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An F/A-18 jet in flight.

Malaysia in talks with Kuwait to buy F/A-18s

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 14: Malaysian Defense Minister Mohammad Khaled Noordin announced that Malaysia is negotiating with Kuwait to acquire F/A-18 Legacy Hornet aircraft currently in use by the Kuwaiti Air Force, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The Malaysian government has expressed its desire to integrate these aircraft into the Malaysian Armed Forces.

Minister Khaled Noordin made the statement following the 2024 Firepower Training (LKT) at Camp Syed Sirajuddin, according to the Malaysian News Agency.

He highlighted that Malaysia had previously shown interest in these aircraft after conducting discussions with Kuwait and sending a technical team to evaluate the planes last June.

The ongoing negotiations aim to finalize Kuwait's decision on the matter.

MoE, MoH evaluate school clinics needs

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

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 14: The Ministry of Education, in coordination with the Ministry of Health, is working to evaluate approximately 1,000 school clinics. This evaluation includes identifying their needs for medical equipment and assessing the condition of existing equipment, particularly devices for measuring blood pressure and blood sugar levels, as well as First Aid kits.

According to informed sources from the ministry, determining the required materials will begin immediately after the nursing staff starts their work on September 7. They will prepare a list of medical supplies that need to be restocked or supplied, including bandages, disinfectants, gloves, and examination tools.

Equipping school clinics is one of the important matters that the ministry is following up on as part of the preparations for the new school year to ensure a safe and healthy environment for students and teachers.

It stressed the need to provide First Aid items such as gauze, bandages, wound disinfectants, and medications that students may need such as painkillers and antihistamines.

The sources called on the Ministry of Education to coordinate with the School Health Department to ensure the medical personnel are aware of the latest health protocols and guidelines and are trained on how to deal with emergencies and infectious diseases that may occur in schools.

They stressed the importance of regularly updating students' electronic health files in school clinics, particularly given the electronic link between health centers, schools, and the Ministry of Education. This link allows school nurses to access students' health information, including any chronic conditions and recommended treatments, as well as to identify cases where sports participation is restricted without guardian approval.

NewsWatch

KUWAIT CITY: Kuwait Petroleum Corporation's (KPC) **Sheikh Nawaf Saud Al-Nasser Al-Sabah** was named by Forbes on Wednesday as the country's top chief executive, according to the magazine's annual list of the **Middle East and North Africa** region's most influential CEOs.

The KPC CEO was also named the sixth top chief executive in the Middle East and North Africa region, the state-owned oil firm said on social media platform X, citing the Forbes list. (KUNA)

BAGHDAD: The extremist Islamic State (IS) militant group carried out a drone attack on a military base of a local tribal force affiliated with the Iraqi Hashd Shaabi paramilitary forces in Iraq's western province of Anbar, security sources said Wednesday.

The attack occurred on Tuesday night when the drone bombed the base which houses the Sunni tribal fighters in a desert area, a security source in Anbar told Xinhua on condition of anonymity.

Meanwhile, **Sheikh Mandol al-Jaghifi**, leader of the tribal force, said in a statement that IS militants fired a drone equipped with hand grenades on his fighters' base in the Anbar desert without causing casualties. (Xinhua)

ANKARA: Turkish police detained 520 suspects for manufacturing and trafficking drugs during extensive operations across the country, Interior Minister **Ali Yerlikaya** said on Wednesday.

The police seized more than 3.7 tonnes of narcotics and 861,000 drug pills in those raids, Yerlikaya said on social media X, without specifying the time of the action.

The operations, dubbed "Narkocelik-32," were conducted across 59 provinces, including **Istanbul**, **Ankara** and **Izmir**, and involved 3,250 personnel, he added. (Xinhua)

Transparency crucial to improve business ties

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

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 14: Official spokesperson of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry **Abdullah Al-Harzi** has affirmed that the mandatory disclosure of the actual beneficiary of economic and financial transactions as one of the positive decisions that contribute to developing the economy, since it will improve the business environment and raise

Kuwait reiterates commitment to UN nuclear safety code of conduct

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 14, (KUNA): Kuwait has enhanced its "commitment" to the code of conduct established by the UN nuclear agency on the safety and security of radioactive sources, a health official said on Tuesday.

The measure is a testament to Kuwait's "firm belief" in nuclear safety on both regional and international levels, said health ministry radiation protection department chief **Ihham Al-Fares**, underlining the solid rapport between relevant Kuwaiti bodies and the International Atomic Energy

Agency (IAEA).

As part of Kuwait's commitment to the UN Code of Conduct on the Security and Safety of Radioactive Sources, the country has formed a rigid policy and effective strategy to manage these sources, which includes ratcheting up inspection efforts to ensure the "validity and safety" of radioactive tools, added the official.

On the intricacies of the IAEA code of conduct, Kuwait's UN nuclear agency liaison officer **Nader Al-Awadhi** said

that it was tantamount to an instrument that provides an appropriate framework for radiation safety and security, while it also has the backing more than 150 countries from around the world.

National commitment to this nuclear code of conduct demonstrates the "broad safety" of radioactive material management in Kuwait, he said, emphasizing Kuwait's determination to further cooperate with the IAEA as part of efforts to ensure global nuclear safety.

Kuwait slams Al-Aqsa incursion; efforts to prevent war intensify

US nods \$20b in weapons sales to Israel



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

PM Diwan photo

Penalties toughen for attacking staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 14, (KUNA): The Cabinet expressed its sincere condolences to His Highness the Amir **Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah**, His Highness the Crown Prince **Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah** and the Al-Sabah family on the passing away of His Highness the Commander of Kuwait National Guard **Sheikh Salem Al-Ali Al-Salem Al-Sabah**.

Sheikh Salem offered, during his lifetime, countless contributions and services to the homeland and the citizens, the Cabinet recalled during its weekly session, held at Bayan Palace on Tuesday under the chairmanship of His Highness the Prime Minister **Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah**.

The meeting also heard a presentation by Minister of Public Works and Minister of State for Municipal Affairs **Dr. Noura Mohammad Al-Meshaan** on the project to develop **Al-Mubarkiya** marketplace, according to statements by Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs **Shereeda Abdullah Al-Mousherji**. The project aims to build a hotel with a classical architecture, a shopping complex, a parking lot and numerous facilities at the site.

Minister of Social Affairs, Labor, Family and Childhood Affairs and Minister of State for Youth Affairs **Dr. Amthal Hadi Al-huwailah** briefed the meeting on the activities of the committee on national cooperative projects, including the cooperatives' center for addiction treatment, the cooperatives' center for pediatric hereditary disease treatment, and the social care complex.

The Cabinet session approved the minutes of the higher committee on verification of Kuwaiti citizenship, including citizenship withdrawal cases under Act 15 (1959) and the subsequent amendments.

Based on the recommendations of the ministerial committee on legal affairs, the Cabinet decided to:

Approve draft bills to amend Act 16 (1960), Act 31 (1970) and the Penal Code 16 (1960) to toughen the penalties for aggression on civil servants and prohibit dropping of complaints or barring reconciliation with aggressor;

Continued on Page 5

Gov't sector must start enforcing 3rd 'biometric' attendance: CSC

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

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 14: The Civil Service Commission (CSC) on Tuesday obligated all government agencies to implement its decision on the mandatory third biometric attendance registration within the official working hours starting Sunday.

The CSC took this step after the push and pull on the implementation of the decision since its issuance on Aug 4; as some entities have adopted the new attendance mechanism, while others have yet to implement it.

A circular issued by CSC Chairman **Dr. Issam Al-Rubaian** stated: "All government agencies must start implementing the new attendance system on Sunday."

Continued on Page 5

MoH tells staff to stick to official work hours

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 14: The Ministry of Health (MoH) has reiterated its call for employees and staff to strictly adhere to official working hours, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

This reminder was issued in an administrative circular by the acting Undersecretary of the Ministry, emphasizing the importance of following the Civil Service Council's rules and provisions regarding official work hours to maintain efficient workflow.

According to the circular, official working hours are set from 7:00 am to 2:00 pm for male employees and from 7:00 am to 1:45 pm for female employees.

The period of delay is calculated after a grace period of thirty minutes upon arrival. Medical, technical, and administrative staff are urged to comply with these working hours, with outpatient clinics in hospitals and specialized medical centers expected to start work at 7:30 am.

In addition, due to a technical issue with the automated system at Al-Oyoun Health Center, the Ministry announced the temporary transfer of residents from the Al-Oyoun area to Al-Qasr Health Center for laboratory tests.

Residents of the Al-Naseem and Al-Waha areas have also been redirected to Al-Jahra Health Center (medical complex) for their healthcare needs.

The Ministry of Health emphasized that adherence to these working hours is crucial for ensuring the provision of the best possible health services to the public.



Students visit the headquarters of the KRCS to learn about the mechanism of the society's work.

KUNA photo

KUNA interns visit KRCS

As part of its internship program for college students, KUNA took its interns on a field training trip to Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS), to get acquainted with the workflow of the society. The interns interviewed KRCS officials on the local, regional

and international roles of the society, as well as the mechanisms it adopts in response to crises.

They also conversed about KRCS' future plans and cooperation with local and international entities. (KUNA)

Continued on Page 5

Biometrics mandatory for gov't transactions

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 14: The Ministry of Interior has announced that biometric fingerprints will be mandatory for completing government transactions after the specified deadlines, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

According to Major **Shaheen Al-Gharib**, the Ministry's security media officer, all government transactions for citizens and residents who have not completed biometric fingerprinting will be halted. The deadlines for fingerprinting are set for September 30 for citizens and December 31 for residents.

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Independence Day Of INDIA An ARAB TIMES Special Supplement With this issue don't miss your copy

Prayer Timings

Fajr 03:50 Asr 15:28
 Sunrise .. 05:15 Maghrib .. 18:30
 Zohr 11:53 Isha 19:53

Local

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

Weather

Expected weather for next 24 hrs:

By Day: Very hot and relatively humid over coastal areas with light to moderate northwesterly wind to light variable wind, with speeds of 10-35 km/h.

By Night: Hot to rather hot and

relatively humid over coastal areas with light variable wind to light to moderate northwesterly wind, with speeds of 08-28 km/h.

Station	Max Exp	Min Rec
Kuwait City	47	36

Kuwait Airport	48	34
Abdaly	48	31
Jahra	49	37
Salmiyah	41	35
Jal Aliyah	48	32
Nuwaisib	44	32
Wafra	47	28

Condolences

HH Amir receives condolences from Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 14, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received on Tuesday evening a phone call from Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman bin Abdulaziz over the demise of His Highness Sheikh Salem Al-Ali Al-Salem Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah, President of Kuwait National Guard.

During the call, Prince Mohammad conveyed condolences of King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud to His Highness the Amir and the Al-Sabah Family over the death of His Highness Sheikh Salem Al-Ali Al-Sabah, praying to Allah the Almighty to bestow mercy on his soul and bring solace to the ruling family.

His Highness the Amir expressed great appreciation to King Salman for his sincere sentiments and condolences, wishing him good health.

Meanwhile, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Hamad Al-Sabah received on Tuesday evening a phone call from Saudi Arabia Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman bin Abdulaziz, regarding the demise of His Highness Sheikh Salem Al-Ali.

During the call, Prince Mohammad conveyed condolences, heartfelt sentiments and sorrow over the loss, praying to Allah the Almighty to bestow mercy on his soul and bring solace to the ruling family.

Bahraini King

His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah and Al-Sabah family received on Tuesday representative of both Bahraini King Hamad bin Essa Al-Khalifa and Crown Prince and Prime

Minister Salman bin Hamad Al-Khalifa, the King's Special Representative Mohammad bin Mubarak Al-Khalifa and his accompanying delegation.

The Bahraini delegation came to offer condolences on demise of chief of the Kuwait National Guard Sheikh Salem Al-Ali Al-Sabah.

Uzbekistan's FM

His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled and Al-Sabah family received on Tuesday Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Uzbekistan Bakhtiyar Saidov and the accompanying delegation.

The Uzbek guests offered condolences on the demise of His Highness Sheikh Salem Al-Ali Al-Sabah.

Oman Sultan

His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, and the Al-Sabah family received Wednesday representative of the Sultan of Oman Haitham bin Tareq, Harb bin Thuwaini Al-Said and his accompanying delegation.

The Omani official offered his condolences on the late Chief of Kuwait National Guard (KNG) Sheikh Salem Al-Ali Al-Salem Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah.

UAE President

His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah, and the Al-Sabah family received Wednesday afternoon the envoy of the President of the United Arab Emirates Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, UAE Minister of Tolerance Sheikh Nahyan Mubarak Al Nahyan and his accompanying delegation.

The Emirati official offered the UAE condolences on the late Chief of the Kuwait National Guard (KNG) Sheikh Salem Al-Ali Al-Salem Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah.



Bin Salman

HH Crown Prince and Prime Minister send greetings

HH Amir congratulates Pakistan on National Day

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 14, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent on Wednesday a congratulatory cable to the President of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Asif Ali Zardari, on his country's Independence Day.

In the cable, His Highness the Amir wished

President Zardari good health and wellbeing, and for the friendly country and people more progress and prosperity.

Meanwhile, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah sent a congratulatory cable to President, Asif Ali Zardari, on his country's Independence Day.

In the cable, His Highness the Crown Prince wished President Zardari good health and wellbeing.

Also, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah sent a congratulatory cable to President Asif Ali Zardari, on his country's Independence Day.

Saidov invites Kuwaiti investors to explore opportunities in Uzbekistan

KCCI hosts Kuwaiti-Uzbek Investment and Trade Forum

By Marwa Al-Bahravi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 14: Minister of Foreign Affairs of Uzbekistan Bakhtiyar Saidov has confirmed the strong and solid bilateral relations between Kuwait and his country, highlighting the remarkable development of such relations over the past few years.

Saidov made the statement at the Kuwaiti-Uzbek Investment and Trade Forum held in Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI) on Wednesday; with the attendance of 60 businesspersons and 15 officials representing the Uzbek ministries of Industry, Trade, Finance and Health, in addition to members of the Uzbek Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

He affirmed his country has a lot of great investment opportunities in all fields; indicating his accompanying delegation represents companies in various industries like food, agricultural, light, medical supplies, sweets, poultry and farming. He is hoping that Kuwaiti investors will know the opportunities available to them in Uzbekistan, including the opportunities in the fields of infrastructure and energy.

Meanwhile, head of the Kuwaiti delegation Assistant Director General of KCCI Firas Al-Awda pointed out that the visit of the Uzbek delegation after the Kuwaiti-Uzbek Investment and Trade Forum in May reflects Uzbekistan's commitment to deepen relations with Kuwaiti companies and investors.

He said the potential between the two countries has been growing steadily over the past 20 years, thanks to their shared visions and commitments. He also confirmed Kuwait's efforts to deepen relations between the business communities in the two countries, uncover opportunities and strive to realize similar economic ambitions.

He added that Uzbekistan's development strategy for the years 2022 to 2026 aims to create a diversified and market-driven economy; while the parallel ambitions create unique opportunities for cooperation, with strong potential in different sectors such as renewable energy, food security and education.

He also stated that the expertise of Kuwaiti investors in banking, telecommunications, primary care and petrochemicals combined with Uzbekistan's abundant resources provide a promising landscape for shared prosperity in the future. He emphasized the importance of cooperation between the two countries in building resilient and diversified economies.

Orientation program for new KU students

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

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 14: The Faculty of Student Affairs at Kuwait University held an orientation program for new students titled "Start Your Journey with Awareness and Success" for the 2024/2025 academic year at Sabah Al-Salem University City in the presence of a number of university leaders.

According to the Academic Guidance Department, a program has been prepared to help new students build their academic paths based on their abilities and interests. This program includes a review of the student guide provided by the Deanship of Admission and Registration, as well as the guidance and counseling offices in the colleges or on the university's website. The student guide covers key university regulations, graduation requirements, and available specializations.



A photo from the Kuwaiti-Uzbek Investment and Trade Forum held at the KCCI.

KUNA photo

... A pillar of Kuwait's National Guard legacy

Sheikh Salem's primary concerns was to protect homeland, citizens

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 14: The late Kuwaiti leader, His Highness Sheikh Salem Al-Ali Al-Sabah, who recently passed away, is remembered as a towering figure in Kuwait's history, exemplifying noble morals and an unwavering dedication to the nation, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

As the Chief of the National Guard, Sheikh Salem Al-Ali played a pivotal role in shaping and strengthening this crucial military institution.

From the time he established the National Guard in 1967, Sheikh Salem Al-Ali's leadership transformed it into an independent and highly respected body, separate from the armed forces and public security agencies. His vision and commitment led to the development of a disciplined, well-ordered, and technologically advanced military institution.

He meticulously laid down the organizational structure, recruited specialized military cadres, and ensured that the National Guard was equipped with the latest advancements in military, technical, and administrative fields.

Sheikh Salem Al-Ali's efforts in building the National Guard from the ground up made it an impregnable wall in Kuwait's defense system, working in close cooperation with the army and police.

Leadership

His leadership, alongside the contributions of his brother, the late Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad, and His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad, brought about significant advancements in the National Guard, enhancing its capabilities and earning it admiration and respect.

His legacy as a leader who dedicated his life to the service of Kuwait and its people will remain etched in the memory of the na-



Late Sheikh Salem Al-Ali

tion.

Sheikh Salem Al-Ali's contributions to Kuwait's independence, security, and development are a testament to his enduring commitment to the renaissance of the nation and the well-being of its citizens.

His Highness Sheikh Salem Al-Ali Al-Sabah, may God bless his soul, was deeply committed to the well-being of the National Guard's employees and their families, recognizing that their improved performance and high-level combat capabilities were essential for the protection of the homeland.

His leadership and the efforts of loyal members have ensured that the National Guard stands today as a formidable and essential force in defending Kuwait.

The foundation that Sheikh Salem Al-Ali laid in establishing the National Guard bore significant fruit, particularly during the tragic Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in 1990.

The National Guard played a crucial role in defending the country, with its members showing remarkable courage and resilience.

In the early days of the invasion, National Guard soldiers stood steadfast against the occupying forces, inflicting heavy losses and demonstrating their unwavering commitment to the nation's defense.

The bravery displayed during this time led to the National Guard camp being renamed the "Stead-

fastness Camp" after liberation, commemorating the valor and sacrifice of its defenders.

One of Sheikh Salem Al-Ali's primary concerns was the protection of the homeland and its citizens. He consistently emphasized this duty to the officers and soldiers under his command, encouraging them to dedicate themselves to the nation's defense with faith, hard work, and sincere training.

He believed that these values would prepare them to always be worthy of the trust placed in them by their beloved country.

Instrumental

Sheikh Salem Al-Ali was also instrumental in developing the National Guard by creating new units and ensuring that its leaders and soldiers were equipped with the latest military technology and security advancements. His vision was to keep the National Guard on the cutting edge, always ready to defend Kuwait.

Known for his noble character, Sheikh Salem Al-Ali often reminded others that it is not wealth but good morals that truly satisfy people.

He held a deep respect for the sacrifices made by martyrs, ensuring that their memory and the value of their ultimate sacrifice remained ingrained in the consciousness of the Kuwaiti people, generation after generation.

His dedication to honoring the martyrs ensured that no martyr was forgotten, and their families were always remembered and cared for, reflecting the profound love for the homeland that demands the highest sacrifices.

Sheikh Salem Al-Ali's legacy is one of profound service, unwavering commitment to Kuwait's defense, and a deep moral compass that guided his leadership and inspired those who served under him.

MoH to receive Addiction Treatment Project

MoH 'opens' night emergency pediatric clinic at Adan Specialized Dental Center

By Marwa Al-Bahravi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 14: Assistant Undersecretary for Dental Affairs at Ministry of Health Dr. Ahmad Asad opened a night emergency pediatric clinic at Adan Specialized Dental Center, as part of the government's 100-day plan.

In a press statement issued Monday, Dr. Asad said the clinic aims to provide specialized treatment services to children up to the age of 15 residing in Ahmadi Governorate from 10:00 pm to 6:00 am.

He stressed that this achievement will contribute to enhancing the level of health services provided to children in the country, indicating that the clinic was launched in response to the needs of society, and based on a comprehensive strategy aimed at expanding the scope of health services to include all governorates of Kuwait.

Dr. Asad revealed that with the opening of the Night Emergency Pediatric Clinic in Ahmadi Governorate, the ministry has completed the opening of such clinics in four governorates so far, namely Jahra, Mubarak Al-Kabeer, Farwaniya and Ahmadi governorates, as part of the ministry's plan to provide comprehensive health coverage for this age group.

He affirmed that the Ministry of Health will continue to implement the provisions of the 100-day plan, expressing optimism

about achieving further successes.

Meanwhile, Assistant Undersecretary for Financial and Administrative Affairs at the Ministry of Social and Family Affairs and Director of the Cooperative Center for Addiction Treatment Project Dr. Bader Al-Adwani announced that the Addiction Treatment Project will be handed over to the Ministry of Health within a maximum of 15 days, adding that this transfer will occur once the preparation and setup are completed, using a donation from the National Cooperative Projects Committee.

In an exclusive interview with Kuwait TV, Dr. Al-Adwani said the project, which costs about KD 3.5 million, is being implemented based on directives from the Minister of Social Affairs, Family and Child Affairs Dr. Amthal Al-Huwailah, and in implementation of the directives issued by the political leadership to contribute to combating the scourge of drug addiction that has become a threat to many young men and women.

He explained that the building under construction consists of a ground floor and four floors on an area of 5,000 square meters with a capacity of 208 beds, in addition to a parking lot with a capacity of up to 72 cars. The ground floor includes clinics, a swimming pool, a gymnasium, and a theater, in addition to private rooms for the medical staff. The four floors include guest rooms, a gymnasium, and dining rooms on each floor.

Dr. Al-Adwani stressed that this project is complementary to and aligns with previous projects of the Ministry of Health aimed at increasing accommodation capacity and bolstering efforts in the fight against addiction.

Doha hosts GCC anti-corruption meet

Kuwait watchdog backs tech use to push 'anti-corruption' efforts

DOHA, Aug 14, (KUNA): Haya Al-Sayer, Director of the Research and Studies Department at the General Authority for Combating Corruption (Nazaha), emphasized the significance of participating in the event titled "Using Technology in the Field of Promoting Integrity and Combating Corruption." This event is part of the annual gathering of anti-corruption agencies from Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries, held in Qatar.

In a statement to Kuwait News Agency (KUNA), Al-Sayer highlighted that the authority's participation underscores its commitment to sharing expertise and experiences among member states. This effort aligns with the GCC's guiding principles for collaboration in preventing and addressing transnational corruption, as established by the Ministerial Committee on Combating Corruption in 2015.

During the event, Al-Sayer presented a visual report titled "Employing Technology in the Field of Promoting Integrity and Combat-

ing Corruption." This presentation showcased Kuwait's approach to leveraging technology to enhance integrity, including the implementation of digital tools to support governmental digital transformation. The report focused on how technology aids in reporting corruption, ensuring transparency in financial operations, and tracking government transactions to evaluate performance.

Abdul Wahab Al-Kuwari, Head of the Communications Department at the Qatari Administrative Control and Transparency Authority, addressed the opening session. He emphasized the growing importance of technology in modern times, noting its critical role in promoting ethical values and practices. Al-Kuwari highlighted that technology is no longer merely a tool for development but a key driver of integrity, transparency, and anti-corruption efforts. It enhances access to official information, improves oversight, and fosters a work environment grounded in legal and ethical standards.

diwaniya ديوانية

A DIGEST OF PUBLIC OPINION

'Beijing between the US' presidential candidates'

"THE urgent need to weaken China, the most serious strategic threat to American hegemony since the fall of the Soviet Union, is one of the very few points of agreement or consensus between the Republican and Democratic parties. Indeed, adopting more aggressive policies toward China has become one of the most important weapons of the American presidential candidates to win the presidential race," columnist **Dr. Noura Saleh Al-Majim**, wrote for **Al-Qabas** daily.

"Since the Obama administration began escalating tensions with China, subsequent US administrations have not only maintained this confrontational approach but have also intensified it, particularly under President Biden.



Dr. Al-Majim

"However, despite bipartisan agreement on the necessity of confronting China, the Democratic Party has developed a distinct strategy. This strategy focuses on avoiding direct, zero-sum conflicts, instead emphasizing the mobilization of international alliances and deep economic and security penetration into China's spheres of influence, particularly in Southeast Asia.

"The Democrats describe their stance towards China as 'strategic competition' rather than 'strategic conflict', which implies direct confrontation, the absence of any potential for cooperation on specific issues, and a perpetual military threat.

"While former president Trump currently has strong prospects for winning the presidency again, Vice President Kamala Harris could still surprise many, given the growing support and endorsements she receives daily.

"Trump's approach to China has been characterized by his unconventional foreign policy, marked by a unilateral stance. He initiated an economic confrontation through a broad trade war, followed by a technological war, seemingly believing that weakening China economically was the key to reducing its global influence.

"This strategy resonated with the Biden administration, which publicly praised it and continued its implementation, particularly in the technological sector. The Biden administration has imposed stringent restrictions on the export of advanced technology components to China, and in April, signed legislation to ban the TikTok app.

"However, Trump's approach has seen a relative neglect of alliance policies, especially in the Pacific. His administration was less aggressive on two critical issues in the conflict with China: Taiwan and the South China Sea.

"It is expected that if Trump were to return to office, he would continue this approach. Ironically, despite his tough rhetoric on China, Beijing might prefer Trump's return, as his lack of focus on Taiwan and the South China Sea, coupled with a confrontational stance toward US allies, could weaken the strong security alliances the Biden administration has cultivated in the Pacific, such as the Quad and AUKUS.

"Trump's return could provide China with a strategic advantage, as his strained relationships with Washington's closest allies might create opportunities for China to expand its influence.

"Vice President Harris, on the other hand, has made few public comments on the China conflict, though this issue is expected to be a focal point in her upcoming debate with Trump. However, it is highly likely that Harris would continue Biden's approach to China.

"Her previous statements, including those made during her 2022 visit to Asia, indicate a commitment to Washington's military support for Taiwan and opposition to China's expansionist policies in the South China Sea. Harris has also emphasized the importance of constructive cooperation with China and maintaining open lines of communication.

"In conclusion, confronting China has become a cornerstone of U.S. strategic policy. The main difference between the two major parties, or between different presidents, lies in the methods and tactics used. While Trump's direct confrontational approach may appear more dangerous to China, the Democrats' strategy, particularly their emphasis on building strategic alliances, is potentially more effective -- and more threatening to China -- in the long term."

Also:

"When His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled, may God protect and preserve him, was Prime Minister, his government produced for us the "Sahel" application, which greatly reduced the citizen's need to visit many government agencies," columnist **Mazid Mubarak Al-Mausherji**, wrote for **Al-Anba** daily.

"Under the leadership of His Highness Sheikh Ahmed Al-Abdullah, Kuwait's government has embraced digital transformation with remarkable success.

"This initiative, known as the "Government of Digital Transformation,"

has been particularly evident in the offices of His Highness the Amir and His Highness the Crown Prince, where all transactions within the Amiri Diwan have been seamlessly integrated into a smart electronic system.

"The wave of digital transformation has extended across various state ministries, with notable achievements in the Ministry of Information. Upon entering the ministry's portal, users are guided by a digital barcode system that efficiently manages their time based on their specific needs.

"The most significant advancement within the ministry is the launch of the 51 platform, a long-awaited innovation that many had thought would be challenging to realize due to its association with a major government ministry.

"However, this ambitious project has been brought to fruition, largely thanks to the diligent efforts of His Excellency the Honorable Minister of Information, Abdul Rahman Al-Mutairi. His leadership has revitalized Kuwaiti media, restoring its prominence while reigniting the cultural, artistic, and literary sectors.

"Similar strides are evident in the Ministry of Commerce, where the implementation of digital solutions has drastically reduced the need for citizens to visit service centers. Transactions can now be easily completed through the "Sahel" platform and the ministry's website.

"The Ministry of Interior is also gradually transitioning its processes to digital, further streamlining services for the public.

"As more ministries and government agencies adopt digital practices, the lengthy and cumbersome document processing cycles are becoming a thing of the past.

"The push towards digital transformation is eliminating the need for manual signatures and the physical movement of paperwork through multiple departments.

"Many officials within these entities are working tirelessly to accelerate the pace of digital transformation. With the continued guidance and support of His Highness the distinguished Prime Minister, there is confidence that these efforts will meet the nation's ambitions for a more efficient and modern government.

"As Kuwait progresses on this path, the nation's future looks bright, with the promise of continued growth and prosperity for its people. May God protect Kuwait and guide it towards enduring success."

"After the results of the recent elections were announced, disbelief and frustration swept through the Kuwaiti public regarding the state of democracy and its outcomes. Many expressed dissatisfaction with the political scene. However, the Kuwaiti street erupted in joy at the decree to dissolve the National Assembly, a decision that was widely welcomed. Even ordinary citizens with no direct involvement in politics applauded the dissolution," columnist **Talal Al-Saeed** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

"The dissolution naturally led to a shift in popular support for the government, which the Kuwaiti people had hoped would deliver significant improvements after enduring difficult years marked by conflicts between the two authorities that impacted them.

"With the formation of the new government and the appointment of the new prime minister, there were high expectations for positive changes. People anticipated notable achievements, particularly in enhancing the standard of living for ordinary citizens.

"The government needs to be aware that it is beginning to lose popular support. If it is aware of this, it is a serious issue; if it is not, the situation is even worse.

"While there may be major upcoming projects that benefit both the country and its citizens, the government seems unable to effectively communicate its initiatives or connect with the public. It struggles to engage with the Kuwaiti people in a meaningful way.

"For instance, the new traffic law focuses solely on increasing penalties without offering any tangible benefits to citizens, such as extending the duration of private car ownership for three years.

"The same applies to the media. The ministry's direction now seems at odds with citizens' expectations, to the point where they no longer find what they are looking for on official television channels.

"Instead of supporting freedoms, the media has become known for filing lawsuits and threatening individuals, often inappropriately. Rather than addressing public discontent and channeling it into constructive feedback for the government, the media has exacerbated resentment. This situation mirrors the recent controversies that have turned public opinion against the government in unprecedented ways, highlighting a significant failure.

"Imam Al-Bukhari narrated in his 'Sahih' that Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) said, "When trust is lost, then await the Hour." When asked, "How will trust be lost, O Messenger of God?" he replied, "When matters are entrusted to those who are not worthy of them, then await the Hour."

— **Compiled by PFX Fernandes**



KUNA photo

Kuwait's first aid plane as part of its humanitarian air bridge to Sudan.

KRCS' first relief plane departs for Sudan

The Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) announced on Wednesday the departure of the first aid plane as part of Kuwait's humanitarian air bridge.

The aircraft, equipped by the KRCS, is loaded with 10 tons of aid materials, including protective equipment and tents to support and provide relief to the people who were displaced by the ongoing conflicts, heavy rain, and floods in Sudan.

KRCS Deputy Chairman, Anwar Al-Hasawi told KUNA that this flight marks a continuation of Kuwait's relief efforts aimed at alleviating the suffering of

Sudanese people.

He added the preparations and dispatch of this aid were part of the "Kuwait by Your Side" campaign, in line with the directives of His Highness Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, which underscores Kuwait's commitment to humanitarian work.

Al-Hasawi emphasized that Sudan is currently experiencing heavy rains that have flooded entire villages and caused the collapse of dozens of houses, stressing the importance of supporting the Sudanese people during those challenging times. (KUNA)

Drug bust leads to shootout in Jahra stables, 2 suspects held

Accountant swindles KD1,790; Egyptian faces deportation

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 14: In a dramatic operation, officers from the General Department of Narcotics Control arrested two suspected drug traffickers following a shootout at the Jahra stables. Two additional suspects managed to flee and are currently being pursued by authorities, reports Al-Anba daily.

The incident began when a force from the Anti-Narcotics Department raided a stable on suspicion of drug activity. The situation quickly escalated into an exchange of heavy gunfire between the suspects and the anti-narcotics team. In response to the incoming fire, the officers were compelled to return fire to neutralize the threat.

Notably, the father of one of the detained suspects reported to the Ministry of Interior Operations that his son had been kidnapped by individuals in two luxury vehicles, including a four-wheel drive. Upon investigation, it was revealed that the son was actually in custody at the General Department for Combating Narcotics, not abducted as initially feared.

The Ministry of Interior had also received multiple reports from visitors to the Jahra stables who heard the intense gunfire. The situation was soon confirmed to be the result of the anti-narcotics raid. Although two suspects were captured, two others escaped, and efforts are underway to apprehend them.

A security source emphasized that the anti-narcotics officers were left with no choice but to return fire when they came under attack, and that a manhunt is ongoing to locate the fugitives.

Expat 'embezzles' KD 1,790: A Kuwaiti citizen born in 1988 has filed a complaint with the Jahra Police Station, accusing an expatriate working as an accountant in his restaurant chain of embezzling 1,790 dinars, reports Al-Anba daily.

The case, filed under the title 'Breach of Trust', details how the complainant discovered the accountant had embezzled the money last Tuesday. The citizen added, he attempted to contact the suspect several times, but to no avail.

The Jahra Police Station investigator has ordered the suspect's name be placed on the travel ban and a search and arrest warrant has been issued against him. According to reports, the man has changed his place of residence 'to avoid arrest'.

Two illegals arrested for trading in liquor: The Jahra security patrol officers detained two individuals residing illegally in the country on suspicion of trafficking in liquor.

The incident began when the Ministry of Interior's operations center received a report of a suspicious vehicle seen in the Sulabiya area.

A security patrol was dispatched to investigate, and upon arrival, the officers found the two occupants of the vehicle in an abnormal condition.

A search of the vehicle revealed 30 bottles of locally produced alcohol. The individuals and the contraband have been handed over to the Directorate-General for Drugs Control.

'True fame lies in good morals': The Criminal Court has warned users of the X platform against being influenced by the allure of fame and the pursuit of increasing followers.

The court stressed that true fame should be rooted in good morals and exceptional knowledge. It should be about conveying truth and presenting positive contributions to society, rather than posting phrases or content that could lead to criminal liability or involvement in unlawful activities.

This statement was made in a ruling issued by the Fifth Criminal Circuit, presided over by Dr. Khaled Mohammed Al-Omara, to acquit a Twitter user of charges related to challenging the rights of His Highness the Amir and his authorities, spreading false information about the internal situation of the country, and misusing their phone.

The ruling stated, "Undoubtedly, a person's respect for themselves and, more importantly, for others, makes them an example to be emulated. A true role model is someone who masters the art of choosing the best meanings and words and shares what is beneficial to others. The goal should not be to seek false or superficial fame, which may be based merely on obtaining a large number of followers or enhancing the popularity of an account."

Deportation for collecting donations: The Ministry of Interior has arrested an Egyptian after a video surfaced on the social media showing him collecting donations in cash without obtaining the necessary authorization from the relevant authorities, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The suspect was also found to be in violation of residency and labor laws. Legal procedures are currently underway, with deportation from the country being the next step.

Power poles, cutter stolen: The Deputy Public Prosecutor has filed a 'felony' case against an unidentified person for stealing public property, reports Al-Anba daily.

According to a security source, a citizen representing the Ministry of Electricity reported the incident to the Sulabiya police station.

The theft involved 11 electricity poles and an antenna cutter, stolen from a ministry site located off the Sixth Ring Road. The theft was reported to have occurred around 7 am.

Forensic evidence specialists were summoned to the crime scene to gather evidence, and investigation teams were instructed to conduct inquiries to identify the perpetrators.

New service on Sahel: MPW

DGCA employees planning to submit their 'grievances'

By **Mohammad Al-Musleh, Mohammed Ghanem**
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 14: Dozens of Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) employees are planning to submit grievances regarding the administrative decision to terminate the assignment of employees under the shift system.

Reliable sources told the newspaper that some employees believe it is unfair to withdraw their allowances, considering the decision resulted in the suspension of allowances of up to KD300 for some job grades.

Sources disclosed the employees will demand for withdrawal of the decision due to the severe financial harm it caused them. On the other hand, sources confirmed that the decision is in response to the request of regulatory authorities, especially the State Audit Bureau, to suspend some employees as at Sept 1.

They pointed out that the work of some employees is administrative in nature and does not match the technical work related to the shift system as per the opinion of the regulatory authorities. Meanwhile, the Ministry of Public Works announced Wednesday the addition of a new service on the unified government application for electronic services (Sahel) - the submission of a request for sewage connection for residential plots.

In a press statement, official spokesperson of the ministry Eng. Ahmed Al-Saleh confirmed that the ministry is working hard to eliminate the obstacles that citizens are facing and to provide all the services they need, as per the directive of Minister of Public Works and Minister of State for Municipal Affairs Dr. Noura Al-Mashaan.

Al-Saleh explained that the inclusion of the sewage connection service for residential plots on 'Sahel' is part of the ministry's commitment to offer more services through the online platform; which includes the supply of treated water.

KM issues 60 advert-related citations

Expat's passport, ID, cash stolen from home while he was asleep

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 14: Forensic technicians were dispatched to an expatriate's residence in Taima to gather evidence in hopes of apprehending an unknown suspect who robbed the individual while he was asleep. According to a security source, the expatriate, born in 1984, reported waking up to find his room in disarray, reports Al-Anba daily. Upon inspection, he discovered that his passport, national ID, 50 dinars, and 7,000 rupees had been stolen. Although he did not suspect anyone specific, he mentioned that the apartment door was left open. The incident has been registered as a theft and classified as a misdemeanor.

A medical report has been attached to the case file (which was titled assault and beating), showing a 3-cm head wound that required several stitches, according to a report issued by Jahra Hospital.

A security source said, a bedouin born in 1966, said his minor son, born in 2011, was beaten by two unknown people in front of the Public Authority for Minors' Affairs on Tuesday at 8:30 pm. The informant did not specify any reasons for his beating.

60 violations cited: The Kuwait Municipality's Public Relations Department reported that a recent inspection by the Audit and Follow-up Department of Municipal Services in Farwaniya Governorate led to the issuance of 60 advertisement-related violations, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

These violations include instances where businesses failed to renew their advertisements and cases where advertisements were made without obtaining the license from the municipality.

Additionally, three warnings were issued during the inspection tour.

This action underscores the Municipality's ongoing efforts to enforce compliance with advertising regulations and ensure that businesses adhere to the legal requirements for advertising in the region.

Two persons assault minor bedouin: Police are looking for two unknown persons who assaulted a juvenile in the Al-Qasr area, reports Al-Anba daily.

Stalled South Saad Al-Abdullah plot distribution sparks public criticism

Citizens demand clarity

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

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 14: The delay in resolving the issue related to the distribution of residential plots in the South Saad Al-Abdullah project is still ongoing.

It has been a month since the Public Authority for Housing Welfare (PAHW) announced a temporary suspension of payments. This suspension remains in effect until the board of directors meets to review and update the distribution mechanism.

Several housing observers criticized the stagnation in finalizing the distribution mechanisms for the project, amid the lack of comprehensive information about the remaining plots. This uncertainty has caused confusion regarding the future of the distributions and whether new, unconventional housing policies or alternatives will be introduced.

They said that the impact of the absence of official information has contributed to the increase in rumors and misinformation about transferring the rest of the plots to real estate developers.

The observers demand the Minister of State for Housing Affairs to activate the media role, especially since there are a number of citizens who are on the verge of submitting requests to view the progress of housing projects in implementation of the Right to Access Law.

In this regard, housing activist Hadi Al-Ajmi stated that the procrastination and failure to resolve the distribution of plots in South Saad Al-Abdullah, despite a month having passed since PAHW announced it would find mechanisms to improve the distribution process, has caused considerable confusion for those entitled to housing care.

He explained that the media sector of PAHW is currently facing a setback due to the lack of clear and transparent information for the public. This absence has led to speculation on social media about the future of distributions in South Saad Al-Abdullah, with these concerns not being addressed by PAHW.

There is a lack of information for the public, especially the monthly statistics PAHW used to publish several years ago concerning the projects and implementation statuses. The current reluctance to disclose information may be an attempt to avoid provoking



Hawalli Governor with delegation members.

Health delegation calls on Hawalli Governor

Hawalli Governor Ali Al-Asfar has emphasized the governorate's commitment to fully supporting medical emergency teams and ambulance centers to enhance their efficiency and effectiveness in serving patients throughout the area, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

He expressed his gratitude and pride in the vital services these teams provide, which are crucial for improving medical care in the governorate.

This statement was made during a meeting with a health delegation that included Dr. Abdullah Al-

Fars, the Assistant Undersecretary for Supporting Medical Services, Dr. Ahmed Al-Shatti, the Director of the Medical Emergency Department, and other officials from the department.

During the meeting, the governor was briefed on the activities of ambulance centers in Hawalli and the importance of expanding their presence to accommodate the large population in the governorate. The goal is to ensure rapid response to emergency cases, enabling swift access to patients and the provision of immediate medical care.

public reactions.

Meanwhile, representative of the residents of South Saad Al-Abdullah Barak Al-Qahtani said the lack of transparency regarding the distribution process has caused significant confusion among residents, given that approximately 6,000 families, or about 20,000 individuals, are still awaiting their distributions from the project.

Al-Qahtani called on PAHW to be more transparent, especially since the distributions are paper-based

and do not require all this waiting.

He said, "The housing authority can distribute the entire project within weeks, not years, as long as the distribution is paper-based."

Al-Qahtani stressed that the majority of those waiting for housing care from the South Saad Al-Abdullah project are over 45 years old, and they are still waiting for housing.

He urged PAHW to pay attention to the citizens, address their concerns, and quickly resolve their issues.

Major changes to land use

Amendments to Sulaibikhat Bay master plan near final approval

By Inaas Awadh

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 14: According to informed sources, the final approvals for the amendments to the master plan for the Sulaibikhat Bay development project are nearing completion, following its approval in mid-July by the municipality's organization sector led by Deputy Director General of the Organization Sector Manal Al-Omran. This is in preparation for presenting it to the technical committee of the Municipal Council before the end of its summer vacation, which is scheduled to end on September 12.

The sources explained that the project is part of the municipality's efforts to advance the completion of development projects with recreational aspects in the country. It is based on the directives issued by the Council of Ministers in recent meetings that urge the municipality to expedite the completion of two key projects - the waterfront development in Jahra (Jahra Corniche) and the Sulaibikhat Bay project.

The master plan for the Sulaibikhat Bay project includes amendments to land uses, building regulations, and occupancy rates for the area situated within Kuwait Bay, west of Kuwait City. This area, which overlooks the coast, spans from the service sector No. 16 in Shuwaikh and Al-Rai commercial service and industrial area to the borders of Doha Port.

The total area of the Sulaibikhat Bay project is 8,152 square kilometers and includes six development zones. These zones are:

- Innovation Area: 609,311 square meters
- Sulaibikhat Coast Area: 1,611,879 square meters
- Sulaibikhat Sports Area: 1,707,314 square meters
- Ras Ashairj Area: 2,725,980 square meters
- Asharej Residential Area: 600,995 square meters
- Asharej Islands Area: 896,413 square meters

Together, these areas constitute approximately 35 percent of the project site. This includes the re-shaping of the coastline and proposed islands. The vacant lands currently available for development constitute 29 percent of the total site area.

In a preliminary report issued previously on the project, the municipality had indicated that it was implementing the urban policy of the state's structural plan, approved by Decree No. 255/2008, which was established to monitor population growth, land use, road networks, services and public facilities, and the resulting availability of job opportunities.

In its latest issue, *MEED* magazine highlighted the importance of the Sulaibikhat Bay development project in its entirety.

The magazine referred to the expectations of Global Data, a data company, for a 6.6 percent growth in Kuwait's construction industry economic output this year. This growth is bolstered by investments in the energy sector and government initiatives to enhance oil and gas production, as well as investment in infrastructure development.

Global Data also forecasted a 5.9 percent increase in the residential construction sector this year, with a projected decline to 3.2 percent during the period from 2025 to 2028. This is supported by the government's efforts to advance the New Kuwait 2030 vision, which includes building 65,500 housing units through five projects by 2029.

Inventory checks underway

MoE completes distribution of school supplies ahead of new academic year

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 14: The Ministry of Education has completed the distribution of school furniture and equipment to both new and existing schools across multiple educational regions, reports Al-Jarida daily.

As the start of the 2024/2025 academic year approaches, educational sectors are now engaged in a detailed review and inventory of school supplies to ensure that all necessary resources are provided before the academic year begins on Sept 8.

Mansour Al-Dhafiri, the Acting Assistant Undersecretary for Public Education, has emphasized the importance of efficient coordination and follow-up among educational and religious education district directors.

In a letter addressed to these directors, Al-Dhafiri underscored the urgency of assessing and reporting on the needs of schools to ensure a conducive educational environment for both students and teachers.

He instructed directors to provide detailed reports to the Public Education Office within two days to facilitate any necessary actions by relevant authorities.

Preparation follow-up teams, established by school principals or their representatives, commenced their work on Sunday.

These teams are tasked with coordinating with liaison officers in various sectors to ensure that preparations are completed effectively. According to sources, the process is progressing as planned, with ongoing efforts to supply schools with textbooks, laboratory tools, screens, and cameras, among other essentials.

All school work requirements are expected to be fulfilled before the start of the academic year, aided by existing contracts with specialized companies.

Educational zones directed to report school readiness

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

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 14: Assistant Undersecretary for Public Education Affairs at Ministry of Education Mansour Al-Dhafiri instructed the directors general of all educational zones as well as the director of the Religious Education Department to urgently assess and coordinate to identify their needs for services and supplies required in all schools in preparation for the upcoming 2024/2025 academic year.

In a letter sent to the directors, Al-Dhafiri requested that he be provided with the latest developments within two days to determine the readiness of all schools, so that the relevant authorities can be addressed to do what is necessary. He stressed the need to give this matter the utmost importance and urgency.

Meanwhile, the Undersecretary of the Ministry of Education Mansour Al-Daihani approved the academic calendar for religious education for the year 2024-2025.

The issued calendar specifies that all employees will begin work on September 8. The primary, middle, and secondary school students will start their school year on September 17. The mid-year vacation is scheduled from January 19 to January 30.



A worker seen moving furniture.

Ministry warns of legal consequences

MoSA issues new directive for caregivers

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 14: The Ministry of Social Affairs has issued a directive requiring caregivers of disabled persons to provide a statement confirming they accompany the 'sick' if they stay outside the country for more than 45 days, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

This measure is intended to protect the rights of people with disabilities, with the ministry warning of legal consequences for those who do not comply.

The directive was outlined in a circular issued by Dr Amthal Al-Huwailah, the Minister of Social Affairs, Family and Childhood Affairs, and Minister of State for Youth Affairs.

It mandates that caregivers submit an annual certificate from the Public Ports Administration, along with copies of the passport and residency documents for the servant or driver assigned to the disabled person.

Additionally, a periodic report must be submitted if the caregiver is compelled to stay abroad for more than 45 days.

This circular is based on Article 17, Clause 11, and Article 18, Clause 4 of the Public Authority for the Affairs of

Residents can submit sewer connection requests via app

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 14: The Ministry of Public Works has announced the addition of a new service that allows residents to submit sewer connection requests for their residential plots through the government application "Sahel".

This initiative, according to Al-Seyassah daily, is part of the ministry's broader plan for digital transformation to streamline public services and improve accessibility for citizens.

By integrating this service into the "Sahel" app, the ministry is enhancing efficiency and convenience for residents, making it easier to manage essential infrastructure needs like sewage connections.

This step aligns with Kuwait's ongoing efforts to modernize public services and improve the overall quality of life for its citizens.

Persons with Disabilities Law, ensuring sustained and effective care for individuals within this vulnerable group.

AUGUST

Room Promotion

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

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

Tel: +973 17701201 - Ext. 351
Email: reservation@albander.com
www.albander.com
Facebook: @albanderhotelandresort

LOCAL

Health licenses & ads go online

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 14: The Kuwait Municipality has launched a new digital platform that allows for the issuance and renewal of health licenses and advertisements online, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

This initiative aligns with government directives to expand electronic services, making processes more convenient and accessible for citizens.

Yousef Al-Azmi, Deputy Director General of the Development and Information Sector, emphasized that this program is part of a broader digital transformation effort by the municipality.

The goal is to streamline services, reduce administrative burdens, and ultimately save public time and effort. This move reflects Kuwait's commitment to enhancing service delivery through digital innovation.



A cake-cutting ceremony with numerous Pakistani children, and prominent community members in attendance.



Leaders call for national unity and development

Pakistan Embassy marks 77th Independence Day

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 14: To commemorate the 77th anniversary of Pakistan's Independence, the Embassy organized a flag hoisting ceremony at the Chancery on 14 August, 2024. The ceremony was well attended by a large number of Pakistani community members, including women and children.

Messages from the President, Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister of Pakistan were read out; wherein the leadership stressed that the entire nation must work with utmost devotion

for the development and progress of the country. In his remarks, the Charge d' Affaires (a.i.) paid tribute to the forefathers of the Nation for their relentless services and sacrifices, which led to the creation of a separate homeland for the Muslims of the Sub-continent. He stressed that Pakistan is blessed with capable youth and all the resources of the State as well as society should be utilized for their education and growth.

Referring to the historic day of 77th Independ-

ence anniversary, the Charge d' Affaires (a.i.) extended felicitations and urged the community members to work diligently and wholeheartedly for the progress and development of Pakistan. He acknowledged the contribution of Pakistanis residing in Kuwait towards progress and development of both the nations.

A cake cutting ceremony took place in the presence of a large number of Pakistani children, women and prominent community members.

KD11.8 mln for mechanical overhaul

MEW prepares for '25 with extensive station upgrades

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 14: The Ministry of Electricity, Water, and Renewable Energy is gearing up for extensive maintenance of power and water distillation stations as the current heat wave subsides and preparations begin for the 2025 summer season, reports Al-Jarida daily.

The Central Agency for Public Tenders has recently approved a budget allocation of 11.8 million dinars for the annual maintenance of mechanical equipment across these facilities.

The ministry has submitted multiple tenders for various maintenance activities related to buildings and equipment within energy and water production plants.

This initiative underscores the ministry's commitment to adhering to established schedules and meeting the specific conditions and specifications outlined in each tender.

The approved mechanical maintenance tender includes a comprehensive scope of work such as inspect-

ing and cleaning main equipment, filters, and cooling systems, as well as examining and replacing oils and greases.

Moreover, it encompasses the maintenance of engines, pumps, cooling systems, and distillation systems. The ministry aims to complete these tasks during the winter season to ensure optimal performance and reliability.

According to sources, these maintenance activities are expected to significantly enhance the performance and stability of the country's electrical network, particularly during peak load periods and high temperatures.

In a related development, the agency has also approved a tender for agricultural works at the Al-Zour South Power Generation and Water Distillation Station.

This tender was awarded to the company with the third lowest bid that met all conditions, amounting to 345 thousand dinars.

MoSA outlines cost sharing standards

Co-ops' Umrah trip rules revised

By Fares Al-Abdan

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 14: In confirmation of an article published recently about amending the decision on Umrah trips organized by cooperative societies, the Minister of Social Affairs, Family and Childhood Affairs and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Dr. Amthal Al-Huwailah has issued a new decision outlining the regulations for the Umrah trips organized by cooperative societies and the implementation



Dr. Al-Huwailah

mechanism.

According to the decision, the board of directors should approve the operation of Umrah trips from Kuwait to Jeddah and back, or from Kuwait to Taif and back, specify the total number of participants and the trip's cost. This cost must cover economy class tickets, accommodation, transportation, and optional three meals, with accommodation in at least a four-star hotel.

The cooperative society must cover 70 percent of the trip's cost for each participant, while the participant will pay the remaining amount. This arrangement applies once every five years.

Additionally, the organizing company or institution must be qualified, and its commercial license must be completely consistent with the nature of the required activity.

by the State and those listed under the Capital Markets Authority (CMA) are excluded.

Gov't sector

Continued from Page 1

He stressed the need to ensure the ease and convenience of proving attendance during official working hours for each employee, and providing sufficient fingerprint devices at the attendance proof points.

He urged government agencies -- whose systems and nature of work make it difficult for the employees to access the attendance proof sites during official working hours -- to use smartphone applications, activate the face print feature and complete the technical procedures in the integrated systems.

He also emphasized the need for government agencies, whose employees are performing certain in or outside the work centers, to communicate with the CSC in order to set the timings for proving attendance during working hours in accordance with the nature of their jobs.

Biometrics mandatory

Continued from Page 1

This measure is part of the Ministry's effort to ensure that everyone complies with the biometric registration requirements.

The Ministry had previously extended the deadline to accommodate those who had not yet completed the process. Major Al-Gharib also mentioned that over 2.5 million people, including citizens, Gulf nationals, and residents, have already completed the biometric fingerprinting procedures.

This move highlights the Ministry's commitment to enhancing security and streamlining government services through biometric identification systems.

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Interior announced 70,000 residency violators have corrected their status within the

By Mohammad Ghanem

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 14: The Kuwait International Airport passenger terminal project (T2), along with its three beams, will need 20 megawatts of electricity to operate; say sources from the Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy.

Sources explained that 15 percent of the above mentioned quantity of electricity will be supplied through the available renewable energy in the project; since it is one of the new projects upon which the Energy Code has been applied like the other buildings of government agencies and ministries.

Sources affirmed that the ministry is ready to supply the project with the required quantity of electrical energy once it is fully operational. Sources said it is one of the major development projects that will contribute to the modernization of the air transport sector and will increase the capacity of airports in the country.

grace period provided by the ministry, which concluded on June 30, reports Al-Jarida daily.

This period allowed individuals to resolve their residency issues without facing penalties.

Moreover, the ministry reported a reduction in crime rates, noting a decrease from 1,167 incidents in the first half of 2023 to 1,016 incidents in the same period this year.

Kuwait slams

Continued from Page 1

Former Lebanese Foreign Minister Fares Bouez expressed his concern to KUNA that the head of the Israeli occupation government is striving to "implicate" the US and the world in a regional war against Iran through continued military provocations, targeting of defenseless civilians, and his refusal to compromise and release the hostages.

He pointed out that the US would be the only party capable of pressuring the Israeli occupation to stop the war, but the latter calls on; the one hand to de-escalate the tension, and on the other hand declares its commitment to supporting the Israeli occupation and providing it with weapons and ammunition.

For his part, former Lebanese Ambassador to the US Riad Tabbara said that the Lebanese Prime Minister Najib Mikati reaffirmed Lebanon's position in rejecting the war and adhering to international resolution 1701 by asking friendly countries to pressure the Israeli occupation to stop its attacks on civilians.

He told KUNA that no one has an interest in entering an "open war", noting that even the resistance in Lebanon says this and does not want to deviate from the rules of confrontation with the Israeli occupation.

For his part, Political Science Professor at the American University of Beirut Dr. Hilal Khashan said in a similar statement to KUNA that there will be no expansion of the war zone due to the fact the Iran and Hezbollah are unwilling to do so.

MEW commits to support integration



Photo taken during familiarization meeting for new students.

Sources added the ministry is willing to fully cooperate with the Ministry of Public Works, which is implementing the project for the benefit of the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), in order to complete all the necessary electricity and water facilities.

Sources emphasized that using re-

newable energy in a project of this size is a step towards using renewable energy in government buildings; considering the huge savings from the power consumption of buildings, as well as protecting the environment and reducing the carbon used in producing electrical energy from traditional sources.

"The United States is committed to the security of Israel, and it is vital to U.S. national interests to assist Israel to develop and maintain a strong and ready self-defense capability. This proposed sale is consistent with those objectives," the State Department said in a release on the sale.

The Biden administration has had to balance its continued support for Israel with a growing number of calls from lawmakers and the U.S. public to curb military support there due to the high number of civilian deaths in Gaza. It has curbed one delivery of 2,000-pound weapons amid continued airstrikes by Israel in densely populated civilian areas in Gaza.

The contracts will cover not only the sale of new 50 aircraft to be produced by Boeing. It will also include upgrade kits for Israel to modify its existing fleet of two dozen F-15 fighter jets with new engines and radars, among other upgrades. The jets comprise the biggest portion of the \$20 billion in sales with the first deliveries expected in 2029.

A senior adviser to U.S. President Joe Biden said Wednesday it's critical to take advantage of "this window for diplomatic action" to end the Israel-Hamas war in Gaza and ongoing hostilities along the Lebanon-Israel border, fearing that escalations could spiral "out of control."

Amos Hochstein, tasked with shuttle diplomacy between Lebanon and Israel, spoke to journalists after meeting Lebanese Parliament Speaker Nabih Berri, as the region anxiously anticipates retaliatory attacks from Iran and the allied Lebanese Hezbollah group on Israel. Hochstein met with Israeli officials Tuesday.

Cease-fire talks between Hamas and Israel are expected to resume in Qatar on Thursday with Qatari, Egyptian, and U.S. mediators.

Hezbollah and Israel have traded strikes since Oct. 8, a day after Palestinian Hamas militants' surprise attack into southern Israel that sparked the war in Gaza.

"The more time goes by of escalated tensions, the more time goes by of daily conflict, the more the odds and the chances go up for accidents, for mis-

KU welcomes new students

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 14: The Academic Guidance Department at Kuwait University's Deanship of Student Affairs organized an orientation meeting titled 'Start Your Journey with Awareness and Success' for new students starting the academic year 2024-2025, reports Al-Jarida daily.

Held at the Cultural Center in Sabah Al-Salem University City, the event aimed to familiarize students and their parents with university regulations, services, and the campus environment.

Acting Dean of Student Affairs, Dr. Jassim Al-Hamdan, emphasized the importance of understanding the university system and adhering to its regulations.

He highlighted that success in university life relies on good morals, respectful interactions with peers and faculty, academic discipline, and compliance with university rules.

The orientation included the issuance of university IDs for new students in collaboration with the Security and Safety Department and conducted tours across various colleges within Sabah Al-Salem University City.

takes, for inadvertent targets to be hit that could easily cause escalation that goes out of control," Hochstein said.

Hochstein said he and speaker Berri agreed there were "no more valid excuses from any party for any further delay" on a cease-fire based on a framework Biden presented months ago.

"The deal would also help enable a diplomatic resolution here in Lebanon," the U.S. envoy added.

Diplomatic efforts continue to prevent the regional tensions to spiral into all-out war. Iran and Hezbollah say they are committed to their retaliatory attack.

Hochstein also met with Lebanon's caretaker Prime Minister Najib Mikati and Army chief Gen. Joseph Aoun Hochstein.

The "broad consensus" is that a cease-fire in Gaza would help bring calm to hostilities in Lebanon and elsewhere in the region, said Maha Yahya, the director of the Beirut-based Carnegie Middle East Center. She believes that Hezbollah and Iran did not expect the war in Gaza to continue for so long.

"Nobody counted on the fact that this would last 10 months and still going, with an increasing humanitarian toll," she told The Associated Press. "Put aside the rhetoric and public anger, which is very much there and not for show, they have been open to diplomatic back-channel discussion to try to resolve this."

Yahya said Iran and Hezbollah not attacking over the past two weeks slightly dims the element of surprise, while the U.S. military increases its naval reinforcements in the area and more diplomatic discussion takes place.

If war breaks out between Hezbollah and Israel, it would be the first since a six-week war in the summer of 2006 ended in a draw.

Hezbollah's military capabilities have developed significantly since then.

War would further devastate Lebanon, which already has a deeply divided government and a battered economy. Mikati's caretaker government has met to discuss an emergency response plan should war break out.

World News Roundup

Europe

Kyiv denies occupation

Russian forces stop Ukrainian incursion

KYIV, Ukraine, Aug 14, (AP): Russia said Tuesday that its forces checked an effort by Ukrainian troops to expand a stunning weeklong incursion into the Kursk region, as a Ukrainian Foreign Ministry spokesperson said Kyiv has no intention of occupying Russian territory.

Russian army units, including fresh reserves, aircraft, drone teams and artillery forces, stopped Ukrainian armored mobile groups from moving deeper into Russia near the Kursk settlements of Obshchy Kolodez, Snagost, Kauchuk and Alexeyevsky, a Russian Defense Ministry statement said.



Zelenskyy

Meanwhile, Ukrainian Foreign Ministry spokesperson Heorhii Tykhyi said the cross-border operation was aimed at protecting Ukrainian land from long-range strikes launched from Kursk.

"Ukraine is not interested in taking the territory of the Kursk region, but we want to protect the lives of our people," Tykhyi was quoted as saying by local media.

He said Russia had launched more than 2,000 strikes from the Kursk region in recent months using anti-aircraft missiles, artillery, mortars, drones, 255 glide bombs and more than 100 missiles.

"The purpose of this operation is to preserve the lives of our children, to protect the territory of Ukraine from Russian strikes," he said.

The commander of the Ukrainian military, Oleksandr Syrskiy, said in a video posted Tuesday to President Volodymyr Zelenskyy's Telegram channel that Ukraine now controls 74 settlements in the Kursk region.

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Nord Stream warrant issued: German prosecutors have issued a first arrest warrant in their investigation into the undersea explosions in 2022 that damaged the Nord Stream gas pipelines between Russia and Germany, according to a media report Wednesday. German authorities refused to comment.

German public broadcaster ARD, the daily Sueddeutsche Zeitung and the weekly Die Zeit said in a joint report that federal prosecutors obtained an arrest warrant in June against a Ukrainian man believed to have resided until recently in Poland. The reports, which did not cite sources, identified the man as Wolodymyr Z.

The federal prosecutor's office said it doesn't comment on media reports or on arrest warrants.

Explosions on Sept. 26, 2022, damaged the pipelines, which were built to carry Russian natural gas to Germany under the Baltic Sea. The damage added to tensions over the war in Ukraine as European countries moved to wean themselves off Russian energy sources.

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France probe gender cyber: French prosecutors opened an investigation into an online harassment complaint made by Olympic boxing champion Imane Khelif after a rain of criticism and false claims about her sex during the Summer Games, the Paris prosecutor's office said Monday.

The athlete's lawyer Nabil Boudi filed a legal complaint with a special unit in the Paris prosecutor's office that combats online hate speech on Friday.

Boudi said that the boxer was targeted by a "misogynist, racist and sexist campaign" as she won gold in the women's welterweight division, becoming a hero in her native Algeria and bringing global attention to women's boxing.

The prosecutor's office said it had received the complaint and its Office for the Fight against Crimes against Humanity and Hate Crime had opened an investigation on charges of "cyber harassment based on gender, public insults based on gender, public incitement to discrimination and public insults on the basis of origin."

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Longest-held dissident freed: Andrei Pivovarov knows there are about 1,000 hours in 42 days.

Doing the math in his head and quietly marking milestones left in his sentence helped the Russian opposition politician survive more than three years in prison, much of it spent in complete isolation.

"You have no one to talk to, so you come up with causes" for celebration, Pivovarov said in an interview with The Associated Press. A scrap of a letter from his wife fashioned into a bookmark also became precious to him.

Freed on Aug. 1 in the historic East-West prisoner swap, Pivovarov now is figuring out a new life in Germany, where he reunited with his wife, Tatyana Usmanova.

Of all the dissidents Russia released, Pivovarov, 42, spent the most time behind bars. He had only about a month left to serve when he was plucked from the prison in northern Russia and flown to Germany. Usmanova already had started readying their St. Petersburg apartment for his homecoming.

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Possible sabotage probed: Investigators are looking into suspicions of unauthorized entry and possible sabotage at a major military barracks in western Germany, the Defense Ministry said Wednesday.

Ministry spokesperson Arne Collatz said the Wahn barracks outside Cologne was closed off. He said there were suspicions of attempted or actual illegal entry, as well as sabotage, but gave no further details.

German news agency dpa, which didn't name its sources, said a hole had been found in a fence and there was an unconfirmed suspicion that the facility's water supply might have been tampered with. It said that water samples had been taken for the investigation.

The barracks serves the military part of Cologne/Bonn Airport, where the fleet of military aircraft that serves the German government has its main base.

Speaking outside the barracks, military spokesperson Ulrich Fonrobert said the facility had been closed off after an incident on Tuesday night that the military is taking "very seriously," but he wouldn't give details.



Vice President Kamala Harris stands in front of mountains during a news conference, June 25, 2021, at the airport after her tour of the U.S. Customs and Border Protection Central Processing Center in El Paso, Texas. (Inset: Vice President Kamala Harris and Mexican President Andrés Manuel López Obrador wave from the balcony of the Eisenhower Executive Office Building on the White House complex in Washington, Nov. 18, 2021. (AP))

Politics

Can Trump stick to a clear message?

Harris opts for long-term solutions

WASHINGTON, Aug 14, (AP): President Joe Biden, watching tens of thousands of migrants from Central America reach the U.S.-Mexico border just a few months into his administration, tapped his second-in-command to help address the influx - a decision that has exposed Vice President Kamala Harris to one of her biggest political liabilities.

In grappling with migration, Harris proceeded cautiously. She focused her time and prestige on boosting private investment in El Salvador, Honduras and Guatemala, the so-called Northern Triangle; her goal was to help create jobs to bolster economies and dissuade migrants from making the perilous journey to the United States.

It was a decidedly long-term - and limited - approach to a humanitarian crisis, and it has allowed Republicans to tie her to the broader fight over the border. While migration from the Northern Triangle ebbed, it surged from other nations, sparking an emergency at the U.S.-Mexico border, one that Republicans have aggressively sought to exploit at Harris' expense.

A review of Harris' work on immigration reveals a record that is more nuanced than the one presented by her critics or allies. It also provides insights into how Harris - who took over as the Democratic standard-bearer when Biden dropped out of the presidential race last month - might tackle one of the nation's most vexing concerns.

Harris was never the "border czar," or put in charge of border security or halting illegal border crossings, as former President Donald Trump, Republicans and even the occasional media outlet have claimed. Instead, she was tasked in March 2021 with tackling the "root causes" of migration from the Northern Triangle and pushing its leaders - along with Mexico's - to enforce immigration laws, administration officials said.

Harris' backers say she demonstrated leadership by leveraging her stature to win investments that might curb migration years down the road.

"She felt - and I think she was right - that what she could do the most was help basically lead the effort to draw in investment, using the confidence that a relationship with the White House would give to investors," said Ricardo Zúñiga, a former State Department official who specialized in the Northern Triangle and who traveled with Harris to the region.

Critics contend that she could have done far more but chose a less risky path, ensuring the problem only worsened.

"She was like, 'nope, I'm just root causes,'" said Mark Krikorian, executive director of the Center for Immigration Studies, which advocates for less immigration. "Even if it worked, it's the sort of thing that takes generations, not one term."

He also said there was no evidence that Harris pushed Mexico and the Northern Triangle nations to enforce immigration laws.

Border security

Harris has defended her work, and her campaign began running a television ad Friday that said Harris as president would "hire thousands more border agents and crack down on fentanyl and human trafficking." Democrats have also blasted Trump for helping tank a bipartisan immigration bill earlier this year that would have increased funding for border security, including the hiring of new Customs and Border Protection personnel.

Trump "has been talking a big game on securing the border, but he does not walk the walk," the vice president said last month in Atlanta. Later, she added, "Donald Trump does not care about border security. He only cares about himself."

Immigration has long been an issue that motivates Trump and his base of supporters, and polls show it

is among the most important issues on the minds of voters. As a presidential candidate in 2016, Trump said he would build a wall along the border between the United States and Mexico and get Mexico to pay for it. Trump was not able to complete the project, and Mexico did not fund the part of the barrier that was constructed. The former president also used explosive language to describe immigrants, launching his campaign by suggesting Mexico was sending its "rapists" and criminals to the United States.

Also:

ASHEVILLE, N.C.: Donald Trump will have another opportunity Wednesday to recalibrate his presidential comeback bid, this time with a rally and speech in North Carolina that his campaign is billing as a significant economic address.

Set in a Democratic city surrounded by staunchly Republican mountain counties, the event carries both national and local implications for the former president.

Republicans are looking for Trump to focus the scattershot arguments and what he has made on Vice President Kamala Harris since Democrats elevated her as their presidential nominee. Twice in the last week, Trump has fumbled such an opportunity, first in an hourlong news conference at his Mar-a-Lago estate in Florida, then in a 2 1/2-hour conversation on the social media platform X with CEO Elon Musk.

The latest attempt comes in the state that delivered Trump his closest statewide margin of victory four years ago and that is once again expected to be a battleground in 2024. Trump won North Carolina over Democrat Joe Biden in 2020 by less than 1.4 percentage points - about 74,500 votes - and he can't afford to have the state's 16 electoral votes shift to Democrats for the first time since Barack Obama prevailed here in 2008.



Rep. Ilhan Omar speaks after winning the primary at Nighthawks in Minneapolis, Tuesday, Aug. 13, 2024. (AP)



Gianforte



Cooke

America

Montana governor seeks 2nd: Montana Republican Gov. Greg Gianforte reported more than \$23 million in income over four years ending in 2022, as the former technology executive who is seeking reelection to a second term continues to rake in money from investments, according to tax records released by his campaign.

Democrat Ryan Busse, a former firearms industry executive, is challenging Gianforte in November.

Gianforte spent more than \$6 million of his own money on a failed bid for governor in 2016. After getting elected to Congress in a 2017 special election, he ran for governor again four years ago and spent more than \$7.5 million defeating Democrat Mike Cooney by a wide margin, according to campaign finance reports.

So far this election cycle, he has contributed roughly \$47,000 to his campaign, the reports show. (AP)

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Cooke wins Dems primary: Democrat Rebecca Cooke won western Wisconsin's 3rd Congressional District primary on Tuesday and will face Republican Rep. Derrick Van Orden in November.

Cooke defeated state Rep. Katrina Shankland and political newcomer Eric Wilson. Cooke previously ran in 2022 for the seat but lost in the primary.

Cooke, 36, is a former small business owner and political fundraiser. She currently runs a nonprofit.

She will now try to knock off Van Orden, a former Navy SEAL who is one of former President Donald Trump's loudest backers.

Van Orden was elected in 2022 when the seat was open. The district is a target for Democrats as they seek to win back majority control of the House. (AP)

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GOP tap restaurant owner: Matt Corey, a Connecticut entrepreneur who unsuccessfully ran for the U.S. House and Senate in the past, won the Republican nomination Tuesday to take on Democratic U.S. Sen. Chris Murphy again, saying he believes voters are more receptive to his message.

Corey, whose victory in the primary came against Gerry Smith, the top elected official in the small town of Beacon Falls, said voters are fed up with high energy costs, inflation and job losses.

"It's just affordability, job opportunities. It's pretty much similar to what I ran last time," he said in a phone interview. "And all the policies that are coming out of Washington and what Sen. Murphy is embracing, it's not going to move Con-

necticut forward or any of these business-forward." (AP)

□ □ □

Ex-prosecutor wins GOP primary:

Former federal prosecutor Joe Teirab has won a contested GOP primary for Minnesota's 2nd District seat held by Demo-

cratic Rep. Angie Craig.

Teirab has the support of former President Donald Trump, House Speaker Mike Johnson and the National Republican Congressional Committee.

His opponent, defense attorney Tayler Rahm, won the endorsement at the district convention with support from grassroots

conservatives.

While Rahm announced in July that he was suspending his campaign and would instead serve as a senior adviser for Trump's Minnesota campaign, he remained on the ballot.

Teirab will face Craig in what's expected to be Minnesota's most competitive House race in November.

Craig issued a statement following Teirab's win calling him "a guy who recently moved to the district because he saw a political opportunity." (AP)

□ □ □

Judge's ruling bars insurers: A Maui judge's ruling Tuesday resolves a critical roadblock to finalizing a \$4 billion wildfire settlement: Insurance companies who have paid out more than \$2 billion in claims can seek reimbursement only from the settlement amount defendants, who victims blame for causing the deadly tragedy, have agreed to pay.

Lawyers representing plaintiffs in hundreds of lawsuits over the deaths and destruction caused by the fires asked the judge to bar insurers from bringing independent legal action to recoup the money paid to policyholders. Preventing insurers from going after the defendants is a key settlement term.

The settlement was reached earlier this month, days before the one-year anniversary of the fires, amid fears that Hawaiian Electric, the power company that some blame for sparking the blaze, could be on the brink of bankruptcy. (AP)



Anti-abortion protesters gather for a news conference after Arizona abortion-rights supporters delivered more than 800,000 petition signatures to the state Capitol to get abortion rights on the November general election ballot, July 3, 2024, in Phoenix. (AP)

Lat/Am

Ernesto devastates

'Venezuela's election lacked transparency'

MIAMI, Aug 14, (AP) — A panel of experts from the United Nations said Venezuela's recent presidential elections lacked "basic transparency and integrity," adding an important voice to those who have cast doubt on President Nicolás Maduro's claim he won the contest.

A four-member team sent by UN Secretary General António Guterres was in Caracas for over a month in the run up to the July 28 election, one of the few independent outside observers invited by Maduro's government.

While the UN group praised the logistic organization of the voting, it harshly criticized the National Electoral Council, or CNE, for flouting local rules and announcing Maduro the winner without tabulated results from each of the 30,000 polling booths nationwide, something it said "had no precedent in contemporary democratic elections."

"This had a negative impact on confidence in the outcome announced by the CNE among a large part of the Venezuelan electorate," the U.N. experts said in a statement late Tuesday.

The U.N. statement follows criticism by another invited observer, the Atlanta-based Carter Center, which said it could not verify the CNE's results. Venezuela's foreign minister has blasted the Carter Center, accusing it of lying and serving as a tool of U.S. "imperialism."

While the U.N. team stopped short of validating claims by the opposition that its candidate, former diplomat Edmundo González, trounced Maduro by a more than 2-to-1 margin, it said that the voting records the anti-Maduro coalition published online appeared to exhibit all of the original security features.

"This suggests a key transparency safeguard may be available, as intended, with respect to any officially released results," the experts added, noting that electoral authorities failed to meet with the group prior to the mission's departure from Venezuela five days after voting.

Since the election, security forces have arrested more than 2,000 people for demonstrating against Maduro or casting doubt on his claims that he won a third term.

Separately on Tuesday, the U.N.'s top human rights official expressed concern over the arbitrary detentions and "disproportionate use of force" in Venezuela as part of the crackdown.

"It is especially troubling that so many people are being detained, accused or charged either with incitement to hatred or under counterterrorism legislation," U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Türk said in a statement. "Criminal law must never be used to limit unduly the rights to freedom of expression, peaceful assembly and association."

Türk's comments come as Venezuela's opposition gears up for a demonstration Saturday that it hopes will increase pressure on Maduro to recognize defeat and negotiate a political transition.

"If Maduro makes a realistic evaluation of his options, he'll understand that digging in is not sustainable," opposition leader María Corina Machado told journalists Tuesday.

Machado, who anointed previously unknown retired diplomat Edmundo González as her stand-in once she was banned from running in the presidential campaign, spoke to journalists at a virtual press conference from an undisclosed location due to safety concerns.

In her comments, she tried to temper expectations for a quick resolution of the political crisis.

The UN human rights office said that in most of the cases it has documented, detainees haven't been allowed to appoint lawyers of their choice or have contact with their families. "Some of these cases would amount to enforced disappearances," it said.

Thousands left without power: Tropical Storm Ernesto dropped torrential rain on eastern Puerto Rico early Wednesday and left hundreds of thousands of people without power in the US territory as it threatened to strengthen into a major hurricane en route to Bermuda.

A hurricane watch remained in effect for the British Virgin Islands as Ernesto began moving over open waters.

The storm was located about 85 miles (135 kilometers) north-northwest of San Juan, Puerto Rico. It had maximum sustained winds of 70 mph (110 kph) and was moving northwest at 16 mph (26 kph).

"While it is possible Ernesto is already a hurricane, radar data does not yet support an upgrade," the National Hurricane Center in Miami said.

Ernesto is expected to become a hurricane later Wednesday morning. A tropical storm warning was in effect for Puerto Rico, Vieques, Culebra and the U.S. and British Virgin Islands.

Ernesto is forecast to move through open waters for the rest of the week and make its closest approach to Bermuda on Saturday. It is expected to become a major Category 3 storm in upcoming days, with forecasters warning of heavy swells along the U.S. East Coast as Ernesto moves north-northwest in the Atlantic.

Between 4 to 6 inches of rain is expected in the US and British Virgin Islands, and between 6 to 8 inches in Puerto Rico, with up to 10 inches in isolated areas.

3 killed in armed assault: At least five people were killed and three others injured in an armed assault at a mine in Camilo Ponce Enriquez in southern Ecuador's Azuay province, police said Tuesday.

"This morning an attack was reported between members of organized armed groups that caused the death of five people and the injury of three others," the police force said on social media X.

Authorities are investigating the incident in the region of the Andean province, where both legal and illegal mining activities are expanding.

3 crash victims remains flown home: A Brazilian air force plane on Tuesday carried the remains of three of the 62 people killed in last week's plane crash to a small, distraught city in the country's south where they were to be handed over to their families for burial.

Forensics experts have so far identified 45 of the victims and authorized that the remains of 27 of them be returned to their families, the Sao Paulo state government said later Tuesday.

Eight of the victims had been returned by Monday night to their families. The 35-year-old pilot of the plane, Danilo Santos Romano, was the first to be buried. He was laid to rest on Monday in the city of Sao Paulo.



Maduro



Japan's Prime Minister Fumio Kishida, (right), speaks during a press conference at his office in Tokyo as he announced he will not run in the upcoming party leadership vote in September, Wednesday, Aug 14. (AP)



Thai Prime Minister Srettha Thavisin talks to reporters during press conference at Government House in Bangkok, Thailand, Wednesday, Aug 14. (AP)

Asia

Japan's premier paves way for new PM

Kishida will not run for PM again

TOKYO, Aug 14, (AP) — Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida, in a surprise move Wednesday, announced he will not run in the upcoming party leadership vote in September, paving the way for Japan to have a new prime minister.

Kishida was elected president of his governing Liberal Democratic Party in 2021 and his three-year term expires in September. Whoever wins the party vote will succeed him as prime minister because the LDP controls both houses of parliament. A new face is a chance for the party to show that it's changing for the better, and Kishida said he will support the new leader.

"We need to clearly show an LDP reborn," Kishida told a news conference Wednesday. "In order to show a changing LDP, the most obvious first step is for me to bow out."

"I will not run for the upcoming party leadership election," he said.

Corruption

Stung by his party's corruption scandals, Kishida has suffered dwindling support ratings that have dipped below 20%.

In order to achieve policies to tackle difficult situations in and outside Japan, regaining public trust in politics is crucial, Kishida said. He called on aspiring party lawmakers to raise their hands to run for leadership and have active policy debate during the campaign.

"Once a new leader is decided, I hope to see everyone unite and form a dream team to achieve politics that can gain public understanding," he said.

Kishida said he has been mulling his possible resignation for some time but waited until he could put his key policies on track, including energy policy that calls for a return to nuclear power, a drastic military buildup to deal with security threats in the region, and improving ties with South Korea, as well as political reforms.

Speculation on potential candidates has landed on a number of senior LDP lawmakers, including party Secretary-General Toshimitsu Motegi, Digital Minister Taro Kono, Economic Security Minister Sanae Takaichi and Foreign Minister Yoko Kamikawa.

A winner will replace Kishida as party president, and will be endorsed as the new prime minister in a parliamentary vote soon after. LDP executives are expected to decide next week on the date for the party election.

Since the corruption scandal broke, Kishida has removed a number of Cabinet ministers and others from party executive posts, dissolved party factions that were criticized as the source of money-for-favor politics, and tightened political funds control law. Ten people - lawmakers and their aides - were indicted in January.

Despite Kishida's efforts, support for his government dwindled.

Local election losses earlier in the year eroded his clout, and LDP lawmakers have voiced the need for a fresh face ahead of the next general election. Major losses in the Tokyo metropolitan assembly by elections in

oplia's deal with the breakaway region of Somaliland, Turkey's foreign minister said Tuesday.

Hakan Fidan made the comments at the end of a second round of talks between the foreign ministers of Somalia and Ethiopia that are being mediated by Turkey.

"I am pleased to announce that the number and extent of issues we discussed, has increased significantly, compared to the first round. We were able to focus on the details and technicalities of concrete steps," Fidan

Thai PM Srettha removed from office over an ethics violation

BANGKOK, Aug 14, (AP) — A court in Thailand on Wednesday removed Prime Minister Srettha Thavisin from office over an ethical violation, further shaking up Thai politics after the court-ordered dissolution of the main opposition party a week ago.

The Constitutional Court ruled on a case involving Srettha's appointment of a Cabinet member who had been imprisoned in connection with an alleged attempt to bribe a court official.

The court voted 5:4 against Srettha and the ruling removed him from office immediately.

The Cabinet will remain in place on a caretaker basis until Parliament approves a new prime minister. There is no time limit for Parliament to fill the position. The caretaker Cabinet could also dissolve Parliament and call a new election.

The acting PM is expected to be Phumtham Wechayachai of the Pheu Thai party. Phumtham was first deputy prime minister and commerce minister under Srettha.

If Parliament is given the task of choosing a new prime minister, it can select from a roster of candidates nominated for the post last year by the major political parties. The Pheu Thai Party, to which Srettha belongs, has two eligible candidates, including Paetongtarn Shinawatra, the daughter of former Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra.

Another frontrunner would be Anutin Charnvirakul, head of the Bhumjaithai Party, which ran third in last year's election. He is currently a deputy prime minister and interior minister. Anutin, a powerbroker in the vote-rich northeast whose family owns a major construction group, has served in both a military-backed government and the civilian one that it replaced.

Also in the running would be two former senior military officers: Prayuth Chan-ocha, who served as prime minister for nine years after staging a coup in 2014, and Prawit Wongsuwan, who was one of Prayuth's depu-

ty prime ministers.

Srettha, speaking at Government House shortly after the verdict, thanked the judges for giving him the opportunity to defend himself. He said he respected the ruling and that he always sought to act ethically during his time in office.

"I'm sorry that I'd be considered as a prime minister who's unethical, but that's not who I am," he said.

Srettha had appointed Pichit Chuenban as a minister of the Prime Minister's Office in a Cabinet reshuffle in April. Pichit was jailed for six months in 2008 on contempt of court charges after he allegedly tried to bribe a judge with 2 million baht (\$55,000) in cash in a grocery bag over a case involving Thaksin, the former prime minister.

Pichit resigned from the post weeks after being appointed when controversy over the incident was revived.

The court said that although Pichit has already served his jail term, his behavior - as ruled by the Supreme Court - was dishonest.

Srettha as prime minister has sole responsibility for vetting the qualifications of his Cabinet nominations, the court ruled. It said he knew about Pichit's past but still nominated him, and therefore it ruled that he violated the ethics codes.

The petition against Srettha was initiated by former members of the military-installed Senate who had refused to approve Move Forward's prime ministerial candidate when the party was attempting to form a government after its election victory.

The petition against Srettha was seen as a move favoring a pro-military political party in his coalition government.

Thailand's courts, especially the Constitutional Court, are considered a bulwark of the country's royalist establishment, which has used them and nominally independent state agencies such as the Election Commission to issue rulings to cripple or sink political opponents.

July also added to the push.

The scandal centers on unreported political funds raised through tickets sold for party events. It involved more than 80 LDP lawmakers, mostly belonging to a major party faction previously led by assassinated former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe. The assassination surfaced a scandal over the LDP's decades-old, deep-rooted ties with the Unification Church, for which Kishida has also faced criticism.

Also:

TOKYO: A Japanese business executive has returned home from Myanmar following his release from more than a month of detention after being convicted of violating rice pricing rules, his company said Wednesday.

Hiroshi Kasamatsu, a director of the Myanmar supermarket Aeon Orange, was in custody in Myanmar since his June 30 arrest for selling rice at prices above the official regulations. Japan's Foreign Ministry confirmed Monday that the Japanese national was convicted of violating law related to

daily necessities and service. He was sentenced to one year in prison and fined 500,000 kyat (about \$150).

His parent company Aeon released a statement Wednesday confirming his return home after the conviction. The company said that retailers operating in Myanmar had no way of knowing the change of law in that country about the rice pricing, which caused Aeon Orange's rice prices to "deviate" from the controlled price in violation to the related law.

The company apologized for causing trouble and thanked Japanese Foreign Ministry and others for their support that allowed Kasamatsu's safe return home.

Kasamatsu was freed Monday afternoon, said Maj. Gen. Zaw Min Tun, spokesperson for the Myanmar's ruling military council.

The Japanese Foreign Ministry said it was unclear if Kasamatsu would stay in Myanmar or return to Japan. He was released from custody and is in good health, it said, but declined to give further details.



Fidan



Kwoyelo

said in a video message recorded at his ministry. "We believe that a collaborative and constructive solution is within reach."

Flanked by his counterparts from Ethiopia and Somalia, Fidan added that a third round of talks would be held on Sept. 17.

Tensions between the two African countries have simmered since Ethiopia signed a memorandum of understanding with Somaliland in January, which Somalia denounced as infringing upon its sovereignty and territorial integrity. (AP)

Sheikha Dana
Naser Al Sabah



KIPCO reports KD 11.2 mln in net profit for H1 2024

KIPCO – Kuwait Projects Company (Holding) – announced a net profit of KD 11.2 million (US\$ 36.5 million) for the first six months of 2024. This represents an 8% increase over the KD 10.4 million (US\$ 33.9 million) reported in the corresponding period of 2023. Earnings per share for the first half of the year increased by 20% to 1.8 fils (US\$ 0.59 cents) compared to 1.5 fils (US\$ 0.49 cents) for the same period last year.

In the second quarter (the three months ended June 30, 2024), the company reported a net profit of KD 5.31 million (US\$ 17.3 million), an increase of 1% from the KD 5.24 million (US\$ 17.1 million) reported for the corresponding period of 2023. KIPCO's consolidated revenue for the first six months of 2024 came to KD 725.5 million (US\$ 2.4 billion), an increase of 22% over the KD 595.5 million (US\$ 1.9 billion) reported for

the same period in 2023. Consolidated assets came to KD 12.5 billion (US\$ 40.8 billion) at the end of the first six months of 2024, up from KD 12.3 billion (US\$ 40.1 billion) reported at year-end 2023. Equity increased to KD 620 million (US\$ 2.02 billion) from KD 611 million (US\$ 1.99 billion) reported at the end of 2023. Sheikha Dana Naser Sabah Al Ahmad Al Sabah, KIPCO's Group Chief Executive Officer, said: "The first half of the year has been

a positive one for KIPCO, and the results reported for the period are a reflection of our efforts to preserve and grow stakeholder value. Once again this quarter, our local and regional banking operations reported strong growth, as have our foodstuff, industrial and energy businesses. We look to continue along this growth trajectory, supported by the enhancement of KIPCO's capital structure and the strengthened performance of our key portfolio investments."

Market Movements

14-08-2024

		Change	Closing pts
SAUDI	- TASI	+52.81	11,849.65
DUBAI	- DFMGI	+28.92	4,213.42
JAPAN	- Nikkei 225	+209.92	36,442.43
PHILIPPINES	- PSEI	+54.52	6,704.96
EGYPT	- EGX 30	+235.96	29,567.00

Change Closing pts

Business

Reem Mall opens with 400 retail stores and major attractions in Abu Dhabi

NREC reports H1 2024 net profit of KD 1.6 million, reverses loss from H1 2023

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 14: National Real Estate Company (NREC) reported its financial and operational results for the periods ended June 30, 2024. The Company announced a net profit of KD 1.6 million and an EPS of 0.91 fils in H1 2024, compared to a net loss of KD 3.8 million and a loss per share of 2.15 fils in H1 2023.

The Company's operating revenue came in at KD 2.6 million for the 6-month period ended June 30, 2024, a decrease of 61% compared to the same period in 2023. Total assets stood at KD 505 million as of June 30, 2024.

For Q2 2024, the Company reported a net loss of KD 1.3 million, and a loss per share of 0.70 fils, and operating revenue of KD 1.2 million.

Commenting on the Company's results, NREC Vice Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, Faisal Jamil Sultan Al-Essa, said: "Our results for the first half of 2024 were positive and we are focused towards continued performance improvement through our resilient operations and strategic investments."

Updates on Reem Mall: Official Opening with Promising Outlook amid



Faisal Jamil Sultan Al-Essa

Abu Dhabi's Favourable Economic Climate

Reem Mall, Abu Dhabi's latest retail, dining, and entertainment hub, officially opened on May 30, 2024, on Reem Island. The mall boasts nearly 400 retail stores and 80 food and beverage outlets. It also features Snow

Abu Dhabi, the region's largest snow



park, spanning 9,732 square meters with 20 rides and icy adventures, along with exclusive attractions and a unique mix of shops.

NREC Vice Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, Faisal Jamil Sultan Al-Essa, stated: "Reem Mall is an innovative project that promotes community spirit and provides a premium mall experience. It is a one-stop family destination with cutting-edge design, perfectly aligned with Abu Dhabi's vision to offer a remarkable lifestyle and leisure experience."

Sultan added: "We continue to have high hopes for Reem Mall's future performance, especially in light of Abu Dhabi's advantageous economic climate. The mall's continued success and growth are sustained by the city's robust economic environment, ongoing infrastructure development, and growing consumer demand. These factors are expected to drive foot traffic and retail activity, further strengthen-

Financial Highlights for the Periods Ended June 30, 2024 (Million KD)						
Item	Q2 2024	Q2 2023	Variance (%)	H1 2024	H1 2023	Variance (%)
Revenue	1.2	2.7	-56%	2.6	6.7	-61%
Net Revenue	0.6	1.5	-58%	1.5	4.1	-64%
EBITDA	1.2	1.1	2%	6.3	1.3	397%
Net Profit (Loss)	(1.3)	(1.6)	19%	1.6	(3.8)	143%
EPS (fils)	-0.70	-0.88	20%	0.91	-2.15	142%

ing Reem Mall's competitive position."

NREC is a co-investor in Abu Dhabi's \$1.3 billion Reem Mall on Reem Island. With digital innovations like an aggregated mobile app for hands-free shopping, in-mall navigation, and smart parking, Reem Mall is leading the way in integrated online and in-person shopping. The mall is home to the first Bloomingdale's Beauty in the world, the only private viewing rooms in VOX Cinemas, and top brands like Carrefour, Nike, Eataly, Zara, and

Sephora. Top home furnishings retailers like Marina Home are also featured there.

Strategic Asset Divestment and Restructuring to Maximize Shareholder Value

"We remain committed to our objective of divesting select assets, with a clear focus on maximizing shareholder value", said Sultan.

Sultan added: "As part of this value-maximization strategy, we are also in the process of restructuring the company's movable assets and real estate,

ensuring they are re-registered under the names of our wholly-owned subsidiaries. These efforts are being undertaken with the best interests of our shareholders at the forefront."

Established in 1973 and listed in Boursa Kuwait, National Real Estate Company (NREC) is a real estate investment, development, and property manager based in the Middle East and North Africa. The Company's portfolio comprises a mix of retail, commercial, and residential properties in the region.

Main market index rises slightly, First Market Index declines

Boursa Kuwait index falls by 43.2 points

By Mahmoud Shendi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 14: The Boursa Kuwait experienced a decline, with the general index falling by 43.2 points to 7009 points, marking a 0.6% decrease.

The market saw a total trading volume of 199.9 million shares through 13,181 transactions, amounting to 49 million dinars (approximately \$149.4 million).

As a result of the selling pressures on most listed shares, the market value dropped by 255 million dinars, from 41.701 billion dinars to 41.446 billion dinars.

Main Market Index rose by 29.8 points to 5983.84 points (up 0.5%), with 88.1 million shares traded through 5,105 transactions worth 13 million dinars (about \$39.3 million).

First Market Index fell by 64.86 points to 7620.04 points (down 0.8%), with 111.7 million shares traded through 8,076 transactions worth 36 million dinars (about \$109.8 million).

Main 50 Index increased by 68 points to 5844.27 points

(up 1.1%), with 36.3 million shares traded through 2,595 transactions worth 5.3 million dinars (about \$16.1 million).

Market analysts suggest that the current decline in stock prices may present investment opportunities, as valuations become more attractive.

They remain optimistic about the long-term outlook for the Kuwait Stock Exchange, driven by government development plans, economic diversification, strong financial foundations, and significant sovereign wealth funds. The continued improvement in company profits and foreign investments further support this positive outlook.

Regarding Al-Maidan Dental Clinic Company, the Board of Directors is deliberating the Risk Committee's recommendation to voluntarily withdraw from the Kuwait Stock Exchange.

They have decided to delay the decision until additional research and studies are conducted. The company reported a 3% decrease in profits for the year ending March 31, 2024, with earnings of 11.82 million dinars compared to 12.18 million dinars for the previous year.

Phase-in plan proposed for mandatory sustainability disclosures

CMA explores new regulations for compulsory sustainability reports

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 14: The Capital Markets Authority (CMA) is exploring the implementation of a mandatory requirement for the disclosure of sustainability reports among listed companies, currently submitted on a voluntary basis.

This initiative aims to enhance transparency and commitment to sustainable development practices across various sectors, reports Al-Jarida daily.

Sources revealed that under Law No. 7 of 2010 and its amendments, companies are permitted to submit sustainability reports voluntarily.

At present, twenty-one listed companies provide these reports, adhering to the Global Reporting Initiative standards, with only one exception. These reports align with both the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and the Ku-

wait Development Plan 2035.

The CMA is considering a phased approach to make sustainability reporting compulsory, starting with companies listed on the first market, where reporting is already more frequent.

The proposed regulations are expected to improve compliance with CMA rules, boost company profitability and competitiveness, manage governance-related risks, and enhance stakeholder confidence.

Currently, companies disclose sustainability information in various formats: some include it in their annual reports, others issue standalone reports, and some provide integrated reports.

The CMA's study will assess the feasibility of mandatory reporting and set timelines for its implementation.

CEO Al-Khatib to chair 11-member cmte overseeing KNPC, KIPIC & KOTC merger

Kuwait oil sector merger expected to save \$2 billion annually

By Najeh Bilal

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 14: A committee has been established to oversee the comprehensive merger of the Kuwait National Petroleum Company (KNPC), the Kuwait Integrated Petroleum Industries Company (KIPIC), and the Kuwait Oil Tanker Company (KOTC).

The committee, formed on August 12, 2024, is chaired by Wadha Al-Khatib, CEO of both Kuwait National Petroleum and KIPIC.

The formation of this committee follows a memorandum from Sheikh Nawaf Al-Saud Al-Sabah, CEO of the Kuwait Petroleum Corporation, dated July 18, which approved the merger.

The committee, comprising 11 members, includes experts from financial, legal, and gas transpor-



Wadha Al-Khatib

tation departments, and is tasked with completing the merger process within six months.

This merger is anticipated to yield annual savings of \$2 billion. The successful integration of these companies aims to enhance efficiency and consolidate operations within Kuwait's oil sector.

The merger process between the KNPC, KIPIC, and the KOTC has commenced due to the complementary roles of these entities. The KNPC manages the Ahmadi and Mina Abdullah refineries, while KIPIC oversees the Al-Zour refinery. The merger aims to consolidate these refineries under a single entity to streamline operations and

rationalize spending.

Additionally, integrating the liquefied gas filling operations of the KOTC with the KNPC aims to centralize marketing efforts, enhance efficiency, and reduce the risk of accidents at the gas filling plants.

The merger is projected to save between \$1.5 to \$2 billion annually by cutting costs related to security, maintenance, and management salaries. The unification will also facilitate better implementation of digital transformations, boosting business volume and reducing bureaucracy.

The full merger of these companies is expected to be completed by 2025. Sheikh Nawaf Al-Saud Al-Sabah, CEO of the Kuwait Petroleum Corporation, is focused on this initiative to achieve significant cost savings, enhance operational efficiency, and support the corporation's broader goals.

Furthermore, there are ongoing efforts to integrate the Kuwait Gulf Oil Company with the Kuwait Oil Company, with an announcement likely within this year. This merger is part of a strategic vision to consolidate similar activities and en-

hance overall efficiency.

Studies on the merger indicate that it will not negatively impact national labor and is essential for achieving the KPC's 2040 strategy. The consolidation is expected to enable the corporation to increase its production capacity to 4 million barrels per day or more and better meet Kuwait's gas needs, potentially reducing the country's reliance on imports.

The direct merger between the oil companies is expected to result in increased profitability for the entities affiliated with KPC.

This anticipated rise in profits is expected to lead to higher revenues and reduced expenses. The merger aims to address the decline in profits experienced by some companies in the 2023-2024 budget compared to the previous 2022-2023 budget.

By consolidating operations and streamlining management, the merger is projected to enhance operational efficiency, lower costs, and improve financial performance.

This strategic move aligns with the KPC's goals to bolster profitability and achieve better financial outcomes in the coming years.

Experts criticize 700-day drilling timeline

Kuwait Oil Company embarks on marine exploration project

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 14: The Kuwait Oil Company (KOC) has announced the commencement of its marine exploration project, aimed at enhancing the country's hydrocarbon reserves and ensuring the sustainability of oil and gas resources, reports Al-Jarida daily.

The project, led by CEO Ahmed Al-Eidan, will involve drilling six exploratory wells in Kuwait's marine area, which spans over 6,000 square kilometers, representing a significant portion of the country's total land area.

The following are the project details:

Seismic Surveys and Drilling -- The initial phase includes drilling exploratory wells based on two-dimensional seismic surveys to identify optimal offshore drilling sites.

According to opinions of the experts, the success of the initial drilling will determine the next phases of the project.

Dr. Abdul Samie Behbehani criticized the prolonged drilling time of 700 days and suggested the need for faster operations. He emphasized the potential of the Noukhatha field, which contains significant gas and light oil reserves. Behbehani also highlighted the inefficiencies in the oil sector's investment and operations, urging the adoption of modern technology and expertise.

Kamel Al-Harami stressed the importance of involving international oil companies with advanced technology to expedite production processes. He pointed out challenges such as declining production rates and the need for

a specialized offshore oil company in Kuwait. Harami noted that current oil reserves do not align with production demands, affecting local refinery operations.

Dr. Khaled Boodai highlighted the importance of the Noukhatha field in enhancing Kuwait's oil reserves and meeting future market needs. He also emphasized the need to expand renewable energy use to reduce emissions and energy costs, and the potential of hydrogen energy as a future energy source.

Dr. Abdul Mohsen Al-Mutairi emphasized that the exploration strengthens Kuwait's position as a major oil producer and has geopolitical implications. He called for a multi-faceted approach to exploration that includes sustainable practices, advanced technologies, and global partnerships to maximize benefits and minimize environmental impact.

The following are the key take-aways:

Economic and Strategic Impact -- The exploration project is crucial for boosting Kuwait's hydrocarbon reserves and maintaining its position in the global energy market.

Need for Modernization -- There is a call for modernization in drilling operations, investment practices, and technology adoption to improve efficiency and reduce costs.

Sustainability and Future Technologies -- Emphasis on integrating renewable energy and hydrogen technologies to complement traditional hydrocarbon resources and address environmental concerns.

Retail spend in GCC to rise 37% by 2028

GCC cities poised to join elite global shopping destinations

DUBAI, Aug 14: GCC cities can join the world's elite shopping destinations, significantly contributing to urban GDP and employment, improving residents' quality of life, and enhancing offerings to tourists, according to research by Strategy & Middle East, part of the PwC network.

With retail spend in the region expected to increase by 37% from 2022

to reach US\$300 billion by 2028, Strategy &'s latest report titled "Shopping for growth: How to build an urban retail destination" identifies the strong growth potential for the sector to significantly contribute to economic development.

"We see major cities in the GCC region pursuing urban transformation and expansion with mega-projects, di-

versifying economies with the aim of achieving growth," said Rami Sfeir, Partner at Strategy &, and the leader of the family business, investments, and real estate practice in the Middle East. "Within this transformation and expansion is tremendous opportunity to realise the potential for growth in the retail sector, translating to significant opportunity to boost economies," he

added.

Global retail impact
Strategy &'s analysis of six leading shopping destinations – Dubai, London, Milan, New York City, Seoul, and Tokyo – shows significant direct retail spending per capita of \$8,000 to \$18,000 annually. This includes a contribution of up to 24% to urban GDP in these cities, as well as the employment

of up to 20% of the urban workforce in the sector.

According to Strategy &'s analysis, Dubai, the only GCC representative among the six listed cities, records a retail spend per capita of approximately US\$14,000, second only to New York City. Additionally, around 21% of the emirate's workforce is employed in the retail sector – the highest of all six cit-

ies – and the sector contributes an impressive 24% to the urban GDP.

The report notes that retail sectors in these cities support growth of other local businesses, especially in creative industries such as design and fashion, and subsequently boost progress towards broader economic goals, including economic diversification and resilience.

BUSINESS

EKH achieves net profit of \$90m in first half of 2024

Total revenues \$321 mln

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 14: Today, Egypt Kuwait Holding Company (EKH) announced its financial results for the period ending June 30, 2024, prepared in accordance with Egyptian accounting standards.

The company recorded total revenues of \$321 million during the first half of 2024, with a gross profit margin of 42%, and net profit of \$100 million, resulting in a net profit margin of 31%. The net profit attributable to the company's shareholders rose to \$90 million.

Commenting on the Group's performance during the first half of 2024, EKH Chairman Loay Jassim Al-Kharafi stated: "The results of the first half of 2024 reflect the company's resilience and ability to seize opportunities, achieving exceptional profitability despite regional challenges."

Al-Kharafi emphasized the group's commitment to expansion in 2024, noting the recent agreement with the Egyptian Ministry of Petroleum and Mineral Resources which expands the concession areas granted to North Sinai Petroleum Company – an EKH subsidiary that holds the North Sinai offshore concession), with the aim to enhance exploration efforts and increase gas production in the coming period.

He highlighted that the agreement follows the company's success in discovering and commencing production from the expanded concession's first exploratory well, KSE-2, in June 2024. The second well, Aton-1, is expected to commence production in September 2024, further contributing positively to the performance of our subsidiary and EKH overall. This demonstrates our ability to realize the benefits of strategic investments made in recent years, which have played a key role in diversifying and strengthening our investment portfolio.

Al-Kharafi further added that in 2024, the Group has focused on expanding into regional markets and exploring investment in new and diverse sectors. This strategy is aimed at achieving sustainable growth and maximizing the company's foreign currency revenues. He also commended the efforts of the executive management and employees across the company and its subsidiaries for their efforts in executing the board's growth strategy and maximizing returns for shareholders.



Loay Jassim Al-Kharafi



Jon Rökk



Loay Jassim Al-Kharafi:

- The results reflect the company's resilience and its ability to seize opportunities and achieve exceptional profitability despite regional challenges.
- The agreement with the Egyptian Ministry of Petroleum to expand the concession areas granted to North Sinai Petroleum Company is one of the fruits of strategic investments.

Strong Results

Jon Rökk, CEO of Egypt Kuwait Holding, expressed pride in the strong results achieved by the group despite the operational challenges faced during this period, including the devaluation of the Egyptian pound against the US dollar and the slow recovery of global urea prices.

Rökk added that the group's investment portfolio succeeded in achieving strong revenue performance and maintained outstanding operational performance thanks to its commitment to operational excellence, as well as its extensive track record and expertise in the sectors in which it operates.

He stressed the group's commitment to implementing proactive strategies to address potential exchange rate fluctuations. The management is studying opportunities for geographic expansion and investment in new and diverse sectors to achieve sustainable growth and maximize the company's foreign currency revenues while avoiding market

Jon Rökk:

- The group has managed to maintain outstanding operational performance across the various sectors in which it operates and has achieved strong revenue performance during the first half.
- We trust in our team's ability to maximize long-term positive returns for shareholders.

challenges. He affirmed his confidence in the team's ability to maximize long-term positive returns for shareholders and all stakeholders, as we strive to seize attractive growth opportunities.

Fertilizers and Petrochemicals Sector

The fertilizers and petrochemicals sector achieved revenues of \$181 million during the first half of 2024, with a stable net profit margin of 41%. The net profit attributable to the company's shareholders amounted to \$67 million during the same period.

Alexandria Fertilizers Company recorded revenues of \$107 million during the first half of 2024, continuing to achieve strong profitability, with the gross profit margin remaining stable at 38%, and the operating profit margin before interest, taxes, depreciation, and amortization increasing by 2 percentage points to 45% during the first half of 2024, thanks to comprehensive reforms implemented by the company during the period. Additionally, the net profit mar-

gin remained stable at 33%, with the net profit attributable to the company's shareholders reaching \$26 million. The company is expected to achieve strong results in the coming period, supported by forecasts of rising urea prices and stable gas supplies.

Sprea Misr's revenues, denominated in Egyptian pounds, grew by 8% year-on-year due to the gradual improvement in prices, reaching \$74 million. The net profit attributable to the company's shareholders rose by 15% to \$40 million during the first half of 2024 compared to the same period in 2023.

Energy and Energy-Related Activities Sector

The energy and energy-related activities sector recorded revenues of \$83 million during the first half of 2024, with a 4 percentage point increase in net profit margin to 49%. The net profit attributable to the company's shareholders increased by 1% year-on-year to \$37 million during the same period.

NatEnergy recorded revenues of \$55 million during the first half of 2024, with a 6 percentage point increase in net profit margin to 44%, and the net profit attributable to the company's shareholders rose by 3% year-on-year to \$21 million.

Additionally, revenues from the North Sinai offshore gas concession area reached approximately \$29 million during the first half of 2024, with a 2 percentage point increase in net profit margin to 56% during the period. The company continues to achieve positive results, driven by expansion efforts, including increasing the concession area to 440 square kilometers and drilling two new wells.

Insurance and Other Diversified Sectors

Revenues from other diversified sectors amounted to \$57 million during the first half of 2024, driven by the strong performance of Delta Insurance Company during the first quarter of the year. The insurance sector also achieved notable results, benefiting from rising interest rates and the increase in insurance premiums due to the revaluation of insured assets, which will positively impact the sector's performance in the coming period.

Fed edges closer to cutting rates

Inflation likely stayed low last month

WASHINGTON, Aug 14, (AP): If the Federal Reserve needs any further evidence that the worst price spike in four decades is steadily easing, it's likely to come Wednesday, when the government is expected to report that inflation cooled further last month.

Consumer prices are thought to have risen just 0.2% from June to July, according to economists surveyed by FactSet, a pace only slightly above the Fed's 2% annual inflation target. Measured from a year earlier, inflation is forecast to have remained 3%, the same as in June.

Excluding volatile food and energy costs, so-called core prices are also expected to have risen 0.2% from June and 3.2% from 12 months earlier, just below the 3.3% annual increase in June.

For months, cooling inflation has provided gradual relief to America's consumers, who were stung by the price spikes that erupted three years ago, particularly for food, gas, rent and other necessities. Inflation peaked two years ago at 9.1%, the highest level in four decades.

Inflation has taken a central role in the presidential election, with former President Donald Trump blaming the Biden administration's energy policies for the price spikes. Vice President Kamala Harris on Saturday said she would soon unveil new proposals to "bring down costs and also strengthen the economy overall."

Grocery prices are expected to have been largely unchanged from June to July, according to economists at UBS. Over the past year, food prices are up just 1.1%. Still, food costs have soared roughly 21% in the past three years, squeezing many family budgets.

Fed Chair Jerome Powell has said he is seeking additional evidence of slowing inflation before the Fed begins cutting its key interest rate. Economists widely expect the Fed's first rate cut to occur in mid-September.

When the central bank lowers its benchmark rate, over time it tends to reduce the cost of borrowing for consumers and businesses. Mortgage rates have already declined in anticipation of the Fed's first rate reduction.

At a news conference last month, Powell said

Spending at small businesses went up in July as consumers spend more on general goods

NEW YORK, Aug 14, (AP): Consumers spent more at small businesses in July, a rebound fueled by strong sales of general merchandise and health and personal care products.

The Fiserv Small Business Index rose 1 point to 141 after a 4 point decline in June. The figure is derived from point-of-sale transaction data, including card, cash, and check transactions in-store and online across about 2 million U.S. small businesses.

"Following modest declines in June, consumer spending rebounded nicely in July to help many small businesses start the second half of the year strong," said Jennifer LaClair, head of merchant solutions at Fiserv.

Compared with July of last year, sales rose 3.5% and number of transactions rose 3.3%.

"Consumer spending patterns continue to shift, most notably with retail spend experiencing a decisive bounce back compared to

that cooler inflation data this spring had strengthened the Fed's confidence that price increases are falling back to a 2% annual pace. Inflation was low in May, and overall consumer prices slipped 0.1% in June, the first decline in four years.

"It's just a question of seeing more good data," Powell said. Another inflation report will be issued next month before the Fed's Sept. 17-18 meeting, with economists expecting that report to also show that price increases remained mostly tame.

Raphael Bostic, president of the Fed's Atlanta branch, sounded more explicit about rate cuts in remarks he made Tuesday:

"Yes, it's coming," Bostic said in Atlanta at the Conference of African American Financial Professionals. "I want to see a little more data. ... We need to make sure the trend is real ... but it is

June," said Prasanna Dhore, chief data officer at Fiserv. "Specialty trade and professional services also performed very well due to seasonal demand and stabilizing inflation rates."

Retail spending rose 4.6% and retail transactions jumped 5.8%. General merchandise was the strongest category, up 10.9%. Health and personal care products rose 8.6%, building equipment and garden materials rose 6.2%, food and beverage sales rose 4.9% and furniture, electronics and appliances rose 4.7%.

One weak spot was restaurant sales, which slipped 1.6% despite seeing modest growth in foot traffic, up 0.7%. Consumers dining out have also seen a significant decrease in average check size, down 2.4% compared to July 2023, although it was not clear if the decrease came from lower prices or diners ordering less.

coming."

Inflation has eased substantially in the past two years as global supply chains have been repaired, a spate of apartment construction in many large cities has cooled rental costs and higher interest rates have slowed auto sales, forcing dealers to offer better deals to potential car buyers.

Consumers, particularly lower-income ones, are also becoming more price-sensitive, forgoing high-priced items or shifting to cheaper alternatives. This has forced many companies to rein in price hikes or even offer lower prices.

Prices are still rising sharply for some services, including auto insurance and health care. Auto insurance costs have shot up as the value of new and used vehicles has soared compared with three years ago. Economists, though, expect those costs to eventually grow more slowly.

AI race with Apple heats up

Google rolls out Pixel Nine phones earlier than usual

MOUNTAIN VIEW, Calif., Aug 14, (AP): Google on Tuesday unveiled its next generation of Pixel phones, providing the maker of Android software a head start on the next iPhone in the race to bring more artificial-intelligence services to devices that have become people's constant companions.

The showcase held near Google's Mountain View, California, headquarters took place two months earlier than when the company typically rolls out the next models in its Pixel phone line-up, which made its debut eight years ago.

Although Pixel phones still represent a sliver of worldwide smartphone sales, they are still closely watched because they serve as Google's platform for demonstrating the latest advances in the Android operating system that powers virtually every phone not made by Apple.

And Google left little doubt that the Pixel 9 phones are meant to be a vessel for the AI technology that is expected to reshape the way people live and work, just as smartphones in general have done over the past 15 years.

"We are obsessed with the idea that AI can make life easier and more productive for people," Rick Osterloh, a Google senior vice president who oversees the Pixel phones, said Tuesday.

That's similar to the theme Apple is accentuating as it prepares to make AI a centerpiece of the iPhone.

That moment is expected to arrive shortly after Labor Day when Apple traditionally takes the wraps off its next iPhone. The next model, the iPhone 16, is expected to be a big attraction because it will be equipped with the special chip needed to run a suite of AI features. Those features are designed to make Apple's virtual assistant Siri smarter

and perform a wide variety of other tasks that the company is promising will bring more joy to people's lives, while still protecting their privacy.

But Apple's plans for AI remain hazier than Google's vision, and Google is also rolling it out more broadly, including on Samsung phones powered by Android, said Emarketer analyst Grace Harmon. That may increase the pressure on Apple next month when it unveils the next iPhone.

Not surprisingly, the Pixel 9 lineup is also packed with AI technology, a shift that the Google began last October when it released that year's model. This generation of phones will be the first centered around the Gemini technology that's become the focal point of its push into AI.

Just as Apple is aiming to do with Siri, Google has designed its Gemini assistant to be more conversational, providing it with a range of 10 different human-like voices. It's able to handle even more tasks, especially if users are willing to give it access to email and other documents.

In another move mirroring Apple, Google is equipping the Pixel 9 lineup with a special chip enabling many AI-powered services to be handled on the device instead of remote data centers, with the aim of boosting personal privacy and security.

In on-stage demonstrations Tuesday, the Gemini assistant speaking in a voice called "Ursa" was able to come up with helpful ideas for a fun way to use invisible ink when asked to come up with creative ideas.

But the Gemini assistant also stumbled when shown a picture of a poster for singer Sabrina Carpenter, and when asked to let the questioner know when she was performing a concert in the area.

Germany's auto industry's electrification plans falter

BERLIN, Aug 14, (Xinhua): German seat manufacturer Recaro Automotive, known for supplying luxury brands like BMW, Mercedes-Benz, and Lamborghini, has filed for bankruptcy amid a wider trend of German automotive component suppliers facing financial challenges.

Germany, a major player in the global automotive industry, is witnessing a surge in bankruptcies and layoffs among its suppliers. German automotive suppliers are implementing substantial layoffs due to the ongoing economic downturn. ZF Group plans to cut 11,000 to 14,000 jobs in Germany by 2028. Continental has announced layoffs impacting 7,150 employees, and Bosch is set to reduce 1,200 jobs in its software division.

Larger suppliers have shown more resilience, whereas smaller suppliers are approaching insolvency. In the first half of 2024, 20 German automotive component suppliers with annual revenues exceeding 10 million euros (about 10.99 million U.S. dollars) filed for bankruptcy, marking a 60-percent increase from the previous year, according to management consultancy Falkenstep. This surge in bankruptcies is attributed to factors such as inflation, rising energy costs, and weakening consumer demand.

In addition, the declining German economy and decreased demand for domestic automotive components have contributed to reduced demand from German car manufacturers. The German Association of the Automotive Industry reported that car production in 2023 declined by over 10 percent, with 4.1 million cars manufactured compared to 4.7 million in 2019.

The global shift towards automotive electrification is putting significant pressure on German automotive manufacturers and component suppliers. It is predicted that employment in the German automotive supplier industry could decrease from 270,000 to 200,000 by 2030, according to Frank Schopp, an automotive industry lecturer at Hannover University of Applied Sciences. This trend indicates a gradual erosion of the German automotive industry's job capacity.

German components focused on internal combustion engines are increasingly being replaced by batteries and electrification components, which are driving growth in the automotive market. Some German automotive suppliers are compelled to invest in both technology platforms, leading to rising R&D costs. Furthermore, the German government's decision in December 2023 to prematurely end EV subsidies has contributed to consumer hesitancy. New EV registrations in July decreased by 36.8 percent year-on-year, according to the Federal Motor Transport Authority.

The market share of new EV registrations dropped from 15.8 percent in the same period last year to 12.5 percent in the first half of 2024.



Egypt Kuwait Holding

EXCEPTIONAL PROFITABILITY
DESPITE REGIONAL CHALLENGES

Indicators of profits for the first half of 2024

Net Profits

90 Million dollars

Total Revenue

321 Million dollars

Total Shareholders' Equity

447 Million dollars

Total Assets

1.4 Billion dollars



www.ekholding.com

Educating students about latest AI tools offered by Google as part of its educational 'upgrade' initiative

stc organizes 'Google AI Workshop' in collaboration with Injaz Kuwait

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 14: Kuwait Telecommunications Company - stc, a world-class digital leader providing innovative services and platforms to customers, enabling the digital transformation in Kuwait, organized a workshop for university students in collaboration with INJAZ Kuwait, a non-profit non-governmental organization dedicated to inspiring and preparing young people for the global economy. This workshop was part of stc's educational 'upgrade' initiative, aimed at supporting and empowering the younger generation through various programs and initiatives that prepare them for the future.

The "Google AI Workshop" brought together over 30 students from various educational institutions in Kuwait, which included 10 students from Kuwait University from different majors, 14 students from the College of Science at Kuwait College of Science and Technology (KCST), and 10 summer interns enrolled in stc's internship program. The workshop focused on critical areas of career development and innovation, divided into two main sections. The first section was titled 'Head Start' and concentrated on job applications and resume building. The second section was titled 'Innovation' and aimed at fostering creativity and innovative thinking.

Through this collaboration, stc highlighted its commitment to the educational 'upgrade' initiative, which aims to support various educational initiatives amongst the younger generation with the objective to nurture their skills and empower them to become future leaders. The Company emphasized its social responsibility by offering this free workshop to educate students about the latest AI tools offered by Google in addition to familiarizing them with the Company's various departments. In addition to the workshop, stc provided the participants with an opportunity to apply for jobs directly with the Human Resources department.

The workshop was held in conjunction with International Youth Day, celebrated on August 12th, reinforcing stc's dedication to empowering the youth and supporting their educational and professional growth. As part of its commitment to the youth, stc has recently launched 'youth from stc' campaign that aims to cater to the dynamic needs and interests of this important demo-

graphic in Kuwait through customized bundles that include access to additional benefits and experiences. The 'youth from stc' packages feature exclusive deals and offerings in collaboration with esteemed partners across various sectors.

Danah AlJasem, General Manager of Corporate Communications at stc, said, "We are proud to partner with Injaz Kuwait once again to host this unique workshop that educates students on some of the artificial intelligence tools that are available through Google. These educational tools can highly assist students in achieving higher productivity levels that can benefit them in their future careers and businesses. At stc, we value the importance of creativity and innovation in shaping the future of our community and youth alike. By fostering an environment that encourages exploration and growth, we aim to inspire a generation that will become proactive and contributing members within their community."

AlJasem added, "stc extends its gratitude to Injaz Kuwait for organizing this initiative as well as Kuwait University, specifically the Student Union, for their continuous cooperation in all initiatives, in addition to Kuwait College of Science and Technology (KCST), and to the participating students for their engagement. Following our comprehensive CSR program, stc has established various partnerships with well-recognized institutions in the community, including Injaz Kuwait, to create a broader positive impact. Through these collaborative efforts, our goal is to continue providing educational platforms for the younger generation."

About stc

Kuwait Telecommunications Company (stc) is a Kuwaiti shareholding company incorporated pursuant to Amiri Decree No. 187 on 22 July, 2008, to operate and manage the third GSM mobile network in Kuwait as per Law No. 2 of 2008. Accordingly, stc launched its operations in December 2008 and was listed on Boursa Kuwait in December 2014.

stc Kuwait is a world-class digital leader providing innovative services and solutions to customers, both for individuals and enterprises, enabling the digital transformation in Kuwait, and is a subsidiary of stc Group. stc Kuwait has expanded its portfolio by acquiring companies such as Quality



Students participating in the workshop in a group photo with the PR team at stc.



Students' engagement during the workshop.

net General Trading and Contracting Company (solutions by stc) in Kuwait, and e-portal Holding Company and its subsidiaries.

The Conversation

Higher education ranks 10th in US exports

Int'l students contribute \$40 bln to US economy

By Barnett Sherman, Boston University

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



Of the millions of young adults heading off to college this fall, many will be international students. If trends continue, about 1 million students from around the world will come to the U.S. to pursue higher education this year.

These young scholars make a big economic impact. Altogether, they pump more than US\$40 billion into the U.S. economy and support over 368,000 jobs. That's not just paying professors and buying textbooks - it includes everything from renting apartments to late-night DoorDash and Grubhub deliveries. And it's near a record high.

In fact, higher education is the 10th-leading export of the United States, according to the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis - except the export is really an import, of students from around the world.

Think of it this way: If you went to Paris to see the Olympics this year, the Olympics was the export that brought you - the tourist, or, in economic terms, the import - to France. In the complex world of economic balance of trade accounting, international students are the tourists visiting U.S. campuses.

Only economists could think that studying and taking exams is somehow a vacation.

While China, India and South Korea send the most students to the U.S., young people come from around the globe to pursue degrees here. Last year, they represented some 221 nations and territories, including three students from the independent island nation of Tuvalu.

In any of the 50 largest American cities, you'll find at least one college or university with international students on campus. For these communities, global learners offer a most welcome financial aid package.

Consider Boston. With its pantheon of venerable institutions - including Boston University, where I teach multinational finance and trade - the region boasts over 50 colleges and universities. Boston's economic gains from the more than 60,000 international students at these schools are huge: some \$2.7 billion.

Or look at Greater Phila-

delphia. The region's higher education institutions rank fifth nationwide in attracting students from around the world. From the perennially top-drawing University of Pennsylvania - itself ranked in the top 25 for international students - or the more specialized Curtis Institute of Music, together they can expect to host nearly 17,000 international students in fall 2024.

Prestigious private schools are a draw, but hands down the biggest pull for international students are state universities and colleges. Of the nation's top schools enrolling these students last year, 32 were state colleges and universities, attracting over 240,000 students in total.

In the top three of those public institutions alone - Arizona State University, the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign and the University of California, Berkeley - international students contributed nearly \$1.6 billion, supporting close to 16,900 jobs. Expand that to the top 10 - the University of California system takes four of those spots - and the numbers pop up to \$4.5 billion and 47,900 jobs.

But it's not just the geographically sprawling University of California and other large state systems. Mankato, Minnesota, hosts a Minnesota State University campus; in the 2022 academic year, some 1,700 international students called this small city, 80 miles from Minneapolis, their home away from home.

Those students brought an infusion of \$44.9 million into that community, supporting around 190 jobs. There are dozens of similar campuses in cities and towns like Mankato across the country. It adds up quickly.

In addition to private and public universities, community colleges also attract thousands of international students. Although their international enrollment has fallen off in recent years, community colleges still attracted just shy of 53,600 international students in 2023, with China, Vietnam and Japan leading the list.

Generating some \$1.5 billion and supporting 6,620 jobs, they have a major economic impact - particularly in Texas, California and Florida, where the majority of these students come to learn.

One thing's for sure: Whether they're attending small-town community colleges or Ivies in big cities, international students have a "high degree" of economic impact. (AP)

'Verify companies and avoid sharing payment links'

KIB warns of new real estate scams on social media

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 14: Kuwait International Bank (KIB) has issued a warning to its customers about new types of fraud targeting individuals seeking properties for sale, rent, and investment through widely used social media platforms and advertisement applications. The Bank explained that many people have fallen victim to some of these scams, noting that it is cooperating with relevant authorities to mitigate these incidents and identify those responsible. This step is part of KIB's commitment to monitoring all developments related to digital and traditional financial fraud. It also underlines the Bank's continuous support for the "Let's Be Aware" (Diraya) financial awareness campaign, dedicated to promoting financial and banking literacy among all segments of society.

Commenting on the occasion, Dawood Behbehani, Assistant General Manager - Information Security, Privacy and Anti-Fraud Department at KIB, said: "Our efforts continue to yield positive results in combating all fraud trends targeting our customers and community members who use various digital applications and platforms. We have seen a significant increase in attempts to devise new methods for breaching individuals' financial and personal data and stealing their money through dubious and unauthorized means."

Behbehani added: "At KIB, we always urge our customers not to trust unknown sources claiming to specialize in renting or selling properties and apartments, particularly those who of-



KIB's Dawood Behbehani.

fer unrealistic prices. We are committed to our awareness strategy, which focuses on disseminating specific educational materials and content to protect our customers from falling victim to fraud, especially those carried out through social media or digital applications."

Behbehani advised all customers to verify the reliability of companies they communicate with through social media applications regarding renting or selling properties. He emphasized not sharing any personal payment links or making payments for booking apartments or various real estate spaces



Diraya real estate fraud.

without official documents or proof.

It is worth noting that KIB spares no effort in initiating awareness campaigns to educate customers and community members about the importance of maintaining financial security, avoiding fraud, and protecting their money from theft. This includes advising against disclosing any banking or personal confidential information.

KIB disseminates educational content across all its social media pages, participates in relevant events and activities, and keeps up with financial awareness campaigns, foremost among them is the Diraya campaign. These efforts underscore the Bank's commitment to its comprehensive social responsibility strategy, embodied in its main slogan, "Bank for Life."

Bank's mobile app offers secure, fast and convenient banking solutions

Gulf Bank launches 'WAMD' mobile money transfer service

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 14: Gulf Bank has announced the launch of its new "WAMD" service for transferring money using a phone number via the bank's mobile app. This service is designed to be easy, fast, and secure. Customers simply select the recipient's mobile number, specify the transfer amount, and send the money directly.

The "WAMD" "instant payment system, implemented by the Shared Electronic Banking Services Company (KNET) under the supervision of the Central Bank of Kuwait, enables quick and straightforward money transfers.

Mr. Bader Al-Ali, Gulf Bank's Deputy General Manager of Consumer Banking, commented that the "WAMD" service offers customers a new way to transfer funds using the bank's mobile app. The app provides a wide range of payment and transfer features that are among the best and easiest in the banking industry.

Al-Ali emphasized that the Gulf Bank app offers a variety of exceptional banking services tailored to dif-



Bader Al-Ali

■ Bader Al-Ali: This new service is an addition to the many exceptional features already available on the Gulf Bank app.

ferent customer segments, including exclusive services for Gulf Bank customers. The bank is continually developing and innovating to provide even more services.

He also noted that the Gulf Bank



WAMD service

mobile app marks a significant advancement in the bank's digital transformation journey, enhancing various services and all stages of banking transactions. This makes banking with Gulf Bank more convenient, accessible to everyone, everywhere, at any time, through a simple, fast, and secure interface.

Gulf Bank's vision is to be the leading Kuwaiti Bank of the Future. The Bank is constantly engaging and empowering its employees as part of an inclusive and diversified workplace in recognition of every employee's role in delivering customer excellence and serving the community at large. With

its extensive network of branches and innovative digital services, Gulf Bank is able to give its customers the choice of how and where to conduct their banking transactions, all while ensuring a simple and seamless banking experience.

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

Defense claims Swift concert plot allegations exaggerated

VIENNA, Aug 14, (AP) — A lawyer for the main suspect in an alleged plot to attack now-canceled Taylor Swift concerts in Vienna said Tuesday that authorities' presentation of the case is exaggerated, and his client wouldn't have been able to carry out plans that the attorney described as "fantasies."

The 19-year-old Austrian man, whose name hasn't been released because of Austrian privacy rules, was arrested last Wednesday — one of three people who were detained. Hours later, organizers canceled the concerts that Swift was scheduled to play Thursday, Friday and Saturday at the Austrian capital's Ernst Happel Stadium. Fans were devastated by the decision.

Austrian officials have said that the suspect wanted to carry out an attack outside the stadium, killing as many people as possible using knives or home-made explosives. They say that, during a raid of the suspect's home, investigators found chemical substances and technical devices.

Authorities said last week that the man confessed that he had started planning the attack in July. Defense lawyer Werner Tomanek told the Austria Press Agency that he hasn't yet had access to the case files, but cited a "fragmentary record" of his client's initial questioning to dispute their account of a full confession.

"He had neither the means nor the possibility and the explosives to carry this out," Tomanek said. He added that authorities' allegations against the 19-year-old suspect were "overacting at its best," and contended that they are "presenting this exaggeratedly" in order to get new

surveillance powers.

Tomanek said that his client appeared to have mental problems and described him as "a lone wolf without social contacts." He said that "the alleged attack plans were pure fantasies."

The lawyer said that, in his first questioning by investigators, his client had admitted "in principle to Islamist tendencies" and conceded that he had sought and found "contact with such people online." APA reported. He added that the young man did make a pledge of loyalty to the Islamic State group and put it online, but said he deleted it shortly after.

Asked why his client did so, Tomanek replied: "Because he found it cool." He said the man wanted to imitate poses struck by the assailant in a Nov. 2, 2020, attack in Vienna in which four people were killed and the gunman — who had a previous conviction for trying to join IS in Syria — also was killed.

Swift has five concerts at London's Wembley Stadium scheduled starting on Thursday.



Family and friends of actor **Johnny Wactor** called for action Tuesday from the public and officials to help find and convict his killers.

The former "General Hospital" actor was shot on May 25 when he interrupted thieves stealing the catalytic converter from his car in downtown Los Angeles, authorities said. No arrests have yet been made.

"I'm asking that anybody that knows anything please come forward," the actor's mother, **Scarlett Wactor** of South Carolina, said at a news conference outside Los Angeles City Hall. "It will help me and his brothers in our healing to know that they've been captured and convicted."

Police made their own plea for public help on Aug. 5 when they released surveillance images of three unidentified suspects and their getaway car — a stolen 2018 black Infiniti Q50.

Johnny Wactor was born in Charleston, South Carolina, and grew up in the nearby town of Summerville. He portrayed **Brando Corbin** on the ABC soap opera "General Hospital" from 2020 to 2022. He also appeared in films and TV series including "Station 19," "NCIS" and "Westworld."

Scarlett Wactor said previously that her son had left work at a rooftop bar with a coworker when he saw someone at his car and thought it was being towed. A mask-wearing suspect opened fire, his mother said. "Grief is my constant companion," she said Tuesday. "I can't wish him happy birthday on Aug. 31 — he would have been 38. I can't ask if he's coming home for Christmas. I can't ask how his day went."

Others at the news conference called for more action from Mayor **Karen Bass** and other leaders to combat crime.

"We will make sure that no family has to endure the pain that Scarlett is enduring today," City Councilman **Kevin de León** said. "We want justice for Johnny and we shall have it."

Variety



This image released by Submarine Deluxe shows Lou Caldera, from (third left), Wes Clark, and Steve Bullock, in a scene from 'War Game.' (AP)

Film

Film offers political thriller with a dystopian twist

'War Game' recreates US insurrection

NEW YORK, Aug 14, (AP) — Election results are contested. Far-right extremists groups are plotting to overthrow the electoral college vote count. Protesters gather in Washington. TV news screens blare: "Capitol in Chaos."

In the White House Situation Room, the president gathers with advisors to consider their next moves. Only this is not January 6th, 2021, but a simulation of an insurrection very much like it.

In January last year, a group of former generals, senators, governors and civil servants gathered in a Washington D.C. hotel to run an exercise, a war game, to experience the United States on the brink of civil war in January 2025, and, maybe, to find a few ways to avoid a widely shared American nightmare.

In this queasily familiar but slightly alternate reality, the incumbent is President John Hotham, played by the former Montana Gov. Steve Bullock.

"On the one hand, I'm fairly used to dealing with challenging situations," Bullock said in an interview. "Here, it really was between the fog of war and the fog of disinformation, trying to figure out what was right not just for today but for tomorrow. It was definitely a tense six hours."

For those six hours, Bullock and a group of government and military officials — both Democrats and Republicans, many of them highly accomplished — lived through a US coup. And throughout it, directors Tony Gerber and Jesse Moss were there with cameras to catch everything that unfolded.

Their film, "War Game," which opened in theaters around the US recently, is an almost-real political thriller that marries improvisational theater and dystopian science fiction to add up to a sobering documentary about our current political reality. It's a "Dr. Strange-love" for today.

"I couldn't help but feel that it was prophetic, that it would be a kind of crystal ball that would help us peer into a possible future, perhaps to avoid it," says Moss. "We didn't know if the country would descend into civil war."

The game was conceived by Vet Voice Foundation, a nonprofit group for veterans. The group was motivated

by the fact that military veterans were prominent in the Jan. 6 riot at the Capitol; nearly one in five of those charged with their involvement had a military background. A particular inspiration was a Washington Post op-ed by retired US generals who wrote that they were "chilled to our bones" at the possibility of a successful coup, and raised the concern that rogue military units could throw the chain of command into disarray.

"Given what we saw on January 6, anything is plausible," says Retired Gen. Linda Singh, who plays the chief of the National Guard Bureau in the film. "For us, it may not necessarily be active military, but we've seen a lot of veterans in that group, whether they're working for police departments or they're retired. We have to plan for the most extreme."

Fictional

In "War Game," the fictional group of extremists, the Order of Columbus, is led by Kris Goldsmith, an Army veteran who became disillusioned after fighting in Iraq after Sept. 11. In the film, he says he's playing a twisted version of himself. Some 7% of the National Guard are said to be members of the Order of Columbus, which backs Gov. Robert Strickland (the actor Chris Coffey) for the president.

In the mix are some renown politicians and former members of the military who have been known for prioritizing country over politics. They include Retired Gen. Wesley Clark, the former NATO Supreme Allied Commander, the former North Dakota Senator Heidi Heitkamp and Lt. Colonel Alexander Vindman, who in 2019 testified about former President Donald Trump's call to the president of Ukraine in which he asked him to smear his political rivals.

"I take both my testimony in front of Congress and my participation in this movie to be a showcase of career public service, solely interested in the public good and U.S. national security," Vindman says. "You could agree or disagree with some of the decisions that were made, but I think we effectively showcased folks looking out for the U.S."

In that way, "War Game" may less represent a fearful possible future than it does what the dedication of career civil servants looks like. "Those are patriots. All

of them — Democrats and Republicans," says Bullock, a Democrat who was twice elected governor in the large-ly conservative Montana.

"I'd like to think they reflect our political system," says Gerber. "I think they reflect the best of our political system."

"War Game," which nearly matches the title of the 1983 Matthew Broderick nuclear war thriller, Moss calls a kind of prequel to Alex Garland's near-future-set American dystopia "Civil War," released earlier this year. Moss also, with Amanda McBaine, co-directed one of 2024's other notable election-related films: "Girls State," which documents Missouri teenage girls forming a mock government. That film, with Vice President Kamala Harris now the Democratic nominee, Moss considers newly relevant. Meanwhile, "War Game" seems to shift week to week. In one scene, an assassination attempt is discussed as a remote possibility.

"The film seems to change every time it screens," says Gerber. "But the relevance of our film does not end with this election. The issues we currently face did not arise overnight. It's been a long, slow bake to get to this point. We as a nation have a lot of self reflection in store and hopefully 'War Game' is part of that process."

In "War Game," the situation turns perilous. Military bases are compromised. State capitols are overrun. Given the urgency, President Hotham is advised to hack the email of his opponent, who is opposing the peaceful transfer of power, and to declare the Insurrection Act — the possible implementation of which has been a rising anxiety for some analysts. Bullock, playing president but looking the part, opts against such moves, arguing that they have to consider the ramifications down the line.

"Wherever we are on the political spectrum, preserving the rule of law and the underpinnings of this 250-year experiment is pretty damn important," says Bullock. "It is concerning to me that the vice presidential nominee (JD Vance) said if he was Mike Pence he would have done otherwise. But we have got to remember, there are things more important than an individual election and that's sort of the promise that this country has offered."

LOS ANGELES: The 2024 MTV Video Music Awards have moved to a new date because of the forthcoming US presidential debate.

The VMAs will now air live on Sept. 11 at 8 p.m. Eastern from the UBS Arena on **New York's Long Island**, a day later than previously announced.

Last week, ABC News confirmed that the campaigns of both Vice President **Kamala Harris** and former President **Donald Trump** had agreed to participate in a debate on Sept. 10, the previous date of the 2024 VMAs.

On Tuesday, MTV announced the 2024 nominees.

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

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

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

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

Fan voting across 15 gender-neutral categories is currently active online and ends Aug. 30.

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

Performers at the 2024 VMAs include **Sabrina Carpenter**, **Chappell Roan**, **GloRilla**, **Rauw Alejandro** and **Camila Cabello**. (AP)



BEIJING: Domestic comedy "Successor" stayed atop of the Chinese mainland's daily box office on Tuesday, grossing approximately 22.02 million yuan (about 3.08 million U.S. dollars), according to the China Movie Data Information Network.

It was followed by the Chinese animated film "White Snake: Afloat" on the daily box office chart, which raked in about 19.08 million yuan on Tuesday.

The film is based on the classic Chinese tale of the White Snake, one of the most popular folk love stories about the romance between a young man and a snake spirit who has taken



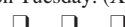
Swift



Beyonce

human form. The third installment of the "White Snake" series, this movie hit the silver screen on the traditional Qixi Festival, also known as Chinese Valentine's Day.

Realistic drama "Upstream," which debuted on Aug. 9, came in third with 18.71 million yuan in revenue on Tuesday. (Xinhua)



CHONGQING: As **Xiao Peng**, 26, met her boyfriend on a bus in Fuling District of southwest China's Chongqing Municipality, the couple instinctively knew what would be the perfect wedding car.

"Compared to traditional wedding car convoys, buses are more eco-friendly and cost-effective," she said, adding that

her wedding party spent the journey singing, taking photos and reminiscing.

However, such unique wedding activities are quite unconventional in China, where traditional weddings are often lavish affairs with long vehicle convoys, numerous customs and a lengthy guest list. (Xinhua)

People & Places

Technology

Political megaphone

Elon Musk uses X to heighten his 'views'

NEW YORK, Aug. 14, (AP) — As X's owner and most followed user, **Elon Musk** has increasingly used the social media platform as a megaphone to amplify his political views and, lately, those of right-wing figures he's aligned with. There are few modern parallels to his antics, but then again there are few modern parallels to Elon Musk himself.

Of course, none of this should come as a surprise. Back in 2022 when he was trying to buy Twitter, Musk said he was doing so because it wasn't living up to its potential as a "platform for free speech." Protecting free speech - not money - was his motivation because, as he put it, "having a public platform that is maximally trusted and broadly inclusive is extremely important to the future of civilization."



Musk

Musk often ruminates on the future of civilization. For one, he appears fixated on a coming "population collapse," threatening to wipe out humanity. And he joined prominent scientists and tech leaders last year in warning the world about artificial intelligence doing the same. Musk has framed threats to free speech as yet another existential crisis looming over the world. And he is going to try his best to save it.

"Free speech is the bedrock of a functioning democracy, and Twitter is the digital town square where matters vital to the future of humanity are debated," Musk said in an April 2022 post, adding hearts, stars and rocket emojis to highlight the statement.

Two years on, the platform - now called X - has indeed become a haven for the type of free speech Musk has come to champion. In the U.S., he's spread memes - and sometimes misinformation - about illegal immigration, alleged election fraud and transgender policies, and he formally endorsed former President Donald Trump's presidential bid this summer.

Glitches

In May 2023, he co-hosted Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis' official presidential bid announcement. That turned out to be a disastrous rollout marred by technical glitches but it underscored Musk's desire to turn X into a "digital town square." After the event was marred by technical difficulties, Musk extended an open invitation to any other presidential candidate who wants to do one. Trump took him up on it, agreeing to an interview with the billionaire Tesla CEO on Monday evening. The conversation started with technical glitches with people unable to join in and began some 42 minutes late.

"I've not been very political before," Musk said during his conversation with Trump.

Overseas - where most X users live - he's feuded with top officials in Australia, Brazil, the European Union and the U.K. over the balance between free speech and the spread of harmful misinformation. And he accused a political party in his native South Africa of "openly pushing for genocide of white people."

"Elon Musk is a master of the media and controls one of the world's largest microphones. Musk understands the power of social media in shaping a political narrative," said Emarketer analyst Jasmine Enberg. "The concern is that as he pushes his own political agenda, X could suppress viewpoints that oppose Musk's own, either intentionally or by nature of the platform becoming more partisan. That could turn off users who feel marginalized on the platform, and disillusion some who may have earlier bought into his free speech mantra."

Musk's political shift playing out on X comes as other social media platforms, notably Meta's Facebook and Instagram, are shying away from politics. Meta CEO Mark Zuckerberg has never endorsed a presidential candidate - and in February, the world's largest social media company announced it would avoid recommending political content to people who don't already follow such accounts.

Lately, Zuckerberg appears to contrast Musk in other ways too. While as recently as January, the Facebook founder was testifying before Congress about the harm his platforms have caused children, he seemed to have embraced a more stylish look that includes gold chains, longer curls and a beaming confidence coupled with slightly self-deprecating humor that seems to embrace his eccentricities. On July 4th, for instance, he posted a video of himself riding an electric surfboard, wearing a tuxedo and holding a can of beer in one hand and an American flag in the other. The online response was far more positive than to a 2021 surfing photo, where he's seen slathered in so much sunscreen it looks like he is wearing a white mask.

Musk, meanwhile, is veering from cool nerd territory into what Kara Swisher, the elder stateswoman of tech journalism, recently called "the Howard Hughes portion" of an inevitable decline. He's sparring with those who disagree with him - be they foreign governments or people infected by what he calls the "woke mind virus."

Responsible

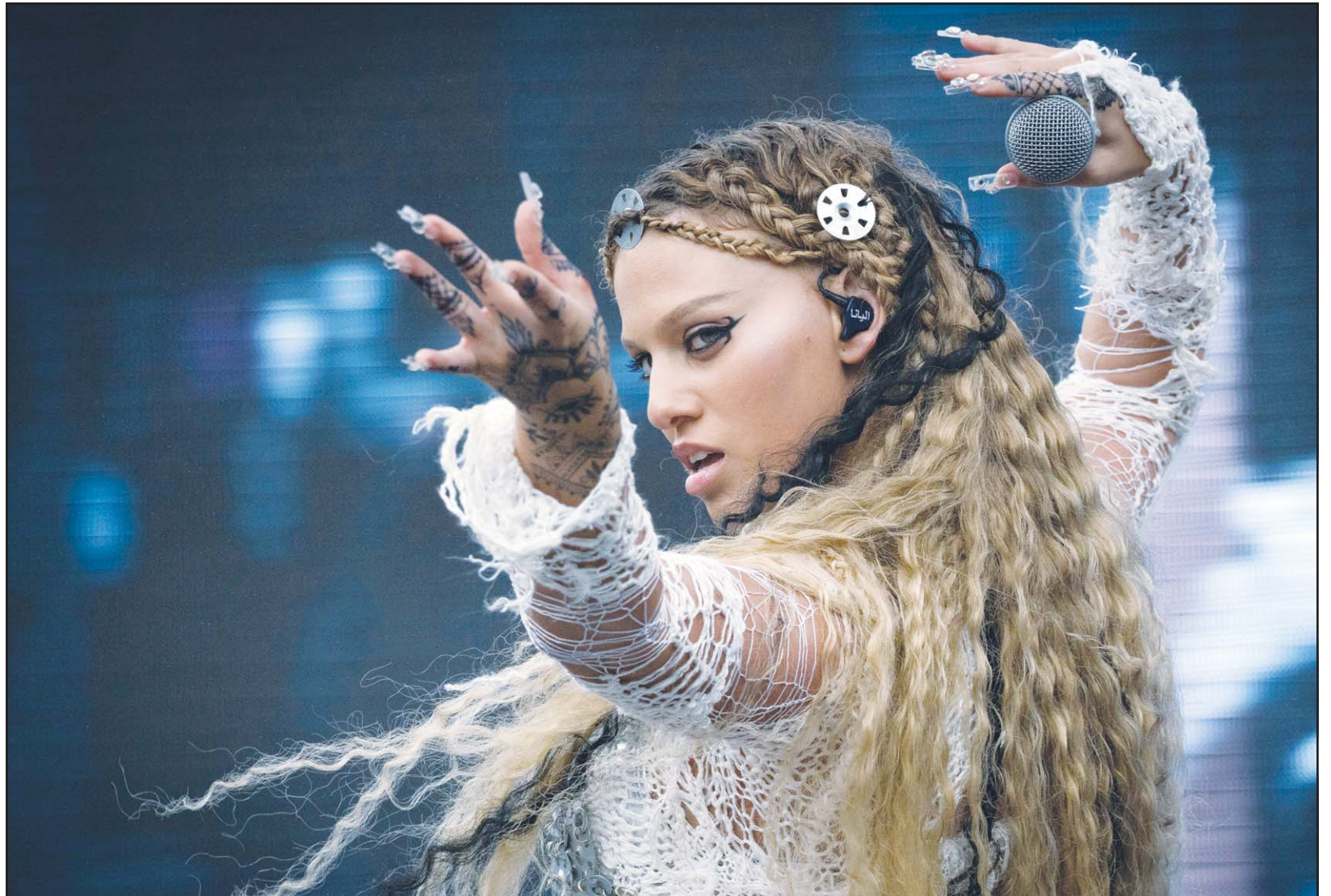
Last week, the British government called on Elon Musk to act more responsibly after the tech billionaire used X to unleash a barrage of posts that risk inflaming violent unrest gripping the country.

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

Officials at X did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

Of course, some of Musk's current battles over free speech are similar to those that the previous Twitter administration was fighting in repressive regimes that have, at times, restricted or blocked access to the platform to suppress dissent. In Venezuela, for instance, President Nicolás Maduro ordered a 10-day block on access to X in the country last week - the latest in a series of efforts by his government to try to suppress information sharing among people voicing doubts about his claim to victory in the July 28 presidential election. Maduro accused X of being used by his opponents to create political unrest, and gave the company 10 days to "present their documents," but he gave no additional details.

Musk's antics are unlike any other Big Tech leader, and while it may be off-putting to a segment of his X user base, it could also attract eyeballs to his platform. Could this all be part of a broader plan? After all, despite publicly criticizing Musk's antics, those on the left continue to use his platform.



Elyanna performs at Outside Lands Music Festival in San Francisco, Sunday, Aug. 11, 2024. (AP)

Stage

Self-loathing blends with love

Modern 'Tristan' opens Bayreuth fest

BAYREUTH, Germany, Aug. 14, (AP) — Thorleifur Örn Arnarsson's phone rang in his Icelandic highlands cabin back in January 2022. Katharina Wagner, the Bayreuth festival director and great-granddaughter of composer Richard Wagner, wanted to get in touch.

She invited Arnarsson to create a new production of "Tristan und Isolde" to open the 2024 festival. He listened to Carlos Kleiber's 1982 recording on Spotify that night and accepted the next day.

"The skies are clear and stars are so bright and the northern lights are very common," he said. "I can't imagine a better place to sit down and close your eyes and listen to 'Tristan und Isolde' than in that place. I immediately had a very strong, almost visceral personal reaction because I understood their struggles so well to try to understand what was going on inside of themselves."

Arnarsson's staging, starring Andreas Schager and Camilla Nylund and conducted by Semyon Bychkov, opened July 25 in a run of seven performances through Aug. 26. Video from opening night can be streamed on Stage+.

Along with the traditional tragic love story, this "Tristan" is a psychoanalytic examination of self-loathing and burdensome expectations. The intellectually dense production with sets by Vytautas Narbutas and costumes by Sibylle Wallum is so layered with symbolism that a study guide would be helpful.

Nylund, who made her role debut two years ago in Zurich, said Arnarsson's aim was to make these legendary characters "very human-like."

"What they have gone through and what they are experiencing, what they are saying, what they are telling, that's something that everybody can find themselves in, also in the audience," she said. "Tristan is caught in his world. He's quite depressed and Isolde

cannot get to him in this depression."

Nylund is in a giant white dress - think Billie Eilish's Oscar de la Renta at the 2021 Met Gala - when the curtain rises, and she scribbles the libretto on it with a quill. Tristan's garment was conceived as oxblood colored, a metaphor for dried blood and wounds.

Arnarsson jettisons the specified love potion and Tristan and Isolde obsess over a death draught - they struggle for it and it falls to the floor, she holds it up to admire and he places it at the lip of the stage. Tristan poisons himself instead of getting stabbed by Melot, who knocks the bottle away from Isolde. She will drink the elixir, too, following Tristan's death and will succumb as she concludes the Liebested.

Opera

In Arnarsson's view, Tristan and Isolde fell in love before the opera starts, when he was wounded while killing her fiancé Morold and Isolde healed him with herbs and spells. Just before the Liebesnacht duet in the second act, Tristan cuts his hand with a sword and Isolde snatches the spear, holds it to Tristan's chest and pulls back the blade.

They start singing of their ardor 20 feet apart before Tristan gets the courage to draw near for an embrace and kiss. He wanders away from Isolde to caress a framed photo of his mother and stare in a mirror - which he puts a fist through when Melot bursts in.

"It has to do with his loneliness that he's felt his whole life," Arnarsson said. "He cannot dare to meet Isolde at face level as himself but he knows that he cannot longer live as the hero."

A ship and King Marke's castle are replaced as settings, first by an abstract open space with 20 dangling ropes connecting contradictory worlds and hole in the stage's center suggesting broken landscape. The second act looks like an estate sale chock-full of tchotchkes, but on closer examination

it is brimming with musical instruments, clocks, electronics, gauges, statues, stuffed animals, an old globe and paintings - Caspar David Friedrich's "The Port of Greifswald" is notable. The third act is detritus of the first two as Narbutas highlights humanity's toll on the planet.

"The set is not a ship but cosmic monster," Narbutas wrote in an email. "Inside of it ribs are body organs, pipes, intestines, big machine - heart, wheels, lungs and etc., which devours civilization and nature, which is represented by various artifacts, tools and objects of nature."

Sascha Zauner's stark lighting can get eerie. He illuminates the stage in a yellow glow for a portion of the third act with discontinued sodium-vapor lamps that take five minutes to reach full intensity.

Schager struggled through the third performance on Aug. 6 and wound up mouthing part of the third act while cover Tilmann Unger sang from the side of the stage. Bychkov had no advance word and noticed the change while conducting from his chair in the famous covered orchestra pit. Schager returned three days later in good voice.

Nylund's eyes were bug-eyed for much of the night Friday, emphasizing a never-ending love-hate in a captivating performance. Christa Mayer was a standout as Isolde's maid Brangäne in a cast that included Olafur Sigurdsson as Tristan's servant Kurwenal, Günther Groissböck as Marke and Birger Radde as Melot.

Bychkov conducted his first fully staged "Tristan" at the Lyric Opera of Chicago in 2000. He led a sumptuous performance from the intensity and spacing of the opening motif.

"In one given performance or in a lifetime, none of us can realize everything that there is there at once," he said. "We'll realize certain elements of it, but not the whole thing because the whole thing is unrealizable - completely."



Actor Michael Keaton poses with a performer during a promotional event for the movie Beetlejuice 2 in Mexico City, Tuesday, Aug. 13. (AP)



Dickerson



Young Thug

Variety

ATLANTA: Jurors in the long-running racketeering and gang prosecution against rapper **Young Thug** and others returned to an Atlanta courtroom Monday after an eight-week pause to find a new judge on the bench.

The jury was already on a break in early July when the trial was put on hold to allow a judge to determine whether the judge overseeing the case should be removed. Two weeks later, **Fulton County** Superior Court Chief Judge **Ural Glanville** was removed from the case after two defendants sought his recusal, citing a meeting the judge held with prosecutors and a state witness.

Fulton County Superior Court Judge **Paige Reese Whitaker** was appointed to take over the case. After she denied motions for a mistrial, the trial resumed Monday with **Kenneth Copeland** returning to the witness stand. The Atlanta Journal-Constitution reported.

Young Thug, a Grammy winner whose given name is **Jeffery Williams**, was charged two years ago in a sprawling indictment accusing him and more than two dozen others of conspiring to violate Georgia's anti-racketeering law. He also is charged with gang, drug and gun crimes.

He is standing trial with five other people indicted with him.

Brian Steel, a lawyer for Young Thug, has said his client is innocent and seeks to clear his name through a fair trial.

Lawyers for Young Thug and co-defendant **Deamonte Kendrick** had filed motions seeking Glanville's recusal. They said the judge held a meeting with prosecutors and prosecution witness Copeland at which defendants and defense attorneys were not present. The defense attorneys argued the meeting was "improper" and that the judge and prosecutors had tried to pressure the witness to testify.

Glanville's colleague, Judge **Rachel Krause**, did not fault Glanville for holding the meeting but said he should be removed to preserve the public's confidence in the judicial system. (AP)

LOS ANGELES: **John Dickerson** and **Maurice DuBois** will co-anchor the "CBS Evening News" following the departure of **Norah O'Donnell** later this year, the network said recently.

Dickerson is a former host of "Face the Nation" and "CBS This Morning" for the network. The former Time magazine White House correspondent has been anchoring a nightly newscast for CBS' streaming service most recently.

DuBois, a veteran anchor for CBS' local affiliate in New York City, has also contrib-

uted reporting to various CBS newscasts.

The storied newscast, which **Walter Cronkite**, **Dan Rather** and **Katie Couric** have anchored, has been third in the ratings to ABC's "World News Tonight" and NBC's "Nightly News" for years.

O'Donnell, who is becoming a special correspondent focusing on big interviews for CBS, didn't move the needle.

Bill Owens, executive producer of CBS

News' most successful broadcast, "60 Minutes," will also become supervisor of the evening news, said **Wendy McMahon**, president and CEO of CBS News and Stations. Owens appointed veteran "60 Minutes" hand **Guy Campanile** as executive producer of the evening news.

The Washington-based **Margaret Brennan**, moderator of "Face the Nation," will lead the broadcast's coverage of political

and foreign affairs. The evening news, which broadcast from a **Washington** studio to accommodate O'Donnell, will move back to New York, CBS said. (AP)

NEW YORK: Paramount Global is restructuring its TV-production business as part of a cost-cutting effort and what the company said were significant changes in the TV and streaming marketplaces.

Paramount on Tuesday said that Paramount Television Studios was shutting down at the end of the week, and that its sister TV unit -- CBS Studios -- would absorb the production of Paramount shows as a result of the move. CBS Studios produces content for the CBS network, Paramount+ and other platforms.

"For decades, Paramount has been one of the pre-eminent producers of television shows," said The Wall Street Journal in its report about the move. Paramount Television Studios recently produced several hits for streaming services including "13 Reasons Why" for Netflix, "Reacher" for Amazon Prime Video and "Defending Jacob" for Apple TV+.

"Over the past several years, however, the studio has shrunk in size and status -- a victim of industry consolidation and challenges facing its parent company," noted The Journal.

The move is part of a shake-up at Paramount Global that will result in about 15 percent of its US workforce being eliminated, or a cut of approximately 2,000 jobs. Paramount Global parent National Amusements is in the process of being acquired by Skydance Media in a complex deal that would result in the combination of Paramount and Skydance. (Xinhua)



This August 2024 photo shows director Thorleifur Örn Arnarsson outside the Bayreuth Festspielhaus in Bayreuth, Germany during rehearsals for his production of Wagner's "Tristan und Isolde." (AP)

'Domestic cats may transmit avian flu to humans'

23 species of mammals found infection of H5 bird flu in US

LOS ANGELES, Aug 14, (Xinhua): The outbreak of H5 bird flu in the United States has showed up in more animal species, including 23 species of mammals, according to the US Department of Agriculture.

The department's website tracking the virus updated Tuesday that Influenza A, also known as HPAI, Highly Pathogenic Avian Flu H5N1, had been detected in many mammals, such as deer mouse, house mouse, desert cottontail, prairie vole, raccoon, striped skunk, red fox, mountain lion, bobcat and black bear.

"There are many species that are potentially susceptible to highly

pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI)," the website said. "In addition to birds and poultry, H5N1 viruses have been detected in some mammals. Infection may cause illness, including severe disease and death in some cases."

The department noted that due to the increased interest in domestic cats associated with the HPAI outbreak, the authority collected the concerned information since March and reported them to World Organization for Animal Health (WOAH).

"As companion animals, domestic cats provide a potential pathway for avian influenza viruses to spillover into

humans," according to Kristen Coleman, an assistant professor at the School of Public Health of the University of Maryland and an affiliate professor at Department of Veterinary Medicine, reported in the university's news outlet in June.

"We looked at the global distribution and spread of bird flu infections in feline species between 2004 and 2024 and found a drastic rise in reports of feline infections starting in 2023, with a spike in infections reported among domestic cats, as opposed to wild or zoo-kept animals. This increase coincides with the rapid spread of the current strain of H5N1 among mammals," Coleman added.

Bird flu is not currently reported to be contagious between humans, and it is not guaranteed to evolve in that direction, but the disease is clearly changing, the report warned. "The current strain of the H5N1 has been spreading to animals that have never been affected before, and pets that can pass it to people could play a role in how it evolves."

Bird flu, a virus usually spread among wild birds and domesticated poultry, made the leap to dairy cattle in the United States in December or January, and has since spilled to other species of animals.

Since the emergence of H5N1 in US dairy cattle, 35 domestic cats have been reported to be infected to date, while no known human cases of H5N1 have been linked to exposure to infected cats, according to health officials.

"It's just remarkable how fast and furious it's moving. So I hope we can get a handle on it soon," said Kay Russo, a Colorado veterinarian who has worked with both dairy cows and poultry, which have been hard hit by the virus this year.

In Colorado, six feline cases of Influenza A have been diagnosed in domestic cats so far this year, according

to the Colorado Veterinary Medical Association's website.

The federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) continued to state that the risk to the general public is low. However, Russo said the surge of confirmed cases raise the level of concerns.

"People with direct contact to infected cats should be considered at the same risk as those in direct contact with other infected animals, such as cows or poultry," she wrote in an email to Colorado Public Radio Tuesday. "The risk of human infection from contact with cats is not well understood."

Unlocking the complexities of cancer

Paige's AI models to revolutionize cancer diagnosis and treatment

NEW YORK, Aug 14, (AP): Paige, a global leader in clinical AI applications for cancer, in collaboration with Microsoft, has unveiled the second generation of Virchow, its million-dollar foundation model for cancer. As additions to Paige's suite of foundation models, the world's largest and most advanced AI models in clinical pathology, Virchow2 and Virchow2G offer a deeper understanding of cells and tissue, aiming to redefine cancer diagnosis and treatment.

Built with a diverse dataset of over 3 million pathology slides from over 800 labs and 45 countries, Virchow2 and Virchow2G offer unparalleled data diversity and depth. Trained using de-identified data from over 225,000 patients, these models encompass a broad spectrum of gender, race, ethnicity, and geographical regions, providing a more holistic understanding of cancer.

This comprehensive dataset also includes over 40 different tissue types stained with H&E and diverse immunohistochemical (IHC), making it suited to a wider variety of applications. With an impressive 1.8 billion parameters, tripling the size of previous models, Virchow2G is the largest pathology model ever created. Trained in collaboration with Microsoft researchers and using Microsoft's advanced supercomputing infrastructure, these models set a new record in AI training scale, surpassing previous performance standards, as showcased in a recently published technical report.

Collaboration

"Our collaboration with Microsoft has been pivotal in the development of Virchow, which has already earned recognition in Nature Medicine," said Thomas Fuchs, Dr.Sc., Founder and Chief Scientist of Paige. "We are merely scratching the surface of what these foundation models can achieve in transforming our understanding of cancer through computational pathology. Virchow's immense scale unlocks key information that can be used to drive groundbreaking innovations, enabling precise diagnostics, targeted treatments, and personalized patient care. This is the beginning of a new era in oncology, where technology and science converge to combat cancer more effectively than ever before."

"This second generation of Paige's Virchow model outperforms anything in the industry and continues to grow in knowledge and capability, bringing us closer to making precision medicine a reality," said Razik Yousfi, Senior Vice President of Technology at Paige. "We are not only expanding capabilities, increasing accuracy, and reducing time in the cancer diagnosis process, but also pushing the boundaries of what's possible. Our goal is to continue to bring the most advanced AI

Mental health in focus

New push to ban use of cellphones in US schools

SACRAMENTO, Calif., Aug 14, (AP): California and South Carolina could become the next states to limit cellphone use in schools, with state officials taking up the issue Tuesday.

California Gov. Gavin Newsom is sending letters to school districts, urging them to restrict students' use of smartphones on campus. South Carolina's State Board of Education took up guidelines to tell local districts to ban cellphone use during class time, but postponed a final vote until next month to take more time to craft the proposal.

The efforts mark a broader push by officials in Utah, Florida, Louisiana and elsewhere to try to limit cellphone use in schools in order to reduce distractions in the classroom - and address the impacts of social media on the mental health of children and teens.

But progress can be challenging. Cellphone bans are already in place at many schools, but they aren't always enforced.

Districts should "act now" to help students focus at school by restricting their smartphone use, Newsom said in the letter. He also cited risks to the well-being of young people, a subject which garnered renewed attention in June after US Surgeon General Vivek Murthy called on Congress to require warning labels on social media platforms.

"Every classroom should be a place of focus, learning, and growth," the Democrat said in his letter. "Working together, educators, administrators, and parents can create an environment where students are fully engaged in their education, free from the distractions on the phones and pressures of social media."

to pathology, leading to better patient outcomes and significant advancements in disease understanding and treatment."

To aid in the detection of cancer, Paige has used its foundation model technology to develop a universal clinical AI application for pathologists to aid in the identification and diagnosis of cancer across over 40 tissue types. Diagnosis can often be time-consuming and error prone, but AI can help the pathologist identify even rare cancers rapidly and accurately highlight each

Newsom said earlier this summer that he was planning to address student smartphone use, and his letter says he is working on it with the state Legislature. Tuesday's announcement is not a mandate but nudges districts to act.

Regulation (cross head)

Newsom signed a law in 2019 granting districts the authority to regulate student smartphone access during school hours.

The debate over banning cellphones in schools to improve academic outcomes is not new. But officials often resort to bans as a solution rather than find ways to integrate digital devices as tools for learning, said Antero Garcia, a professor at Stanford University's Graduate School of Education.

"What I'm struck by is society's inability to kind of move forward and find other kinds of solutions other than perpetually going back to this 'Should we ban devices?' conversation as the primary solution to something that hasn't worked," Garcia said.

"Suggesting curtailing cellphone use in schools is a great thing to say," he added. "What that means for the middle school teacher come next week when many schools start is a very different picture."

Some schools and districts in California have already taken action. The Santa Barbara Unified and Los Angeles Unified school districts passed bans on student cellphone use in recent years.

But some school board advocates say the state should not go further by passing a blanket ban on cellphone use. That decision should be left up to districts, said Troy Flint, spokesperson for the California School Boards Association.

area of concern for further review by the pathologist, making it easier and more efficient for them to assess and reach a diagnosis. 1,2,3

Beyond cancer detection, and to better understand the genetic markers of cancer, Paige has also developed AI modules that serve as pre-built solutions for life sciences, pharmaceutical companies, and research entities. These modules enable precise therapeutic targeting, novel biomarker identification, and optimized clinical trial design.

What is it and what's the WHO doing?

Mpox has been declared a public health emergency across Africa

LONDON, Aug 14, (AP): The Africa Centers for Disease Control and Prevention declared this week that the increasing spread of mpox across the continent is a health emergency, warning the virus might ultimately spill across international borders.

On Wednesday, the World Health Organization is convening its own expert meeting to consider making a similar emergency declaration over mpox. The UN health agency said there have been more than 14,000 cases and 524 deaths this year, which already exceed last year's figures.

So far, more than 96% of all cases and deaths are in a single country - Congo. Scientists are concerned by the spread of a new version of the disease there that might be more easily transmitted among people.

Here's a look at what we know about mpox, and what might be done to contain it:

Mpox, also known as monkeypox, was first identified by scientists in 1958 when there were outbreaks of a "pox-like" disease in monkeys. Until recently, most human cases were seen in people in central and west Africa who had close contact with infected animals.

In 2022, the virus was confirmed to spread via sex for the first time and triggered outbreaks in more than 70 countries that had not previously reported mpox.

Causes

Mpox belongs to the same family of viruses as smallpox but causes milder symptoms like fever, chills and body aches. People with more serious cases can develop lesions on the face, hands, chest and genitals.

The number of cases has jumped dramatically. Last week, the Africa CDC reported that mpox has now been detected in at least 13 African countries. Compared with the same period last year, the agency said cases are up 160% and deaths have increased by

19%.

Earlier this year, scientists reported the emergence of a new form of mpox in a Congolese mining town that can kill up to 10% of people and may spread more easily.

Unlike in previous mpox outbreaks, where lesions were mostly seen on the chest, hands and feet, the new form of mpox causes milder symptoms and lesions on the genitals. That makes it harder to spot, meaning people might also sicken others without knowing they're infected.

WHO said mpox was recently identified for the first time in four East African countries: Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda and Uganda. All of those outbreaks were linked to the epidemic in Congo.

In the Ivory Coast and South Africa, health authorities have reported outbreaks of a different and less dangerous version of mpox that spread worldwide in 2022.

Africa CDC Director General Dr. Jean Kaseya said the agency's declaration of a public health emergency was meant "to mobilize our institutions, our collective will and our resources to act swiftly and decisively." He appealed to Africa's international partners for help, saying that the escalating caseload in Africa had largely been ignored.

"It's clear that current control strategies aren't working and there is a clear need for more resources," said Michael Marks, a professor of medicine at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. "If a (global emergency declaration) is the mechanism to unlock these things, then it is warranted," he said.

During the global outbreak of mpox in 2022, gay and bisexual men made up the vast majority of cases and the virus was mostly spread through close contact, including sex.

Although some similar patterns have been seen in Africa, children under 15 now account for more than 70% of the mpox cases and 85% of deaths in Congo.

Ahead of its emergency meeting on mpox, WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said officials were dealing with several mpox outbreaks in various countries with "different modes of transmission and different levels of risk."

"Stopping these outbreaks will require a tailored and comprehensive response," he said.

Greg Ramm, Save the Children's Congo director, said the organization was particularly worried about the spread of mpox in the crowded camps for refugees in the east, noting there were 345,000 children "cramped into tents in unsanitary conditions." He said the country's health system was already "collapsing" under the strain of malnutrition, measles and cholera.

Also:

MOGADISHU: The Somali Ministry of Health and Human Services has launched an awareness campaign on mpox, which has emerged as a public health emergency of major concern in Africa amid a surge in cross-border transmission.

The ministry said in a health alert released Tuesday that the campaign will provide information on symptoms of the virus, preventive measures, its risks, and how mpox is transmitted.

The ministry said its surveillance team has not detected or reported any cases of the disease in Somalia. "However, Kenya, a neighboring country, has confirmed the presence of the disease with one case. Therefore, the Ministry of Health considers the situation a significant health threat that requires full vigilance."

The ministry said its health workers will use social media, posters, and pamphlets to disseminate information across the country about mpox, whose prevention and control rely on raising awareness in communities and educating health workers to prevent infection and stop transmission.

Philippines sees 136,161 dengue cases, 364 deaths

MANILA, Aug 14, (Xinhua): Dengue cases in the Philippines surged to 136,161 from January to Aug. 3 this year, with at least 364 deaths, the country's Department of Health (DOH) said Tuesday.

"Fewer deaths continue to be recorded this year despite the rising number of cases," DOH spokesperson Assistant Secretary Albert Domingo said.

He attributed the relatively lower number of deaths this year to "people seeking early consultation and hospitals doing better management."

Domingo urged the public to be vigilant, reminding them that dengue cases

"are still on an uptrend."

Dengue is endemic in the Philippines. Water-borne infectious diseases, including dengue, usually peak at the start of the rainy season from July to October due to fluctuating weather conditions, flooding, and accumulation of contaminated water.

Meanwhile, DOH said Tuesday that leptospirosis cases have continued to rise after the July 24 severe flooding that hit Metro Manila and nearby provinces.

From January to Aug. 3, DOH tallied 2,115 cases and 224 deaths. The most recent epidemiologic data recorded 255 new leptospirosis cases from July 21 to

Aug. 3, 17 percent higher than the 217 cases recorded from July 7 to 20.

"The DOH epidemiologists continue to be cautious in interpreting trends as there may be late reports," DOH spokesperson Assistant Secretary Albert Domingo said. The incubation period of leptospirosis ranges from two to 30 days, with a clinically observed average of seven to 14 days.

At least two government hospitals in Metro Manila have expressed concern over the rising number of leptospirosis patients, forcing them to set up additional wards to accommodate more patients, especially those requiring dialysis.

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Moerat to captain the 2023 World Cup champions

Boks make 10 starting lineup changes for 2nd test against Australia

PERTH, Australia, Aug 14, (AP): Scrumhalf Morne van den Berg and lock Ruan Nortje were expected to earn their first test starts in a South Africa team with 10 changes to the starting lineup which beat Australia last weekend in the first round of the Rugby Championship.

Salmaan Moerat will captain the 2023 World Cup champions from lock while regular captain Siya Kolisi was one of nine players from

last Saturday's 33-7 victory over the Wallabies at Brisbane who has been rotated in the squad.

The teams will play at Perth, Western Australia on Saturday.

RUGBY

Loose forward Marco van Staden was promoted from the bench to take Kolisi's No. 6 jersey, while the players retaining starting places

were wing Cheslin Kolbe, center Jesse Kriel, flyhalf Sacha Feinberg-Mngomezulu, No. 8 Elrigh Louw and Pieter-Steph du Toit, who moves from lock to flanker.

Springbok coach Rassie Erasmus says the reason for the wholesale changes was a desire to expand his squad's depth.

"We made it clear from the outset this season that one of our main goals is to build squad depth with an

eye on the next Rugby World Cup here in Australia, and we feel there is no better way to test some of the younger players and assess where we are as a group against a top-tier nation, especially away from home, in this match," Erasmus said in a statement Wednesday.

"We have a group of about 45 players that are part of our wider squad this season and we've seen what most of these players can do.

We feel this is the right time to test them against an Australian outfit that will be desperate to bounce back strongly from last weekend."

Australia had won its first three matches of the season, beating Wales twice and defeating Georgia, before losing to the Springboks last weekend. The Wallabies were expected to name their team for the Perth test on Thursday.

South Africa: Aphelele Fassi,

Cheslin Kolbe, Jesse Kriel, Lukhan-yo Am, Makazole Mapimpi, Sacha Feinberg-Mngomezulu, Morne van den Berg, Elrigh Louw, Pieter-Steph du Toit, Marco van Staden, Ruan Nortje, Salmaan Moerat (captain), Thomas du Toit, Johan Grobbelaar, Jan-Hendrik Wessels; Reserves: Malcolm Marx, Ox Nche, Vincent Koch, Eben Etzebeth, Kwagga Smith, Grant Williams, Manie Libbok, Handre Pollard.

Mou's Fenerbahce fail to reach revamped Champions League



Dynamo Kyiv goalkeeper Georgiy Bushchan, (right), punches the ball away during the UEFA Champions League, third qualifying round, second leg soccer match against Glasgow Rangers at Hampden Park in Glasgow, Scotland. (AP)

Goalkeeper Szczesny set to leave Juventus

ISTANBUL, Aug 14, (Agencies): Jose Mourinho's hopes of leading Fenerbahce into the revamped Champions League ended when the Turkish team was knocked out in the third qualifying round by Lille.

Lille advanced as the 3-2 winner after two legs as Jonathan David converted a penalty in the 118th minute to secure a 1-1 draw after extra time.

Fenerbahce scored in the first minute of second-half stoppage time through Bafode Diakite's own-goal to go 1-0 ahead in the second leg in Istanbul and take the match to extra time. Lille won the first leg 2-1.

SOCCER

Mourinho was hired in June on an \$11 million annual salary to try to win Fenerbahce's first Turkish league title since 2014. He was attempting to get his new team into the revamped 36-team league stage of the Champions League, which he won with Porto in 2004 and Inter Milan in 2010.

Also:

WARSAW: Wojciech Szczesny will leave Juventus before the start of the new season as the Polish goalkeeper agreed to terminate his contract by mutual consent.

Coach Thiago Motta informed the Polish international that there would be no place for him in the team. In

French prosecutors investigate gender-based cyber harassment of Algerian Olympic champ Imane Khelif

PARIS, Aug 14, (AP): French prosecutors opened an investigation into an online harassment complaint made by Olympic boxing champion Imane Khelif after a torrent of criticism and false claims about her sex during the Summer Games, the Paris prosecutor's office said Wednesday.

The athlete's lawyer Nabil Boudi filed a legal complaint with a special unit in the Paris prosecutor's office that combats online hate speech on Friday.

Boudi said the boxer was targeted by a "misogynist, racist and sexist

campaign" as she won gold in the women's welterweight division, becoming a hero in her native Algeria and bringing global attention to women's boxing.

The prosecutor's office said it had received the complaint and its Office for the Fight against Crimes against Humanity and Hate Crime had opened an investigation on charges of "cyber harassment based on gender, public insults based on gender, public incitement to discrimination and public insults on the basis of origin."

Khelif was unwillingly thrust into a worldwide clash over gender identity and regulation in sports after her first fight in Paris, when Italian opponent Angela Carini pulled out just seconds into the match, citing pain from opening punches.

False claims that Khelif was transgender or a man erupted online, and the International Olympic Committee defended her and denounced those peddling misinformation. Khelif said that the spread of misconceptions about her "harms human dignity."



Fenerbahce's head coach Jose Mourinho, (right), walks during the Turkish Super Lig soccer match between Fenerbahce and Adana Demirspor in Istanbul. (AP)

July, Juventus signed Michele Di Gregorio, who will probably be the number one between the posts.

For Juventus, the problem was Szczesny's high salary, which according to Italian media is around seven million euros per year. The Pole's contract runs until July 2025. However, both parties reached an agreement to terminate the contract before the start of this season.

"I really believe in loyalty and fulfilling contracts. I never forced any transfer. But loyalty for me is also such a situation that if the club that gave you a lot needs to break the terms of the contract and needs your help, then you are also able to help," Szczesny was quoted as saying by Polish media "Foot Truck" on Wednesday.

The goalkeeper joined Juventus in 2017. He played 252 matches for the Italian team.

Barca confirm sale of Araujo

Man U sign De Ligt, Mazraoui after selling off Wan-Bissaka

MANCHESTER, England, Aug 14, (Agencies): Manchester United signed Netherlands center back Matthijs de Ligt and Morocco full back Noussair Mazraoui from Bayern Munich.

The 25-year-old De Ligt agreed to a five-year deal, with the option to extend for a further year.

The 26-year-old Mazraoui, who can play as a right back or left back, has a contract until June 2028, also with the option to extend for a further year.

No transfer fees were announced but British media reported United was paying 60 million pounds (\$77 million) for Mazraoui and De Ligt.

United earlier Tuesday sold Aaron Wan-Bissaka to Premier League rival West Ham for a reported fee of 15 million pounds (\$19 million) to end a five-year spell at United. One of the best one-on-one defenders in the English game, Wan-Bissaka will compete with Vladimir Coufal for the right-back spot at West Ham. Wan-Bissaka returns to London, having started his career at Crystal Palace.

SOCCER

It completes a huge shake-up of United's defense, with the club having already bolstered its back line in this transfer window by signing 18-year-old center back Leny Yoro from Lille for 62 million euros (\$68 million).

England forward Cole Palmer has signed a two-year contract extension that ties him to Chelsea until 2033, the Premier League club said Tuesday.

Palmer joined from Manchester City in September last year and was one of the best players in the Premier League, finishing the campaign with 22 goals - only behind Manchester City's Erling Haaland - and securing a place in England's squad for the European Championship.

The 22-year-old Palmer scored for England as a substitute in a 2-1 loss to Spain in the final.

He is now signed to Chelsea for the next nine years, continuing the club's policy of tying down its young players to long-term deals.

"I achieved a lot in my first season here," he said, "and hopefully I can continue to experience great things at this club, both on a personal level and in terms of bringing success and trophies to Chelsea."

Palmer is on the six-man shortlist for the Professional Footballers' As-

sociation player of the year. The winner will be announced on Aug. 20.

FC Barcelona have confirmed the sale of Mexico full back Julian Araujo to English Premier League side Bournemouth for a fee in the region of 10 million euros (11 million U.S. dollars).

The 23-year-old leaves Barcelona after joining from Los Angeles Galaxy in February 2023 but without making a single official appearance for the club.

The U.S. born defender arrived after the winter transfer window had closed in 2023 and alternated training sessions with the Barca first team and B-team, before playing a friendly in Japan at the end of June.

Araujo spent last season on loan with Las Palmas, making 28 appearances in LaLiga and scoring two goals, before returning to Barcelona for pre-season. He went on Barca's pre-season tour of the U.S. and played in their friendly game against Manchester City, although he played on the right of midfield and not as full back.

Barcelona will point to the six-million profit they made on the player, who only cost four million euros from LA Galaxy, but that fails to take into account the wages the defender earned over the past year and a half.

Sao Paulo have signed central defender Ruan Tressoldi on loan from Italy's Sassuolo, the Brazilian Serie A club said on Tuesday.

Tressoldi, who has two years left on his Sassuolo contract, will be tied to Sao Paulo until next June. The agreement includes an option for Sao Paulo to secure the 25-year-old on a permanent deal when the loan period ends.

"It's a good deal for us because if the loan goes well, we complete the signing," Sao Paulo football director Carlos Belmonte said, adding that Tressoldi was a direct replacement for center-back Diego Costa, who departed last month to join Russia's Krasnodar.

Tressoldi has made 64 first-team appearances for Sassuolo since joining the club from Gremio in August 2021.

Sassuolo were relegated to Italian football's second tier after finishing 19th in the 20-team Serie A last season.

Sao Paulo are currently fifth in Brazil's top-flight standings, five points behind leaders Botafogo.

Giroud makes Los Angeles FC debut

LOS ANGELES, Aug 14, (AP): Olivier Giroud made his Los Angeles FC debut Tuesday night during a Leagues Cup Round of 16 match against the San Jose Earthquakes.

The 37-year-old French striker came on as a substitute in the 71st minute of LAFC's 4-1 victory. He had a chance inside the box in the 90th minute, but his shot was blocked by San Jose's Daniel Munie near the goal.

Giroud signed with LAFC in May and had his first practice with the club on Aug. 3. He comes to the United States after spending 18 years in the top professional leagues in France, England and Italy. That included the past four seasons with AC Milan. He has 285 goals in 716 club matches.

"I wish I could play even more tonight, but it was a good first step. I'm

looking forward to the next game," Giroud said. "I need my fitness back. When you restart a season you need to work hard at training, but I understand what the manager is expecting from me and I will try to get ready as soon as possible."

Prior to Tuesday night, Giroud's most recent action was with France last month in the European Cham-

SOCCER

ionship. He came off the bench in four games, including a 2-1 loss to eventual champion Spain in the semifinals on July 9.

Giroud is the second French player on LAFC, joining goalkeeper and former national teammate Hugo Lloris.

LAFC is at Seattle on Saturday in a Leagues Cup quarterfinal match.

Vinesh Phogat is still waiting

Decision on Indian wrestler's appeal pushed back again

NEW DELHI, Aug 14, (AP): Vinesh Phogat is still waiting.

A decision on the Indian wrestler's appeal for a shared silver medal after she was disqualified from an Olympic final for missing weight has been postponed a second time and won't come until Friday, the Wrestling Federation of India said Tuesday.

The Court of Arbitration for Sport - sport's highest court - said a judge in Paris held a hearing last Friday regarding Phogat's case against United World Wrestling and the International Olympic Committee. The CAS originally said a decision was expected by the end of the Olympics on Sunday, but the CAS granted arbitrator Annabelle Bennett more time, citing "exceptional circumstances," and pushed the deadline for a decision to Tuesday.

The federation said Tuesday the CAS

has pushed its deadline back again as the wrestling-crazy nation of 1.4 billion waits.

Phogat was disqualified from the 50-kilogram women's freestyle class after weighing in at 100 grams above the limit last Wednesday. Instead of becoming India's first woman to compete in an Olympic wrestling final, she was denied a medal. She appealed, requesting credit for the three wins she earned after weighing in successfully a day earlier.

The situation brought to light concerns about the dangers of weight cutting. The Olympics have only six weight classes, instead of 10 for other international competitions.

Phogat announced last Thursday on social media that she would retire from the sport. The post, written in Hindi, translates as: "My courage is broken. I don't have any more strength now. Goodbye Wrestling, 2001-2024."

Pakistan to play test match against B'desh without fans

ISLAMABAD, Aug 14, (AP): The second cricket test match between Pakistan and Bangladesh in Karachi starting Aug. 30 will be played without fans due to ongoing construction work at the National Bank Stadium, the Pakistan Cricket Board said on Wednesday.

The PCB started renovating the stadium this month as part of its preparations for next year's Champions Trophy, which begins Feb. 19.

The PCB said it has suspended ticket sales for the Karachi test "with immediate effect" and that fans who have already

purchased tickets will receive a full refund. "The health and safety of our fans is our utmost priority," the PCB said in a statement. "After careful consideration of all available options, we have decided that the safest course of action is to hold the second test in front of an empty stadium."

The cricket board said it wanted to make the stadium more spectator-friendly for the Champions Trophy, which will be the first ICC event hosted in Pakistan since the 1996 World Cup.

The first test match will be played at Rawalpindi starting Aug. 21.

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Botswana Olympic team receives hero's welcome home

Pakistan rewards Nadeem with \$359,000 for record-breaking throw

ISLAMABAD, Aug 14, (Agencies): Olympic javelin gold medalist Arshad Nadeem received \$359,000 from the Pakistani government as the country continued to celebrate his record-breaking throw at the Paris Games.

Punjab's Chief Minister Mariam Nawaz visited Nadeem's house in a village in the Mian Channu district and presented him with a cheque for 100 million rupees (\$359,000).

Nawaz also handed him the keys to a new car which has a special registration number of "PAK 92.97" to commemorate Nadeem's throw of 92.97 meters at Paris, which was an Olympic record. Nadeem's coach Salman Iqbal Butt was also given 5 million rupees (\$18,000).

Last Thursday, Nadeem set off celebrations across Pakistan when his throw easily surpassed the previ-

ous Olympic mark of 90.57 set by Andreas Thorkildsen of Norway in 2008. It was also well clear of India's Neeraj Chopra, the Tokyo champion, who reached a season-best 89.45 for silver.

"Arshad Nadeem has brought unprecedented happiness to the na-

OLYMPICS

tion," Nawaz said in a statement.

Nadeem won Pakistan's first Olympic gold in 40 years, when the men's field hockey team won at the 1984 Los Angeles Games. Pakistan's last medal of any color was a field hockey bronze at the 1992 Barcelona Games.

"The heights that parents' prayers take a person to," Nawaz said in her post on X, formerly known as Twit-



Pakistan's javelin gold medalist, Arshad Nadeem, (center), is greeted by Pakistani people and his villagers with flower garlands upon his arrival at Mian Channu, Khanewal district, of Pakistan. (AP)

ter, while sharing a picture with Nadeem and his mother Razia Parveen.

Later Tuesday, Nadeem and his family were flown to Islamabad on a

special flight from Multan to attend a reception being hosted by prime minister Shehbaz Sharif.

Last Saturday, the Pakistani government issued a special postage stamp with an image of Nadeem with his javelin in his hand in connection with Pakistan's Independence Day, celebrated on Wednesday.

Also:

GABORONE: Team Botswana and Letsile Tebogo received a hero's welcome home on Tuesday after winning their first Olympic gold medal in the men's 200m final at the Paris 2024 Olympics.

Multitudes flocked to Sir Seretse Khama International Airport in the capital Gaborone, while others gathered at Botswana's national stadium, taking advantage of the half-day off

declared by President Mokgweetsi Masisi to welcome the team and celebrate their outstanding performance.

Botswana fans, both young and old, lined the road to greet Team Botswana as they arrived at the stadium in a convoy of motorbikes, buses, and a double-decker bus.

Masisi praised the squad's success and promised that everyone on the team will be rewarded, noting that Tebogo was the first African to win the men's 200m, and his time was an African record.

For his part, the 21-year-old sprinter praised the team, the government, and fans from throughout the country and around the world.

At the just concluded Paris Olympics, the team won two medals, including the silver medal in the men's 4x400m relay.

KFA 'postpones' three Jahra Club's matches amid administrative crisis

Al-Jadaan, Madloul urge authorities to address Club's situation



Al-Jahra team management is helpless in the face of the problem of registering players.

By Hassan Musa

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 14: The Kuwait Football Association has decided to postpone Al-Jahra Club's matches for the first three rounds of the Zain First Division League for the 2024-2025 season due to ongoing issues at the club and the inability to register players with the association.

Al-Jahra was initially set to begin their league campaign next Sunday against Al-Sahel, followed by matches against Burqan on August 24 and Al-Shabab on August 29. However, the association has not yet rescheduled these fixtures, stating that new dates will be announced later.

The club has been facing significant "administrative" problems since last November, following a court ruling that invalidated the board of directors led by Khaled Al-Jarallah. This has led to a period of "regression" across various sports at the club, including the loss of local and foreign players due to financial issues and the lack of

SOCCER

an authorized board to sign off on their dues. The club's employees have also struggled with delayed salaries.

These challenges have severely impacted the first football team, which was relegated to the first division. The team's professionals left immediately after the season ended, and key local players have moved to other clubs.

Al-Jahra has been further hindered by these issues, particularly in football, where the team has been unable to recruit new coaches or players. Ahmed Hassan, a former player and youth team coach, and Frenchman Enrique were initially brought in to lead the team during preparations last July. Meanwhile, volunteers Mubarak Al-Jadaan and Aziz Madloul have managed the team in an effort to maintain its cohesion amid the crisis, despite the lack of approved technical, medical, and administrative staff.

Jadaan and Madloul have appealed to Dr. Amthal Al-Huwailah, Minister of Social Affairs, Family and Childhood Affairs and Minister of State for Youth Affairs, as well as Bashar Abdullah, Director General of the Public Authority for Sports, seeking urgent attention to Al-Jahra Club's situation.

Colo-Colo 'gain' the upper hand in Copa

SANTIAGO, Aug 14, (Xinhua): Vicente Pizarro scored late to earn Colo-Colo a 1-0 home win over Junior Barranquilla in the first leg of their Copa Libertadores round of 16 clash.

The 21-year-old Chile international midfielder gave his side the lead in the 76th minute at Estadio Monumental in Santiago when he showed superb poise to angle a low finish into the far corner.

The return fixture will be played in Colombia next Tuesday, with the winner on aggregate advancing to the quarterfinals of South America's premier club competition.

Meanwhile, Reinaldo Silva struck twice in three second-half minutes as Gremio recovered from a goal down to clinch a 2-1 home win over Fluminense in their all-Brazilian clash.

The hosts survived an intense finale after Rodrigo Ely was shown a red card with just six minutes remaining.

In Tuesday's only other Copa Libertadores fixture, Paulinho's second-half strike canceled out Alexis Cuello's opener as the teams drew 1-1.

Jordan to host Champ'ship re-draw

By Khaled Al-Enezi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

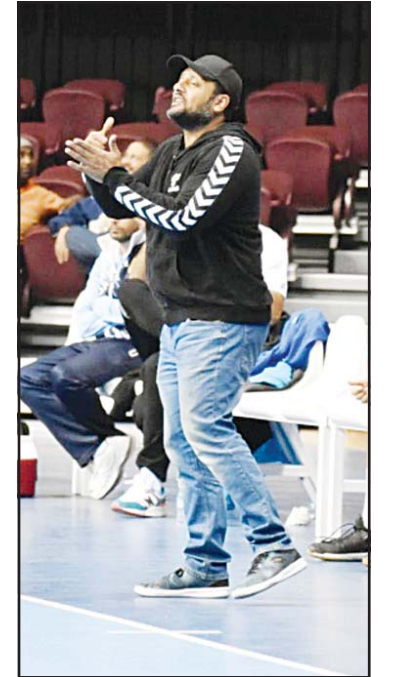
KUWAIT CITY, Aug 14: The Jordanian capital, Amman, will host the re-draw for the 10th Asian Junior Championship, which serves as the 2025 World Cup Qualifiers for Slovenia. The event will take place today at the headquarters of the Jordan Handball Federation, with the championship scheduled to be held in

HANDBALL

Jordan from September 3-14.

Last week, the Asian Handball Federation decided to relocate the tournament from Iran to Jordan due to regional tensions, ensuring the safety and security of all participating teams. Previously, the draw had placed the "Blues" in Group D, alongside Japan, China, and Jordan.

In related news, Al-Sulaibikhat Club has hired Fahad Fahid to lead the youth handball team and assist first-team coach Walid Fayrouz. Fahid, a former player



A coach encouraging his players (unseen) in this file photo.

for Al-Salmiya Club and national teams, brings extensive experience to the role and has transitioned to coaching after retiring from professional play.

Thompson returns to GSW on Nov 12

Lakers open title defense vs Spurs

NEW YORK, Aug 14, (AP): The Los Angeles Lakers' defense of the NBA Cup title will begin on Nov. 15 in San Antonio against Victor Wembanyama and the Spurs, and Klay Thompson will be back at Golden State - as a visitor with Dallas - on Nov. 12.

The NBA released the schedule of the group play games on Tuesday, with those contests getting played on a series of Tuesdays and Fridays starting Nov. 12 and ending Dec. 3. Each team was assigned to a five-team group and plays the other four clubs in that group once.

LeBron James, Anthony Davis and the Lakers went 7-0 in the tournament last season - when it was simply called the In-Season Tournament - and beat the Indiana Pacers in the final in Las Vegas. The semifinals and finals return to Las Vegas this year, with the semis on Dec. 14 and the title game on Dec. 17.

The NBA Cup will provide some obvious storylines. Among them: Thompson going back to Golden State, where he helped the Warriors win four titles, after joining the Mavericks this summer. And then the Lakers open defense of the Cup title, it'll be a game where James and Davis face Wembanyama again after helping the U.S. beat France in the gold-medal game at the Paris Olympics.

Almost all of the games for the

2024-25 NBA season will be released Thursday. All games in the NBA Cup will count in the regular-season standings except for the title game in Las Vegas; that would be an 83rd game for both of those teams, which doesn't fit into an 82-game season.

Teams will get schedules Thursday with 80 games on them. Every team will play two more, either in the playoffs of the NBA Cup or in games scheduled between teams that did not make the tournament quarterfinals. And those teams that lose in the

BASKETBALL

quarterfinals will meet for what essentially becomes the 82nd game on their schedule for the coming season.

There will be 60 group-stage games in all - eight games on Nov. 12, then 12 on Nov. 15, six on Nov. 19, eight on Nov. 22, five on Nov. 26, 10 on Nov. 29 and the final 11 on Dec. 3.

Each NBA team will play four designated group play games - one game against each opponent in its group, with two games at home and two games on the road. The four group winners will make the quarterfinals, along with one wild-card team from each conference. That wild-card club will be the best second-place team from each conference.



Niagara River Lions Omari Moore (7) makes the trip to the basket difficult for Vancouver Bandits Taze Moore during first half of the final CEFL playoff basketball game in Montreal. (AP)

Leicester facing points deduction

Stopping Man City, VAR and 'burnout' fears, big talking points ahead season

LONDON, Aug 14, (AP): A look at some of the big talking points heading into the new Premier League season, which starts on Friday when Manchester United hosts Fulham:

Stopping City

Since 2017, only one team - Liverpool, in 2020 - has stopped Manchester City winning the title. Can anyone stop Pep Guardiola's juggernaut capturing a record-extending fifth straight title in what could be a tumultuous season for the champions? Arsenal took City all the way last season, having collapsed late the year before, and looks to be the best equipped to win what would be its first title since 2004. Otherwise, only Liverpool seems capable of producing the consistency to finish

SOCCER

ahead of City - and that is a big ask for Arne Slot in his first season in charge since replacing Jurgen Klopp as manager. Manchester United and Chelsea should improve after more heavy spending in the offseason, but they are unlikely to deliver a sustained push for the title.

Improved VAR?

It will be the sixth season of video reviews in England's top division - and it still hasn't prevented regular flashpoints popping up, much to the frustration of players, managers and fans alike. New for this season is an account on X, formerly Twitter, dedicated to offering live refereeing and VAR clarifications and explainers



In this file photo, Southampton's Sekou Mara, top right, is challenged by Liverpool's goalkeeper during the English FA Cup fifth round soccer match between Liverpool and Southampton at Anfield stadium, in Liverpool. (AP)

from all matches. Semi-automated offside technology will also be in use for the first time, though not until a few months into the season. The Premier League says the number of correct decisions in matches has climbed to 96%, up from 82% before video reviews were brought in.

Goals, Goal, Goal

Premier League teams will do well to top the record 1,246 goals scored last season, which was a staggering 162 more than the previous most for a single campaign. It worked out at 3.28 goals per match - never before had it exceeded 2.85. Increased amounts of stoppage time, more adventurous managers and VAR interventions were credited as some of

the reasons behind the soaring numbers of goals. Will it continue this season?

Long Season

For some, this could be the longest ever club season. Take the players at Manchester City, who have just started the season by winning the Community Shield on Saturday and might not finish it until the final of FIFA's expanded and revamped Club World Cup, scheduled for July 13 next year in the United States. Make that an 11-month season for City and Chelsea, the other Premier League team involved in the Club World Cup. City manager Pep Guardiola has already gone public with his concerns that there is too much soccer on the calendar, with the Champions League also expanding for this season. Expect talk of burnout and the threatened legal action by soccer leagues and player unions against FIFA to be a constant issue throughout the season.

More Points Deductions?

Everton and Nottingham Forest were hit with points deductions last season for overspending, forcing all the clubs in the league to take a closer look at their finances to ensure compliance with the competition's regulations that are being more strictly applied. Leicester, one of the three promoted teams, is facing a points deduction for breaching spending rules during their previous stay in the Premier League but have others learned their lesson? Judging by some of the creative transfer activity in the last weeks of June and the lack of blockbuster signings so far in the summer window, teams appear to be more aware of what it takes to comply.

Farewells

Pep Guardiola is heading into his ninth year at Manchester City and he will have to decide at some point this season whether his stay at the club will extend to a decade. Similarly, this might mark Kevin De Bruyne's final season at City - enjoy him while you can - while Liverpool stars Mohamed Salah and Virgil van Dijk are in the final years of their contracts at Anfield. Then there's Everton, which is preparing for its last season playing at Goodison Park, its storied home since 1892, before moving to a new stadium at Bramley Moore Dock that has cost a reported 760 million pounds (\$975 million).



Coventry City's Ellis Simms, (left), scores their side's first goal of the game against Bristol City during a Carabao Cup first round soccer match at Ashton Gate in Bristol, England. (AP)



Al-Hilal players celebrate after defeating Al-Ahli 4-1 in shootout to advance to Saudi Super Cup final.

Sports

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Al-Hilal advance to Saudi Super Cup final

Al-Ahli beaten again

RIYADH, Aug 14: Al-Hilal continued to dominate Al-Ahli Jeddah, extending their winning streak in the Saudi Super Cup semifinals. Al-Hilal secured their spot in the final by defeating Al-Ahli 4-1 in a penalty shootout after a 1-1 draw in regular time.

Al-Ahli has been unable to break its losing streak against Al-Hilal,

SOCCER

which now spans 1,454 days. The team has failed to secure a win against its rival in its last six encounters, including this recent match.

The last time Al-Ahli triumphed over Al-Hilal was on August 20, 2020, in the Prince Mohammed bin Salman Cup League, where it won 2-1. Since then, Al-Hilal has won five matches and drawn one against Al-Ahli.

Following that defeat, Al-Hilal achieved its most significant victory against Al-Ahli with a 5-1 win in the 28th round of the 2020-2021 Prince Mohammed bin Salman Cup League. The two teams played to a 1-1 draw in October 2021 during the 10th round of the 2021-2022 league.

After that draw, Al-Hilal secured three consecutive wins against Al-Ahli a 4-2 victory in the 25th round of the 2021-2022 Saudi League, a 3-1 win in the 11th round of the 2023-2024 season, and a 2-1 victory in the 28th round of last season's Saudi League.



AC Milan players celebrate with the trophy after defeating Monza in the Silvio Berlusconi Trophy (Trofeo Berlusconi) soccer match at the San Siro Stadium in Milan, Italy. (AP)

Al-Duwaisan joins Kuwait Club for Asian Championship in Iran

By Khaled Al-Enezi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 14: Kuwait Club's volleyball team has strengthened its roster by enlisting Burgan Center player Saud Al-Duwaisan to bolster its squad for the upcoming Asian Clubs Championship, set to take place in Yazd, Iran, from September 8-15.

The tournament draw placed Kuwait Club in Group A alongside Iranian club Shahdab Yazd. Group B features Japanese club Nagoya, Iraqi club Gas South, and Chinese club Badong Wuli. Group C includes Indonesian club Jakarta, Kazakh club Pavoir, and Tai Chong from Chinese Taipei, while Group D comprises Qatari club Al-Rayyan, Afghan club Kam, and Iranian club Foolad Sirjan.

To prepare for the championship, the "Sons of Kaifan" will



Musleh Al-Rashidi

hold an external training camp in Turkey from August 25 to September 6, after which it will head directly to Iran.

Kuwait Club has also renewed the contract of coach Atik and signed Brazilian player Ferreira, Cuban player Ramos, and former Al-Arabi player Hussein Al-Masry.

VOLLEYBALL

Musleh Al-Rashidi, the Volleyball Director at Kuwait Club, stated that the team has begun its local preparation phase to get players physically and technically ready after the long break since last season. The Turkish camp will focus on tactical preparations, including several friendly matches. Al-Rashidi emphasized the significance of participating in the Asian Championship before the new season starts on September 15.

Al-Rashidi expressed his gratitude to the Chairman of the Board of Directors of Kuwait Club, Khaled Al-Ghanim, for his unwavering support of the team, ensuring its readiness for this prestigious Asian event. He also thanked the Chairman of the Board of Directors of Burgan Club, Anwar Al-Otaibi, and Burgan Secretary Nawaf Al-Adwani for their cooperation in facilitating Al-Duwaisan's participation with the team in the Asian Championship.

Fritz upset at Cincinnati Open

Oly silver medalist Vekic knocked off by Krueger

MASON, Ohio, Aug 14, (AP): Donna Vekic was defeated in her first match since winning the silver medal in the Olympics, falling to Ashlyn Krueger 5-7, 7-6 (4), 6-2 on Tuesday at the Cincinnati Open.

Krueger played her win into the field through the qualifying rounds, where she defeated Naomi Osaka. The American then opened her first appearance in the main draw in Cincinnati by knocking off Vekic, the No. 16 seed from Croatia who lost to Zheng Qinwen in the women's gold-medal match in Paris.

On the men's side, Brandon Nakashima upset No. 11 seed Taylor Fritz 6-4, 4-6, 7-6 (4), while No. 12 Ben Shelton edged Reilly Opelka 7-6 (3), 7-6 (3) in another All-American matchup.

Shelton, Nakashima and Krueger were among five Americans who advanced Tuesday in the hard-court tournament.

Villarreal snap up Perez from Betis

MADRID, Aug 14, (Xinhua): La Liga side Villarreal have signed Spain international forward Ayoze Perez from Betis after paying his release clause of four million euros.

The 31-year-old has agreed to a four-year contract with the club from the east coast of Spain, who were looking to replace Norwegian forward, Alexander Sorloth, following his move to Atletico Madrid.

Ayoze moves after a season and a half at Betis, where he netted 15 goals in 59 appearances, with nine of those coming in LaLiga. The rapid striker, who has also played for Newcastle United and Leicester City in England, had three seasons left on his contract with Betis, but his low release clause made him a tempting target, especially after his form last season saw him force his way into the Spain squad.

up for the U.S. Open. Alex Michelsen and Frances Tiafoe also moved on.

The only other seeded competitor to advance in men's action was No. 14 Lorenzo Musetti of Italy, the bronze

medalist in Paris who outlasted Chile's Nicolas Jarry 4-6, 7-6 (5), 7-6 (4).

Ninth-seeded Daria Kasatkina and No. 15 Marta Kostyuk were the women's seeded winners.

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 14: Sheikh Ahmed Al-Jaber, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Arab Tennis Federation, has announced the organization of the Arab Tennis Championship for junior categories, set to take place in Tunisia from August 16 to 24, with unprecedented and widespread participation. As the Chairman of the Organizing Committee, Sheikh Al-Jaber revealed that over 120 male and female players from 10 Arab countries will be competing in this significant sporting event. He added that the Arab Federation, in collaboration with the Tunisian Tennis Federation, is fully prepared for the championship, which will be held at the Marsa Club courts in Tunis.

TENNIS

Sheikh Al-Jaber also noted that the tournament draw will be conducted on August 15, in the presence of technical committee members and representatives from each participating country. The competitions will be officiated by referees accredited by the host country, along with referees from the participating nations.

Expressing his delight with the high level of participation from Arab countries, Sheikh Al-Jaber emphasized that this reflects a new milestone for the Arab Tennis Federation. He highlighted the Federation's efforts to encourage widespread participation by inviting all national federations to join this fra-

Record turnout expected

Arab Tennis Federation gears up for Championship

Long weekend

First round of games gives first view of Mbappe and Barcelona

MADRID, Aug 14, (Xinhua): The first "weekend" of the new LaLiga season is a very long weekend indeed as the first round of matches kicks off on Thursday night, with the last games played on Monday.

The coming days should give us the first chance to see Kylian Mbappe wearing a Real Madrid shirt in a competitive game in Spain, while it will be fascinating to see how Hansi Flick starts his time as Barcelona coach and while new Atletico Madrid signings Alexander Sorloth and Julian Alvarez travel to play in Villarreal - which is familiar ground for the former of those two.

Athletic Club Bilbao and Getafe have the honor of getting the ball rolling on Thursday evening, with the home side buoyed by Nico Williams' decision to stay for another season.

The Basque side who finished fifth last season, and won the Copa del Rey, haven't had a great pre-season and will hope not to miss Spain

keeper Unai Simon, who is out for three months after a wrist operation, while understudy Julen Agirretxea is a doubt with a back problem, meaning third choice Alex Padilla is likely to make his league debut.

Thursday's second match gives us the chance to look at last season's surprise package as Girona have a difficult visit to Betis.

It's always hard to play in Seville in August and Girona have lost several players (Savinho, Yan Couto, Aleix Garcia, Artem Dovbyk and Eric Garcia) who were so important last season.

Celta and Alaves play on Friday, with Celta needing to improve after last season but with a squad that doesn't look stronger after losing Carles Perez and Jorgen Strand Larsen.

Friday's second game sees new Sevilla coach Garcia Pimienta make a rapid return to the Canary Islands to face Las Palmas, who he left in the summer after coaching them to

promotion and keeping them in the top flight.

Saul Niguez and Kelechi Iheanacho make their Sevilla debuts, while Adnan Januzaj could play for the home side after leaving Sevilla.

Vicente Moreno debuts as Osasuna coach as his side entertain Leganes on the Madrid club's return to the elite on Saturday, before one of the most interesting matches of the weekend as Valencia take on FC Barcelona.

Barca's financial struggles mean they only have 16 first team players in their squad and several of those are injured, meaning Hansi Flick will need some B-team players to make up the numbers.

SOCCER

They were well-beaten by Monaco in the traditional Joan Gamper friendly game on Monday but until Barca find more money, neither central defender Inigo Martinez nor new arrival Dani Olmo will be in the squad.

Valencia haven't been very active over the summer, but striker Rafa Mir could be a key signing against Barca's weak defense and all eyes will be fixed on Barca's start to the campaign.

Kylian Mbappe is expected to make his league debut as Real Madrid as the reigning champions start their defense away to Mallorca. Real Madrid play the European Supercup final on Wednesday night, so it's a busy start to the season for Carlo Ancelotti's men.

Former Osasuna coach Jagoba Arrasate makes his debut as Mallorca coach and will no doubt look for striker Vedat Muriqi to trouble the Real Madrid back line.

Sunday's other game will see Martin Zubimendi start for Real Sociedad at home to Rayo Vallecano after rejecting the chance to sign for Liverpool.

Monday's matches pit newly promoted duo Valladolid and Espanyol against each other, while new Atletico Madrid signing, Alexander Sorloth will start when they visit Villarreal - the club he left less than a month ago to join Atletico.



Sheikh Ahmed Al-Jaber, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Arab Tennis Federation.



'Our commitment to equitable development is cornerstone of socio-economic policies'

Ambassador's message on Independence Day of India

On the special occasion of India's 78th Independence Day, I extend my heartfelt greetings to all Indian nationals and persons of Indian origin residing in Kuwait.

I would also like to convey my profound gratitude to the leadership, government and people of Kuwait for their steadfast support for strong and friendly ties between our two countries. India remains committed to further strengthening and expanding this long-standing partnership.

As we celebrate 78 years of independence, it is a significant milestone in our pursuit of a resurgent and self-reliant India, the 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat'. Prime Minister of India, Shri Narendra Modi outlined Amrit Kaal: Vision 2047: a 25-year roadmap for India's development, aiming for India to become a developed nation by 2047. It is the responsibility of all Indian nationals to work diligently towards this goal.

Today, as we celebrate our Independence Day, we take pride in India's many achievements. Our commitment to equitable development has been the cornerstone of various socio-economic policies.

The principles of democracy, pluralism, and unity in diversity are deeply embedded in Indian society, guided by the ancient philosophies of 'Sarvadharmā Sambhava' (equality of all religions) and 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam' (the world is one family), which also shape our foreign policy.

India today is a land of a billion opportunities, with a robust economy that has made significant strides despite global challenges.

Our IT sector delivers digital solutions worldwide, and our startup ecosystem is thriving with innovation and technological advancements. India is among the top five global economies, a leader in science and technology, a hub of innovation and IT, known as the 'Pharmacy of the World,' and possesses world-class production and manu-



Dr Adarsh Swaika
Ambassador of India

facturing capabilities.

We are also a key global partner in addressing challenges such as climate change and ensuring food and health security through resilient supply

chains.

There has never been a better time to invest in India, with unprecedented momentum in modernizing our physical and digital infrastructure.

The 'Make in India, Make for the World' initiative is driving our economy forward, supported by business-friendly reforms that unlock the country's true potential. India has made

significant improvements in the World Bank's Ease of Doing Business rankings, the Global Innovation Index, and is recognized as a key driver of the global economy.

On the international stage, India continues to play a vital role in promoting global peace, stability, and prosperity. Our leadership in global bodies has been significant, particularly during the past year's successful hosting of the G20 and SCO Summits.

India believes in resolving disputes through dialogue and diplomacy, upholding multilateralism, and taking leadership on global issues of relevance and concern such as cross-border terrorism, climate change, energy and food security etc, and reforming multilateral institutions like the UN Security Council.

Bilateral relations with Kuwait continue to progress, with increased engagement at various levels and growing trade and investments. Our cultural connections resonate well with our Kuwaiti friends, and people-to-people contacts form the foundation of our bilateral relations.

The Indian Embassy prioritizes the welfare and well-being of the large Indian community in Kuwait, serving as a 'Home Away from Home.' I extend my appreciation to Indian community associations, professional bodies, cultural groups, and media representatives for their efforts in supporting the community and strengthening India-Kuwait relations.

On this proud and joyous occasion of India's 78th Independence Day, I wish every Indian in Kuwait and all friends of India in Kuwait, success, good health and happiness.

The supplications of the oppressed are always heard, as is recognized across all religious traditions. Sometimes, the answer to these prayers may be delayed, unfolding in due time for reasons understood only by those who do not oppress others.

Modi announced a five-point climate action plan (Panchamrit) for India

India is the world's largest country in terms of population, comprising around 17% of the global population. It is also the fifth largest economy in the world, on its way to becoming the third largest economy by 2030.

Yet, its contributions to cumulative carbon dioxide emissions since the industrial revolution are a mere 3.4% of the world total and at 2 tons its current per-capita emissions are less than half of the global average of 4.7 tons.

India's per-capita carbon footprint is also the lowest among the G-20 countries with the International Finance Corporation (IFC) acknowledging India as the only G20 nation in line with 2-degree centigrade upper limit for global warming.

Additionally, the IFC has highlighted that India's GDP grew by a Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of about seven per cent between 2005 and 2019, whereas the emissions grew at a CAGR of about four per cent. This would appear to underscore India's relative success in decoupling economic growth from greenhouse gas emissions, reducing the emission intensity of its GDP and being a possible model for the globe in general and the global South in particular.

Leading India's determination to be part of the solution on climate change, Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced a five-point climate action plan (Panchamrit) for India at the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) meeting in Glasgow in November 2021.

This included the key commitment of achieving Net Zero emissions by 2070 along with four elements of the pathway. These, enumerated below, were later incorporated in India's Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs):

- Reach 500 GW of non-fossil fuel generation by 2030
- 50% of India's power requirements would come from renewable energy by 2030
- Reduction of total projected carbon emissions by one billion tons till 2030
- Reduction of the carbon intensity of the economy by 45% by 2030, over 2005 levels

Many of these goals upped the already significant targets set by India for itself following the UNFCCC meeting in Paris in 2015. This was possible given the fact that India had achieved its NDCs well ahead of time.

In-fact, in so far as use of non-fossil fuel resources for energy, India achieved 40 percent cumulative electric power installation capacity from non-fossil fuel-based energy sources in 2021, nine years before the initial target year of 2030.

Further, between 2017 and 2023, India added around 100 GW of installed electric capacity, of which around 80% is attributed to non-fossil fuel-based resources.

As of now, the share of non-fossil fuel-based resources in installed electricity capacity has reached 45.4 percent. And the key target of 33 percent reduction of emissions intensity of GDP by 2030, from the 2005 level, was met in 2019, 11 years ahead of time.

Apart from the four pathway elements, India has undertaken to create an additional carbon sink of between 2.5 to 3 billion tons of carbon dioxide equivalent through additional forest and tree cover by 2030. As of date, around 1.97 billion tons of carbon dioxide equivalent sinks have been created putting India on track for achieving this Nationally Determined Contribution.

Two other initiatives by India are of global importance: The first is LiFE – Lifestyle for Environment, a mass movement launched at Glasgow by Prime Minister Modi to encourage the adoption of sustainable lifestyles to address the challenges of environmental degradation and climate change.

The G-20, in its communiqué issued in New Delhi in September 2023, emphasised the importance of behavioural and lifestyle changes as pillars in the strategic plan adopted for advancing energy efficiency across all demand sectors by 2030.

The second push by India is on the development of alternatives to carbon intensive fossil fuels. As a part of this a major effort is the National Green Hydrogen Mission which seeks, by 2030, the development of green hydrogen production capacity of at least 5 million metric tons per annum with an associated renewable energy capacity addition of about 125 GW.

This could result in an annual abatement of nearly 50 million metric tons of greenhouse gas emissions.

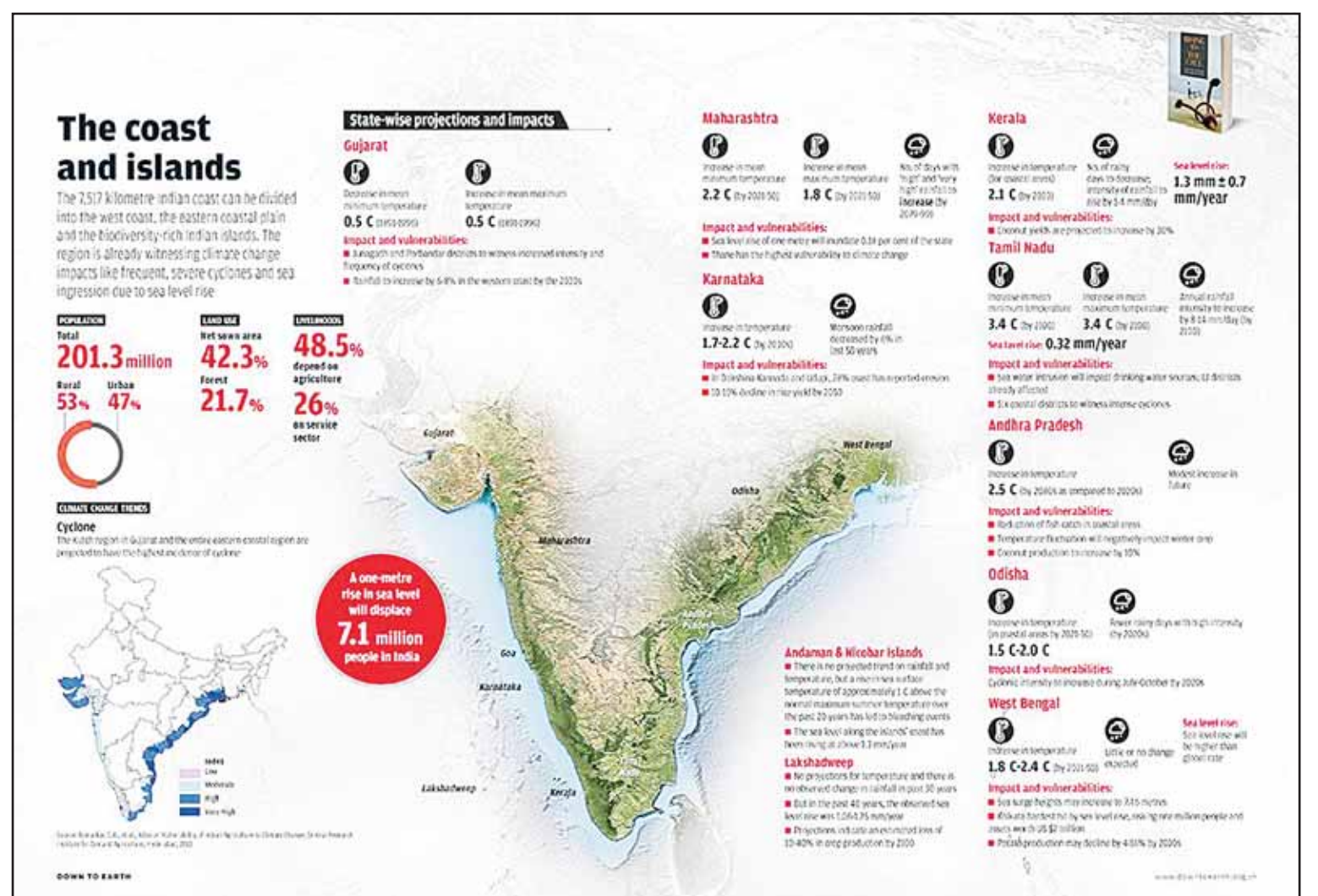
India's efforts on climate change are not only domestic but also seek build global partnerships. At the UNFCCC meeting in Paris in 2015, India joined hands with France and launched the International Solar Alliance (ISA) which today has 119 signatories to its framework agreement and is in the forefront of deploying solar energy solutions in the global South to mitigate climate change.

India's huge domestic efforts on pushing solar power have led to majorly reducing the cost of solar power and hence vastly increasing interest in its adoption at home and acting as a model across the global South.

In 2019, India established the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure which led to the launch at Glasgow in 2021 of the Infrastructure for Resilient Island States (IRIS), a flagship initiative designed to achieve and deliver resilience and climate adaptation solutions to the Small Island Developing States (SIDS).

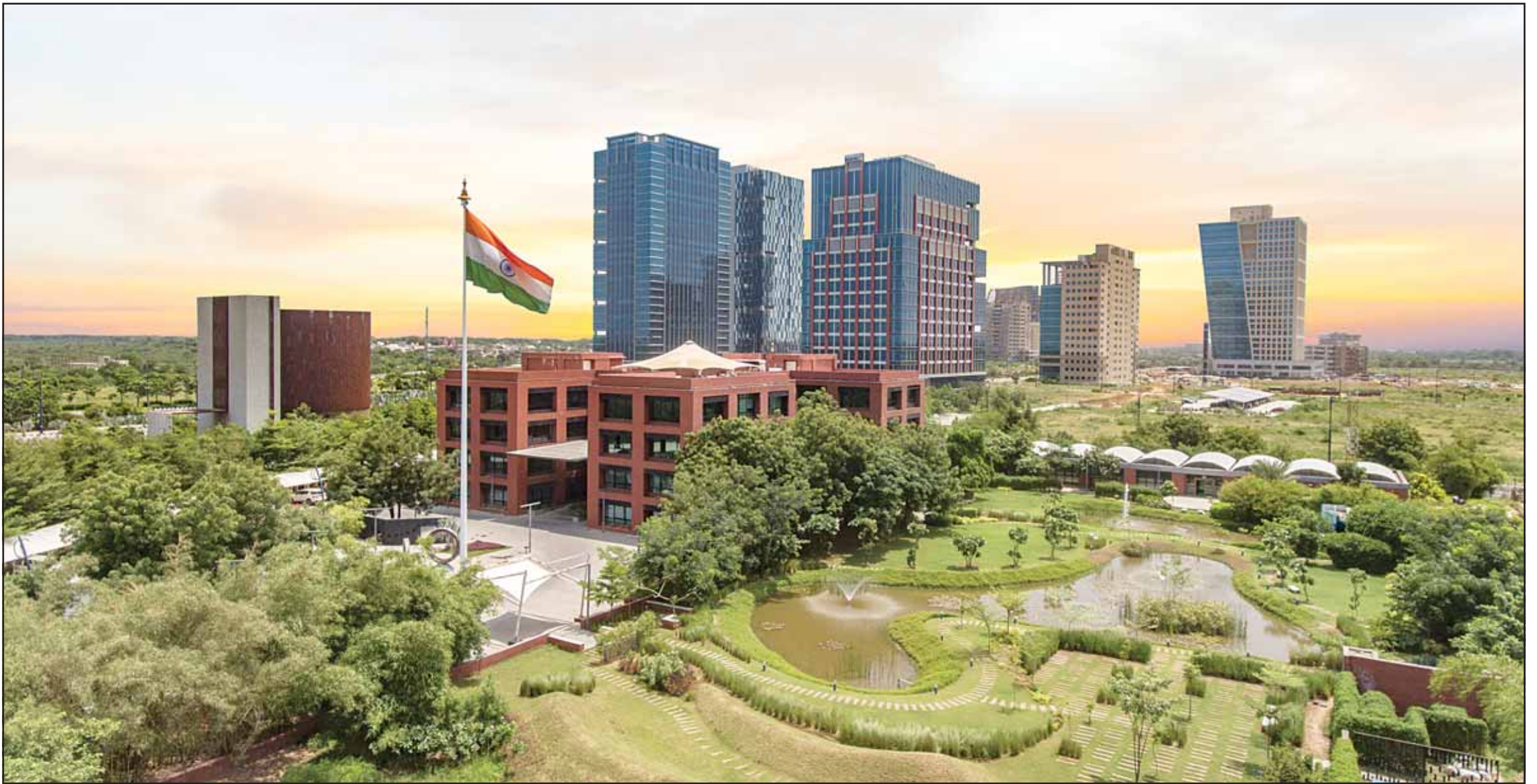
At the UNFCCC meeting in Dubai in 2023, India collaborated with Sweden and launched the second phase of the Leadership Group for Industry Transition (Lead IT) 2.0 and at the G-20 Summit in Delhi India joined many countries across the globe in launching the Global Biofuels Alliance.

India through its ambitious policies, successful renewable energy growth trajectory, along with effective achievement of international commitments has strongly demonstrated climate leadership at the global level. With climate change being seen by many as the defining challenge of our times, India's has assumed a pivotal role in tackling climate change, both in terms of its actions and as the leading voice of the global south for sustainability.





GIFT IFSC – positions itself as a ‘New Age Global Financial Centre’



By Dr Dipesh Shah

The Government of India implemented a major financial sector reform by establishing the country's maiden International Financial Services Centre (IFSC) in GIFT City, Gujarat.

The IFSC has been developed as a unique international financial jurisdiction within onshore India, which has been designated as a non-resident zone under the Foreign Exchange Management (FEM) Act. This special status enables financial transactions to be

carried out in any of the notified fifteen foreign currencies, including USD, GBP, Euro and Yen.

The IFSC has been set up with two primary objectives namely -- onshoring India-centric international financial services business, and Serve as a preferred gateway for channelising global capital flows into and out of the country.

Over the last few years, GIFT IFSC has made remarkable progress in positioning itself as a 'New Age Global Financial Centre,' providing an ideal platform for the global financial services industry to integrate

more efficiently with the Indian economy.

A key landmark in IFSC's journey so far has been the establishment of the International Financial Services Centres Authority (IFSCA) as a unified statutory body for the development and regulation of IFSCs in India. Since October 2020, IFSCA has assumed its statutory powers and has notified over 29 regulations and more than 14 frameworks encompassing the entire spectrum of financial services, including - banking, capital markets, insurance, the fund industry, Fintech, aircraft leasing, ship leasing, and global corporate treasury centers.

The Government endeavors to develop GIFT IFSC as an internationally recognised financial centre with trusted business regulations, competitive tax regime and ease of doing business.

Today, the GIFT IFSC initiative is a testament to India's firm resolve to undertake bold and transformative reforms in the financial sector.

This ambitious project is envisaged to catalyse global capital flows into the country and accelerate the integration of the Indian economy with the global financial ecosystem.

As of July 2024, more than 600 + entities across banks, capital markets, insurance, Fintech, aircraft leasing, ship leasing, bullion exchange, etc. have been registered with the IFSCA.

The financial service market is gaining momentum with healthy and growing participation of global and domestic financial services institutions.

The business growth in some of the key sectors is highlighted below:

Banking Sector -- The Banking ecosystem in GIFT IFSC is rapidly evolving with a healthy mix of foreign and domestic banks, primarily catering to the foreign currency borrowing requirements of Indian corporates and public sector enterprises through external commercial borrowing, trade finance, etc.

Transactions under these heads, previously booked from overseas financial centres are now being booked out of GIFT IFSC. As of March 2024, the total asset size of IFSC Banking Units (IBUs) crossed USD 60 billion, and the cumulative value of transactions undertaken by IBUs crossed USD 795 billion.

Fund Industry -- The growth of a robust fund industry in GIFT IFSC is having a transformative impact in catalysing global capital inflows into India, including for the start-up ecosystem. Previously, pooling of international capital for investments in India was structured through funds (private equity, venture capital, hedge funds, etc.) set up in offshore jurisdictions.

Now, with enabling regulations, a competitive tax regime, and beneficial cost of operations, GIFT IFSC is emerging as a preferred jurisdiction for the pooling of global capital by foreign and Indian fund managers.

In the last three years, there has been rapid growth in Fund Management Entities (FMEs) and Alternative Investment Funds (AIFs) registered with IFSCA. The

cumulative FMEs and funds registered rose from 39 and 33 in September 2022 to 114 and 120, respectively, in March 2024.

Aircraft Leasing -- The aviation industry in India is on the cusp of unprecedented growth, with a strong order book of more than 1500 + aircraft placed by Indian airlines and a projected demand for over 2,200 aircraft by 2042.

Currently, most aircraft operated by Indian airlines are leased from offshore lessors that have access to competitive capital costs. The aircraft leasing and financing business, the most profitable segment in the aviation value chain, was entirely residing in foreign jurisdictions.

Recognizing the immense potential of aircraft leasing and financing business, IFSCA introduced the enabling leasing framework, and the Government supported the endeavour by providing several tax incentives.

In three years, green shoots have been visible in IFSC with more than 28 aircraft lessors already registered. These have leased more than 120 + aviation assets, including commercial aircraft, helicopters, aircraft engines and ground support equipment.

Foreign universities initiative -- The IFSC, being an offshore jurisdiction is uniquely positioned to become an 'International Higher Education Hub' by attracting top-quality international universities which are keen on exploring India for its talent and demographic profile.

IFSCA achieved a significant milestone in FY24 when Australia's Deakin University became the first foreign university to be granted final registration for their International branch campus in GIFT IFSC under IFSCA (setting up and operation of international branch campus and offshore education centres) Regulation, 2022.

University of Wollongong of Australia became the second foreign university to receive in-principal approval for their international branch campus in GIFT IFSC.

Global In-House Centres -- Globally, information technology and digital practices have facilitated the cross-border flow of services such as - accounting, auditing, taxation, book-keeping and has fuelled the growth of Global In-House Centres (GIC). GIFT IFSC, is uniquely positioned to offer such services to global clients.

A leading US institution, i.e. Bank of America has already set up a large GIC unit in GIFT IFSC, which is providing in-house support services to the bank's global operations. Several other international firms are now looking at the GIC opportunity in GIFT IFSC.

In the future, GIFT IFSC is slated to play a significant role in achieving the vision of a developed India@2047.

Dr. Dipesh Shah is Executive Director (Development) at International Financial Services Centres Authority (IFSCA), GIFT City



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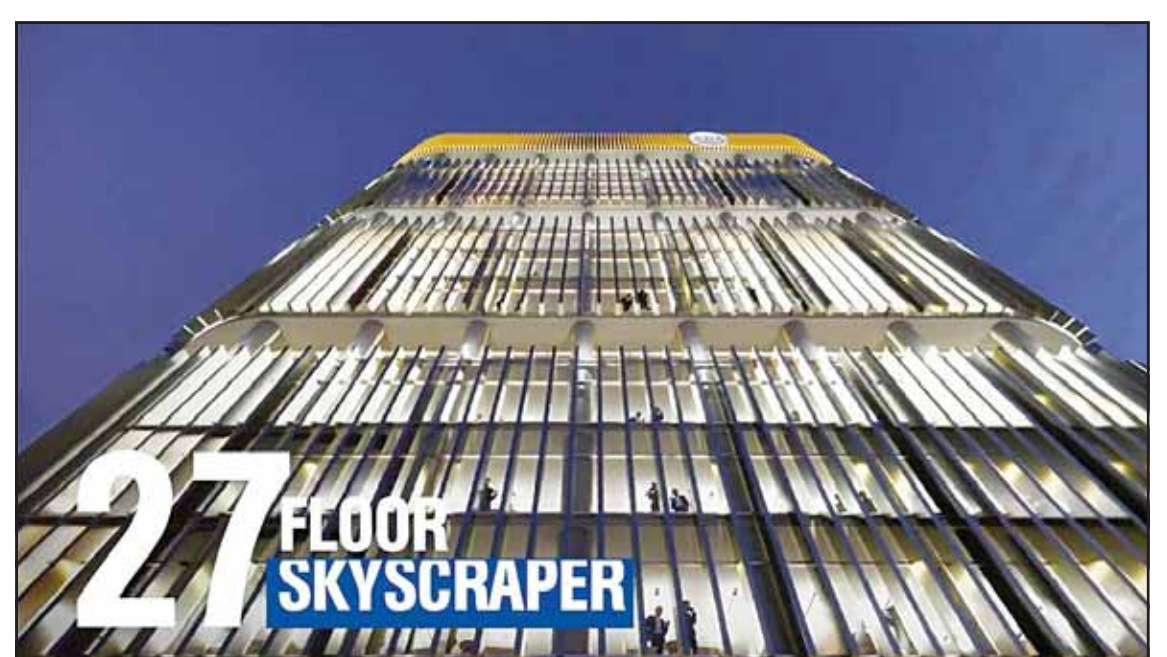
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India's automotive industry at a glance

The automotive industry in India is the world's fourth-largest by production and valuation as per 2022 statistics. As of 2023, India is the 3rd largest automobile market in the world in terms of sales; as of April 2022, India's auto industry was worth more than US\$100 billion and accounts for 8 percent of the country's total exports and 7.1 percent of India's GDP.

According to the 2021 National Family Health Survey, barely 8 percent of Indian households owned an automobile. According to government statistics, India has barely 22 automobiles per 1,000 people.

The automobile industry produced a total 28.43 million vehicles including passenger vehicles, commercial vehicles, three wheelers, two wheelers, and quadricycles in April 2023 to March 2024 showing a strong position in the international heavy vehicles arena as it is the largest tractor manufacturer, second-largest bus manufacturer, and third largest heavy trucks manufacturer in the world.

The EV market is expected to grow at CAGR of 49 percent between 2022 and 2030 and the EV industry is set to create 5 million direct and indirect jobs by 2030. A market size of \$50 billion for the financing of EVs in 2030 has been identified, about 80 percent of the current size of India's retail vehicle finance industry, worth \$60 billion now.

India's trucking market is expected to grow over 4 times by 2050. The number of trucks is expected to more than quadruple, from 4 million in 2022 to roughly 17 million trucks by 2050.

As per the Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers (SIAM), the auto industry generates employment of 13 persons for each truck, 6 persons for each car and four persons for each three wheelers and one person for each two-wheelers. India aims to double its auto industry size to INR 15 lakh crores by end of year 2024.

In the Automobile market in India, two-wheelers and passenger cars account for 75.3 percent and 17.6 percent market share, respectively. Passenger car sales are dominated by small and mid-sized cars.

Export of total number of automobiles in 2023-24 was recorded at 45,00,492 out of which two wheelers accounted for about 76.8 percent of the total exports. In April 2023 to March 2024, Passenger Vehicle Exports increased from 6,62,891 to 6,72,105 units, registering a positive growth of 13.8 percent.

The Union Cabinet chaired by the Prime Minister, Narendra Modi announced the Production-Linked Incentive (PLI) Scheme in the Automobile and Auto Components sectors. The PLI scheme (outlay of \$3.5 billion) for the automobile sector proposes financial incentives of up to 18 percent to boost domestic manufacturing of advanced automotive technology products and attract investments in the automotive manufacturing value chain. Incentives are applicable for determined sales of products manufactured in India from April 1, 2022, for a period of five consecutive years.

The Ministry of Heavy Industries has announced the extension of the tenure of the Production Linked Incentive (PLI) Scheme for Automobile and Auto Components by one year. Under the amended scheme, the incentive will be applicable for a total of five consecutive financial years, starting from the financial year 2023-24.

Recently a total of 115 companies had filed their application under the PLI scheme. Out of 115, 85 applicants have been approved under this scheme -- 18 applicants for Champion OEM Incentive scheme and 67 applicants have been approved under Component Champion Incentive scheme; the scheme has been successful in attracting proposed investment of INR 67,690 Cr against the target estimate of investment INR 42,500 crores over a period of five years; apart from Indian business groups, approved applicants for Champion OEM Incentive scheme include groups from countries such as Republic of Korea, USA, Japan, France, Italy, UK and the Netherlands.

India's major automobile manufacturing companies include Maruti Suzuki, Hyundai Motor India, Tata Motors, Ashok Leyland, Mahindra & Mahindra, Force Motors, Tractors and Farm Equipment Limited, Eicher Motors, Royal Enfield, Sonalika Tractors, Hindustan Motors, Hradayesh, ICML, Kerala Automobiles Limited, JSW MG Motor India, Tara International and Vehicle Factory Jabalpur.

Maruti Suzuki is undeniably the leading car manufacturer in India. With a wide range of models catering to different budget segments, Maruti Suzuki



has established itself as a trusted brand over the years.

Passenger vehicles comprised 368,086 units, three-wheelers 56,723 units, and two-wheelers dominated with 1,487,579 units sold domestically. India's automotive market is on track to hit a significant milestone, with projections estimating it will reach US\$ 300 billion by 2026.

Chennai is nicknamed the "Detroit of Asia" due to the presence of major automobile manufacturing units and allied industries around the city.

With the Indian automotive market now growing at a rapid rate, a number of carmakers are shifting their primary focus to India and are developing made-for-India products to attract buyers. Many of the carmakers are not only making cars for India but are also focusing on making cars in India. From Maruti to Hyundai, Tata to Mahindra, and Mercedes to Land Rover, we saw multiple brands expanding their made-in-India portfolio in the last few years.

What's undeniable is the fact that India's automotive sector makes for a fascinating growth story. As our economy surges ahead, and with an ever-improving infrastructure network, the demand for personal vehicles has soared recently. That would be an understatement, to be frank. For a while now, India

has witnessed enviable growth in the automotive sector, and the growing middle class is primarily responsible for it. All the while, the tag for the 'most sold car in India' keeps evolving. It's no wonder that the most sold car in India till date (the Maruti Suzuki Alto) no longer features in the top 10.

With this incredible growth, we're also witnessing a number of new launches from manufacturers old and new, and with an ever-expanding list of options, the buyer is firmly in the driver's seat, as it were. There's also a growing demand for electric (and even hybrid) vehicles in India.

Given all that, though, what does the leaderboard look like? Which manufacturer rules the roost when it comes to their vehicles finding a new home? These are questions that we will answer.

Over and above that, though, buying trends indicate a strong pull towards SUVs and compact cars more than any other segments. As you will notice, this reflects very well in the sales charts. And while it's true that there are quite a few familiar names on the list of the 10 most selling cars in India, it's also a fact that spending habits are evolving, bringing in a few new faces that are determined to leave a lasting impression.

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The Araku story – a testimony to the power of democratic participation



By Rohini Mukherjee

The opening of Araku café in Paris in 2017, marked India's arrival on the world map of specialty coffee. It was the tribal farmers of Araku Valley, a rich biodiverse region on the borders of Andhra Pradesh and Odisha that have placed India there.

The story of Araku Coffee dates back to the year 2000, when the Naandi Foundation started interacting with the local community there. Conscious of the unique cultural and historical heritage of adivasi (tribal) communities,

Naandi Foundation focused on developing a deeper understanding of their culture and the environment they lived in.

The tribal farmers who had been relying on the traditional shifting cultivation were slowly introduced to regenerative agriculture practices. By 2005, these farmers had started working with Naandi Foundation on growing and improving the quality of their coffee crops.

Coffee plantation not only provides better income but also helps in afforestation since it is grown under shade. It provides round the year employment to the local inhabitants and their family members.

The entire valley witnessed a turned around in a short span of 10-15 years. Now it boasts of the world's largest tribal organic coffee farmers' cooperative,

massive annual forest festivals resulting in the planting of 49 million trees, a world-class organic coffee brand with a flagship store in Paris and exports to more than 12 countries.

The tribal farmers and their families are now in the coffee and pepper business, some have their own orchards; they are also growing paddy, pulses and millets using organic regenerative agriculture and are living testimony to the efficacy of a model that ensures economic and ecological security.

Araku stands as a testimony to the power of democratic participation in the form of the tribal farmers' cooperative, which now boasts a 40,000+ membership, regularly conducts democratic elections, and has a current executive body with 50% women.

Araku is an example of how globalization can be leveraged to benefit the smallest farmer in a remote corner of the world – innovative financing models introduced by European companies; international coffee experts frequenting the valley to support the adoption of the 19 steps to world-class coffee; a flagship store in Paris and a score of gourmet partner stores in Paris selling the premium speciality coffee grown here.

Buoyed by the success in Paris, a first-of-its-kind large format Araku Cafe was opened in Bengaluru, India, in 2021. This not only serves the best coffee and food but has also become an interactive cultural space to spread the new food vision guided by Ara-



kunomics. Signature coffee equipment borne out of a landmark collaboration with Norwegian design duo Anderssen & Voll – the first of its kind for Indian coffee – was launched first in France and then in India in 2018. Araku opened a restaurant in South Mumbai.

Araku Coffee is now a premium luxury social enterprise with high socio-economic and ecological impact that has demonstrated how India can excel globally across the entire value chain from soil to foil. It is a matter of pride for the Naandi team that Araku coffee was included as one of the prized items in the Government of India's gift hamper presented to visiting heads of state at the G20 Summit in 2023.

Gems of Araku is an annual harvest festival that celebrates the seasons' speciality coffee micro-lots and the farms and farmers of Araku for their contribution to creating this world-class coffee. The event brings together over 20,000 farmer families and coffee experts from across the globe to discover extraordinary coffee lots. Over 1800 micro-lots each season are put through a rigorous evaluation by professional coffee cuppers following international cupping protocols.

Since 2009, the event has helped unite over 40 coveted international jurors and Araku farmers to perfect coffee quality. These stimulating interactions have helped incorporate the best farm and processing practices and raise the coffee to international standards by improving the quality of the beans year after year.

In the pursuit of excellence, Araku farmers are continuously learning about and honing their coffee terroirs to enhance coffee bush health, build soil organic carbon, and regenerate the Araku Coffee landscape. And the proof is in the cup. As the soils get richer and coffee flavour notes more complex, Gems of Araku, currently in its 16th edition, top micro-lots score ratings as high as 94 out of 100 from professional cuppers.

Internationally acclaimed for their quality, the 'Gems' of Araku has now reached over 42 countries including - Korea, Japan, France, the UK, Germany, and the USA. The event has helped nurture an Indian-origin international coffee brand produced by small and marginal tribal farmer families of Araku by taking it to the global buyer and consumer.

The biodiverse, carbon-rich, wealth-creating model for agriculture, christened Arakunomics by Naandi, was awarded the Food System Vision Prize by the Rockefeller Foundation in 2020 and the Seeding the Future Prize by the Institute of Food Technologists in 2023. It is now being replicated in other geographies of India with complex agrarian realities, such as the Vidarbha region in Maharashtra, ground-water-depleted districts in Punjab and forgotten border districts in northern Uttar Pradesh.

This is an India Rise story, an Atma Nirbhar Bharat story.

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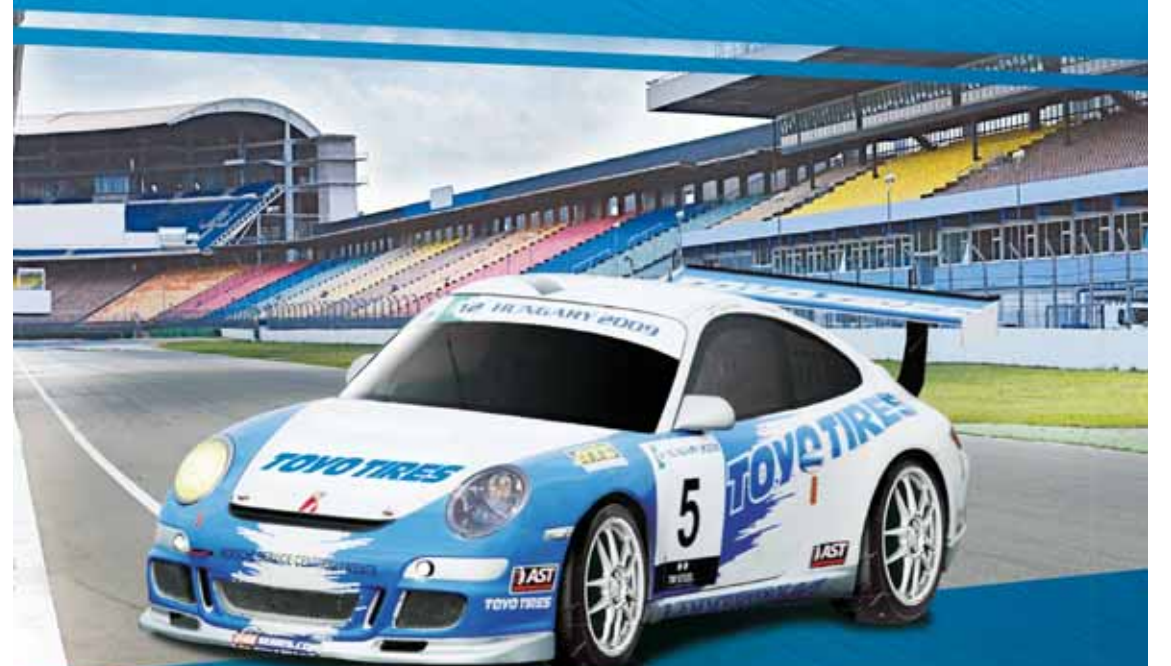


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