers, community service centers and post offices. (AP)



Suga



Martin

LOS ANGELES: Steve Martin's next role will not be the Midwestern politician the internet hoped he'd portray.

With **Maya Rudolph's** wildly popular impression of **Kamala Harris** on "Saturday Night Live," fans clamored to see who the late-night comedy show would pick to play Harris' new running mate,

Minnesota Gov. **Tim Walz**.

With similar hairstyles and their signature glasses, many fans quickly drew comparisons between Walz and Martin, who's been a frequent "SNL" guest but never a formal cast member.

The Los Angeles Times reported Wednesday that "SNL" producer **Lorne Michaels** called

Martin to offer him the role on the upcoming 50th season, premiering Sept. 28, which he declined.

"I wanted to say no and, by the way, he wanted me to say no," Martin said. "I said, 'Lorne, I'm not an impressionist. You need someone who can really nail the guy.' I was picked because I have gray hair and glasses." (AP)

People & Places

Music

'Flight b741' nostalgic

Sakamoto's 'Opus' is a reflective farewell

TOKYO, Aug 8, (AP) — Recorded and filmed as he was dying of cancer, **Ryuichi Sakamoto's** "Opus" — the Japanese film composer's posthumous album and documentary of the same name — is clearly meant to be his final farewell.

As an album, it is fitting that the 20-song, hour-and-a-half recording of sparse piano played by Sakamoto is a retrospective, taking the listener on a journey through his half-century career.

One standout is the first-ever recorded version of the playfully lyrical "Tong Poo" from his early days with techno-pop trio Yellow Magic Orchestra, also known as YMO. They were pioneers of 1970s electronic music and a Japanese act that landed on the global stage.



Sakamoto

The album "Opus" is set to be released Friday from Milan Records. It showcases solo piano versions of the film scores that form the pillars of Sakamoto's legacy, starting with the majestic theme for Bernardo Bertolucci's "The Last Emperor," a film set in the final days of imperial China leading into its communist rule.

It won an Academy Award for best original score, making Sakamoto the first Asian to win the honor. The 1987 film, starring John Lone, also won best picture. The score also won a Grammy.

Elsewhere, the track "BB" is Sakamoto's homage to Bertolucci, a tender love poem for his brilliant collaborator.

"Opus" also features the forlornly pensive music Sakamoto did for Bertolucci's 1990 "The Sheltering Sky," which juxtaposed emotionally lost American travelers with the ruthless vastness of northern Africa.

And it includes the music for "Merry Christmas Mr. Lawrence," a 1983 film about a World War II prisoner of war camp, directed by Nagisa Oshima, in which Sakamoto also acted. It has become his signature piece.

Sakamoto's sound has an unmistakably Asian feel that's challenging to define, but evident through the utilization of certain harmonies, pentatonic motifs or scales. His sound is also evocative of Debussy but, to be fair, this is all Sakamoto.

Poignant

Minimalist is another way some have described his ability to speak in the silences between the notes.

All the songs on "Opus" were immaculately recorded in Tokyo's NHK 509 Studio, performed without an audience in 2022. The piano pedal shift, and, at times, his breathing, are present.

A poignant black-and-white documentary film by his son Neo Sora documents the recordings, spread out over a period of days because of Sakamoto's weakening health.

This testament to Sakamoto's music underlines an artist's commitment to his work that was there, to the very end. The tagline on the album reads: "Art is long, life is short."

"Opus" is all about death, with segments, like the title piece that ends the album, resonating like a solemn prayer.

Sakamoto wanted to record his performance while he still could. He felt so drained after the recordings, and his condition worsened. He died on March 28, 2023, in Tokyo. He was 71.

"In some sense, while thinking of this as my last opportunity to perform, I also felt that I was able to break new ground," he said in a statement accompanying the project.



King Gizzard & the Lizard Wizard is in their dad rock era — and not just because most of the band members now have kids.

Following their highly technical heavy metal concept album released last year, the remarkably prolific Australian rock band wanted to take it back to basics with their latest album, embracing a sound that reminded them of why they fell in love with music in the first place.

Taking a page from 1970s classic rock for "Flight b741," their 26th studio album out Friday, the band didn't use guitar pedals and recorded on cheap, second-hand amps from a local pawn shop, according to frontman **Stu Mackenzie**. Once in the studio, they relied on instinct, not strategy, for the band's most collaborative album to date.

"At this moment in time, the easiest thing was the right thing to do," Mackenzie, 33, said of how the men approached their record. "Don't come in with too many ideas, just pick up the guitars. Don't worry about your bloody headphone mix, just make the music that comes out."

The album's lyrics maintain many of the poetically dark and poignant themes the band has come to be known for — like battling depression or escaping parental strife. "I've been drinking on the job/Not much thinking going on about the passengers I got on board/Satan's winking, givin' me the nod," they croon in "Sad Pilot."

But the sound of "Flight b741" is decidedly upbeat and nostalgic, thanks in part, Mackenzie said, to some of their relatively new identities as fathers.

"Being a parent, I think, changes everybody. It has to. I think if it doesn't, you might be a psychopath," said Mackenzie, who has a 3-year-old and 9-month-old baby. "I actually have more gratitude in my heart than ever before. And I think that's in the songwriting, from probably everybody's perspective. And I think we did have a lot of fun making this record."

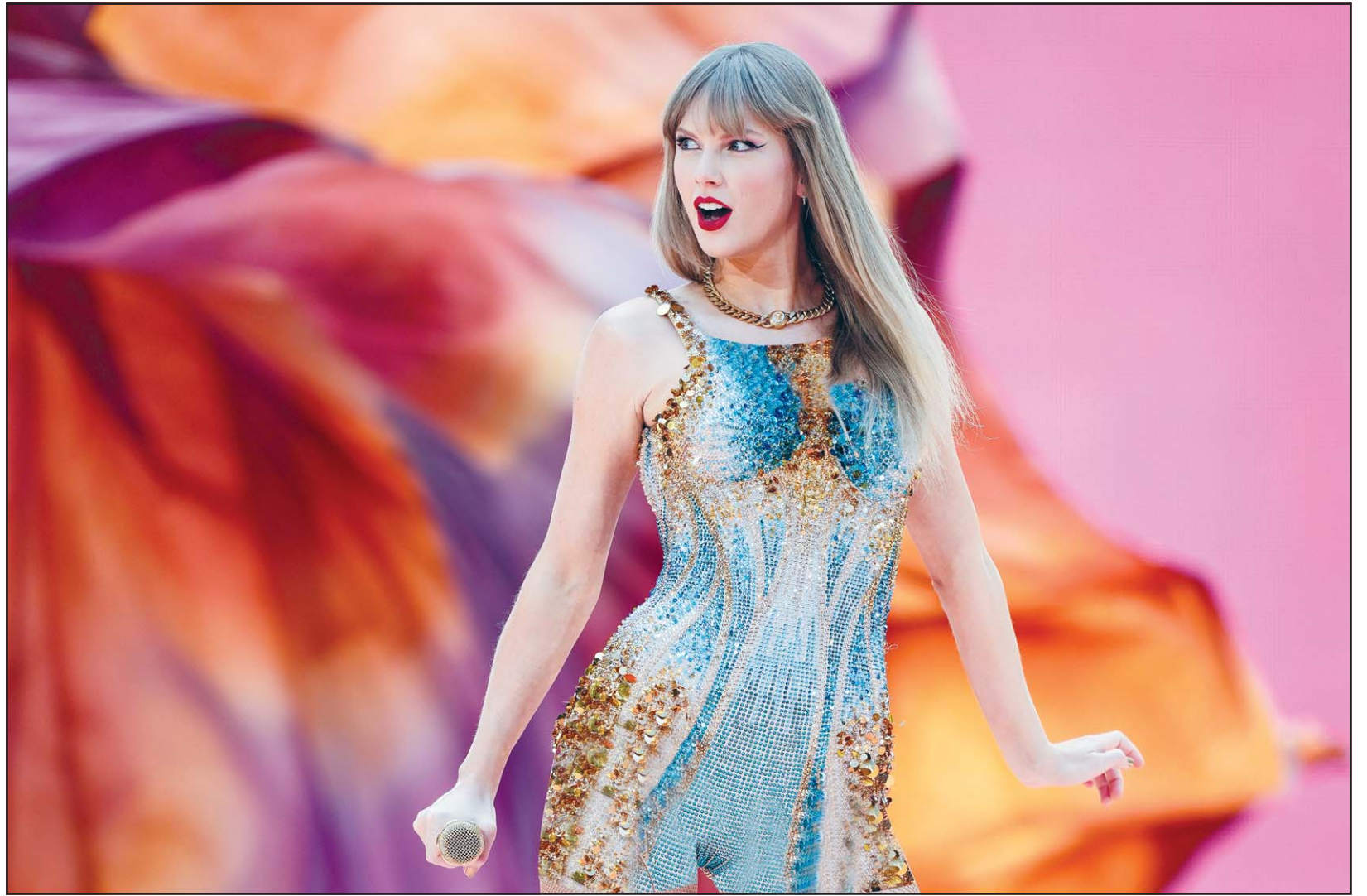
Touring

That four of its six members now have kids makes the band's sustained output and touring schedule even more impressive. And it's not just their personal lives that have undergone major shifts since they got together. A lot has changed in the music industry since King Gizzard & the Lizard Wizard first put music out in 2010.

But in those two and a half decades, they've cultivated a loyal fanbase, allowing them to explore multiple disparate genres of rock and avoid creative constraints or expectations that many artists nowadays feel bound to, such as factoring in TikTok virality or Spotify algorithms.

"Maybe we are in an unusually fortunate position where people actually expect us to do the thing you're not supposed to do. And that's a liberating feeling because it kind of just means I'm not sort of beholden to any industry trope," Mackenzie said.

That liberation is apparent in their unapologetically nostalgic album, which sounds like it was pulled from a time capsule buried during the heyday of rock and roll.



Taylor Swift performs at Wembley Stadium as part of her Eras Tour on Friday, June 21, 2024 in London. (AP)

Music

2 arrested over terror plot; Swifties devastated

Swift's Vienna shows cancelled

Concert plotters aimed for maximum deaths: officials

VIENNA, Aug 8, (AP) — Authorities found Islamic State group and al-Qaida material at the home of the second and final suspect in a foiled plot to attack now-cancelled Taylor Swift shows in Austria. No other suspects are being sought after the two were arrested. Interior Minister Gerhard Karner said Thursday in Vienna.

"The situation was serious, the situation is serious. But we can also say: A tragedy was prevented," he said.

Austrian security authorities said the second suspect, a 17-year-old Austrian citizen with Turkish and Croatian roots, was arrested by special police forces near the stadium where the concerts were supposed to take place this week. A 19-year-old Austrian had also been arrested. The suspects' names were not released in line with Austrian privacy rules.

Confessed

Austrian security officials alleged the two young men wanted to commit an attack outside the stadium, killing as many people as possible using knives or self-made explosives.

They told reporters at a press conference in Vienna that the main suspect, a 19-year-old Austrian with North Macedonian roots, fully confessed his attack plans. They said he was "clearly radicalized in the direction of the Islamic State and thinks it is right to kill infidels."

The second suspect was employed a few days ago by a facility company providing services at the venue during the concerts. Investigators said they found extensive material related to the Islamic State group and Al Qaida at his home.

The cancellations of three sold-out concerts this week devastated Swifties across the globe, many of whom had dropped thousands of euros on travel and lodging in Austria's expensive capital city for the sold-out Eras Tour shows on Thursday, Friday and Saturday at the Ernst Happel Stadium, which sat empty Thursday morning aside from media filming outside.

Three Swift concerts this week in Vienna have been canceled following arrests over an apparent plot to launch an attack in the area, potentially at the stadium itself, and at least one of the suspects has been linked to the Islamic State group.

Chemical substances and technical devices were found at the house of that suspect, a 19-year-old Austrian, according to Franz Ruf, the public security director at Austria's Interior Ministry.

In an interview Thursday with public broadcaster ORF's Oe1 program, Ruf said investigators are evaluating the evidence seized from the suspect's home. Just a few weeks ago, the 19-year-old had uploaded an oath of allegiance to the current leader of the Islamic State group militia to an internet account, Ruf added.

A second person was arrested in the Austrian capital. Several Austrian media reported Thursday that additional suspects were being sought — something police did not officially confirm.

VIENNA, Aug 8, (AP) — Both suspects in a foiled plot to attack Taylor Swift shows in Vienna appeared to be inspired by the Islamic State group and al-Qaida, Austrian authorities said Thursday, and investigators found bomb-making materials at one of their homes. Officials said one of the two confessed to planning to "kill as many people as possible outside the concert venue."

Three sold-out concerts were canceled a day earlier because of the plot, devastating Swifties from across the globe, many of whom had dropped thousands of euros (dollars) on travel and lodging in Austria's expensive capital city to attend the Eras Tour shows at the Ernst Happel Stadium, which sat empty Thursday morning aside from media filming outside.

Concert organizers said they stood behind their decision to cancel all three events, saying they expected up to 65,000 fans inside the stadium at each concert and as

many as 30,000 onlookers outside. The foiled attack was planned for Thursday or Friday, according to Austria's interior minister, Gerhard Karner.

Officials told reporters that the 19-year-old Austrian suspect began working on his attack plans in July, and just a few weeks ago uploaded to the internet an oath of allegiance to the current leader of the Islamic State group militia. He planned to use knives or homemade explosives to carry out the attack outside the stadium.

He was "clearly radicalized in the direction of the Islamic State and thinks it is right to kill infidels," said Omar Hajjawi-Pirchner, the head of the Directorate of State Security and Intelligence.

During a raid of his home in Ternitz, south of Vienna, investigators found chemical substances and technical devices that indicated "concrete preparatory acts," said Franz Ruf, Director General for Public Security at the Ministry of the Interior.

The cancellations devastated Swifties across the globe, many of whom had dropped thousands of euros on travel and lodging in Austria's expensive capital city for the sold-out Eras Tour shows on Thursday, Friday and Saturday at the Ernst Happel Stadium, which sat empty Thursday morning aside from media filming outside.

Shattered

Europe is enamored by the American superstar, with the German town of Gelsenkirchen renaming itself "Swiftkirchen" before its mid-July concerts.

Austria's Vice-Chancellor Werner Kogler wrote on social platform X: "For many, a dream has been shattered today. On three evenings in Vienna, tens of thousands of #Swifties should have celebrated life together."

"I am very sorry that you were denied this. Swifties stick together, hate and terror can't destroy that," Kogler wrote late Wednesday.

Ruf said authorities were aware of "preparatory actions" for a possible attack "and also that there is a focus by the 19-year-old perpetrator on the Taylor Swift concerts in Vienna," the Austria Press Agency reported.

The Austrian citizen is believed to have become radicalized on the internet. Ruf didn't give more details, such as the suspects' names, in line with Austrian privacy law.

Event organizer Barracuda Music said in an Instagram post late Wednesday that "we have no choice but to cancel the three scheduled shows for ev-

eryone's safety." It cited government officials' confirmation of a planned attack at the stadium.

The cancellation came hours after authorities said security measures for the Swift concerts would be stepped up. Ruf previously said that there would be a special focus among other things on entry checks, and concertgoers should plan a bit more time.

Vienna Police Chief Gerhard Pürstl said at the same time that, while any concrete danger had been minimized, an abstract risk justified raising security.

Austrian Chancellor Karl Nehammer posted on X that "the cancellation of the Taylor Swift concerts by the organizers is a bitter disappointment for all fans in Austria."

"The situation surrounding the apparently planned terror attack in Vienna was very serious," he wrote. But he added that, thanks to intensive cooperation between police and Austrian and foreign intelligence, "the threat could be recognized early on, tackled and a tragedy prevented."

Barracuda Music said that "all tickets will be automatically refunded within the next 10 business days." The same wording was posted under the Vienna dates on Swift's official website.

The Vienna stadium had been sold out for the planned concerts, APA reported, with an estimated 170,000 fans expected for the concerts in Austria.

Some who posted on X lamented months of now-wasted efforts to make friendship bracelets and pick out fashionable outfits for the performance.



Isabella Ferrer poses for photographers upon arrival at the photo call for the film 'It Ends With Us' on Thursday, Aug. 8, in London. (AP) — Details Page 11

Variety

ROME: Fashion house Dolce & Gabbana has launched a new alcohol-free perfume for dogs called "Fefe" in honor of Domenico Dolce's poodle, but not all vets and pet owners agree it's safe or appropriate.

The perfume costs 99 euros (\$108) for 100 milliliters (3.4 ounces) and has been certified suitable for animal use. It follows a Safe Pet Cosmetics protocol designed to ensure a degree of safety of cosmetic products for animals comparable to that required for humans. Dolce & Gabbana said.

"Through a compliance recognition to this protocol granted by Bureau Veritas Italia, participating companies demonstrate their sensitivity in creating products that ensure the safety and respect of the animal, in accordance with established standards," the company said in the statement issued for the launch of the perfume.

Bureau Veritas Italia is a publicly held company that provides inspection, laboratory verification and certification services.

All of the dog owners consulted agreed that the fragrance is "gentle and well accepted by their pets," and veterinarians approve of the product, according to the company web page dedicated to "Fefe," which cites performance reviews by veterinarians and customers.

But not all veterinarians agree on the use of perfumes for dogs, as they may interfere with the animal's sense of smell and cover up bad odors that could be a symptom of diseases.

"Dogs recognize themselves by smells, they recognize a person by a smell," said **Federico Coccia**, a veterinarian in Rome who holds a doctorate from the University of Teramo. (AP)



LAS VEGAS: Back by popular demand, two-time Rock & Roll Hall of Fame inducted singer, songwriter and performer **Sir Rod Stewart** has announced that he will return to The Colosseum at Caesars Palace in 2025 in partnership with Caesars Entertainment and Live Nation Las Vegas. "The Encore Shows" will feature his biggest hits, plus surprises from the songbook, swing, as well as deep cuts, and stunning new production elements.

Following 200 performances of his remarkable and critically acclaimed 13-year residency, "Rod Stewart: The Hits," the rock icon realized that he's having too much fun to completely end it... so he's coming back for an encore!

Fan club presale tickets will be available starting Citi is the official card of "The Encore Shows" at The Colosseum at Caesars Palace. Citi card members will have access to presale tickets beginning through the Citi Entertainment program. (AP)



NEW YORK: Twenty-two poets around the country each will be receiving \$50,000 grants for projects ranging from a poetry cookbook in **Kansas** to a billboard campaign in **Michigan**.

On Tuesday, the Academy of American Poets announced its latest round of gifts through the Poet Laureate Fellowship Program, through which it has given out \$6.55 million since 2019, along with more than \$440,000 in matching grants.

Among this year's Fellows are: Michigan laureate **Nandi Comer**, whose billboard project includes excerpts from

Michigan poets and a QR code directing readers to the Library of Michigan's website; Kansas laureate **Traci Brimhall**, who hopes to bring chefs and poets together for a state community cookbook; and **Angelika Brewer**, poet laureate of Ogden, Utah, who is working on a local archive. (AP)

BEIJING: Chinese comedy "Successor" remained on top of the daily box office



Brimhall



Stewart

chart on the Chinese mainland with a revenue of 30.5 million yuan (about 4.27 million U.S. dollars) on Wednesday, 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. (Xinhua)

Ethiopia vaccinates over 10 mln people against cholera

UN experts to assess if Africa's mpox outbreak a global emergency

GENEVA, Aug 8, (Agencies): The head of the World Health Organization said he will convene an expert group to determine if the increasing spread of the mpox virus in Africa warrants being declared a global emergency.

At a press briefing in Geneva, WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said that given the increasing spread of mpox cases beyond Congo, he has decided to ask independent experts to advise WHO "as soon as possible."

Last week, the Africa Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported that mpox, also known as mon-

kypox, has now been detected in 10 African countries this year including Congo, which has more than 96% of all cases and deaths. Compared with the same time period last year, the agency said cases are up 160% and deaths have jumped by 19%.

Officials at the Africa CDC said nearly 70% of cases in Congo are in children younger than 15, who also accounted for 85% of deaths.

Mpox was reported last week in Burundi and Rwanda for the first time while other countries including Kenya and the Central African Republic also identified cases.

WHO's Tedros said the agency has released \$1 million from its emergency fund to support the response to mpox, also known as monkeypox.

Earlier this year, scientists reported the emergence of a new form of the deadlier version of mpox, which can kill up to 10% of people, in a Congolese mining town that they feared might spread more easily among people. Mpox spreads via close contact with infected people, including via sex.

In 2022, WHO declared mpox to be a global emergency after it spread to more than 70 countries, mostly affecting gay and bisexual men. Before that

outbreak, the disease had mostly been seen in sporadic epidemics in central and West Africa when people came into contact with infected animals.

Western countries mostly shut down the spread of mpox with the help of vaccines and treatments, but very few of those have been available in Africa.

Maria Van Kerkhove, who leads WHO's outbreak department, said there were numerous concerning issues in Africa's mpox epidemic and called for a more urgent response.

"We do not want the world to sit and watch and wait," she said. "The time (to act) is now."

Also: **ADDIS ABABA:** Ethiopia has vaccinated over 10 million people as part of a national campaign to contain the spread of an ongoing cholera outbreak, the World Health Organization (WHO) has said.

In a statement issued Wednesday, the WHO said that two years after the cholera outbreak began in August 2022, the East African country has continued to battle the disease, with a recent increase in the number of cases.

A national oral cholera vaccination campaign, launched recently to protect at-risk populations covering 89 dis-

tricts across eight regions in Ethiopia, has achieved 98.4 percent coverage, vaccinating over 10.19 million people, it said.

As part of the anti-cholera efforts, multi-sectoral stakeholders have also implemented response measures to contain transmission, including house-to-house disinfection, water testing and treatment, and latrine construction.

The WHO stressed that the lack of funding is severely impeding the coordinated anti-cholera response efforts led by the Ethiopian Public Health Institute.

Heat risk isn't just about the highs

Large daily temperature swings can harm human health: experts



A child, Park Roh-yi, cools off in a public fountain in Seoul, South Korea, Monday, Aug. 5, 2024. (AP)

Experts urge caution

July breaks 13-month streak of heat records

NEW YORK, Aug 8, (AP): Earth's string of 13 straight months with a new average heat record came to an end this past July as the natural El Nino climate pattern ebbed, the European climate agency Copernicus announced Wednesday.

But July 2024's average heat just missed surpassing the July of a year ago, and scientists said the end of the record-breaking streak changes nothing about the threat posed by climate change.

"The overall context hasn't changed," Copernicus deputy director Samantha Burgess said in a statement. "Our climate continues to warm."

Human-caused climate change drives extreme weather events that are wreaking havoc around the globe, with several examples just in recent weeks. In Cape Town, South Africa, thousands were displaced by torrential rain, gale-force winds, flooding and more. A fatal landslide hit Indonesia's Sulawesi island. Beryl left a massive path of destruction as it set the record for the earliest Category 4 hurricane. And Japanese authorities said more than 120 people died in record heat in Tokyo.

Merciless

Those hot temperatures have been especially merciless. The globe for July 2024 averaged 62.4 degrees Fahrenheit (16.91 degrees Celsius), which is 1.2 degrees (0.68 Celsius) above the 30-year average for the month, according to Copernicus. Temperatures were a small fraction lower than the same period last year.

It is the second-warmest July and second-warmest of any month recorded in the agency's records, behind only July 2023. The Earth also had its two hottest days on record, on July 22 and July 23, each averaging about 62.9 degrees Fahrenheit (17.16 degrees Celsius).

During July, the world was 1.48 degrees Celsius (2.7 degrees Fahrenheit) warmer, by Copernicus' measurement, than pre-industrial times. That's close to the warming limit that nearly all the countries in the world agreed to in the 2015 Paris climate agreement: 1.5 degrees.

El Nino - which naturally warms the Pacific Ocean and changes weather across the globe - spurred the 13 months of record heat, said Copernicus senior climate scientist Julien Nicolas. That has come to a close, hence July's slight easing of temperatures. La Nina conditions - natural cooling - aren't expected until later in the year.

By Shengjie Liu and Emily Smith-Greenaway
USC Dornsife College of Letters, Arts and Sciences

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

This summer has shown how quickly high temperatures can pose serious health risks, with record-breaking heat waves claiming thousands of lives around the world.

However, it's not just high and low temperatures that matter. How many degrees the temperature swings within a day - the daily temperature variation - itself poses health risks.

Studies have found that days with larger than normal temperature swings can increase asthma flare-ups and hospitalizations for respiratory and cardiovascular diseases, leading to an overall higher death rate than normal. One study, based on data from 308 cities from 1972 to 2013, estimates that 2.5% of deaths in that time could be attributed to large daily temperature swings.

Although humans can live in a wide range of ambient temperatures, a dramatic shift in temperature can tax multiple systems in the body, including the immune, musculoskeletal and cardiovascular systems. It can be especially taxing on very young and older individuals, who are generally more vulnerable to harsh climates.

Variations

We mapped daily temperature variations at the neighborhood scale across the US to get a better picture of where these temperature swings are highest and who is most affected. The results highlight how poverty and a legacy of discriminatory practices have left racial minorities and low-income residents in neighborhoods with more dramatic temperature differences through the day.

Large night-to-day temperature swings are more common in some regions, such as the US Southwest, but they can also vary over short distances depending on the landscape and what's known as the urban heat island effect.

For example, the ocean can mitigate rapid temperature changes since water can absorb a lot of heat before it gets hot. The Greater Los Angeles area is a case in point. Santa Monica, a coastal community in Los Angeles County, has much smaller temperature swings than more inland neighborhoods in the county, like downtown Los Angeles.

Green space, like forested parks, can also reduce temperature swings. Urban trees and vegetation can keep neighborhoods cooler, reducing the temperature volatility.

Using NASA's satellite data between 2000 and 2017, we cross-checked the daily temperature variation with the US Census Bureau's American Community Survey demographic data at different census tracts to see how race and ethnicity, income, and age affected exposure to daily temperature variations across all 50 states.

We found that, of the three demographic factors, exposure to daily temperature variation is the most unequal by race and ethnicity, followed by income. Age mattered the least.

In the state with the greatest disparity, Rhode Island, Hispanic and Black populations experienced, on average, daily temperature swings of 31.2 degrees Fahrenheit (17.3 degrees Celsius) in May, while the average daily temperature variation for white populations was 25.8 F (14.3 C). That's a 5.4 F (3 C) difference between the groups.

The contrast between low-income and high-income groups in Rhode Island was 28.6 F (15.9 C) compared with 24.5 F (13.6 C), a 4.1 F (2.3 C) difference. The difference was negligible among age groups, at 1.8 F (1 C).

Among the 50 states, we saw significant differences by race and ethnicity in 46 states, by income in 39 states, and by age in 15 states. In general, daily temperature swings were highest in western states, particularly in late spring and summer. (AP)

Quick trip may turn into an 8-month stay

Astronauts may switch from Boeing to SpaceX for return to Earth: NASA

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla., Aug 8, (AP): What should have been a quick trip to the International Space Station may turn into an eight-month stay for two NASA astronauts if they have to switch from Boeing to SpaceX for a ride home.

There's lingering uncertainty over the safety of Boeing's new Starliner capsule, NASA officials said Wednesday, and the space agency is split over the risk. As a result, chances are increasing that test pilots Butch Wilmore and Suni Williams may have to watch from the space station as their Starliner is cut loose to return to Earth empty.

If that happens, NASA would leave behind two of four astronauts from the next SpaceX taxi flight in late September, with the vacant seats set aside for Wilmore and Williams on the return trip next February. The pair expected to be gone just a week or two when they launched June 5 as Starliner's first crew.

NASA is bringing in additional experts to analyze the thruster failures experienced by Starliner before it docked. At the same time, NASA is looking more closely at SpaceX as a backup.



NASA astronauts Butch Wilmore and Suni Williams are greeted by the crew of the International Space Station on Thursday, June 6, 2024. (AP)

Mission

At this point, "we could take either path," said Ken Bowersox, NASA's space operations mission chief.

During a recent meeting, "We heard from a lot of folks that had concern, and the decision was not clear," he said. A final decision is expected by mid-August.

Boeing issued a brief statement following NASA's news update, repeating its position that the capsule could still safely bring the astronauts home.

"We still believe in Starliner's capability and its flight rationale," the company said.

Boeing will need to modify the capsule's software in case Starliner ends up returning without a crew.

No serious consideration was given to launching a separate SpaceX flight just to retrieve Wilmore and Williams, according to commercial crew program manager Steve Stich.

Tests on the ground have replicated the thrust problems, pointing to seals as one culprit. But it's still not understood how or why those seals swell when overheated and then shrink back to the proper size, Stich noted. All but one of the Starliner's five failed thrusters have since been reactivated in orbit.

These thrusters are essential for allowing Starliner to back away from the space station following undocking, and for keeping the capsule in the proper position for the deorbit.

At the same time, engineers are grappling over helium leaks in Starliner's propulsion system, crucial for maneuvering. The first leak occurred before liftoff, but was deemed isolated and stable. Then more cropped up in flight.

NASA hired Boeing and SpaceX to ferry astronauts to and from the space station, after the shuttles retired in 2011. SpaceX flew its first crew in 2020. Boeing stumbled on its first test flight without a crew and then fell further behind after a repeat demo.

Officials repeated their desire for a backup taxi service on Wednesday. A situation like this one could happen again, and "that's why we want multiple vehicles," Bowersox said.

The next crew flight will be SpaceX's 10th for NASA. On Tuesday, it was delayed for a month until late September to allow for extra time to figure out how best to handle Starliner's return. Three NASA astronauts and one Russian are assigned to the flight, and managers on Wednesday declined to say who might be bumped.

Canada secures space deal

Shenzhou-18 crew conducts fire drill, blood test in space

BEIJING, Aug 8, (Agencies): The Shenzhou-18 crew on board China's orbiting space station conducted a fire alarm test recently, evaluating the performance of the fire detection sensors within the three-module craft.

The China Manned Space Agency has released video updates from space, showing the three taikonauts using specialized tools to activate temperature and smoke detectors, which in turn triggered fire alarms for lighting and instruments.

The trio also collected blood samples. In addition to routine blood examinations conducted in orbit, some samples will be preserved at low temperatures and transported back to Earth after the mission for further medical study.

They underwent a range of medical checks related to blood pressure, heart rate and lung function, according to the space agency.

Also:

OTTAWA, Ontario: The Canadian government said Friday it has completed negotiations with the United States on an agreement that would allow the use of U.S. space launch technology, expertise and data for space launches in Canada. The agreement, which is yet to be

signed, will establish the legal and technical safeguards needed, while ensuring the proper handling of sensitive technology, the government said in a news release.

"Canada's vibrant and growing commercial space launch industry relies on its ability to collaborate across borders," said Foreign Affairs Minister **Melanie Joly** in a statement. "The conclusion of negotiations between Canada and the United States means that we are one step closer to finalizing this agreement, which, when in force, will position our country to be a global leader in commercial space launch."

Maritime Launch Services, the company developing Canada's first commercial spaceport in northeastern Nova Scotia, called the agreement a major step forward for the industry.

"We look forward to welcoming our American clients to Nova Scotia in the coming months as we prepare for Canada's first orbital launch from Spaceport Nova Scotia in 2026," said president and CEO Stephen Matier.

The federal government is in the process of modernizing its regulatory framework around commercial space launch activities as the industry sees tremendous growth globally, the release said.

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New format to kick-start next season

Kuwait Handball Association introduces revamped league system

By Khaled Al-Anzi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

PARIS, Aug 8: The Secretary-General of the Kuwait Handball Association, Qaed Al-Adwani, recently unveiled the new league format for all age groups for the 2024-2025 season. This announcement, made during the draw for the 2023-2024 Handball Cup (knockout) which was postponed to the new season, was well received by the majority of club representatives present. The announcement also followed a coordination meeting between the Association's Competitions Committee and the clubs.

HANDBALL



The junior handball team preparing for the upcoming international events.



The draw in progress.

Al-Adwani outlined the schedule for the upcoming season, which will kick off with the 56th edition of the Cup Championship from September 29 to October 7, followed by the "merger" league championship running from October 9 to March 31. Matches involving the Kuwait Club and Kazma teams will be postponed due to their participation in the Asian Clubs Championship in Qatar in November, with the rescheduled matches set for March 2 to 17.

The league will pause after the sixth round of the merger in December to allow the national team to prepare for the 2025 World Cup. During this break, an

"activation" tournament will be held, concluding on January 13.

In February, the "Super" Cup will take place in conjunction with Kuwait's national holidays. On April 2, 2025, the two Premier League tournaments will begin, with the top six teams from the merger competing in three divisions until April 29. The remaining eight teams will compete in the First Division League Championship from April 3 to 31, 2025. Following this, the Federation Cup Championship for the 2024-2025 season will be held from June 3 to 14 in a knockout format.

The age group competitions, covering will begin on September 26. Each category will feature a league, a cup, and festivals held three times a month on weekends.

The age group league will adopt a new format, dividing teams into two groups for a single round of matches. The top four teams from each group will qualify for the Golden League (home and away), where they will compete in a league format. The top four teams from this stage will advance to the Super League to vie for the title, while the remaining teams will compete in the Silver League.

For the minor league, matches will be played in three rounds. The first round will feature a man-to-man system (3/3), the second round will use an advanced system (1/5), and the third round will be mixed according to the club's preference. Matches will not end in a draw; if tied, penalty kicks will determine the winner, helping young players develop their penalty-taking skills.

Qaed Al-Adwani emphasized that the Competitions Committee, in collaboration with the Federation's Board of Directors, has thoroughly studied the new competition format, especially for the age groups. The goal is to de-

velop and advance the game in a modern, scientifically informed manner.

Al-Adwani stated, "Through the new local tournament format, we aim to increase the number of matches, particularly for age groups, to enhance their level of play, gain experience, and adapt to match pressure. This will ultimately raise the players' abilities and performance, ensuring they are fully prepared when they reach the national teams."

He also noted that most clubs have responded positively to the new league format, and the success of these competitions, as well as the sport in gen-

eral, is a shared success between the Federation and the clubs, benefiting the national teams in the near future.

Meanwhile, Kuwait junior handball team is set to depart today for an external training camp in Hungary, Slovenia, and Croatia, in preparation for upcoming international events. The camp will continue until September 2.

The delegation is led by the Handball Federation's Treasurer, Khaled Talib, and includes Board Member Talal Al-Otaibi, head coach Stefan Kovacs, assistant coach Mishal Al-Adwani, and team administrator Shaker Arti.

Poland rally to beat US in fifth set & will play for Olympic gold



Norbert Huber, of Poland (99) hits the ball during a semifinal men's volleyball match against the United States at the 2024 Summer Olympics in Paris, France. (AP)

Europeans rally for victory after trailing 2-1

PARIS, Aug 8, (AP): Poland will play for a gold medal in men's volleyball, rallying from a 2-1 deficit to beat the United States in the deciding fifth set of the Paris Olympics' semifinals.

Poland came back from 20-18 in the third and needed two set points to force it to a deciding fifth, sending the largely pro-Poland crowd at South Paris Arena into a frenzy, with chants of "Polska!" and horns blaring throughout the stadium.

Led by Cuba native outside hitter Wilfredo León in the attack, Poland jumped out to an early lead in the fifth and left the Americans trying to play catch up the rest of the way.

A service ace by Max Holt pulled the Americans within 11-10. León's spike out of bounds made it 14-13 before his successful point moments later

VOLLEYBALL

sent the team onto the floor in celebration of the comeback.

León amassed a match-high 26 points to lead the 25-23, 25-27, 14-25, 25-23, 15-13 victory.

Four-time American Olympians Matt Anderson and David Smith were oh-so-close to finally playing for a gold medal. The Americans haven't been to the Olympic championship since winning it all at the 2008 Beijing Games.

Despite this defeat, getting to the medal round is sweet redemption for a U.S. men's team that failed to advance out of group stage play in Tokyo three years ago - and it's a major reason several of the older players on the team returned for one last Olympic hurrah.

The veteran U.S. squad will play for bronze against the loser of the late match Wednesday between Italy and France, while Poland plays for the title

Controversy in floor exercise final at Olympics

Romania appeals gymnast's score after 'inquiry drama'

PARIS, Aug 8, (AP): The Romanian Olympic Committee says it has appealed Sabrina Maneca-Voinea's score from the floor exercise final at the Paris Games after a last-minute inquiry on behalf of American rival Jordan Chiles prompted heartbreak and rage from the former gymnastics powerhouse.

Maneca-Voinea and Romanian teammate Ana Barbosu were left outside the medals in Monday's floor final after finishing with matching scores of 13.700. Barbosu thought she had won bronze over Maneca-Voinea via a tiebreaker - a higher execution score - and began celebrating with a Romanian flag.

Chiles was the last athlete to compete and initially was given a score that put her in fifth place, right behind Maneca-Voinea. Chiles' coaches called for an inquiry on her score, and after a review, judges boosted Chiles' total by 0.1. That was enough to leap-

frog Barbosu and Maneca-Voinea for the last spot on the podium.

Maneca-Voinea was given a 0.1 deduction for stepping out of bounds during her routine, but replays showed she narrowly kept her heel inbounds

GYMNASTICS

during the moment in question.

The Romanian Olympic Committee said its president, Mihai Covaliu, wrote a letter of protest to the International Gymnastics Federation asking it to reconsider Maneca-Voinea's score, saying an initial challenge was rejected.

The gymnastics federation did not immediately confirm whether Romania had indeed appealed and if it would hear that appeal. It's unclear when the Romanians made the initial

challenge.

Meanwhile, the Romanian Gymnastics Federation said it has submitted requests to the Court of Arbitration for Sport. It said one of them is linked to the inquiry submitted by Chiles' coaches. "Aware of the negative impact on Ana Maria Barbosu and Sabrina Maneca-Voinea, the Romanian Gymnastics Federation aims to correct the mistakes made by the judges and to restore the rights of our athletes," the federation said.

The results of the floor exercise have caused an uproar in Romania.

Romanian Prime Minister Marcel Ciolacu said Tuesday he will boycott the closing ceremony because of the "scandalous situation." Ciolacu promised Romania would honor Barbosu and Maneca-Voinea as Olympic medalists, "including in terms of the prizes."

run in Paris after the heartbreak of missing the medal rounds in Tokyo.

The 37-year-old Anderson is a four-time Olympian but second-oldest behind Smith, who is 39. Christenson, Shoji, Holt and Thomas Jaeschke are at their third Olympics.

Certain details show the Americans' experience in life off the court, too.

Anderson and Christenson walk through the venue after matches with children in their arms. Aaron Russell, who made his Olympic debut to help the U.S. win bronze at the 2016 Rio

de Janeiro Games, became a first-time father earlier this year while playing in Japan.

These two teams sure know each other well, too.

The U.S. men stopped in Gdansk to scrimmage Poland on the way to Paris and dropped the exhibition in five sets.

In May 2023, the Americans beat Poland 3-0 in the Netherlands during Volleyball Nations League play, then lost 3-1 to Poland in the gold medal match on its home floor at Gdansk almost a month later.

Athletes allowed to compete

WADA 'exposes' USADA's prolonged doping scheme

OTTAWA, Aug 8, (Xinhua): The World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) has issued a stern rebuke to the U.S. Anti-Doping Agency (USADA) following revelations by Reuters, exposing a scheme that allowed U.S. athletes who had committed doping violations to compete without sanctions for years.

WADA noted in a statement that this practice is a blatant violation of the World Anti-Doping Code and USADA's own regulations.

WADA highlighted the severity of the allegations, which suggested that USADA permitted doped athletes to compete, including in Olympic qualifiers and international events, without publishing their anti-doping rule violations or imposing any sanctions. This, WADA asserted, undermined the integrity of sporting competition and is a clear breach of both international and USADA's own anti-doping rules.

WADA denied any involvement or approval of this practice.

"Contrary to the claims made by USADA, WADA did not sign off on this practice of permitting drug cheats to compete for years on the promise that they would try to obtain incriminating evidence against others," WADA said in the statement.

The World Anti-Doping Code does have provisions for reducing suspensions for athletes who provide substantial assistance, but WADA emphasized that this process does not permit athletes to continue competing while potentially still benefiting from performance-enhancing substances.

"When WADA eventually found out about this non-compliant practice in 2021, many years after it had started, it immediately instructed USADA to desist," the statement read.

WADA's investigation has so far identified at least three cases where athletes who had committed serious anti-doping rule violations were al-

lowed to continue competing for years as undercover agents for USADA. In these instances, USADA failed to notify WADA, as required, and there were no provisions under the Code or USADA's rules that allowed such a practice.

One case involved an elite athlete who admitted to using steroids and EPO but was allowed to compete up until their retirement. This athlete's results were never disqualified, and their case was never made public. USADA argued that publishing the athlete's doping violations would endanger their security, forcing WADA to reluctantly agree to non-publication after confirming the security threat was credible.

In another case, a high-level athlete had their provisional suspension lifted by USADA without WADA's knowledge, which is an appealable decision.

"Had WADA been notified, it would never have allowed this," the statement read.

WADA's statement also raised concerns about the broader implications of these actions, questioning the fairness and integrity of competitions where clean athletes unknowingly competed against those who had been allowed to cheat. WADA criticized USADA's apparent double standard in enforcing anti-doping rules and called into question whether USADA's Board of Directors or the U.S. Congress, which funds USADA, were aware of these practices.

"How must other athletes feel knowing they were competing in good faith against those who were known by USADA to have cheated?" WADA's statement asked.

"It is ironic and hypocritical that USADA cries foul when it suspects other Anti-Doping Organizations are not following the rules to the letter while it did not announce doping cases for years and allowed cheats to carry on competing, on the off chance they might help them catch other possible violators."

Al-Arabi's new season roster expands with the 'signings' of Jaco and Khaled

By Hassan Musa

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

PARIS, Aug 8: Al-Arabi Club has announced the signing of two new professional players: Brazilian Carlos Alberto, known as "Jaco," and Egyptian Abdelrahman Khaled.

With these additions, the team now has six foreign players for the upcoming season. These players include Nigerian Anabo Ayoala, Algerians Ahmed Khaldi and Sofiane Bouchar, Moroccan Hamza Khaba, and the newly signed Jaco and Khaled.

SOCCER



Brazilian Jaco

It is anticipated that Al-Arabi will "medically withdraw" Moroccan Hamza Khaba from the team's roster, as the player has traveled to Germany for a treatment program following a muscle injury sustained during the team's camp in Turkey earlier this week, according to a club source.

Al-Arabi has confirmed that Khaba will be sidelined for 30 days, causing him to miss the first three rounds of the Zain Premier League. Additionally, reports have surfaced about Khaba's interest in leaving Al-Arabi this season in

pursuit of a new professional opportunity, particularly after receiving multiple offers this summer.

Jaco, 29, is a versatile striker with extensive professional experience, particularly in the Gulf region, having played for clubs such as Riffa and Al-Shabab in Bahrain, and Al-Taawun and Masfout in the UAE. Khaled, 28, is a midfielder who has played for several Egyptian clubs, including Haras El-Hodoud, Aswan, and El-Mokawloon El-Arab.

Felix wins athlete election to join IOC as member

Seven-time Olympic gold medalist Allyson Felix won an election Thursday to represent athletes at the IOC for the next eight years.

Felix, the retired United States sprinter great, got the most votes - 2,880 of the 6,576 ballots cast by athletes at the Paris Olympics - of four athletes elected by their peers, the International Olympic Committee said.

The other winners from a slate of 32 candidates were Germany gymnast Kim Bui, Australia canoeist Jessica Fox - who is a double gold medalist in Paris - and New Zealand tennis player Marcus Daniell.

One of the four athlete IOC members they will replace, who all were elected at the 2016 Rio de Janeiro Olympics, is Yelena Isinbayeva, the Russian holder of the world record in women's pole vault.

The IOC has a maximum of 115 members, which include members of royal families in Europe and Asia, a head of state - the Emir of Qatar - former heads of government, sports officials, former Olympic athletes and an Oscar-winning actor, Michelle Yeoh. Member duties at annual IOC meetings include approving recommended candidates as future Olympic hosts. (AP)



Vedriq Leonardo of Indonesia competes in the men's speed final during the sport climbing competition at the 2024 Summer Olympics in Le Bourget, France. (AP)

Austrians top podium in mixed-gender dinghy

Italy's reigning multihull champions repeat gold

MARSEILLE, France, Aug 8, (AP): Reigning Olympic champions Ruggero Tita and Caterina Banti of Italy cruised to gold in the mixed-gender multihull Thursday, while Lara Vadlau and Lukas Maehr of Austria won gold in the mixed-gender dinghy, a new sailing category for the Paris Olympics.

"We knew winning again would be the hardest thing of all," Tita said. "It's a success that comes over a long, long time."

Mateo Majdalani and Eugenia Bosco of Argentina won silver in the event, also known as Nacra 17, while Micah Wilkinson and Erica Dawson of New Zealand got bronze.



Ruggero Tita and Caterina Banti of Italy celebrate after the Nacra 17 mixed multihull medal race during the 2024 Summer Olympics in Marseille, France. (AP)

SAILING

Normally, the catamarans fly off the water on foils - but the same fickle, light breezes that have plagued more than a week of Olympic sailing meant they never got to foiling, rare for a medal race.

"We knew Marseille was going to throw everything at us," Wilkinson said on the sweltering beach.

The dinghy known as 470 became a mixed-gender event in these Games, the first with equal medal opportunities for men and women.

In that race, ran just before the multihull on Thursday, Keiju Okada and Miho Yoshioka of Japan won silver and Anton Dahlberg and Lovisa Karlsson of Sweden took bronze in the event, also known as 470.

Hosts eye gold

Henry reflects on France unity before showdown with Spain

PARIS, Aug 8, (AP): Win or lose the men's soccer final on Friday, Thierry Henry says the Paris Olympics have been a triumph for France.

"When we decide to be together, we are unstoppable, no matter the outcome of a match or sport. And that, I think we needed after what happened a little before the competition," Henry said Thursday.

The show of unity witnessed at the Games has been in contrast to the division created during France's recent elections when the country looked set to usher in its first far-right government since World War II. A coalition of the French left eventually took the most seats, but it came after political uncertainty when National Rally appeared poised to win.

Henry, coach of the France team, did not make specific reference to the political environment, but his pride at his country's reaction was clear ahead of his team's gold medal match against Spain at Parc des Princes.

"As I often say, when we know how to come together, to unite, we are still not bad. And then we have a beautiful country," he said.

Henry was a World Cup and European Championship winner with France as a player. Now he has the chance to add Olympic gold to his resume and perhaps put himself in the frame for top coaching jobs beyond the Games.

It was suggested to him that he could emulate Novak Djokovic, who completed a full set of major titles by winning gold in the men's tennis singles in Paris.

"I can't compare myself to a guy like that," the Arsenal great said. "It's up to them (the players) to make sure that we can go and win gold. But did I ever think I was going to be part of an Olympic team? Never."

The gold medal would be Henry's first major honor in a coaching career that is still early in its development.

He won the World Cup on home soil as a player in 1998. Gold in France would be extra special, he said, because his family will be watching

in the stadium, adding: "maybe that's what was missing."

For a man who often seemed guarded during his playing career, Henry let his emotion out after the dramatic extra time win against Egypt in the semifinals.

"I never had my kids at a stadium looking at me with my team ... because when I got my kids, I was almost at the end of my career. So having them around is something I never felt before, never experienced. And I experienced a lot," he said. "The possibility to see my kids, sharing that moment with me and everybody in France, that beats everything for me and it's the Olympic games in your country."

"So if you're not emotional with that, then you have a problem."

SOCCER

Standing in France's way is a Spain team looking to complete a memorable double for its national soccer teams after the senior squad won the European Championship last month.

Spanish soccer, in general, is enjoying a period of success, with the women's team winning the World Cup last year and having the chance to take bronze at the Olympics.

"We're a reference (point) for European and world soccer," Spain coach Santi Denia said. "What we're doing is trying to improve our playing style - football now is faster, with more transitions - without losing our essence."

France vs. Spain means there will be a European gold medalist at the Olympics for the first time in 32 years. Latin American nations have dominated the last five editions of the tournament, with Brazil and Argentina winning two each and Mexico one.

Spain - the beaten finalist in Tokyo three years ago - was the last European winner at Barcelona 1992.

France's only Olympic gold came at Los Angeles 1984 and it also took silver when the Games were held in Paris in 1900.



Supporters cheer before a semifinal handball match between Sweden and France at the 2024 Summer Olympics in Villeneuve-d'Ascq, France. (AP)

Casting aside 'concerns' about Seine, Sharon wins more gold in open water

Johnson takes silver

PARIS, Aug 8, (AP): Casting aside concerns about the safety of swimming in the Seine River, Sharon van Rouwendaal of the Netherlands used a late pass to win the women's 10-kilometer open water swimming at the Paris Olympics on Thursday.

After Moesha Johnson of Australia led most of the way, van Rouwendaal cut into the strong current of the Seine as the lead pack came around the final bridge support. Johnson stayed closer to shore, allowing the 30-year-old Dutch swimmer to claim the gold.

Van Rouwendaal reached up to slap the finishing pad in 2 hours, 3:34 seconds, while Johnson settled for silver in 2:03:39.7. The bronze went to Ginevra Taddeucci of Italy, the only other swimmer who had a shot at the end, in 2:03:42.8.

With a picturesque backdrop that no other city can provide - the Eiffel Tower looming over the course, the gold-domed Invalides a couple of blocks away, the statue-lined Pont Alexander III overlooking the starting buoy and finishing chute - van Rouwendaal added to her legacy as perhaps the greatest female open water swimmer in history.

She won gold at the 2016 Rio de Janeiro Games and a silver in Tokyo three years ago.

Despite massive, expensive efforts to clean up an iconic river where swimming has been largely banned for



Sharon Van Rouwendaal, of the Netherlands, right, leads Australia's Moesha Johnson, and Italy's Ginevra Taddeucci, rear, as they approach the finish of the marathon swimming women's 10km competition at the 2024 Summer Olympics in Paris, France. (AP)

more than a century, there were still doubts just 48 hours earlier that the event would go off as planned because of illness-causing bacteria lingering in the Seine.

Triathlon events had already been held in the river, though the schedule was upended by fluctuating bacteria levels in the water.

With that in mind, World Aquatics and Paris organizers had a backup plan in place to shift the marathon swimming races - the men's 10-k event is set for Friday - to the rowing and canoeing basin about 18 miles (30 kilometers) east of Paris.

No need.

After daily water readings prompted World Aquatics to cancel a test run Tuesday because conditions were deemed too risky, the situation had improved enough for a two-hour training session on Wednesday. That cleared the way for 24 female athletes to dive into murky water on a cool, sunny morning in Paris.

Despite the health risks, many swimmers were more concerned with a current that was estimated at 2-3 mph (3.2 to 4.8 kilometers per hour), a significant factor in a grueling sport that is often held in more docile waters such

as lakes or ponds.

Indeed, the race settled into familiar pattern largely determined by the flow of the Seine. On the outward leg, with the strong current at their back, the swimmers spread out and went as fast as they could to the far end of bridge-lined course.

Things got more interesting at the turn, as the current caused them to swim almost sideways as they navigated around two buoys.

Then, everyone lined up along the edge of the river, sticking as close to the wall as possible, almost like a pack

SWIMMING

of stock cars drafting in a single-file line at a NASCAR race. They had to be careful not to get tangled up in vines that dangled into the waterway at some points, or run into boats that were tied up along the shore.

The idea was to negate the current as much as possible, though it was still a slog for the hearty group swimmers to get back to the feeding dock with the Seine slapping in their faces.

Johnson led after the first lap, ceded it to van Rouwendaal on lap two, then went back to the front at the midway point of the six-lap event.

Johnson, van Rouwendaal and Taddeucci gradually pulled away from the rest of the pack, leaving contenders such as defending Olympics champion Ana Marcela Cunha of Brazil in their wake.

Cunha finished fourth, more than 30 seconds behind the bronze medalist.



Germany's Sarah Bruessler, Jule Marie Hake, Pauline Jagsch and Paulina Paszek compete in the women's kayak four 500-meter finals at the 2024 Summer Olympics in Vaires-sur-Marne, France. (AP)

Australia win rare Oly men's team pursuit gold

MONTIGNY-LE-BRETONNEUX, France, Aug 8, (AP): The pursuit team of Sam Welsford, Oliver Bleddyn, Conor Leahy and Kelland O'Brien from Australia beat Britain in a close final at the Olympic velodrome to win the gold medal for the first time in two decades.

The Australians finished in 3 minutes, 42.067 seconds in a final in which the two teams were separated

not only defeated Olympic champion Italy but also snatched away its

world record, finishing in 3:40.730 to ease into the finals.

Its opponent was a familiar one: Britain. The nation whose streak of three straight Olympic golds ended with a seventh-place letdown at the Tokyo Games beat the world champions from Denmark to return to the gold-medal race.

In the race for bronze, the Italian team of Simone Consonni, Filippo Ganna, Francesco Lamon and Jonathan Milan rallied over the last 1,000 meters as the Danish team of Tobias Hansen, Niklas Larsen, Carl-Fredrik Bevert and Rasmus Pedersen fell apart.

The finals of the women's pursuit was later Wednesday night, when the U.S. quartet of Kristen Faulkner, Chloe Dygert, Lily Williams and Jennifer Valente were facing off against New Zealand for gold. The Americans have two silver medals and a bronze in three previous Olympics but have never triumphed in the event.

CYCLING

by less than two-tenths for almost the entire 4,000 meters. It wasn't until the British quartet of Daniel Bigham, Ethan Hayter, Charlie Tanfield and Oliver Wood appeared to touch wheels at the end that they pulled away.

The men's pursuit podium was destined for a shakeup after Australia roared through qualifying, then



From left: Australia's Oliver Bleddyn, Sam Welsford, Conor Leahy and Kelland O'Brien pose with the gold medal of the men's team pursuit event, at the Summer Olympics in Paris, France. (AP)



Quincy Hall, left, of the United States, beats Matthew Hudson-Smith, right, of Britain, to win the men's 400-meter final at the 2024 Summer Olympics, in Saint-Denis, France. (AP)

Sports

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El Bakkali defends steeplechase title



Soufiane El Bakkali, of Morocco, celebrates winning the men's 3000-meters steeplechase final at the 2024 Summer Olympics in Saint-Denis, France. (AP)

Spaniards made to rue their profligacy

India beat Spain to take men's hockey bronze

PARIS, Aug 8, (Xinhua): India withstood heavy pressure from a profligate Spain side to win the men's hockey bronze medal match 2-1 at the Paris Olympics here on Thursday.

On a hot and sunny afternoon at the Stade Yves de Manoir, and with India's richest man Mukesh Ambani in attendance, the match started in relatively pedestrian fashion with few chances across the first 15 minutes.

However, Spain began to turn the screw in the second quarter, and took the lead through captain Marc Miralles' penalty stroke in the 18th minute.

With Miralles looking at his exuberant best in midfield, Spain twice narrowly missed the chance to double their lead in the 28th minute, when Borja Lacalle first failed to connect with Gerard Clapes' cross from the left, and then saw an effort trickle onto the India post.

Spain were made to rue their profligacy two minutes later, when an Indian penalty corner was confidently fired in off the post by Harmanpreet Singh, ensuring that the sides went in level at the game's

HOCKEY

halfway point.

The soporific nature of the first 15 minutes was swiftly forgotten as India took the lead at the beginning of the third quarter, when a penalty corner saw Harmanpreet drill a low shot into the bottom left corner of Luis Calzado's goal.

Both sides then traded penalty corners in quick succession, and Spain thought they had equalised on 40 minutes through Jose Maria Basterra, but his effort was chalked off after the ball was adjudged to have struck a Spain player's body.

India might have made it 3-1 just before the end of the quarter, but Calzado was equal to Harmanpreet's effort from a penalty corner.

Into the final quarter, and with time running out for Spain, the Redsticks removed Calzado and poured men forward in a desperate attempt to equalize, but despite winning a series of penalty corners, they could not find a way past India goalkeeper Sreejesh Parattu Raveendran and his well-marshalled defence.

In the end, Spain were left to rue their wastefulness, converting only one of their 15 efforts, in a game where no goals were scored from open play.

Celebrations were witnessed across India on Thursday evening after the country's men's hockey team won the bronze medal at the Paris Olympics, as people took to streets dancing with the national flag, distributing sweets and burst-

ing crackers.

Hockey is India's national sport. With this medal, India's medal tally rose to four, all bronze, bringing the country to the 69th on medal tally.

It was the last international hockey match for the team's goal-keeper Parattu Raveendran Sreejesh. His family members in India's southern state of Kerala were seen bursting crackers and dancing at the feat achieved in Paris.

India defeated Spain 2-1 in the bronze medal match. This was the second consecutive time when India's hockey team won bronze medal at the Olympics after the Tokyo 2020.



India's players celebrate after winning the men's bronze medal field hockey match against Spain at the Yves-du-Manoir Stadium during the 2024 Summer Olympics in Colombes, France. (AP)

Siyi takes gold on the 3-meter springboard

China stay on track for unprecedented sweep

SAINT-DENIS, France, Aug 8, (AP): China won its sixth gold medal in diving on Thursday at the Paris Olympics as it stays on track for an unprecedented sweep of all eight at the Games.

China has dominated diving for decades but never has taken all eight golds.

Xie Siyi took the gold on the 3-meter springboard and teammate Wang Zongyuan won silver, repeating their finish in the event three years ago in Tokyo. Osmar Olvera of Mexico took bronze.

Xie scored 543.60 points in six dives, Wang had 530.20 and Olvera finished with 500.40. American Carson Tyler was fourth with 429.25.

Olvera took silver earlier in the Olympics in men's 3-meter synchronized while paired with Juan Celaya. Mexico has won 17 medals in diving, its highest total in any event.

China has won the men's 3-meter springboard in seven of the last eight Olympics. The only slipup



Gold medalist China's Xie Siyi shows his medal after the men's 3m springboard diving final, at the 2024 Summer Olympics in Saint-Denis, France. (AP)

came in the 2012 London Olympics when Ilya Zakharov of Russia won. Russian divers are absent this time because of the invasion of Ukraine more than two years ago.

Including Thursday's results, China has won 53 of 70 gold medals in diving since the 1984 Los Angeles Olympics, where it won its first.

DIVING

If you count from the 2008 Beijing Olympics, it's won 33 of 38 gold medals in the discipline.

Diving wraps up with the women's 3-meter springboard on Friday and the men's 10-meter platform on Saturday.

Mexico came close to upsetting China in the men's 3-meter synchronized earlier when Olvera and Celaya took silver behind Long Daoyi and Wang Zongyuan. China won with 446.10 points to 444.03 for Mexico.

India's Phogat retires after missing weight for Oly final

PARIS, Aug 8, (AP): Vinesh Phogat, the Indian women's wrestler who qualified for the Olympic final at 50 kilograms and then was disqualified for barely missing weight, announced her retirement on social media on Thursday.

In a post translated from Hindi, Phogat said: "My courage is broken, I don't have any more strength now. Goodbye Wrestling, 2001-2024."

Phogat beat four-time world and defending Olympic champion Yui Susaki of Japan on Tuesday. She then won her quarterfinal match against Ukraine's Oksana Livach 7-5 and her semifinal against Cuba's Yusneylis Guzman Lopez 5-0 to

WRESTLING

seemingly earn a spot in Wednesday night's championship match.

United World Wrestling, the sport's governing body, disqualified Phogat on Wednesday morning. Team India said she was 100 grams - about a fifth of a pound - over the weight limit. Instead of becoming India's first woman to compete in an Olympic final, she went home empty-handed.

Guzman Lopez replaced Phogat in the final, and American Sarah Hildebrandt defeated Guzman Lopez 3-0 to win the gold medal.

United World Wrestling's decision to disqualify Phogat shined a light on the dangers of weight-cutting. Several wrestlers, including American gold medalists Hildebrandt and Amit Elor, said more weight classes need to be added so it is less difficult to make weight.

Hall surges to 400m gold

PARIS, Aug 8, (Xinhua): Morocco's Soufiane El Bakkali successfully defended his Olympic title by winning the men's 3,000m steeplechase final at the Paris Olympics.

The 28-year-old crossed the finish line in 8 minutes 6.05 seconds, 0.36 seconds ahead of American Kenneth Rooks, who took silver. Kenya's Abraham Kibiwot secured bronze in 8:06.47.

El Bakkali is the first man to win consecutive gold medals in the event since Finland's Volmari Iso-Hollo achieved the feat in 1932-1936.

"I am really glad I have won again," El Bakkali said. "This is my second Olympic gold. I am really pleased. This year I am going to celebrate with family, friends and everybody."

El Bakkali has dominated the men's 3,000m steeplechase for al-



Roje Stona, of Jamaica, competes during the men's discus throw final at the 2024 Summer Olympics in Saint-Denis, France. (AP)



Jordan's Zaid Kareem celebrates after winning in a men's 68kg Taekwondo semifinal match against Britain's Bradley Sinden during the 2024 Summer Olympics, at the Grand Palais in Paris, France. (AP)

silver. Australia's Matthew Denny clinched bronze with a best effort of 69.31.

Nina Kennedy grabbed Australia's maiden athletics gold medal at Paris 2024 by winning the women's pole vault.

The 27-year-old cleared 4.90 meters to finish ahead of defending champion Katie Moon of the United States and Canada's Alysha Newman, who took silver and bronze, respectively.

Kennedy, who shared the gold medal with Moon at last year's world championships in Budapest, is Australia's first ever Olympic pole vault champion.



Spain's Judith Forca Ariza scores a goal during a women's Water Polo semifinal match between Netherlands and Spain at the 2024 Summer Olympics in Paris, France. (AP)

Spain edge Dutch in last four

NANTERRE, France, Aug 8, (AP): Judith Forca scored five times in regulation and made her attempt in the penalty shootout, helping Spain beat the Netherlands 19-18 on Thursday in the women's water polo semifinals at the Paris Olympics.

Bea Ortiz, Elena Ruiz, Paula Crespi and Maica Garcia Godoy also converted as Spain went 5 for 5 in the tiebreaker. Goalkeeper Martina Terre stopped Brigitte Sleeking's penalty shot before Garcia Godoy closed out the win.

Spain improved to 6-0 as it goes for the country's first gold medal in women's water polo. It lost to the United States in the final in London and Tokyo.

"We don't want another silver. We're just here for the gold," Anni Espar Llaquet said. "It's been a long way. It's been a tough way to get here."

"We have one more game, we have dreamed about this for a few years, and I think it's our time to shine."

The gold-medal match is on Saturday at Paris La Defense Arena.

Simone van de Kraats had four goals for the Netherlands, which beat Spain 8-7 for the European championship in January. Vivian Sevenich, Nina ten Broek, Lieke Rogge and Kitty Lynn Joustra each scored twice.

The Netherlands got off to a shaky start and Forca scored to make it 6-1 at the end of the first quarter. But Spain looked a little stagnant on offense in the third period, and the Netherlands began to rally.

Ten Broek converted a couple of well-placed lobs, and the game was tied at 11 after three.

"I'm sad that we lost the game, but if you saw the beginning of the game, nobody believed that we could tie the game and almost win it," said Sabrina van der Sloot of the Netherlands, which will play for the bronze medal on Saturday. "So I'm really proud of my team and the way we fought back."