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GOV'T MONITORING SITUATION AS DISEASE SPREADS IN ARAB, GULF REGION

Kuwait free of Mpox virus infection

WHO declares global health emergency

MoE to be strict on mid-job biometrics

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

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 15: The Ministry of Education (MoE) has called on its employees to comply with leave regulations and the requirement for three fingerprint log-ins, including the additional fingerprint scan from Sunday.

The ministry stressed that any employee who fails to record their presence within 60 minutes after the first two hours of their shift will be considered to have left during official working hours without permission.

The Undersecretary of the Ministry of Education Mansour Al-Dehani had issued a circular to remind all ministry sectors to adhere strictly to leave regulations and the allotted grace period.

He emphasized that employee attendance, departure, and presence during official working hours must be recorded using fingerprint or facial recognition systems.

Al-Dehani said, "All employees must record their presence by performing a fingerprint scan within 60 minutes after the first two hours of their shift have elapsed. "Employees are exempt from this requirement if they have obtained permission that was granted within the 60-minute window. If an employee fails to record their presence within the specified 60-minute period, it will be considered that he or she left the workplace during official working hours without permission.

"In such cases, the period from two hours after the employee's arrival until the time of recording their presence with the fingerprint will be counted as part of the monthly delay periods in accordance with Article 18 of Civil Service Council's Resolution No. 6/2024.

"The Information Systems Department will coordinate with the Civil Service Bureau regarding the transfer and management of fingerprint data for Ministry of Education's employees. All employees are expected to be aware of these regulations and comply with them."

Over 40,000 dead

New round of Gaza ceasefire talks set

DOHA, Qatar, Aug 15, (AP): International mediators were set to hold a new round of talks Thursday aimed at halting the Israel-Hamas war and securing the release of scores of hostages, with a potential deal seen as the best hope of heading off an even larger regional conflict.

The United States, Qatar and Egypt were to meet with an Israeli delegation in Qatar as the Palestinian death toll from the 10-month-old war climbed past 40,000, according to local health authorities. Hamas, which is not expected to participate directly, accuses Israel of adding new demands to a previous proposal that had U.S. and international support and to which Hamas had agreed in principle.

A cease-fire in Gaza would likely calm tensions across the region. Diplomats hope it would persuade Iran and Lebanon's Hezbollah to hold off on retaliating for the killing of a top Hezbollah commander in an Israeli airstrike in Beirut and of Hamas' top political leader in an explosion in Tehran.

The mediators have spent months trying to hammer out a three-phase plan in which Hamas would release scores of hostages captured in the Oct. 7 attack that triggered the war in exchange for a lasting cease-fire, the withdrawal of Israeli forces from Gaza and the release of Palestinians imprisoned by Israel.

Both sides have agreed in principle to the plan, which U.S. President Joe Biden announced on May 31. But Hamas has proposed "amendments" and Israel has suggested "clarifications," leading each side to accuse the other of making new demands it cannot accept.

Hamas has rejected Israel's latest demands, which include a lasting military presence along the border with Egypt and a line bisecting Gaza where it would search Palestinians returning to their homes to root out militants. Hamas spokesperson Osama Hamdan told The Associated Press the group is only interested in discussing the implementation of Biden's proposal and not in further negotiations over its content.

A Palestinian official who closely follows the negotiations said Hamas would not take part in Thursday's talks but that its senior officials, who reside in Qatar, were ready to discuss any proposals from the mediators, as they have in past rounds.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu denies Israel has made new demands, but he has also repeatedly raised questions over whether the cease-fire would last, saying Israel remains committed to "total victory" against Hamas and the release of all the hostages.



KUNA photo Foreign Minister Abdullah Al-Yahya meets the British envoy Belinda Lewis.

FM, UK envoy discuss ties

Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Al-Yahya met with British Ambassador to Kuwait Belinda Lewis on Thursday, where they discussed bilateral ties. (KUNA)



His Excellency the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Oil, Dr. Imad Muhammad Al-Ateeqi, returned to the country today (Thursday) after the end of his treatment period in the friendly Republic of Turkey.

Event commemorates Kuwait's rich heritage

'Qaffal' sees end of traditional pearl diving fiesta

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 15: The 33rd diving anniversary trip concluded on Thursday evening, at the Kuwaiti Marine Sports Club, marking the end of the traditional event organized by the Marine Heritage Committee, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The event, held under the patronage of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad, involved over 150 participants, including captains and experienced sailors and other trainees.

The Qaffal ceremony was attended by the public and heritage enthusiasts and was broadcast live on Kuwait TV. The ceremony was also attended by the honorary president of the club, Sheikh Mubarak Abdullah Al-Mubarak.

The Qaffal began with the return of the diving ships to the club's coast, where the sailors disembarked, carrying their equipment and the oysters they have harvested.

They were welcomed by the community following which they proceeded to designated areas.

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MoH set to launch virtual med office

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 15, (KUNA): The Health Ministry announced on Wednesday that it was ready to launch in the upcoming weeks the virtual medical office to help provide medical services to Kuwaitis abroad.

In a press release, the ministry affirmed that the step was in line with its policy to further digitize services, revealing that authorizing for this step was granted by the Civil Service Commission (CSC) last Thursday.

The aim is to provide the best of medical services to Kuwaitis abroad, expedite treatment, as well as ease procedures to seek treatment, indicated the ministry, noting that the virtual office would be in contact with embassies and diplomatic missions abroad especially in area out of reach for physical offices.

It went on to say that, the virtual office would be a welcomed edition to health diplomacy, easing communication and contact with international health organizations as well as highlighting local health initiatives to the world.

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Young sailors embarking on a trip to the sea in hunt for pearls in oysters.

MEW renews call for cut in power use as temperatures soar to 50s

By Mohammad Ghanem
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff and Agencies

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 15: The electricity load index has once again approached the critical orange zone, registering 16,681 megawatts due to the soaring temperatures, which ranged between 48-50 degrees Celsius today. This extreme heat has led to a significant increase in electricity consumption, particularly during peak periods.

In response, sources within the Ministry of Electricity, Water, and Renewable Energy have emphasized the continued importance of energy conservation across all residential sectors. They stressed the necessity of setting cooling devices to 23 degrees Celsius, rather than 18, to help curb the excessive electricity consumption by cooling systems, which account for 70 percent of energy production.

It is also noteworthy that the highest electricity

load recorded by the index this summer was 17,360 megawatts on July 13.

Meanwhile, Kuwait's Meteorological Department has forecast very hot daytime temperatures and warm nights throughout the weekend.

According to Abdulaziz Al-Qarawi, the Director of the Meteorological Department, the country is currently experiencing the effects of an extension of the Indian seasonal depression. This is bringing very hot and relatively humid air masses, particularly over coastal areas, with light to moderate northwesterly and variable winds.

On Thursday, daytime temperatures are expected to peak between 48 and 50 degrees Celsius, with light to moderate variable winds shifting to northwesterly, at speeds of 10 to 28 kilometers per hour. The sea is anticipated to be light to moderate, with waves ranging from 1 to 3 feet.

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Increase in travel bans as installment scams 'spike'

By Najeh Bilal
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 15: The rise of mobile phone and gold cashing schemes, along with a lack of control over these activities, has led to an increase in travel bans for both citizens and residents in Kuwait.

The annual statistics issued by the Justice Ministry revealed that the total number of travel bans and arrests in the year 2023 reached 153,784 -- about 13,779 higher than the previous year's total of 140,005. It showed that the number of travel ban decisions related to mobile phone installment plans issued in 2023 reached 73,612; while the number of travel ban lifting decisions totaled 45,959 in the same year.

This phenomenon, which worsened in recent years, is due to the desire of some

people to obtain cash to settle their financial obligations; prompting them to buy certain items by installment and then sell the items to the stores to get cash, but at a much lower price than the purchase price. Therefore, they incur a burdensome bill due to the high interest rate and many of them face legal problems because of failure to pay.

Economic expert Mohammad Ramadan affirmed there have been many victims of such operations, whether in selling mobile phones or mortgaging gold. He stressed the need for the Ministry of Commerce and Industry to conduct public awareness programs on the issue, so people do not fall victim to such unscrupulous practices.

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CSC set to upgrade 'staff' competency

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 15: The Civil Service Commission (CSC) recently held an informative meeting for representatives from various ministries, departments, and government agencies to announce amendments to the scholarship and study leave regulations, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

This session, led by the CSC Chairman Issam Al-Rubaian, aimed to provide updates on changes to some Articles of Resolution No. (10/86).

During the meeting, Assistant Undersecretary for Scholarships and Study Leave Affairs, Narjes Dashti, detailed the rationale behind these amendments. She emphasized that the changes reflect the CSC commitment to enhancing the scientific and practical qualifications of Kuwaiti employees.

By allowing them to focus on obtaining advanced qualifications, the amendments aim to align with the state's public interest and support the strategic goals of government agencies seeking to benefit from this delegation.

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

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 15: The Ministry of Health said on Thursday that it was following up on the spread of a new monkeypox variant in several African countries, a matter that prompted WHO to announce a global health emergency.

In a statement, the ministry affirmed that it was working with regional and international partners to monitor the situation and prepare viable responses, revealing that Kuwait's Center for Disease Control (CDC) was coordinating with several national entities in this regard.

Monkeypox, or Mpox is a viral disease that causes painful rash, enlarged lymph nodes and fever.

The disease spreads via direct contact with infected individuals through sexual intercourse and touch or respiratory secretions, added the ministry.

It indicated that a Polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test could verify infection, noting that treatment includes supportive care medicine that decrease symptoms or antibiotics for some cases.

The ministry said that preventive measures includes washing hands with water, soap, and disinfectants, avoiding promiscuity and direct contact with individuals with apparent Mpox symptoms.

Following the reporting of over 99,500 cases of Mpox worldwide, which led the World Health Organization (WHO) to yesterday declare a global emergency for the second time in two years, Dr. Ghanem Al-Hujailan, a consultant for epidemiological and internal diseases at the Ministry of Health, highlighted the concern that approximately 95 percent of the reported cases are occurring outside the virus's usual areas and focal points of spread.

In a press statement, he explained that statistics from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reveal that the virus has spread to 122 countries, including 116 outside the areas previously identified as viral foci during the initial outbreak in 2022.

What adds to the concern in the Arab and Gulf regions is that many Gulf and Arab countries reported cases of the new Mpox strain in August.

About 88 cases were recorded in the Arab and Gulf countries including 16 cases in the UAE, eight in Saudi Arabia, five in Qatar, three in Oman and two in Bahrain. Lebanon announced the recording of 27 cases, Egypt three, Morocco three, Sudan 19 and one case each in Iran and Jordan.

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Newswatch

TOKYO: The Embassy of Kuwait in Tokyo urged its citizens in Japan to exercise extreme caution following a warning from the Japan Meteorological Agency (JMA) about the powerful approaching Typhoon Ampil.

In a statement received by KUNA on Thursday, the embassy advised citizens to follow Japanese authorities' guidelines as Typhoon No.7 is forecasted to strike northern and eastern Japan with strong forces between August 16-17. (KUNA)

TEHRAN: A member of Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC), who had earlier been injured in an airstrike by the U.S.-led coalition forces in Syria, succumbed to his wounds on Thursday, the semi-official Tasnim news agency reported.

The member of the IRGC's Aerospace Force, identified as Ahmad-Reza Afshari, was serving as a "military adviser" in Syria when he was wounded in an aerial bombardment by the "aggressive" coalition forces in the first half (July 22-Aug. 5) of the current Iranian month of Mordad in Syria, the report said without specifying the location and date of the incident. (Xinhua)

Prayer Timings

Fajr	03:50	Asr	15:28
Sunrise ..	05:16	Maghrib ..	18:29
Zohr	11:54	Isha	19:51

Local

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

Weather		Wind	Temp	Humidity
Expected weather for next 24 hrs:	By Day:	wind to light variable	wind, with	Abdaly 49 31
By Night:	Hot to rather hot with light to moderate northwesterly	speeds of 08-28 km/h.		Jahra 49 34
				Salmiyah 42 36
				Jal Aliyah 48 31
				Nuwaisib 47 32
				Wafra 48 30

Saudi delegation, ambassador of Bhutan offer condolences

Amiri Diwan expresses gratitude to mourners of late Sheikh Salem Al-Ali

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 15, (KUNA): The Amiri Diwan expressed on Wednesday gratitude to those offering condolences over the late Chief of the Kuwait National Guard (KNG) Sheikh Salem Al-Ali Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah.

The Amiri Diwan added that the gratitude came on the behalf of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and the Al-Sabah family.

Saudi Arabia

Meanwhile, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, and the Al-Sabah family received on Wednesday the Saudi Arabian delegation.

Prince Turki bin Mohammad Al-Saud, Minister of State and Member of the Council of Ministers of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia led a delegation representing King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud and Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman Al-Saud to offer their condolences on the passing away of Sheikh Salem Al-Ali Al-Salem Al-Sabah.

Bhutan

The Ambassador of the Kingdom of Bhutan to Kuwait, HE Chitim Tenzin, expressed his sincere condolences to the political leadership on the death of His Highness Sheikh Salem Al-Ali, Chief of the National Guard and Dean of the hon-

orable Al-Sabah family.

Ambassador Tenzin said: I extend my condolences to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Al-Abdullah, the honorable Al-Sabah family, and the friendly Kuwaiti people on the death of the His Highness Sheikh Salem Al-Ali Al-Sabah.



Tenzin

Jordan Crown Prince

His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled received a phone call on Thursday from his Jordanian counterpart Hussein bin Abdullah II.

During his call, the Jordanian Crown Prince Hussein expressed the deepest condolences of Jordan's King Abdullah II to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad and to His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled over the death of Chief of the Kuwait National Guard Sheikh Salem Al-Ali Al-Salem Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah.

His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled thanked King Abdullah and Crown Prince Hussein bin Abdullah on their kind feelings, wishing them a long healthy life, and more development and prosperity for their people.

Leadership sends greetings on national days

HH Amir congratulates Korean and Indian leaders

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 15, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent on Thursday a cable of congratulations to President of the Republic of Korea, Yoon Suk Yeol, on the occasion of his country's National Day.

His Highness the Amir wished the president good health and the friendly people of Korea all progress and prosperity. His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah sent a cable to President Yoon Suk Yeol, congrat-

ulating him on his country's National Day, and wishing him good health.

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah also sent a cable of congratulations to President Yoon Suk Yeol.

Meanwhile, His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad sent a congratulatory cable to the President of India, Droupadi Murmu expressing his well wishes on her country's Independence Day.

His Highness the Amir wished the president of

India and its people further progress and prosperity.

His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad sent a cable of congratulations to President Droupadi Murmu, on the occasion of her country's Independence Day, wishing her long-lasting health.

Also, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah sent a congratulatory cable to President Droupadi Murmu, on the occasion of her country's Independence Day.

'No immediate health crisis despite new virus reports'

Ministry spokesman addresses public concerns

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 15: Dr. Abdullah Al-Sanad, the spokesman for the Ministry of Health, reassured the public about concerns related to the emergence of new viruses or mutations that have been reported periodically.

Speaking during the 'Concepts' program broadcast on Kuwait TV, Dr. Al-Sanad emphasized that such reports often give the impression that the world is on the brink of a major health crisis, which is not necessarily the case.

He clarified that the warnings issued by international institutions focused on monitoring epidemics are primarily aimed at health professionals and systems, urging them to be more prepared to handle potential outbreaks.

The term 'Disease X,' which has been mentioned recently, is merely a hypothetical name created in 2018 to encourage preparedness for any potential epidemic, not an indication of an imminent threat.

Dr. Al-Sanad explained that scientists routinely compile lists of diseases that are most likely to spread, a practice intended to bolster vigilance and prevention efforts.

He stressed that there is no need for undue worry, as these actions are precautionary measures designed to ensure readiness and protection. He urged the public to approach the issue of epidemics with wisdom and calmness, avoiding both unnecessary fear and complacency, as both extremes can negatively impact the outcomes of public health measures.

Disasters

He also noted that while natural disasters, famines, and wars are devastating and often claim many lives, humanity's greatest enemy has historically been pathogens -- microbes responsible for infectious diseases, which can occasionally evolve into pandemics.

Dr. Al-Sanad's message was one of balance: acknowledging the risks without succumbing to panic, while reinforcing the importance of preparedness and caution.

During the program, Dr Al-Sanad provided a comprehensive review of the historical and ongoing threats posed by epidemics, underscoring the devastating impact they have had on humanity.

He referenced statistics illustrating the dangers of epidemics, which have claimed millions of lives and caused major health, economic, and social crises throughout history, beginning with the Antonine Plague during the Roman Empire and extending to the recent COVID-19 pandemic.

The latter has evolved from an epidemic to a pandemic due to its rapid spread, resulting in nearly 7 million deaths worldwide.

Dr. Al-Sanad highlighted that while there is general consensus on the reality of epidemics and viruses, differing opinions have emerged regarding the origins and development of the corona virus. The virus's rapid transmission and global impact have fueled debates about its source and whether it may have involved biological tampering.

He pointed out that there is historical evidence suggesting that humans have used germs as weapons in warfare since ancient times, indicating a possible link between biological tampering and the tragedies caused by some epidemics throughout history. This connection has led to fears of repeating such tragedies, particularly in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.



KUNA photo
Kuwait Society for Relief organized a second relief plane to Port Sudan International Airport.

27 tons of food and medical supplies sent

2nd Kuwaiti relief planeload leaves for Sudan

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 15, (KUNA): The second relief plane took off, Thursday, as part of the Kuwaiti humanitarian air-bridge heading to Port Sudan International Airport, carrying 27 tons of food and medical supplies and an ambulance, organized by Kuwait Society for Relief (KSR).

Chairman Dr. Ibrahim Al-Saleh told KUNA prior to takeoff that this initiative comes as part of a campaign to provide aid to the Sudanese people, launched by KSR, in cooperation with eight Kuwaiti charitable societies, and in line with directives of Kuwait's leadership to alleviate the urgent hu-

manitarian needs resulting from the floods that hit northern Sudan, in conjunction with the ongoing internal conflicts.

Meanwhile, Kuwait's first new air bridge plane carrying 10 tons of relief aid arrived in Sudan on Wednesday to help those affected by the war and floods in that country.

Head of delegation of Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) Faisal al-Jarallah told KUNA that the new air bridge of aid plane includes tents, health equipment and insecticides for Sudan, under the directives of Kuwait's leadership to help Sudanese who are in distress.

He affirmed continuation of addi-

tional aid planes in the next period for those affected by the war, as part of Kuwait's support for brothers in Sudan.

The plane was received, in the presence of Kuwait's Embassy staff in Port Sudan and KRCS officials.

Meanwhile, acting head of Sudan Red Crescent Society Hassan Abu Bakr expressed appreciation to Kuwait for this support, which shows continued cooperation between the two societies.

He noted that the Sudanese society would supervise distributing humanitarian aid in Nile and Northern States in the first phase.

MoH withdraws licenses of 21 pharmacies

'Commerce' eyes team to regulate medicine prices

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 15: Minister of Commerce and Industry Omar Al-Omar issued a decision on the formation of a team headed by the assistant undersecretary for Companies and Commercial Licenses Affairs; with the chairman of the Anti-Money Laundering and Financing Terrorism Department, director of the Commercial Monitoring Department, director of the License Monitoring Department and a commercial inspector as members, reports Al-Shahed daily.

The team will oversee the private pharmacies and drug companies in order to control the prices of medicines; including diabetes and cardiology medicines as well as some

creams, considering the prices increased by about 85 percent recently.

The team will also review the correspondences between the companies and pharmacies on one hand, and the Ministry of Health on the other hand; in addition to the inspection of pharmacies and drug companies to uncover violations in coordination with the concerned institutions like Kuwait Municipality, Ministry of Health, Public Authority for Manpower, Central Bank of Kuwait and Ministry of Interior.

The team will work for a period of three months, and then submit a detailed report to the minister of commerce and industry.

Meanwhile, the Ministry of

Health has confirmed the withdrawal of the licenses of 21 pharmacies; thereby, increasing the total number of closed pharmacies to 61 as part of ongoing efforts to regulate pharmacies.

This is in accordance with the reports and recommendations of the committee tasked to enforce Law No. 28/1996 and its amendment -- Law No. 30/2016.

The Ministry of Commerce and Industry affirmed its commitment to strictly implement the Ministry of Health's regulations on granting a license to a Kuwaiti pharmacist with a minimum of five years experience in the field to establish a private pharmacy.

Implementing measures to prevent infection and enhancing immunization coverage

Advanced Monitoring Systems -- Providing health systems with advanced monitoring capabilities and laboratories equipped to detect disease outbreaks

Strengthening Health Systems -- Enhancing the resilience, prevention, response, and preparedness of health systems, especially in countries with limited capacities

Global Support -- Offering necessary global support to countries struggling with capacity deficiencies

Coordinated Response to Zoonotic Diseases -- Developing a science-backed, coordinated response to diseases that originate in animals and can be transmitted to humans

Addressing Environmental Degradation -- Tackling factors that contribute to environmental degradation, which can lead to the spread of diseases

Comprehensive Risk Management -- Adopting a comprehensive approach that considers multiple risks in pandemic and epidemic response strategies.

Food Safety and Market Monitoring -- Enhancing food safety standards, monitoring traditional food markets, and working to improve and rationalize them.

Dr. Al-Sanad emphasized the importance of a rational, science-based approach to dealing with epidemics, ensuring that the global community is better prepared to handle future health crises.

India's External Affairs Minister set to visit Kuwait on August 18

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 15: India's External Affairs Minister (EAM) Dr. S. Jaishankar will pay an official visit to the State of Kuwait on August 18. During the visit, EAM will meet the Foreign Minister of the State of Kuwait HE Abdullah Ali



Dr. Jaishankar

Al-Yahya. He is also expected to call on the leadership of the State of Kuwait.

The visit of the EAM will enable both sides to review various aspects of our bilateral relations including political, trade, investment, energy, security, cultural, consular and people-to-people contacts as well as exchange views on regional and international issues of mutual interest.

NBK calls to check URL legitimacy & website matching when e-shopping

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 15: Reflecting its active role in promoting financial literacy and inclusion among all sectors of society, National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) continues promoting the "Let's Be Aware" banking awareness campaign introduced by the Central Bank of Kuwait, in cooperation with Kuwaiti banks and Kuwait Banking Association (KBA).

NBK intensifies awareness by sharing educational content including video clips, text messages, and tips across its social media platforms and other digital channels, as well as reposting CBK's communications, aiming to raise awareness among all people and familiarize them with the various fraud schemes and required precautions.

In this context, the bank called to check website URL to ensure using the legitimate website when shopping or making any banking transactions online to avoid falling victim to fraud.

NBK also stressed on never clicking any links from unknown sources, whether via e-mail or social media platforms, which may redirect the user to clone websites, as scammers make clone webpages that look exactly like well-known shopping websites, so, it is necessary to check the URL before entering any credentials or banking information.

With the ever-growing fraud threats using various techniques, NBK is keen to protect customers and increase their awareness of how to steer clear of these threats by following the tips provided across its digital channels.



Diraya logo

The bank also affirms that it will never ask customers for personal information via e-mail, SMS or phone calls, warning them of responding to such messages representing fraud attempts to obtain their banking information to steal their money or information.

NBK employs its strong customer communication capabilities as well as all its digital channels, which are the most popular among all Kuwaiti banks, to support the Central Bank's endeavors to protect customers and the national economy.

It is worth mentioning that NBK is a key supporter and partner in all CBK's campaigns and initiatives aiming to increase financial and banking awareness among different segments of society. As a leading financial institution in Kuwait, NBK frequently organizes various activities to raise awareness on all topics related to the banking sector, as well as various training courses for its employees to enhance their experience in the areas of combating fraud and financial crime.

Chinese Embassy in Kuwait launches 'Beautiful China' photography contest

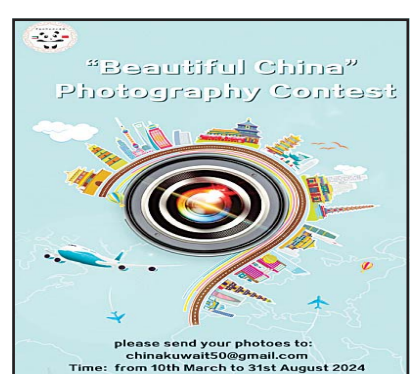
KUWAIT CITY, Aug 15: In celebration of 75th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China, the Chinese Embassy in Kuwait is pleased to launch the "Beautiful China" Photography Contest intended to promote people-to-people bonds between China and Kuwait, provide Kuwaiti people with a better understanding about China and China's pursuit of Chinese modernization.

The Chinese Embassy is now announcing an open call for photographic works related to China from the citizens of Kuwait and foreign friends living or working in Kuwait.

This contest, with the theme of "Beautiful China", welcomes photos that depict the natural scenery, history, culture, folk custom and social development of China from various angles and perspectives in a way that will present to all the true, multi-dimensional and all-round image of China and reflect the theory and practice of Chinese modernization. All citizens of Kuwait and all foreign friends living or working in Kuwait, regardless of age or occupation can take part in the competition.

Every entry must adhere closely to the given theme and be an original work that is created by the photographer on his or her own and has not been made public previously. No advertisement is allowed in any entry submitted for the contest.

There are no limits on the form in which the entries are created or arranged. Colorful



A flyer of the 'Beautiful China' Photography Contest.

and black and white photos, single photos and photo series, are all acceptable.

Each participant may submit up to five pieces of photos, each of which needs to be explained briefly and be in JPG format with a resolution of no less than 1280x720 pixels and the image size no less than 2M.

Entries must be submitted together with the registration form chinakuwait50@gmail.com and note "beautifulChina+name" in the subject of the email.

Entries contributed to the contest that were taken within China will be preferred and prioritized during the selection and appraisal process. Entries will be accepted from until August 31, 2024.

diwaniya ديوانية

A DIGEST OF PUBLIC OPINION

'Political maneuvering affecting Kuwait's constitutional integrity'

"ACCUSING the government of not believing in the Constitution and democracy every time it suspends some articles of the Constitution is not accurate," columnist **Nasser Al-Abdali** wrote for **Al-Qabas** daily.

"A serious observer can know that there are objective reasons that led to such a step more than once, the most prominent of which is that there is use by some components of the ruling family of parliament, whose role is limited to oversight and legislation, through some of its members, to pressure to reap their own gains, and the constitution or democracy have nothing to do with it."



Nasser Al-Abdali

"The use of parliament to arm-twist the government, to direct it towards unconstitutional and undemocratic directions, occurred in the 1960s and the government was forced to remove some political activities from the forefront, by influencing the electoral process."

"Although the goal was to weaken that use, the method was wrong, indeed extremely bad, and those uses were repeated, and also led to the suspension of some articles of the constitution in 1976 and 1986."

"The battle since the first National Assembly (1963) has been between loyal members of parliament and others who were thrown into membership for private agendas, in order to neutralize the parliament from participating in any projects that go beyond its original function of 'oversight and legislation.'"

"Some parliaments failed to maintain this neutrality, while others succeeded, especially those headed by the two former Speakers, Jassem Al-Kharafi, may God have mercy on him, and Marzouq Al-Ghanim, we pray to God to prolong his life."

"If we had observed the performance of some members of the National Assembly during the tenure of His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled, may God prolong his life, as Prime Minister, we would have known the extent of the tragedy that harmed parliamentary life in the country due to the interventions, despite the fact that the man's performance was distinguished, and his opponents before others testified that he was clean-handed, and his presence was an opportunity to move the country to better horizons than it is in now."

"But it was the agenda, which was imposed on that parliament, and led to tampering, as happened in violating the sanctity of the ministers' chairs and preventing the approval of laws related to developing the financial and popular situation."

Also:

"We mourn the passing of the late Sheikh Salem Al-Ali Al-Salem Al-Sabah, whose life was dedicated to serving the nation with unwavering commitment and sincerity. His leadership and contributions have left an indelible mark on Kuwait," columnist **Dr. Hind Al-Shoumer** wrote for **Al-Anba** daily.

"Sheikh Salem held key positions, including Chair of the Municipal Council, Minister of Public Works, and a member of the Supreme Defense Council. As the head of the National Guard, he played a pivotal role in establishing it as a vital entity for ensuring Kuwait's security and stability."

"His vision was to strengthen the National Guard's role in supporting the army, defending the homeland from any threats, assisting the police in maintaining safety, protecting the home front, and securing vital installations. He ensured the National Guard was always prepared to carry out any tasks assigned by the Supreme Defense Council."

"Beyond his official duties, Sheikh Salem's legacy includes significant charitable and community contributions. Among his many philanthropic endeavors, he made a generous donation of 100 million dinars in 2007 to

support the needy and the families of martyrs, with an additional 10 million dinars specifically for families of martyrs in wars.

"His dedication to culture and knowledge was evident in his establishment of the 'His Highness Sheikh Salem Al-Ali Informatics Competition' in 2000, a prestigious initiative aimed at promoting electronic awareness and nurturing talent in information technology, both locally and regionally."

"The departure of the dean of the ruling family deeply saddens us all. However, while Sheikh Salem may have left us in body, his spirit lives on through the remarkable legacy he has left behind."

"His contributions, generosity, and clear vision for Kuwait's advancement and stability will not be forgotten."

"May God have mercy on Sheikh Salem Al-Ali, forgive him, and grant him a place in paradise. Our heartfelt condolences go out to the Al-Sabah family and all the people of Kuwait. We belong to Allah and to Him we shall return."

□ □ □

"We were heartened by the recent Al-Qabas newspaper article titled 'Kuwaiti-Gulf efforts to calm the region'. Like many others, I felt that we had returned to our usual diplomatic role of working to maintain stability and calm in the region, a role we have always excelled in", columnist **Asrar Johar Hayat** wrote for **Al-Qabas** daily.

"Without a doubt, the region is currently experiencing heightened tensions on all fronts - political, security, and even climatic. It is inconceivable that any reckless actions by any party would not lead to undesirable consequences for the entire region. I have continually stressed the urgent need for intervention to address the crisis in Gaza and immediately stop the bloodshed."

"Today, we find ourselves trapped between the jaws of a pincer. On one side is the Islamic Republic of Iran, which seeks revenge for the killing of its guest Ismail Haniyeh in Tehran. On the other side is the escalating tension in Lebanon, along with the ongoing crisis in Gaza, Yemen, and elsewhere. In the face of these challenges, remaining passive is simply unacceptable."

"Despite the decline in our diplomatic activity in recent years when we stepped back from our role in uniting viewpoints and defusing regional crises - an area where we had previously been well-regarded - we are now reclaiming our political and diplomatic leadership. Today, we are returning to our core mission, reaffirming Kuwait's role in maintaining peace, security, and stability."

"In my previous articles, I repeatedly called for the need to reactivate Kuwait's role, not just at the regional level, but on the international stage as well. Kuwait has always served as a bridge of peace and a guide for stability by resolving and dismantling crises."

"In light of our hopes and prayers, we trust that the efforts to calm the region will find wise and listening ears. However, we must also be prepared for all possibilities, should the need arise."

"At the local level, we must consider all possible scenarios in a region that is currently in turmoil. It is essential to assess and prepare for these scenarios from a security perspective, as events unfolding just a few kilometers away from us can place us directly in the midst of the action."

"On the other hand, we must secure food stocks for an adequate duration to prepare for any emergency. Additionally, the government should send messages of reassurance and be transparent in revealing the extent of our readiness for all possible scenarios."

"Given the current tense conditions in the region, it is crucial to immediately establish an operations room that monitors, plans, and ensures the security and safety of society. We are confident that the government is well-equipped to lead this effort."

- Compiled by PFX Fernandes and Mahmoud Ateyieh



Above: Securitymen checking the residency status of some of the expatriates during Jleeb campaign.



Mol photos

210 traffic violations issued, 36 persons arrested in Jleeb

The Ministry of Interior has reported that the Farwaniya Security Directorate conducted a security campaign in the Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh area, covering both morning and evening shifts, reports **Al-Seyassah** daily.

The operation led to the issuance of 210 traffic violations and the arrest of 36 individuals for various offenses.

This is in addition to arresting 14 persons with outstanding arrest warrants; 11 individuals violating labor laws, seven with expired

residency permits, 2 staying in the country illegally after the expiry of work permits, one street vendor, and one who was banned from entering the country.

All individuals were referred to the appropriate authorities for legal action.

Young citizen 'nabbed' for stealing & selling luxury vehicle tires online

PAFN orders closure of 12 food establishments

By Marwa Al-Bahrawi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff and Agencies

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 15: Authorities from the Investigation and Inquiry Department in Hawalli Governorate have successfully closed five cases related to the theft of luxury vehicle tires following the arrest of a young Kuwaiti man. The suspect admitted to stealing tires from high-end vehicles and selling them through social media platforms, reports Al-Anba daily.

According to his confession, the young man targeted specific tires based on online advertisements requesting particular specifications, ensuring quick sales. To facilitate his thefts, he rented a van, which he used to transport the stolen tires.

A security source revealed that the growing number of tire thefts from luxury vehicles prompted the formation of a specialized team to monitor parking areas where such vehicles are commonly found. The team eventually apprehended the suspect while he was in the process of stealing tires from a vehicle. Upon arrest, he confessed to committing similar thefts in both Hawalli and Ahmadi Governorates and reselling the stolen items online.

The source also clarified that the accused did not steal to fund a drug habit but rather out of a desire to show off and enjoy himself.

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12 food outlets closed down: In a decisive move, Ali Al-Kandari, Director of the Capital Governorate Inspection Department at the Public Authority for Food and Nutrition, has ordered the closure of 12 food establishments in the Shuwaikh Industrial Area, reports **Al-Seyassah** daily.

This action follows a series of violations by these businesses, which include shops selling meat, fish, and other food products.

According to a statement, the closures were enforced by the Capital Governorate inspection teams. The establishments were shut down due to serious infractions such as selling food deemed unfit for human consumption, dealing in adulterated products, failing to meet hygiene standards, and the presence of pests like insects and mice. Moreover, some of these businesses were operating without the required licenses.

This crackdown reflects the commitment of PAFN inspectors to maintaining food safety and ensuring that all food establishments comply with regulatory standards.

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Person attempts suicide: This morning, emergency services responded to a report of a suspected suicide attempt on the Jaber Bridge, reports **Al-Seyassah** daily.

A person reportedly jumped off the bridge, prompting a swift response from fire brigades and rescue teams.

The suspect who jumped from the bridge was located and handed over to medical emergency personnel for further evaluation and care. Further details about the incident are awaited as investigations continue.

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Man acquitted of 'kidnap' claims: In a recent case, the Court of Appeals upheld the verdict of the lower court and acquitted a young man who is in his thirties and had been accused of kidnapping three young women with the intention of forcing them into fornication, reports **Al-Seyassah** daily.

The allegations, as presented by the Public Prosecution, claimed that the accused, with the help of others, forcibly took the women from their homes to an apartment with the intent of sexually assaulting them.

During the trial, Attorney Enaam Haidar, representing the accused, challenged the validity of the investigation and the testimony provided by the incident officer.

Attorney Haidar argued that the evidence presented by the Public Prosecution was insufficient and tainted with doubt.

The defense contended that the accusations lacked conclusive evidence and failed to substantiate the claims made in the indictment report. As a result, the Court of Appeals confirmed the initial acquittal, clearing the accused of all charges.

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Car owner fails to pay mechanic: An expatriate working at a garage specializing in the installation and sale of car engines filed a report at the Taima police station, accusing an unidentified individual of stealing a car engine, reports **Al-Anba** daily.

According to the report, a person driving a gray American vehicle brought in a car using a winch and requested the installation of an engine, agreeing to pay 220 dinars for the service.

The complainant stated that after the repairs were completed last week, the individual took the car for a test drive, promising to return and settle the payment but never came back.

The complainant was only able to provide the vehicle's type and color in the case file, leaving out other crucial details.

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'Come forward to settle claims': The Ministry of Interior has urged Kuwaiti citizens and individuals with financial claims or contracts involving the Egyptian national who was arrested recently for collecting donations without an official permit to come forward, reports **Al-Seyassah** daily.

Those affected are requested to visit the General Department of Residence Affairs Investigations (Inspection Department) in the Al-Dajeej area to address and settle their claims.

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No injuries in factory fire: Fire broke out in a wood factory in Amghara without causing injuries or loss of lives; just minor material losses, reports **Al-Anba** daily.

Firefighters rushed to the location and extinguished the fire within a short period.

In addition, the Interior Ministry received a report about the fire incident in a house in Taima.

When the security officers and firefighters arrived at the scene, the owner of the house informed him that he used a household fire extinguisher to put out the fire, and that he no longer needs help.

Moreover, firefighters controlled a garbage fire in Amghara. No casualties, injuries or damages were reported.



Al-Seyassah photo

Governor Sheikh Athbi and Brig-Gen Muhammad Al-Awadhi

Sheikh Athbi receives officials

Farwaniya governor praises role of securitymen in safeguarding nation

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 15: Farwaniya Governor Sheikh Athbi Al-Nasser recently received in his office Brigadier Mohammad Abdul Gafoor on the occasion of his appointment as the Director General of the General Investigations Department at the Ministry of Interior, reports **Al-Rai** daily.

The governor praised the efforts exerted by security personnel in ensuring the safety of individuals and their properties, and in enhancing societal stability.

He also extended his best wishes to Brigadier Abdul Gafoor for success in his new role.

Meanwhile, Sheikh Athbi also received

in his office the former Deputy Chairman of Public Authority for Food and Nutrition (PAFN) Dr. Nawal Al-Hamad. The two parties discussed issues related to nutrition and food safety.

In addition, Sheikh Athbi also received the Chairman of the Kuwaiti-Pakistani Friendship Society Rana Eizag Muhammad and the accompanying delegation.

During the meeting, they discussed ways to strengthen the social relations between Kuwait and Pakistan, as well as the society's activities in this regard.

Members of the delegation praised Sheikh Athbi's commitment to engaging with various communities in Kuwait.

DGFD to select applicants to join fire force

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 15: The Public Relations and Media Department of the Directorate-General of Fire Department (DGFD) said applicants for fire force courses next Saturday will be selected via the public lottery system, reports **Al-Seyassah** daily.

The DGFD said the lottery will be held next Saturday at 9 am at the Al-Qadisiya Sports Club in the Hawalli area.

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60 citizens nominated: The Civil Service Commission (CSC) has announced the nomination of 60 male and female citizens with a bachelor's degree in "Communication Disorder" who are registered in the central employment system. This brings the total number of nominees to 12,964 so far, reports **Al-Seyassah** daily. It advised the candidates to visit the Ministry of Health directly to complete the necessary procedures, without the need to go to CSC.

News in Brief

Dev boom in AI eyed: The use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools should be instrumental in further developing services offered by state bodies, Kuwait's Central Agency for Information Technology (CAIT) said on Thursday.

Overseeing a workshop organized by the information technology body, in conjunction with US software giant Microsoft, CAIT's acting chief Dr. Ammar Al-Husaini said the initiative aims to unveil Kuwait's AI strategy in a bid to give impetus to a national digital drive.

On the growing significance of the burgeoning AI industry, he underlined that the use of such tools is the make-or-break factor in the success of any digital drive, saying he hoped Kuwait's AI strategy would help usher in a development boom. (KUNA)

Time for festivals in co-op: Eng. Bader Hassan Boushahri, Chairman of the

Purchasing and Marketing Committee at Wafra Cooperative Housing Society, announced the launch of the committee's first marketing plan since the formation of the new Board of Directors, reports **Al-Anba** daily.

He highlighted that the month of August has been featuring several unique festivals organized by the committee, coinciding with the back-to-school season.

In a press statement, Eng. Boushahri explained that there will be four main festivals. The first will be the Back to School Festival, for which a dedicated area has been set up to address the needs of students. There will be special discounts for family card holders among shareholders.

In addition to food and consumer products, there will be a festival in the central market on essential goods at competitive prices, another in the family supplies branch, and a festival at the tire shop branch.

He stressed that the diversity of festivals across all sections of the cooperative society reflects the keenness of the board of directors to address the needs of shareholders and reduce the financial burdens on them, especially with the back to school season.



Dr Al-Husaini

MoCI sets new fish prices

Local baskets up to KD 118, imports start at KD 5



Al-Qabas photo

Visual presentation of Mubarakiya Markets Development Project plan.

Al-Mashaan presents Mubarakiya markets visual development plan

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 15: During the weekly meeting of the Council of Ministers today, Minister of Public Works and Minister of State for Municipal Affairs, Dr. Noura Mohammed Al-Mashaan, along with several leaders from the Kuwait Municipality, presented a comprehensive visual presentation on the Mubarakiya Markets Development Project, reports Al-Qabas daily.

The presentation highlighted the key components of the project, which include the construction of a heritage hotel, new buildings, shops, and parking facilities. The project also encompasses various other facilities and services designed to enhance the historic market area.

This development aims to preserve the cultural heritage of the Mubarakiya Markets while providing modern amenities to visitors and shoppers, ensuring that the area remains a vibrant and essential part of Kuwait's urban landscape.

MPW pushes road maintenance bids

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 15: The Ministry of Public Works has requested the Central Agency for Public Tenders to proceed with finalizing bids for the maintenance of governorate roads and highways, with various companies competing for these contracts, reports Al-Rai daily.

According to sources within the agency, the ministry's request has been added to the agenda for the agency's board of directors to review.

Simultaneously, a source from the Public Works Department informed Al-Rai that the agency's approval to address the remaining issues in the bidding process indicates that the committee responsible for evaluating the companies' bids will require some time to accurately issue its recommendations.

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

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 15: The Ministry of Commerce and Industry, through the Fish Market Center (Sharq) in the Control and Trade Department, approved the prices for local and imported fish sold at auctions yesterday, which ranged from KD 5 to KD 118 per basket or code (ten kilograms).

The Director of the Commercial Control Department Faisal Al-Ansari explained that the fish price inspection and monitoring teams at the Sharq Market Center conducted an inspection tour of the market at dawn on Wednesday. They reviewed the latest price developments in the auctions and approved the new prices which ranged from KD 5 to KD 118 per basket or code (ten kilograms) for local fish, and KD 5 to KD 100 per basket or code for imported fish.

The prices for a basket of Kuwaiti silver pomfret ranged from KD 43 to KD 118. Shrimp prices vary, ranging from KD 18 to KD 65 per basket depending on the type. A basket of jumbo shrimp costs between KD 50 and KD 65, Umm Naira shrimp between KD 53 and KD 60, and Shahamiya shrimp between KD 18 and KD 30.

Also, the price for a basket of Orange Spotted Grouper fish ranges from KD 12 to KD 16.25, Tigertooth Croaker KD 15 to KD 32 per basket, Silver Grunt KD 10 to KD 25 per basket, Yellowfin Seabream KD 20 to KD 50 per basket, Cobia KD 15 to KD 35 per basket, Spangled Emperor fish KD 15 to KD 25 per basket, crab KD 8 to KD 30 per basket,

and Sobaity seabream KD 8 to KD 15 per basket.

Regarding the prices of imported fish at the Sharq Market, Al-Ansari explained that a basket of Silver Pomfret ranges from KD 40 to KD 85, and a basket of Grouper ranges from KD 14 to KD 35.

The cost for a basket of shrimp varies between KD 10 and KD 100 depending on the type. A basket of Jumbo shrimp costs KD 90 to KD 100, Umm Naira shrimp KD 45 to KD 50, Shahamiya shrimp KD 15 to KD 20, and farmed shrimp KD 10 to KD 15.

The cost for a basket of Orange Spotted Grouper ranges from KD 5 to KD 12, Tigertooth Croaker KD 17 to KD 24, Silver Grunt KD 7 to KD 18, Yellowfin Seabream KD 20 to KD 27, Spangled Emperor KD 4 to KD 11, and Sobaity Seabream KD 8 to KD 21.

Legacy of compassion

Late Dr. Al-Sumait ... Pinnacle of Kuwait's philanthropic heritage

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 15, (KUNA): If philanthropy could be embodied in a person, the late Dr. Abdurrahman Al-Sumait would surely be befitting, as his legacy within the field is unsurpassed by any individual in recent history.

Born October 15, 1947 in Kuwait, Al-Sumait always had the woes and troubles of the needy worldwide on his mind, and during his life, he dedicated himself to ease the suffering of people and promote welfare to all, especially to those residing in the African continent.

Al-Sumait's academic career saw him first graduate from Baghdad's College of medicine in 1972, which was followed by a diploma in tropical diseases from the University of Liverpool in 1974 and in 1978, he specialized in internal medicine and



KUNA photo

The late Dr. Abdurrahman Al-Sumait

digestive diseases while studying in the McGill University in Canada.

Cultivating leadership, community spirit

KRCS ends Little Volunteer Club's programs

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 15: Anwar Al-Hassawi, Vice Chairman of the Kuwait Red Crescent Society, announced the successful conclusion of the Little Volunteer Club's activities for the season, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

He highlighted that the club has effectively promoted a culture of volunteering among children, fostering cooperation, leadership, and problem-solving skills.

In a statement to the Kuwait News Agency (KUNA), Al-Hassawi emphasized the association's commitment to enhancing volunteerism as part of sustainable development and preparing future generations. He noted the association's focus on instilling a love for giving, charity, and



KUNA photo

Kuwait Red Crescent Society building

volunteering in children.

The Little Volunteer Club's pro-

grams covered a range of topics, including first aid, time management, health culture, sports, dental health, and environmental preservation.

Specialized programs developed by trainers included awareness and education initiatives, workshops, lectures, and publications aimed at raising children's awareness and making productive use of their free time.

Al-Hassawi encouraged the use of children's energies to boost their involvement in volunteer work. He advocated for their participation in community service and various events organized by the association, which would further their training and experience in volunteering.

Final-year switch prohibited

Education Ministry sets new transfer 'guidelines' for scholarship students

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 15: The Ministry of Higher Education has unveiled new guidelines for scholarship students wishing to change their university or specialization for the 2024/2025 academic year, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

In a post on the social media platform X, the Ministry detailed the conditions for such changes. For students seeking to alter their area of study, there is a notable restriction: each student may only switch their specialization once throughout their entire study period.

When it comes to changing universities or colleges, the Ministry outlined four key requirements.

First, the students must secure approval from the Cultural Office, second, the new institution must be endorsed by the National Authority for Academic Accreditation and Education Quality Assurance within the specific field of study; third, students are not permitted to make such a change in their final year of study and finally, students can only transfer to a different university or college once during their scholarship period.

Any additional changes will require a decision from the Ministry, based on recommendations from the Cultural Office.

These guidelines are designed to ensure that students make informed and stable decisions about their academic paths while abroad.



KUNA photo

Nashmiya Al-Dhuwaih, Acting Director of the Supplies and Warehouses Department at the Ministry of Education.

MoE school supplies distribution ongoing

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 15: Nashmiya Al-Dhuwaih, Acting Director of the Supplies and Warehouses Department at the Ministry of Education, has confirmed that the distribution of school books to all schools is ongoing, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The department is working to ensure that every school across the educational regions is supplied with the necessary books for the upcoming academic year.

Al-Dhuwaih appreciated the efforts of the department's employees and extended best wishes to students for success in the new school year.

Need for alternative grazing areas

Delay in encroachment removal urged

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 15: Municipal Council member Fahd Al-Khanin has called for extending the timeframe for removing encroachments on state property, particularly in wilderness areas, due to the harsh climate conditions, reports Al-Jarida daily.

In a recent press statement, Al-Khanin highlighted the lack of clarity regarding designated grazing areas, attributing this to insufficient coordination among government agencies.

Al-Khanin emphasized the need to balance respect for laws and state property with the preservation of livestock, which he described as integral to Kuwait's historical heritage and food security.

He pointed out that some areas targeted for removal are associated with oil facilities or are under the jurisdiction of the Environment Public Authority. This, he argued, underscores the necessity for better coordination among the involved parties.

He proposed postponing the removal campaign until suitable alternative grazing areas are identified and suggested that more lands be freed up and designated for grazing to support Kuwait's agricultural and livestock sectors.



Al-Khanin

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MoH set

Continued from Page 1

The ministry affirmed that the step was in line with efforts to lower expenses on the state general budget.

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Higher Education opened enrollment on the external missions plan for holders of the English high school certificate and the International Baccalaureate Certificate (IB/DP).

Registration for the academic year 2024/2025 on the website of the Ministry starts at 6:00 pm. tomorrow, Thursday, until 12:00 pm., Saturday, August 17, according to a statement posted to the Ministry's X account.

MEW renews

Continued from Page 1

As for Thursday night, conditions will remain warm and relatively humid in coastal areas, with winds continuing to be light to moderate.

The minimum temperature is expected to hover between 30 and 33 degrees Celsius, with similar sea conditions.

Friday will bring similar weather, with temperatures again reaching between 48 and 50 degrees Celsius during the day. Winds will be north-westerly to variable, at speeds of 12 to 35 kilometers per hour. The sea will see waves between 2 and 5 feet.

Nighttime on Friday will remain hot, with temperatures between 30 and 33 degrees Celsius, and light to moderate northwesterly to variable winds. The sea conditions will remain consistent.

Saturday is expected to be very hot, with temperatures potentially reaching up to 51 degrees Celsius in coastal areas. Winds will continue to be light to moderate, shifting between northwesterly and variable at speeds of 12 to 35 kilometers per hour. The sea will have waves between 2 and 5 feet.

Saturday night will continue to be warm, particularly in coastal areas,

with temperatures ranging between 31 and 33 degrees Celsius. Winds will be light to moderate, and sea conditions will remain stable with waves between 1 and 3 feet.

'Qaffal' sees

Continued from Page 1

The ceremony included the display and opening of the oyster harvest, a process known as "Al-Falak," accompanied by performances from the club's Marine Arts band.

The ceremony concluded with the participants lining up in front of the platform of honor, where a group of divers lowered the Kuwaiti flag, symbolizing the end of the diving season.

Major General Fahd Al-Fahad, the club president, emphasized that the purpose of the diving trip goes beyond collecting oysters and searching for pearls.

It is about preserving Kuwait's rich maritime heritage, following royal directives, and connecting the younger generation with the traditions and values of their ancestors.

He expressed pride in the Amir's annual sponsorship of the event and praised the efforts of the diving youth and their families, as well as the Marine Heritage Committee, in preparing the youth to face challenges, learn valuable life skills, and maintain discipline and respect for their elders.

Increase in

Continued from Page 1

He called for the amendment of the relevant laws, if these operations are not criminalized from a legal standpoint, especially since they may lead to an increase in the number of travel ban decisions.

Economist and media professional Faisal Al-Harbi disclosed there is chaos and randomness in the abovementioned operations, which destroy the economy and put some people to prison. He warned against the spread

of the practice of obtaining cash by selling mobile phones, as one could be forced by circumstances and deceived to obtain KD200, only to be surprised later that the total installment he needs to pay reached KD1,000. He wondered about the role of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry in this regard, stating the ministry left the citizens and expatriates to be preys to such operations.

He pointed out that the gold mortgage operations in some complexes are included in this aspect as there is manipulation in such operations. He said the owner of the gold shop gets 10 percent interest per month, which prevents many citizens and expatriates from traveling due to the accumulation of installments.

He emphasized the need for stricter control over small mobile phone companies that are widespread in complexes, as they deceive people; in addition to the employee in a telecommunications company who might add a router or a digital watch to the customer's installment file without the latter's knowledge - an act of commercial fraud. He called for holding accountable anyone who publishes an advertisement about such operations on social media and other platforms.

In a related development, Saad Ibrahim revealed that he dealt with a mobile phone shop that purchased a phone from him. He received KD250 cash from the shop on the condition that he pays KD35 every month for two years, thus, he had to pay a total of KD840. After five months, he was unable to pay because he lost his job and the company sought the services of a law office, such that he was forced to borrow money in order to settle the debt and avoid facing legal problems.

Hossam Mandour added a mobile phone company bought a phone from him, through which he receive KD300 cash provided he pays KD30 per month for one year. However, he was surprised to find out later that the installment period was two years; and when he stopped paying, he was banned from traveling.

KFH warns against unverified online links

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 15: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) advises customers to stay cautious about a new phishing scam targeting their bank accounts and stealing their funds. KFH warning is part of its continuous support for Diraya campaign, which aims to promote banking awareness, in collaboration with the Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) and the Kuwait Banking Association (KBA).

In its press release, KFH stated that the new form of online scam involves sending a message with a suspicious link tricking victims to click the link to visit a particular website or participate in a survey. Once they click the link, their devices will be hacked, enabling the hacker to access and exploit their personal data for harmful purposes.

KFH urged customers to stay vigilant and refrain from disclosing their



Diraya logo

personal information to requests received through e-mails, text messages, or phone calls, as they are attempts to obtain customers' banking information to steal their funds or data.

KFH advised customers to be careful when receiving links as these

links could lead to theft of sensitive banking information. The bank also recommended that customers protect their bank accounts by avoiding the storage of confidential information, such as card numbers or passwords, on their mobile phones. Additionally, customers were urged not to share their OTP with anyone and to log out of the bank's application or website promptly after finishing a transaction.

KFH added that fraudsters can target anyone, regardless of age or social status. They employ various tactics, including enticing but fake offers, seemingly urgent bank warnings about account problems, suspicious online friend requests, or pleas for help over the phone, benefitting from technology, the launch of new product or services and major events to mislead individuals and steal their valuable information and funds.

Kuwait free

Continued from Page 1

Kuwait has not recorded any cases of Mpox and is currently free of the virus. However, this does not guarantee immunity to the disease. Should Mpox enter the country, it would be relatively easier to control compared to airborne diseases like the Coronavirus, as Mpox is slow-spreading.

Globally, statistics show that the United States has reported the highest number of Mpox cases, with over 33,400 cases, Brazil with 11,200 cases, Spain with 8,100 cases, Colombia with 4,200 cases, and Mexico with 4,100 cases.

Meanwhile, informed health sources affirmed the Ministry of Health's readiness to address any potential cases of the virus.

They confirmed that necessary precautionary measures are in place to confront the virus, including mon-

itoring travelers from countries with recorded infections and inspecting goods and shipments arriving from abroad.

In this regard, the Ministry of Health is closely monitoring the Mpox outbreak in several African countries, especially following the declaration of a global health emergency and the emergence of a new strain of the disease.

The Ministry of Health affirmed that it is continuously coordinating with international partners at the Gulf Center for Disease Prevention and the WHO to monitor the situation and prepare for epidemiological developments.

It stated that the Kuwait Center for Disease Prevention and Control (CDC) is working closely with all relevant parties to strengthen national efforts to prevent and combat infectious diseases.

The ministry explained that Mpox is a viral disease with two sub-types. Its symptoms include rashes, blis-


ters, mucosal lesions, fever, headache, muscle pain, weakness, and swollen lymph nodes.

Transmission can occur through direct physical contact with an infected person, particularly via sexual contact, kissing, or even touching. The disease can also spread through respiratory secretions. Diagnosis is confirmed through a polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test.

Treatment generally involves supportive care and symptom management, though antivirals may be used in some cases.

Prevention measures include maintaining good hand hygiene with soap and water or alcohol-based sanitizers, avoiding risky sexual practices, and refraining from direct physical contact with individuals showing symptoms. The ministry also recommended exercising caution when traveling to countries where cases of the disease have been reported.

See Also Page 13



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COMPREHENSIVE MAINTENANCE AND OPERATIONS SUPPORT SERVICES FOR PRODUCTION FACILITIES IN WEST KUWAIT AREAS

Sl. #	Job Title	No of Position	Salary	Qualification required	Years of experience	Field
1	Coordinator - I	1	KWD 1,125,000	Shall be a graduate of Bachelor of Science Degree/ Bachelor Technology Degree in Electrical/Mechanical/ Instrument/Chemical from a reputed University	10	"Post-qualification experience of minimum of ten (10) years in maintenance services of Energy/ Oil and Gas/ Petrochemical and other such utility facilities. He should have worked for at least past three (3) years in similar position"
2	Maintenance Reliability Engineer	1	KWD 1,125,000	Shall be a graduate of Bachelor of Science Degree in Electrical/ Mechanical/ Instrument/Chemical Engineering or equivalent from a reputed University including three (3) Years' of Reliasoft reliability software hands on experience and certified reliability professional certification from Reliasoft	12	Post qualification experience of minimum twelve (12) Years' in maintenance of process and reliability services of Energy/Oil & Gas/Power/Petrochemical/ Refinery or other utility facilities. He should have worked at least for the past ten (10) Years' in similar position.
3	Control & Instrumentation Engineer	3	KWD 1,125,000	Shall be a graduate of Bachelor of Science Degree in Control and Instrumentation Engineering or equivalent from a reputed University.	10	He shall have a post-qualification experience of minimum ten (10) Years' in maintenance services of Energy/Oil & Gas /Petrochemical/Fertilizer/Refinery or such other utility facilities. He should have worked at least for the past eight (8) Years' in similar position and sufficient knowledge in DCS, PLC, ESD, SCADA and other such Control systems
4	Mechanical Maintenance Engineer	3	KWD 1,125,000	Shall be a graduate of Bachelor of Science Degree in Mechanical Engineering or equivalent from a reputed University.	10	He should have worked at least for the past eight (8) Years' in the similar position shall have hands-on experience in installation, repair and maintenance of gas turbines, compressors, pumps, engines, heat-exchangers, pressure vessels, pipe lines and the like.
5	Electrical Maintenance Engineer	5	KWD 1,125,000	Shall be a graduate of Bachelor of Science Degree in Electrical Engineering or equivalent from a reputed University.	10	He should have worked at least for the past eight (8) Years' in the similar position and shall have hands-on experience in the installation, repair and maintenance of HV/LV electrical network and electrical switchgear, HV/LV motors, power generators, transformers and electrical maintenance associated with HV/LV pumps, gas turbines, compressors, engines, heat exchangers, pressure vessels and the like.
6	Rotating Equipment Machinery Engineer	2	KWD 1,125,000	Shall be a graduate of Bachelor of Science Degree in Mechanical Engineering or equivalent from a reputed University.	10	He should have worked in the similar position at least for the past eight (8) Years' and shall have hands-on experience in installation, repair and maintenance of gas turbines, compressors, pumps, engines and the like.
7	Planning Engineer / Material Engineer	7	KWD 1,125,000	Shall be a graduate of Bachelor of Science Degree in Mechanical Engineering or equivalent from a reputed University.	10	He should have worked at least for the past eight (8) Years' in the similar position. He should have well knowledge of planning and scheduling of all maintenance activities and estimation of manpower and other resources required for the maintenance activities and its allocation and the like
8	HSE /Safety Officer cum Certified Scaffolding Inspector	12	KWD 600,000	Shall be graduate of Bachelor of Science Degree in Industrial Engineering or equivalent from a reputed University.	10	He should have worked at least for the past eight (8) Years' in the similar position.
9	Laboratory Technician (Lube Oil)	1	KWD 360,000	Shall be a Diploma Holder in Chemical Technology or equivalent Chemistry Degree and Laboratory Science is preferred, with additional certificate program on lube oil Analysis and lab equipment.	5	He shall have a post qualification experience of minimum five (5) years in the lube oil laboratories in oil & gas fields and refineries and other such utility facilities.
10	Supervisor - Control & Instrument /Mechanical Maint./ Electrical Maint. /Rotating Equipment	8	KWD 650,000	Shall be a Bachelor Degree or Diploma in Instrumentation Engineering/ Mechanical Engineering/Electrical Engineering from a reputed Institute/University.	12	He should have exhaustive hands-on experience in operation and maintenance of gas turbines, centrifugal and reciprocating process gas-compressors, pumps etc. and good knowledge of planning and scheduling of all maintenance activities and estimation of manpower and other resources and its allocation and the like.
11	Planning / Site Supervisor	2	KWD 650,000	Shall be a Bachelor Degree or Diploma in Mechanical Engineering from a reputed Institute/University.	10 or 12	He should have good knowledge of estimation and allocation of manpower and other resources required for the survey activities during shutdowns at production facilities. Shall have hands-on experience on repair, trouble-shooting, overhauling of mechanical equipment including vessels, coolers, exchangers, heaters, etc.
12	Senior Chargehand	2	KWD 500,000	Diploma in Mechanical Engineering or Higher Secondary School (Science) with two (2) Years' Industrial Training or Secondary School with two (2) Years' Industrial Training	8 or 10 or 12	Shall have hand-on experience in the installation, repair and maintenance of the plant equipment during breakdown and total shutdown such as vessels, heat exchangers, cools, pipe work and the like.
13	Lead Instrument Technician / Lead Mechanical Technician / Lead Electrical Technician/ Lead Rotating Equipment Machinery/ Lead Monitoring / Vibration Technician	59	KWD 380,000	Diploma in Instrumentation Engineering/Mechanical Engineering/ Electrical Engineering or equivalent from a reputed University/ Institution.	8	He should have worked in the similar position at least for the past six (6) Years
14	Chargehand	11	KWD 380,000	Diploma in Mechanical Engineering or Higher Secondary School (Science) with two (2) Years' Industrial Training or Secondary School with two (2) Years' Industrial Training	6 or 8 or 10	Work experience shall be in maintenance services of Energy/Oil & Gas/Petrochemical or such other utility facilities.
15	Auto CAD Draftsman	6	KWD 300,000	Diploma in Engineering with Certificate of AutoCAD latest version from reputed University/Institution.	5	"Shall be able to effectively use Auto Cad programs.
16	Instrument Technician / Mechanical Technician/ Electrical Technician	67	KWD 300,000	Shall hold a 03 Years Diploma in Instrumentation Engineering/ Mechanical Engineering/ Electrical Engineering from a reputed University/Institution Or Higher Secondary School (Science) with two (2) Years' Industrial Training Certificate Or Secondary School with two (2) Years' Industrial Training Certificate from a reputed University/Institution	5 or 8 or 10	
17	Vibration / Condition Monitoring Technician	16	KWD 360,000	Shall hold a 03 Years Diploma in Mechanical Engineering from a reputed University/Institution	6	He shall have hands-on experience in condition monitoring of high speed rotary machinery which includes centrifugal/reciprocating compressors, gas turbines, centrifugal/positive displacement pumps, fans, blowers etc.
18	Technician Rotating Equipment Machinery	20	KWD 300,000	Shall hold a 03 Years Diploma in Mechanical Engineering from a reputed University/Institution Or Higher Secondary School (Science) with two (2) Years' Industrial Training Certificate Or Secondary School with two (2) Years' Industrial Training Certificate from a reputed University/Institution	5 or 8 or 10	He shall have hands-on experience in assembly & dismantling of high speed rotary machinery and shall be well versed in overhauling of centrifugal/reciprocating compressors, gas turbines, centrifugal / positive displacement pumps, fans, blowers etc.
19	Planning Technician	7	KWD 350,000	Shall hold a 03 Years Diploma in Mechanical Engineering from a reputed University/Institution Or Higher Secondary School (Science) with two (2) Years' Industrial Training Certificate Or Secondary School with two (2) Years' Industrial Training Certificate from a reputed University/Institution	5 or 8 or 10	
20	Plant Reliability Technician	6	KWD 360,000	Shall hold a 03 Years Diploma in Mechanical Engineering from a reputed University/Institution	6	Shall have experience on repair, trouble-shooting, overhauling of mechanical equipment including pumps, turbines, compressors, engines etc.
21	Valve Maintenance Technician	8	KWD 300,000	Shall hold a 3 (three) Years' Diploma in Mechanical Engineering from a reputed University/Institution Or Higher Secondary School (Science) with two (2) Years' Industrial Training Certificate Or Secondary School with two (2) Years' Industrial Training Certificate from a reputed University/Institution	5 or 8 or 10	Shall have experience in repair, troubleshooting, overhauling of various types of valve and mechanical equipment.

WALKIN INTERVIEW DATE : 18th AUG 2024 TO 20th AUG 2024 (TIME : 9 AM TO 3PM)

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(Original and Copies of your Educational Certificates, Experience Certificates, Passport, Civil ID and Work permit copy etc.)

World News Roundup

Europe

'Kyiv troops have full control of Sudzha': Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said Thursday that the country's troops have full control of the Russian town of Sudzha in the Kursk region in their incursion into Russian territory.

The town, the largest that Ukraine has reportedly seized so far, had a prewar population of around 5,000 people. It holds a measuring station for Russian natural gas that flows through Ukrainian pipelines to Europe.

Natural gas flows from West Siberian gas fields through pipes that pass through Sudzha and cross the Ukrainian border into Ukraine's system.



Zelenskyy

Zelenskyy said a Ukrainian military commander's office is being set up in Sudzha. He didn't elaborate on the details or the functions of the office.

The claim couldn't be independently verified. Russia did not immediately respond to Zelenskyy's statement, but its defense ministry said earlier Thursday that Russian forces had blocked attempts to take several other communities.

There was no indication of any disruption of the gas flow through Sudzha, which accounts for about 3% of Europe's imports.

Satellite images analyzed by The Associated Press on Thursday show that a Ukrainian drone attack on Russian air bases damaged at least two hangars and other areas.

Images taken Wednesday by Planet Labs PBC show that two hangars at Borisoglebsk Air Base had been struck, with a field of debris around both. It there also appeared to be potential damage to two fighter aircraft at the base. (AP)

US-Russian dual national Khavana gets 12 yrs: A Russian court on Thursday sentenced US-Russian dual national Ksenia Khavana to 12 years in prison on a treason conviction for allegedly raising money for the Ukrainian military.

Khavana, whom Russian authorities identify by her maiden name of Karelina, was arrested in Yekaterinburg in February. She pleaded guilty in her closed trial last week, news reports said.

Khavana reportedly obtained US citizenship after marrying an American and moving to Los Angeles. She had returned to Russia to visit her family.

Russia's Federal Security Service said she "proactively collected money in the interests of one of the Ukrainian organizations, which was subsequently used to purchase tactical medical supplies, equipment, weapons, and ammunition for the Ukrainian armed forces."

Since sending troops into Ukraine in February 2022, Russia has sharply cracked down on dissent and has passed laws that criminalize criticism of the operation in Ukraine and remarks considered to discredit the Russian military. (AP)

France honors African soldiers: France commemorated the 80th anniversary of the Allied invasion of the French Riviera in World War II to push back the Nazis, with events Thursday that especially honored the many soldiers from Africa, sent from then-French colonies, who took part.

Sometimes called "the forgotten D-Day," the occasion was marked by ceremonies presided over by French President Emmanuel Macron. Storm warnings Thursday around the Mediterranean coast forced the cancellation of a seaborne segment of the events.

Macron and Cameroonian President Paul Biya were to give speeches at the Boudouris National Cemetery in the town of Saint-Raphael, which holds the bodies of 464 French soldiers killed in the fighting of August 1944. Other African leaders also took part in the commemorations.

Six World War II veterans - five French and one foreign - were slated to receive the Legion of Honor, the nation's highest award. An aeronautic demonstration and fireworks were also scheduled. (AP)

Two French fighter pilots die: Two fighter jet pilots were killed after their Rafale warplane collided with another and crashed in northeastern France, according to the French military. The pilot of the other jet ejected and suffered minor injuries.

The two aircraft collided Wednesday during a combat maneuver in the Vosges region near the town of Colombey-les-Belles, the Defense Ministry said in a statement late in the day. The pilots who were killed were an instructor and a trainee on a training mission, it said.

Military and judicial investigations are underway into the causes of the accident.

The pilot of one Rafale was found alive soon after the crash, but it took several hours of searching by gendarmes in the wooded region to find the two pilots of the other jet. (AP)

Climate activists protest at German airports: Climate activists staged protests at several German airports on Thursday, forcing a temporary halt to flights at some of them in the latest of a string of similar demonstrations.

The Last Generation group said a total of eight activists were involved in the protests at Berlin, Cologne-Bonn, Nuremberg and Stuttgart airports, which started around 5 a.m. The group is demanding that the German government negotiate and sign an agreement on a global exit from the use of oil, gas and coal by 2030.

Flights were suspended at Cologne-Bonn after two people were reported to have attached themselves to the asphalt, but later resumed, German news agency dpa reported. Police said a hole was found in an airport fence. Flights also were halted for about an hour at Nuremberg. At Berlin Airport, two people who had attached themselves to the ground were removed and detained. (AP)

Germany probes sabotage at military barracks: Investigators are looking into suspicions of unauthorized entry and possible tampering with the water supply at a major air force barracks in western Germany, authorities said Wednesday.

Defense Ministry spokesperson Arne Collatz said there were suspicions of attempted or actual illegal entry, as well as sabotage, at the Wahn barracks outside Cologne.

A hole was found overnight in the fence of the facility in an area near its waterworks, and officials couldn't rule out contamination, military spokesperson Ulrich Fonrobert said. The barracks was sealed off for several hours in case a perpetrator or perpetrators were on the grounds, but none was found and the gates were reopened Wednesday lunchtime.

Speaking outside the barracks, Fonrobert said the alarm had been triggered by a report of "abnormal water values," on which he didn't elaborate. An evaluation of the facility's drinking water was still ongoing. (AP)

Kosovo PM calls for full reopening of key bridge: Kosovo's prime minister called on Wednesday for the full reopening of a bridge in the flashpoint city of Mitrovica, saying it would be another step toward free movement and not a threat to anyone. But Western powers are wary it could increase tensions.

The bridge has been closed to passenger vehicle traffic for more than a decade, with minority ethnic Serbs time and again erecting barricades since 2011 because they say "ethnic cleansing" would be carried out against them if ethnic Albanians could freely travel over the bridge into their part of the city in northern Kosovo.

Mitrovica is divided into a Serb-dominated north and ethnic Albanian south, and the two sides rarely mix.

Kosovo was a former Serbian province until a 78-day NATO bombing campaign in 1999 ended a war between Serbian government forces and ethnic Albanian separatists in Kosovo, which left about 13,000 dead, mainly ethnic Albanians, and pushed Serbian forces out. Serbia does not recognize Kosovo's independence, proclaimed in 2008. (AP)



Volunteers work placing Belgian grown begonia's into a giant flower carpet with an Art Nouveau theme at the historic Grand Place in Brussels on Aug 15. (AP)

Politics

Harris campaign's new \$90m in battleground ads

Trump lays out economic plan in NC

ASHEVILLE, NC, Aug 15, (AP) - Donald Trump made little effort to stay on message Wednesday at a rally in North Carolina that his campaign billed as a big economic address, mixing pledges to slash energy prices and "unleash economic abundance" with familiar off-script tangents on Democratic nominee Kamala Harris' laugh, the mechanics of wind energy and President Joe Biden's son.

The 75-minute speech featured a litany of broad policy ideas and even grander promises to end inflation, bolster already record-level US energy production and raise Americans' standard of living. But those pronouncements were often lost in the former president's typically freewheeling, grievance-laden style that has made it difficult for him to answer the enthusiasm of Harris' nascent campaign.

Trump aired his frustration over Democrats swapping the vice president in place of Biden at the top of their presidential ticket. He repeatedly denigrated San Francisco, where Harris was once the district attorney, as "unlivable" and went after his rival in deeply personal terms, questioning her intelligence, saying she has "the laugh of a crazy person" and musing that Democrats were being "politically correct" in trying to elevate the first Black woman and person of South Asian descent to serve as vice president.

Policy

"You know why she hasn't done an interview? She's not smart. She's not intelligent. And we've gone through enough of that with this guy, Crooked Joe," Trump said, using the nickname he often uses for Biden.

When he was focusing on policy, Trump pledged to end "job-killing regulations," roll back Biden-era restrictions on fossil fuel production and investments in green energy, instruct Cabinet members to use "every tool" to "defeat inflation" within the first year of a second term and end all taxes on Social Security benefits and income classified as tips.

He promised economic growth so abundant that "we will pay off all our debt," similar to a pledge he made in 2016 before the national debt ballooned during his presidency. He pledged to lower Americans' energy costs by "50 to 70%" within 12 months, or a "maxi-

um 18 months." But he immediately hedged: "If it doesn't work out, you'll say, 'oh well, I voted for him and he still got it down a lot.'"

At one point, Trump seemed even to question the purpose of giving a speech ostensibly devoted to the economy. "They wanted to do a speech on the economy," he ruffed, apparently referring to his campaign aides. "They say it's the most important subject. I'm not sure it is."

Trump spoke at Harrah's Cherokee Center, an auditorium in downtown Asheville, with his podium flanked by more than a dozen American flags and custom backdrops that read: "No tax on Social Security" and "No tax on tips" - a made-for-TV setup to project the policy heft his campaign wanted Trump to convey.

Attacks

Republicans had been looking for him to focus more on the economy than the scattershot arguments and attacks he has made on Harris since Democrats shifted to her as their presidential nominee. Twice in the past week, Trump has virtually bypassed such opportunities, 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.

When he stayed on script Wednesday, Trump contrasted the current economy with his own presidency, asking, "Is anything less expensive under Kamala Harris and Crooked Joe?"

"Kamala has declared that tackling inflation will be a 'Day One priority' for her," Trump said. "But Day One for Kamala was 3 1/2 years ago. Why hasn't she done it?"

Yet throughout his speech, Trump ping-ponged between his prepared remarks and familiar attacks - deviating from the teleprompter in the middle of explaining a new economic promise when something triggered another thought. He ticked through prepared remarks crisply and quickly. The rest was his more freewheeling style, punctuated with hand gestures and hyperbole.

More than once, he jumped from a policy contrast with Harris to taking another swipe at her hometown of San Francisco. He also noted several times that it was Biden, not Harris, who earned votes from Democratic primary

voters. During a section of his speech on energy, he slipped in an apparent dig at Hunter Biden, the president's son, and his "laptop from hell."

Also:

WASHINGTON: Kamala Harris' presidential campaign is launching a \$90 million advertising effort over the next three weeks to introduce the Democrat to voters and sharpen the contrast with Republican **Donald Trump**.

The media buy marks her campaign's largest-yet investment in messaging to voters with just 2 1/2 months until Election Day in November. It comes on the heels of a \$50 million worth of ads booked last month shortly after Harris replaced President **Joe Biden** at the top of the party's ticket.

Harris' campaign is buoyed by a rush of fundraising since the switch, and is now moving to spend the money in an effort to counter what had been overwhelming spending by Trump and his allies in the days after Biden dropped out. Harris' team said the ad campaign will focus on the vice president's personal narrative, her career as a prosecutor in California, her commitment to standing up to powerful interests, and a contrast with what it termed Trump's "dangerous, extreme agenda."

The ad buy will reach seven battleground states - **Arizona, Georgia, Michigan, Nevada, North Carolina, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin** - and expand the Harris' team spending to smaller markets they have not yet reached, such as **Marquette, Wisconsin and Erie, Pennsylvania**. The campaign said it is targeting its spending at programs watched by the voters they are looking to motivate to the polls, including "The Bachelorette," "Big Brother," "The Daily Show," "Love & Hip Hop: Atlanta" and "The Simpsons."

Harris' campaign said it raised \$310 million in July and entered August with \$377 million on hand.

The campaign's principal deputy manager, **Quentin Fuks**, said the more that voters learn about Harris, the more they will come to understand that she "is the only candidate fit to lead our country over the next four years."

The campaign intends for the spending to help "break through a crowded media environment early and make clear the choice and stakes of this election for the voters who will decide it," Fuks said.



US Republican presidential nominee former president Donald Trump speaks at a campaign rally on Aug 14 in Asheville, North Carolina. (AP)



Shafik



Case

America

Columbia's president resigns: Columbia University President **Minouche Shafik** resigned Wednesday after a brief, tumultuous tenure that saw the head of the prestigious New York university face heavy scrutiny for her handling of protests and campus divisions over the Israel-Hamas war.

The Ivy League school in upper Manhattan was roiled this year by student demonstrations, culminating in scenes of police officers carrying zip ties and riot shields storming a building that had been occupied by pro-Palestinian protesters. Similar protests swept college campuses nationwide, with many leading to violent clashes with police and thousands of arrests.

The announcement also comes just days after the school confirmed that three deans had resigned after officials said they exchanged disparaging texts during a campus discussion about life and anti-semitism. (AP)

'Break-in' suspect identified: Police in northern Virginia said Wednesday they were looking for a homeless man they suspect broke into an office of Donald Trump's presidential campaign.

The Loudoun County Sheriff's Office said it has issued an arrest warrant for Toby Shane Kessler, 39, of no fixed address, on a burglary charge in connection with the break-in.

The sheriff's office says Kessler was captured on surveillance video Sunday night forcing his way through a back door into the office building in Ashburn. The office is being leased by the Trump campaign and serves as headquarters for the Virginia 10th District Republican Committee. The suspect's face was captured clearly on the surveillance video.

According to the sheriff's office, Kessler spent a brief time in the office and it's unclear whether he took anything. They do not believe he left anything behind.

Thomas Julia, a spokesperson for the sheriff's office, said Wednesday that it's too early to say whether there was any political motivation to the break-in and that authorities will know more once Kessler is arrested. (AP)

Police fatally shoot teen: Anchorage police officers fatally shot a 16-year-old girl who approached them with a knife, the department said Wednesday, the fourth deadly shooting involving police in Alaska's largest

city since mid-May.

Anchorage Police Chief **Sean Case** told reporters that the shooting happened when officers responded to a reported disturbance

between two family members around 11:30 p.m. Tuesday, Alaska Public Media reported. The caller said her sister had threatened her with a knife.



French President Emmanuel Macron meets veterans during a ceremony marking the 80th anniversary of the Allied landings in Provence during World War II, at the Boudouris National Cemetery in Boulouris-sur-Mer, south eastern France on Aug 15. (AP)

Case said the teen approached responding officers holding a knife, at which point two of them opened fire. Police said in a statement that the officers had given the teen "multiple commands," but did not specify what those commands were. (AP)

Texas woman recovering: Newly available video shows police in southeast Texas making a dramatic water rescue of a woman whose vehicle was almost completely submerged in a pond.

Jonquetta Winbush's two children, a 12-year-old boy and 16-year-old girl, managed to get out while Winbush was having a seizure in late July, West Orange, Texas, Assistant Police Chief Jessie Romero said Wednesday. Winbush then passed out and put her foot on the gas pedal, plunging her vehicle into the pond.

Body camera footage from veteran patrolman Charles Cobb, who was nearby monitoring traffic, shows Winbush's son frantically approaching the officer. "She's having a seizure. She's sunk," the boy told Cobb. "She's in the water. Help her."

Cobb put the boy in the back of his patrol car and raced to Winbush's vehicle, which was almost completely underwater. Two workers from a local plant had already gotten in the water to get Winbush out, Romero said. (AP)

Lat/Am

Police officer arrested

Argentina's ex-prez Fernández charged

Buenos Aires, Argentina, Aug 15, (AP): A federal prosecutor on Wednesday formally charged Argentina's former president **Alberto Fernández** with committing violence against former first lady Fabiola Yáñez.

Prosecutor Ramiro González charged Fernández with the crimes of "minor and serious injuries, doubly aggravated" and "coercive threats" against his ex-partner, according to a ruling seen by The Associated Press.

González also requested additional evidence measures including taking testimonies from former presidential doctor Federico Saavedra and former secretary of the president María Cantero, among others.

Fernández, a left-leaning Peronist politician who was president of Argentina from 2019 to 2023, vigorously denied her allegations and promised he would prove to the courts "what really happened."

Yáñez testified Tuesday before an Argentine federal court as part of a case in which she denounced Fernández for alleged gender violence.

The former first lady gave a testimonial statement via video call from Argentina's consulate in Madrid, where she resides, confirming to prosecutor González the complaint she had filed last week in writing.

The charges against Fernández come weeks after Yáñez's accusations first surfaced among thousands of leaked text messages under scrutiny by federal investigators in a separate embezzlement case against Fernández. That case accuses Fernández of irregularities in awarding state insurance contracts - allegations he also denies.

In recent days, the Argentine press has published images in which Yáñez's face and armpit can be seen with marks of what would be blows and that the former first lady would have sent via message to Fernández's former secretary.

Since Yáñez's accusations came to light, Fernández has not been seen outside the apartment where he lives in Buenos Aires.



Fernández

Mexico arrests police officer: Authorities in Mexico's border state of Sonora said Wednesday they have arrested a local police officer in the killing of American man in July.

The Sonora state prosecutors' office identified the victim only by his given names, Kevin Ray.

The office said the man had fired a weapon at a relative of the city police officer at a nightclub in the coastal city of Guaymas, Sonora, killing him. The American fled the scene and the officer pursued and killed him, prosecutors said.

The officer was arrested and now faces homicide charges. Officials identified him only as José Guadalupe, withholding his family names.

The US Embassy did not immediately answer queries about the American's name and hometown.

5 child welfare agency officials held: Five officials from Costa Rica's child welfare agency were arrested on charges they were involved in trafficking migrant children for the purpose of adoption, authorities said Wednesday.

Randall Zúñiga, head of the country's main investigative agency, the Judicial Investigation Agency, said in a video statement that the case began in 2022 when the then-president of the child welfare agency reported irregularities in adoptions at one of the agency's regional offices.

The arrested officials worked as lawyers and social workers.

"The investigation determined that these people included false information on reports they generated, for example saying that a family consumed drugs as a basis for removing that child from the family and being able to take it to a care center," Zúñiga said.

Once they were in state care, the accused allegedly applied to adopt the children or to be assigned as their temporary caretakers and be paid by the government.

Authorities have not said how many children were involved or whether they have been located. Officials also did not specify where the migrant children were from.

The prosecutor's office for human trafficking and migrant smuggling said it had requested that the officials be prevented from leaving the country. Costa Rican authorities issued an international arrest alert for a sixth official.

Ernesto aims for Bermuda: Hurricane Ernesto barreled toward Bermuda on Thursday after leaving hundreds of thousands of people in Puerto Rico without power or water as sweltering heat enveloped the US territory, raising concerns about people's health.

A hurricane warning was in effect for Bermuda, with Ernesto expected to pass near or over the island on Saturday.

The Category 1 storm was located about 635 miles (1,025 kilometers) south-southwest of Bermuda early Thursday. It had maximum sustained winds of 85 mph (140 kph) and was moving north at 13 mph (20 kph).

"I cannot stress enough how important it is for everyone to use this time to prepare. We have seen in the past the devastating effects of complacency," said National Security Minister Michael Weeks.

Ernesto was forecast to become a major Category 3 hurricane on Friday and drop between four to eight inches of rain in Bermuda with up to 12 inches in isolated areas.

"All of the guidance show this system as a large hurricane near Bermuda," said the National Hurricane Center in Miami.

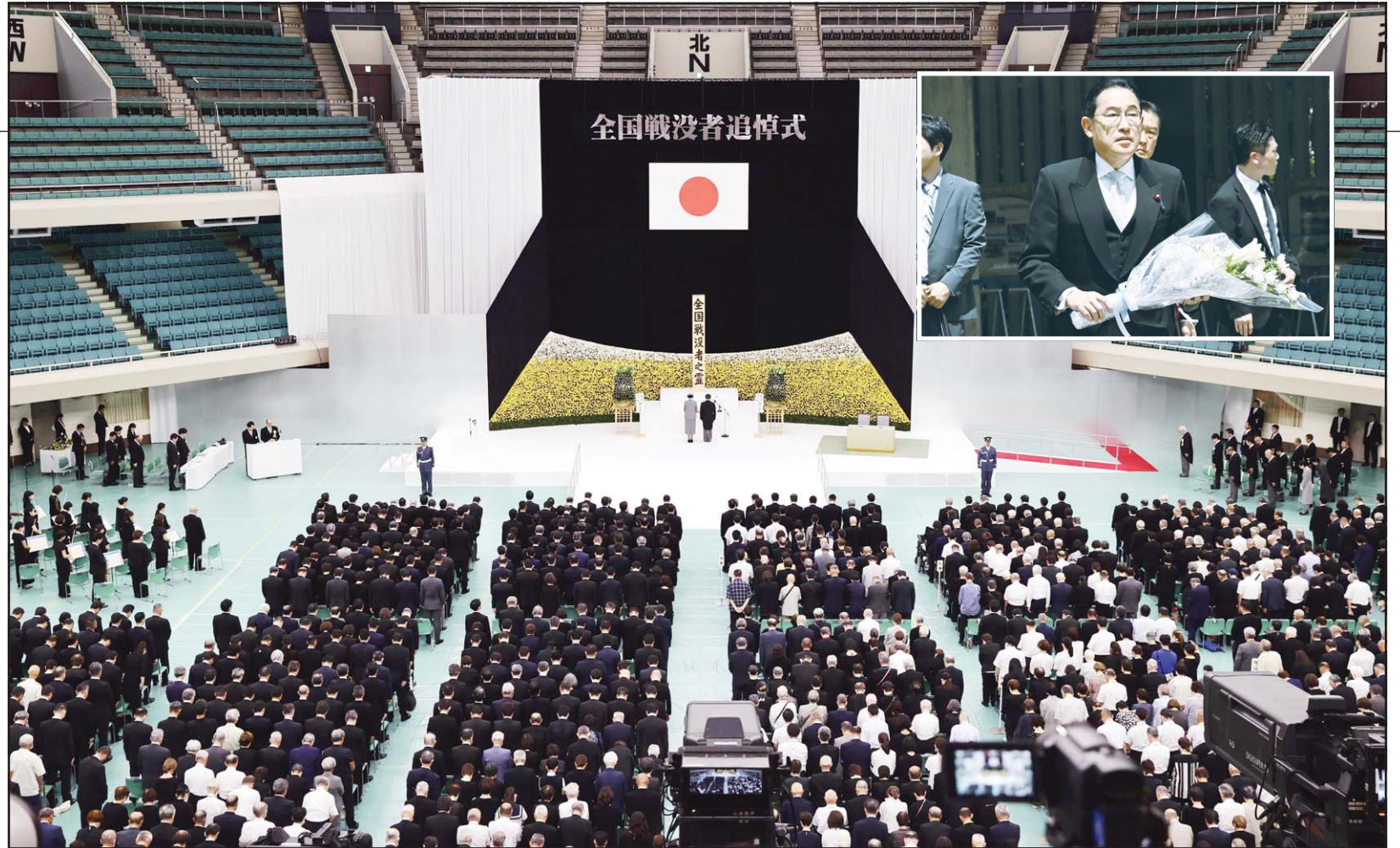
Meanwhile, the spinning storm on Thursday was generating southern winds in Puerto Rico, which have a heating effect as opposed to the typical cooling trade winds that blow from the east.

"We know a lot of people don't have power," said Ernesto Morales with the National Weather Service as he warned of extreme heat and urged people to stay hydrated.

Nearly half a million of 1.4 million customers remained in the dark more than a day after Ernesto swiped past Puerto Rico late Tuesday as a tropical storm before strengthening into a hurricane.

Hundreds of thousands of people also are without water given the power outages.

The situation worried many who lived through Hurricane Maria, a powerful Category 4 storm that hit Puerto Rico in September 2017 and was blamed for at least 2,975 deaths in its sweltering aftermath.



Japan's Emperor Naruhito, rear right, and Empress Masako, rear left, observe a moment of silence during a memorial service for the war dead at the Nippon Budokan hall in Tokyo, as the country marks the 79th anniversary of its defeat in the World War II on Aug 15. Inset: Japan's Prime Minister Fumio Kishida visits the Chidorigafuchi National Cemetery. (AP)

Kishida vows to push rules-based order as Japan defense chief visits Yasukuni

Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida vowed to step up his country's effort to defend a rules-based international order in a peace pledge made Thursday on the 79th anniversary of Japan's defeat in World War II. "We will never again repeat the tragedy of war" and will stick to the country's postwar pacifist resolve, he said at a solemn ceremony at the Budokan hall.

"In the world where tragic battles have persisted, Japan will continue its effort to maintain and

strengthen the rules-based, free and open international order" and endeavor to resolve difficult global issues, Kishida said.

Kishida noted the more than 3 million Japanese killed, the destruction and the lives lost from bloody ground battles on Japan's southern island of Okinawa, fire-bombings across Japan, and the atomic attacks on Nagasaki and Hiroshima. He did not mention or apologize for Japanese aggression across Asia or millions of lives lost there.

Earlier Thursday, three of Kishida's ministers, including Defense Minister Minoru Kihara, prayed at the Yasukuni Shrine - seen by Asian neighbors as a symbol of militarism.

The controversial shrine honors convicted war criminals among about 2.5 million war dead. Victims of Japanese aggression, especially China and the Koreans, see visits to the shrine as a lack of remorse, and visits by defense officials are considered especially controversial. (AP)



Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi, also a member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, meets with Than Shwe, former chairman of the Myanmar State Peace and Development Council, in Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar on Aug 14. (Xinhua)



Museveni



Haysom

Africa

'S.Sudan not ready to hold polls': South Sudan is not ready to hold its first post-independence elections in December and political players are discussing whether voting should be held this year, the UN's top envoy in the troubled African country said Wednesday.

Nicolas Haysom told the UN Security Council that the consultations make it difficult to treat the election date of Dec 22 announced last month by the National Elections Commission "as a definitive trigger in isolation from other critical factors."

The vote, which would be the first since South Sudan gained independence from Sudan in 2011 after a long conflict, is meant to be the culmination of a peace agreement signed five years ago to pull the world's newest nation out of a civil war largely based on ethnic divisions. Fighting between forces loyal to the current president, Salva Kiir, battled those loyal to the current vice president, Riek Machar, killing some 400,000 people. (AP)

Charges dropped against Libyans: South African prosecutors withdrew charges against 95 Libyan nationals who were arrested last month at what police said was an illegal military training camp in Mpumalanga province, officials said Thursday.

Police alleged that the men - who entered the country on study visas - were receiving military training at the camp where firearms and ammunition were recovered during a widely publicized police raid.

During their initial appearances in court, the accused said they were receiving security training at the camp. There was insufficient evidence to prosecute the men, the country's National Prosecuting Authority said.

"The only charge that was brought to the NPA was that of the contravention of the immigration act against the 95 Libyan nationals," said National Prosecuting Authority spokesperson Monica Nyuswa. They were only charged with violating the country's immigration laws, and their lawyer told reporters after the charges were withdrawn today that they expected them to be deported back to Libya in the next 48 hours. (AP)

Subcontinent

Protesters attack Hasina supporters

Modi voices concern over unrest in B'desh

NEW DELHI, Aug 15, (AP) Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday expressed concern over the unrest that led to a change of government in neighboring Bangladesh and the attacks on Hindus and other minorities there.

Modi addressed his nation from New Delhi's 17th-century Mughal-era Red Fort on its 78th Independence Day and assured Bangladesh that India would continue to support it in developing its economy. "We hope the situation gets normal there soon," Modi said in a speech broadcast live.

Bangladesh's former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina fled to India on Aug. 5 after weeks of violent protests that prompted her ouster.

She is likely to stay in New Delhi until she decides where she will seek asylum. An interim government led by Nobel laureate Muhammad Yunus has assumed power in Bangladesh and is expected to organize fresh elections. During the protests in Bangladesh, many Hindu homes, shops and businesses were attacked. Yunus met with Hindu community leaders earlier this week and assured them of their protection.

System

The student-led protests began in July against a quota system for government jobs that critics said benefited people with connections to Hasina's party. The protests morphed into a movement against her government, leaving more than 300 people dead including students and police officers in the ensuing violence.

Aug. 15 marks India's independence from British colonialists in 1947, but it was also the day in 1975 when Bangladesh's first leader after independence, Sheikh Mujibur Rehman, the father of Hasina, was assassinated in a military coup.

Meanwhile, hundreds of student protesters and political activists in Bangladesh, armed with bamboo sticks, iron rods and pipes, on Thursday, assaulted supporters of the Sheikh Hasina and

prevented them from reaching the previous house of her father.

The house in Dhaka's Dhanmondi area was turned into a museum to showcase narratives and other objects about a military coup, when Rahman was assassinated along with most of his family members. The house, now called Bangabandhu Memorial Museum, was torched by the protesters hours after Hasina's downfall on Aug. 5 following an uprising during which more than three hundred people were killed.

Rahman is fondly called Bangabandhu or, a friend of Bengal.

Trainee doc killed in India: A trainee doctor was raped and killed, sparking protests in several cities and an attack on a medical college campus as doctors and paramedics in several cities across India demand better and safer working conditions.

Scores of people went on a rampage at a medical college campus in eastern India, attacking vehicles and ransacking patient wards Wednesday night, police said Thursday. Police did not identify who was behind the rampage, but media reports said several police officers were injured and police fired tear gas in the Wednesday night clash at the R.G. Kar Medical College in Kolkata, the capital of West Bengal state. The unrest began when police said a 31-year-old trainee doctor was found raped and killed Friday. A police volunteer was arrested in connection with the crime, and police handed the case to federal investigators following a court order.

Government hospitals in several cities across India have since suspended medical services except for emergency departments as protesters demanded justice, claiming that it was a case of a gang rape and more were involved.

Grenade attack kills 1 in Pak: Insurgents in an overnight attack threw a grenade at people sitting in front of a hotel in the restive southwest Pakistan and killed at least one person while

wounding 10 more, police and hospital officials said Thursday.

The attack was the third in as many days in Quetta, the capital of Baluchistan province, as people celebrated the country's independence day.

The separatist Baluch Liberation Army (BLA) group claimed responsibility for all the attacks, including the latest one, which came days after the group warned people not to celebrate the holiday on Wednesday, marking the Aug. 14, 1947, date of Pakistan's independence from British colonial rule. Arbab Kamran, a spokesperson at a hospital, said the facility received 10 wounded and one dead following the attack.

39 candidates in Lanka election: Sri Lanka's elections commission on Thursday accepted applications from a record 39 candidates to run in next month's presidential election, which will decide the course of the country's financial reforms to survive an unprecedented economic crisis.

The commission received 39 applications and all were accepted, its head, R.M.A.L. Rathnayake, announced. More than 17 million people are eligible to vote in the Sept. 21 election.

Thirty-five candidates contested the last presidential election in 2019.

The election is seen as a referendum on difficult economic reforms initiated by current President Ranil Wickremesinghe. The reforms have improved key economic figures, but their effects have yet to reach many ordinary people. Sri Lanka is in the middle of a critical debt restructuring and financial reform program under a bailout program by the International Monetary Fund.

Unsustainable debt, a severe balance of payments crisis, the lingering effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the government's insistence on spending scarce foreign reserves to prop up the country's currency, the rupee, led to a severe shortage of foreign currency and essentials such as fuel, medicine, cooking gas and food in 2022.

Uganda landslide toll 30: The death toll of the garbage dump site landslide in Kampala, the capital of Uganda, climbed to 30 Wednesday, a police spokesperson said here.

Six more dead bodies aged between 3 and 33 years were retrieved from the garbage dump site located in Kawempe, one

of the five divisions of Kampala, Patrick Onyango, spokesperson for the Kampala Metropolitan Police, told Xinhua over the telephone.

"Today (Wednesday), the rescue team managed to retrieve six bodies that were trapped down. This makes a total of 30 bodies so far recovered," said Onyango

from the scene of the Saturday morning disaster.

Ugandan President **Yoweri Museveni** on Sunday called for an investigation into the incident, saying people should not have been allowed to live near the landfill. He directed Prime Minister Robinah Nabbanja to coordinate the removal of all households in the zone. (Xinhua)



La Plata river overflows onto a road after Tropical Storm Ernesto passed through Toa Baja, Puerto Rico on Aug 14. Ernesto barreled toward Bermuda on Aug 15 after leaving hundreds of thousands of people in Puerto Rico without power or water as sweltering heat enveloped the US territory, raising concerns about people's health (AP)

Chad steps up relief efforts: Chadian authorities, in cooperation with the United Nations and humanitarian partners, are scaling up efforts to help more than 245,000 people in the country affected by flooding.

Fatime Boukar Kossei, the country's minister of social action, national solidarity and humanitarian affairs, on Wednesday met with UN agencies and activated emergency response and flood control efforts as floods have affected 13 out of the 23 regions in the Central African country since mid-May.

Chad is establishing makeshift shelters and providing relief materials for the affected families, Kossei said.

"Precise directives have been issued to speed up the work and ensure the safety of affected families. The responsiveness of the actors involved in the management of these crises testifies to the determination of the government to protect vulnerable populations during this critical period," Kossei told reporters. (Xinhua)

Middle East IPOs raise \$2.6bn in Q2 2024, up from \$1.8bn last year

PwC Middle East's latest IPO+ Watch highlights a total of 13 IPOs raised \$2.6 bn in the region in Q2 2024, compared to the same number of IPOs in the corresponding period in 2023 that raised \$1.8bn. Notable listings this quarter include Dr. Soliman Abdel Kader Fakeeh Hospital Company, which raised \$763m on Tadawul, as well as Alef Education and Spinneys, two of the largest listings in the UAE.

GCC indices broadly followed the trend in oil prices, whereby we experienced lows at the end of June 2024. This is reflected in the S&P GCC Composite index which was 4.2% lower at the end of June 2024 compared to the level at the start of the year. That said, the overall momentum in the GCC stock markets broadly remained at the high levels experienced in the corresponding quarter last year. Saudi Arabia led the IPO activity in the GCC, raising \$1.6 billion or 61% of the total IPO activity recorded in the region in Q2 2024. Moreover, the aftermarket performance for Q2 2024 IPOs was generally positive with Q2 2024 IPOs posting gains of 43% on average.

Commenting on the findings, Muhammad Hassan, Capital Markets Leader at PwC Middle East, said: "We have witnessed some volatility in the first half of 2024 in the performance of GCC stock exchange indices and

oil prices. That said, the number of new IPOs in the GCC continued to remain strong. Saudi Arabia continued to dominate the IPO market, with H1 2024 experiencing 19 IPOs compared to 17 IPOs in H1 2023."

The report shows that IPO activity was seen across a diverse range of sectors this quarter, including Health Industries (\$774m), Consumer Markets (\$530m), Financial Services (\$256m), Energy, Utilities and Resources (\$148m), Industrials, Manufacturing and Automobile (\$407m), and Technology, Media and Telecommunication (\$515m). This quarter was also the first time Boursa Kuwait saw its first IPO since 2020, with the Beyout Investment Group Holding Company raising \$147m.

In addition, there were a number of sizable sukuk issuances this quarter, raising more than \$10bn compared to \$2.6bn raised in the same period last year, indicating a robust appetite for Sharia-compliant financial products. More than a third of the sukuk were issued on Tadawul, while 67% of bonds and sukuk were issued by the regional governments.

Looking forward, the outlook for the GCC IPO market continues to remain positive with strong issuance expected for the remainder of 2024, subject to the wider geopolitical environment and oil prices.

Market Movements

15-08-2024

	Change	Closing pts		Change	Closing pts
SAUDI - TASI	+65.37	11,915.02	PHILIPPINES - PSEI	-12.05	6,692.91
DUBAI - DFMGI	+5.26	4,218.68			
JAPAN - Nikkei 225	+284.21	36,726.64			
EGYPT - EGX 30	+62.14	29,629.14			
PAKISTAN - KSE 100	+188.06	78,091.19			

Business

Agility reports Q2-24 net profit of KD 6mn

EBIT rises 3% to KD 38.6mn

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 15: Agility, a supply chain services, infrastructure and innovation company, today reported Q2 2024 EBIT of KD 38.6 million a 3% increase from the same period a year earlier and revenue of KD 375.4 million an increase of 14.5% from Q2 2023.

Agility's net profit for Q2 2024 stood at KD 6 million or 2.4 fils per share. Note this quarter's net profit is not comparable to the previous year due to the increase in minority interest as a result of the in-kind dividends distribution of Agility Global PLC.

For the first 6 months of 2024, earnings were KD 24.7 million, or 9.89 fils per share, EBIT grew 11% to KD 84.6 million and revenue increased 9.8% to KD 711.7 million.

Financial Reporting

The in-kind dividends distribution that was announced in Q1 was effective on May 2nd, 2024, the Listing Day of Agility Global PLC and accordingly the impact of this has been reflected in the company's financials in Q2 2024, thus seeing a higher Minority interest starting this quarter.



Tarek Sultan

Latest Update

"Agility has demonstrated strong growth in the first half of the year as we continue to seize new opportunities in Kuwait, including a 17-year contract under which UPAC will operate the Messila Beach Site Project (Phase-2). MRC is also poised to increase its volumes with a new integrated waste recycling facility, spanning over 500,000 square meters, slated to open in Q4 2024. On the back of this news, S2 continues to lead a 30-year contract for the South Village project in Sabah Al-Ahmad City, which is the first integrated logistics and crafts zone spanning 1.28 million square meters. We are pleased with the company's business growth and expansion in Kuwait and look forward to achieving further growth that delivers the best value to

Agility's shareholders," said Agility Vice Chairman Tarek Sultan.

"We are seeing double-digit EBITDA growth in Menzies. Menzies has grown in the Americas, Europe, Middle East and Africa, and Asia, off the back of solid commercial growth, the launch of new operations, and new contract wins. Tristar is also seeing double-digit EBITDA growth as a result of new contracts and business expansion with existing clients, with fuel farms and maritime delivering particularly strong results. Agility Logistics Parks' international business expansion was driven mainly by its Saudi Arabia operations, which is experiencing increased demand for warehousing space."

Recap of Agility KSCP Q2 2024 Financial Performance

■ Agility's net profit was KD 6 million and EPS was 2.4 fils.

■ Agility's EBIT increased 3% and EBITDA increased 4.9% to KD 63.4 million.

■ Agility's revenue increased 14.5% to KD 375.4 million and net revenue increased 18.9%.

■ Agility enjoys a healthy balance sheet with KD 3.8 billion in assets.

■ Agility reported an operating cash flow of KD 80 million for the first half of 2024.

	Q2 2024 (Million KD)	Q2 2023 (Million KD)	Variance (%)	H1 2024 (Million KD)	H1 2023 (Million KD)	Variance (%)
Revenue	375.4	327.8	14.5%	711.7	648.4	9.8%
Net Revenue	237.5	199.8	18.9%	459.9	386.9	18.9%
EBITDA	63.4	60.5	4.9%	134.2	120.9	11.0%
EBIT	38.6	37.5	2.9%	84.6	76.3	10.9%
Net Profit	6.0	14.2	-	24.7	29.5	-
EPS (fils)	2.4	5.67	-	9.89	11.81	-

Numbers above are rounded.

US crude inventories rise by 1.4 million barrels

Kuwait oil price drops to \$80.48 pb

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 15, (KUNA): The price of Kuwait oil went down 78 cents to USD 80.48 pb on Wednesday as opposed to USD 81.26 pb last Tuesday, said Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) on Thursday.

Globally, the price of Brent crude

futures contracts went down 93 cents to USD 79.76 pb, as did the West Texas Intermediate; down by USD 1.37 to USD 76.98 pb.

US crude inventories rose by 1.4 million barrels, compared with estimates for a 2.2 million barrel drop, data from the US Energy Information

Administration showed.

Meanwhile, the International Energy Agency (IEA) monthly report trimmed its estimate of global oil demand growth for 2025, noting the impact of weak Chinese consumption on global economic growth.

Silver, platinum and palladium also see gains

Gold prices near record 'highs' amid Fed rate cut expectations

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 15: On Tuesday, gold prices were near record highs, supported by expectations of a Federal Reserve interest rate cut, ongoing Middle Eastern tensions, and a focus on upcoming US inflation data, reports Al-Jarida daily.

Spot gold increased by 0.4 percent to \$2,474.04 per ounce, nearing its peak of \$2,483.60 from last month, while US gold futures rose 0.2 percent to \$2,513.20.

Recent US data showed producer prices rose less than expected in July, reinforcing the market's belief that slowing inflation might lead to an interest rate cut soon.

The US Consumer Price Index (CPI) data for July is anticipated to show a monthly rise of 0.2 percent, with annual core inflation expected to ease slightly to 3.2 percent. Retail sales data will be released on Thursday.

Ricardo Evangelista, a senior analyst at ActiveTrades, indicated that if inflation data confirms a slowdown, bets on a 50 basis point rate cut in September would increase, potentially pushing gold prices to new highs. Traders currently see a 55.5 percent chance of such a rate cut, according to CME Group's Fed-Watch service.

Gold, traditionally used as a hedge against geopolitical risks, is gaining traction amid a low interest rate environment. Geopolitical concerns include Iran's vow of retaliation against Israel following the assassination of Ismail Haniyeh, a Hamas leader, which Israel neither confirms nor denies. These tensions are driving demand for gold as a safe haven.

In addition to gold, other precious metals saw gains: spot silver increased by 0.3 percent to \$27.92 per ounce, platinum rose by 0.7 percent to \$942.65, and palladium grew by 0.5 percent to \$943.58.

Houthi attacks disrupt Red Sea trade

DP World profits drop nearly 60 percent

DUBAI, Aug 15, (AP): Dubai-based port operator DP World reported Thursday its half-year profits fell by nearly 60%, in part over the ongoing attacks by Yemen's Houthi rebels over the Israel-Hamas war that have affected shipping through the Red Sea.

DP World reported profits of \$265 million this year, down from \$651 million the same time last year. DP World Group's chairman and CEO, Sultan Ahmed bin Sulayem, acknowledged that the Red Sea disruptions affected the firm's revenues.

"The year 2024 has been marked by a deteriorating geopolitical environment and disruptions to global supply chains due to the Red Sea crisis," he said in a statement included in the results. "While the near-term trading out-

look remains uncertain due to macroeconomic and geopolitical headwinds, the resilient financial performance of the first half ... positions us well to deliver stable full year adjusted" profits.

Bin Sulayem did not elaborate on what specific effects the Houthi attacks had been having on DP World, a government-owned shipper that in recent years removed itself from the Nasdaq Dubai stock exchange.

The Houthis since November have been targeting shipping through the Red Sea corridor over the Israel-Hamas war in the Gaza Strip. The assaults have disrupted the \$1 trillion of goods that flow annually through the region, while also sparking the most intense combat the U.S. Navy has seen since World War II.

The rebels maintain that their attacks target ships linked to Israel, the United States or the U.K. as part of a campaign they say seeks to force an end to the war. However, many of the ships attacked have little or no connection to the conflict.

Shippers have begun going around the Cape of Good Hope off Southern Africa to avoid the Red Sea entirely. The rerouting has affected shipping through Dubai's Jebel Ali Port, the home of DP World and the world's largest manmade harbor.

DP World already had faced challenges through the coronavirus pandemic, but the Houthi attacks have seen it affected while the long-haul carrier Emirates, another Dubai government-owned entity, have soared.

Consumer prices up 2.9% year-over-year

US inflation hits 3-year low, easing pressure on Federal Reserve

WASHINGTON, Aug 15, (AP): Year-over-year inflation reached its lowest level in more than three years in July, the latest sign that the worst price spike in four decades is fading and setting up the Federal Reserve for an interest rate cut in September.

Wednesday's report from the Labor Department showed that consumer prices rose just 0.2% from June to July after dropping slightly the previous month. Measured from a year earlier, prices rose 2.9%, down from 3% in June. It was the mildest gain since March 2021.

The ongoing inflation slowdown could affect the presidential campaign, given that former President Donald Trump has highlighted rampant inflation as a key failing of the Biden administration and its energy policies. Vice President Kamala Harris has said she would soon unveil new proposals to "bring down costs and also strengthen the economy overall."

The government said nearly all of July's inflation reflected higher rental prices and other housing costs, a trend that, according to real-time data, is easing. As a result, housing costs should rise more slowly in the coming months, contributing to lower inflation.

The report showed that inflation is steadily falling closer to the Fed's 2% target - though not too quickly, which might suggest that the economy is weakening, said Tara Sinclair, an economist at George Washington University and a former Treasury Department official.

"It's a comforting report, both because it is going in the right direction and because it is not doing anything too dramatic," Sinclair said. "It is exactly what we wanted to see."

In July, grocery prices rose just 0.1% and are a scant 1.1% higher than they were a year earlier, a much slower pace of growth than in previous years. Yet many Americans are still struggling with food prices, which remain 21% above where they were three years ago.

Gas prices were unchanged from June to July and have actually fallen 2.2% in the past year. Clothing prices also dropped last month; they're nearly unchanged from 12 months earlier. New and used car prices fell in July, too. Used car prices, which had skyrocketed during the pandemic, have tumbled nearly 11% in the past year.

Some food prices, including for meat, fish and eggs, are still increasing faster than before the pandemic. Dairy and fruit and vegetable prices, though, fell in July.

Even as inflation - the rate of price increases - keeps slowing, many people are still struggling with daily costs that, on average, are still about 20% higher than they were three years ago. That's true even though average U.S. wages have surpassed inflation for more than a year.

Ariel Borchuk, who lives in the Harlem area of New York City, complained that the government's inflation reports don't mean anything to "regular people" like himself.

"Everything," he said, "is expensive. What more do you need to know?" Borchuk, 48, who works in the catering business, had just grabbed a hot fried chicken sandwich for \$7.99 at a grocery store on Manhattan's Upper East Side. It's something he says he really can't afford.

Borchuk said he's been cooking more at home and eating out less and buying more of his groceries at Costco, where he said he can get good deals.

Austan Goolsbee, president of the Federal Reserve's Chicago branch, said



James Pratt, head cashier at Phantom Fireworks in Hinsdale, N.H., helps bag a customer's order on June 28, 2024. (AP)

Wednesday in an interview with The Associated Press that the July data shows that inflation is clearly on track to return to the central bank's 2% target. He also noted that there are signs that the job market is weakening even while the Fed's key rate remains at its highest level in decades.

Goolsbee's remarks suggested that he would support a series of rate cuts in the coming months.

At a White House event Wednesday, President Joe Biden was asked whether the nation had defeated inflation.

"Yes, yes, yes," he said. "I've told you we're going to have a soft landing," he added, referring to an economy in which inflation is tamed without a steep recession.

For nearly a year, cooling inflation has provided gradual relief to America's consumers, who were stung by the price surges that erupted three years ago. Inflation peaked two years ago at 9.1%, the highest level in four decades.

In July, excluding volatile food and energy costs, so-called core prices climbed a mild 0.2% from June, after a 0.1% increase the previous month. And compared with a year earlier, core inflation slowed from 3.3% to 3.2% - the lowest level since April 2021. Core prices are closely watched by economists because they typically provide a better read of where inflation is headed.

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, and will be followed by additional cuts in November and December. Investors are betting that at least one of those cuts will be a half-point, according to future prices.

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.

Many companies have slowed their price increases as consumers have become more resistant to paying more. Mark Barrocas, CEO of SharkNinja, a small appliance-maker in Needham, Massachusetts, said the company raised its prices 5% to 7% in 2021 and 2022 but hasn't done so since. For some items, it recently reduced prices to where they were before the earlier hikes took effect.

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.

Berkshire's cash pile hits record \$277 bln

Buffett sells over 389 mln Apple shares

OMAHA, Aug 15, (AP): Warren Buffett offered more details Wednesday about the stocks he has been selling lately, including confirming that he sold more than 389 million Apple shares during the second quarter.

Berkshire Hathaway still owns 400 million shares of the iPhone maker, so it remains the biggest position in the conglomerate's stock portfolio, according to the company's latest filing with the Securities and Exchange Commission. The news that Buffett had unloaded a huge chunk of Apple came out in Berkshire's earnings report earlier this month, but the exact number of shares he sold wasn't clear until Wednesday.

In addition to the big Apple sale, Berkshire has also been trimming its investments in Bank of America, Chevron, Capital One, Floor & Decor Holdings, T-Mobile and Louisiana Pacific recently. Berkshire also unloaded its nearly \$1 billion Snowflake investment.

As a result of all the selling, Berkshire's already massive cash pile has

ballooned to the record level of \$277 billion.

But Berkshire did sink more money into the insurer Chubb and oil producer Occidental Petroleum, while revealing smaller new investments in aerospace parts maker Heico Corp. and cosmetics retailer Ulta Beauty.

The quarterly filings don't spell out which moves Buffett made and which actions were taken by one of the two other investment managers at Berkshire, but Buffett typically handles all the biggest investments worth more than \$1 billion.

And many investors watch Buffett's actions closely because he has such a remarkably successful track record over the decades.

In addition to the nearly \$300 billion stock portfolio, Berkshire owns several major insurers, including Geico, one of the nation's largest railroads in BNSF, a collection of big utilities and an assortment of manufacturing and retail companies. Its holdings include well-known brands like Dairy Queen, Helzberg Diamonds and NetJets.

Japan's economy grew last quarter

Japan's economy grew at an annual rate of 3.1% in the April-June period, rebounding from the contraction in the previous quarter, government data showed Thursday.

The world's fourth largest economy grew 0.8% in the fiscal first quarter, according to the Cabinet Office.

Seasonally adjusted gross domestic product, or GDP, measures the value of a nation's products and services. The annual rate

shows how much the economy would have grown or contracted, if the quarterly rate had continued for a year.

Domestic demand grew a robust 3.5% from the previous quarter on the back of healthy household consumption and private sector investments, as well as government investments. Exports grew a booming 5.9%.

Japan's GDP shrank 0.6% in January-March on quarter, after eking out 0.1% growth in October-

December last year. Economic growth went back and forth between such periods of contraction and weak expansion for the past year.

"Today's GDP data signal that the virtuous cycle between income and spending has become more pronounced but uncertainty surrounding macro policies has heightened," said Robert Carnell, regional head of research Asia-Pacific at ING Economics (AP)

Cisco cuts thousands of jobs, 7% of workforce

Cisco Systems is planning to lay off 7% of its employees, its second round of job cuts this year, as the company shifts its focus to more rapidly growing areas in technology, such as artificial intelligence and cybersecurity.

The company based in San Jose, California, did not specify the number of jobs it is cutting. It had 84,900 employees as of July 2023. Based on that figure, the number of jobs cut would be about 5,900. In February, Cisco an-

nounced it would cut about 4,000 jobs.

The networking equipment maker said in June that it would invest \$1 billion in tech startups like Cohere, Mistral and Scale to develop reliable AI products. It recently also announced a partnership with Nvidia to develop infrastructure for AI systems.

Cisco's layoffs come just two weeks after chipmaker Intel Corp. announced it would cut about 15,000 jobs as it tries to turn its

business around to compete with more successful rivals like Nvidia and AMD. Intel's quarterly earnings report disappointed investors and its stock took a nosedive following the announcement. In contrast, Cisco's shares were up about 6% after-hours on Wednesday.

In a foray into cybersecurity, Cisco launched a cybersecurity readiness index back in March to help businesses measure their resiliency against attacks. (AP)

GIG announces net profit of KD 16.8 mln for H1 of '24

Earnings per share amount to 59.03 fils

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 15: Gulf Insurance Group (GIG) announced a net profit of KD 16.8 million (US\$ 54.7 million), with earnings per share of 59.03 fils, for the first half of 2024 compared to KD 25.3 million (US\$ 82.6 million), with earning per share of 89.33 fils for the same period last year.



GIG Vice Chairman & CEO – Khaled Al Hasan



book value per share reached 828 fils compared to 832.6 fils as at December 31, 2023.

Insurance revenue reached KD 449.2 million (US\$ 1.5 billion) compared to KD 390.7 million (US\$ 1.3 billion) for the same period last year, an increase of 15 percent or KD 58.5 million (US\$ 190.6 million).

Net investment income including



interest income and share of result from associates reached KD 31.6 million (US\$ 102.9 million) for the first half of 2024, representing an increase of 20 percent compared to KD 26.3 million (US\$ 85.7 million) for the same period last year.

Total assets came to KD 1.25 billion (US\$ 4.07 billion) as at June 30, 2024, compared to KD 1.18 billion (US\$ 3.83 billion) as at December 31, 2023, an increase of KD 72.1 million (US\$ 235.1 million) or 6 percent.

Mr. Khaled Saoud Al Hasan,

GIG's Vice Chairman & CEO, said: "Our results for the first half of 2024 reflect the strength of GIG as a Group, its continuous growth, soundness in taking risks thanks to diversified revenue sources and ability to preserve stakeholders' benefits and protect their rights. We endeavor to provide the best insurance services to our valued customers in all markets we operate in (Egypt, Algeria, Turkey, Jordan and GCC) by adopting the necessary strategies which today prioritize digital trans-

formation in our operations, digital distribution of products, digital claims services and other supporting functions that all together strengthen the GIG brand and enable us to focus on shaping a valuable insurance ecosystem for the MENA region."

He added, "We thank our valued customers for these achievements, as well as the unlimited support from our shareholders, namely FAIRFAX, and all honorable board members of the Group. I would also like to express my sincere appreciation to our dedicated employees for their sincere efforts and all the concerned authorities in the State of Kuwait for their continuous cooperation to develop the Kuwaiti insurance sector."

Zhu warns of external challenges

Ex-IMF official foresees rise of China as service powerhouse

BEIJING, Aug 15, (Xinhua): China, the world's second-largest economy and a manufacturing giant, has the potential and is well on its track to become a major player in the service sector, a former senior official of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) told Xinhua.

The future prospect for China's manufacturing, which accounts for over 30 percent of the global total, lies in digitalization and technicalization, and this is where industrial services can step in, said Zhu Min, former deputy managing director of the IMF.

"There is so much to be done," Zhu said, highlighting areas with great potential, such as software development, as the country seeks to make its manufacturing industry smarter.

China's technological progress in mobile networks and artificial intelligence, as well as its institutional and market strengths, can all contribute to the development of the service sector and be a strong boost for service consumption, according to Zhu.

China's economy is increasingly driven by consumption and services after China's per capita GDP surpassed 12,000 U.S. dollars. This shift, characterized by a growing service sector and a declining manufacturing share, reflects a global trend, Zhu noted.

On the consumer front, there is much room for service consumption expansion, he said, adding that consumer spending on goods was mainly driven by real estate in the past, but now the demand for services like education, entertainment, tourism, and culture is on the rise as China moves towards the high-income stage.

According to a tone-setting meeting on priorities for the second half of 2024 in late July, service consumption will be a major driver in the expansion and upgrading of consumption.

Official data show that in the first six months of this year, China's retail sales of services increased 7.5 percent from a year ago, 4.3 percentage points higher than that of goods, while service consumption accounted for 45.6 percent of the country's per capita consumer spending.

"China's next round of reform priorities, including increasing national income levels with reasonable distribution policies, continuing the urbanization process, as well as improving social insurance, education and medical systems, promise greater demand for service consumption," Zhu said.

A recent State Council guideline has set out 20 key tasks for developing service consumption, including tapping the potential of services like hospitality, domestic services, elderly care and tourism, fostering new types of consumption and consumption scenarios, relaxing market access, and providing more policy support for service consumption.

However, if the share of the service sector grows but the productivity of this sector stagnates, the average GDP growth is destined to slow down, Zhu said, noting that the key challenge for sustaining China's growth is to enhance labor productivity in the service sector while expanding service consumption.

He believes that when China builds itself into a service powerhouse with a world-class and competitive service industry, not just a manufacturing giant, the Chinese economy will sustain steady growth into the future.

Looking forward, Zhu said the greatest risks faced by the Chinese economy for the rest of 2024 would come from external uncertainties, in particular fluctuations in the global financial markets and geopolitical changes.

"The recent U.S. stock market fluctuations were only early corrections," he said, noting that the market's stability hinges on the Federal Reserve's interest rate decisions and the strength of the U.S. economy.

Externally, he said, the global economy is likely to experience low growth over the next five years, while geopolitical tensions and an aging workforce are expected to further reduce efficiency and productivity.

"The above factors could all weigh on China's foreign trade," Zhu said, warning that maintaining trade growth would be one of the key challenges for the country in the second half of this year.

China's economic recovery being dragged down by property slump

BEIJING, Aug 15, (AP): A continued property crisis and weak consumption dragged on China's economic recovery in July, according to data released Thursday by the National Bureau of Statistics.

Unemployment rose for the first time since February, clocking in at 5.2%, compared to 5% in June.

Industrial production also rose more slowly than the previous month, showing a 5.1% year-on-year increase in July, compared to a 5.3% rise in June.

Retail sales grew slightly more than analysts had expected, rising 2.7% year-on-year in July, compared to 2% in June.

Statistics bureau spokesperson Liu Aihua said the recovery in consumption will be further consolidated given recent government policies to boost consumer spending.

Beijing announced plans last month to use 150 billion yuan (\$20.9 billion) in government debt to finance trade-ins for consumer goods such as appliances and cars to stimulate spending.

Consumption contributed around 60% of China's economic growth in the first half of the year and is expected to assume an even bigger role in supporting the world's second-largest economy. Exports, traditionally China's strongest engine for economic growth, are dampened by frictions with the United States and other Western countries.

Regarding urban unemployment - a ticklish problem for the ruling Communist Party - Liu said the 0.2 percentage-point rise over the previous month was due to the impact of the graduation season.

Investment in real estate dropped 10.2% year-on-year in the first seven months of the year, after decreasing 10.1% in the January-June period.

A prolonged slump in China's property market after regulators cracked down on excessive borrowing by developers unleashed a chain reaction that has pulled housing sales and prices lower and hit many other parts of the economy, such as construction, building materials and home appliances.

LONDON, Aug 15, (Xinhua): Just one month into office, the new Labour government in Britain has been vocal about the challenging fiscal situation they inherited from the previous Conservative administration.

In late July, Chancellor Rachel Reeves informed the House of Commons that the former government had left behind a "fiscal black hole" amounting to 22 billion pounds (approximately 28.21 billion U.S. dollars). Prime Minister Keir Starmer's office issued a statement indicating that their fiscal assessment had revealed a country that was "broke and broken."

Economists and critics see Labour's accusations as signaling possible tax increases in the forthcoming October budget. Additionally, this rhetoric is perceived as an effort to criticize the Conservatives in Parliament and shape public opinion on the necessity for fiscal reforms.

However, it is undeniable that Britain is grappling with significant financial challenges, including high government debt, low public investment, inadequate public services, and increasing economic discontent.

Even before the July general election, the Institute for Fiscal Studies warned that the new government would face the most challenging fiscal environment in 70 years.

High debt vs high demand
The British government debt, which is high by historical and international standards, has been a long-standing concern. According to the Office for National Statistics (ONS), Britain's public sector net debt, excluding public sector banks, was estimated at 99.5 percent of gross domestic product (GDP) at the end of June 2024.

Borrowing for the financial year ending in March 2024 was provisionally estimated at 120.7 billion pounds.

"The UK's fiscal difficulties stem from the global financial crisis when public borrowing was significantly increased to support the banks and to implement a fiscal stimulus program in 2009 and 2010," explained Professor Iain Begg from the London School of Economics and Political Science.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, massive public expenditure, such as furlough schemes and business loans, further exacerbated the situation, he added.

Interest payments on past borrowings are a significant burden, especially with rising interest rates as the Bank of England combats soaring inflation. In 2023-2024, government debt interest spending reached 102 billion pounds, equivalent to 3.8 percent of GDP or 8.4 percent of government spending.

High debt limits the government's ability to increase public spending, making it increasingly difficult for public services to meet the needs of the British people.

Understaffed public sectors, inefficient transport networks, and aging infrastructure are just a few of the problems plaguing the country. A recent YouGov survey showed that 84 percent of Britons believe public services are in poor condition.

The National Health Service in England reports that the waiting list for planned hospital care has risen to 7.62 million, with 6.39 million patients currently waiting.

A decade of low growth
While high government debt hampers public spending, the situation is compounded by Britain's sluggish economic growth.

ONS data indicates that over the past decade, excluding the COVID-19 pandemic, quarterly GDP growth has rarely exceeded 1 per-

Officials vocal about challenging fiscal situation

New UK gov't stuck in high debt, low growth



Photo taken on Aug 18, 2021 shows the Houses of Parliament in London, Britain. British lawmakers on Wednesday criticized Prime Minister Boris Johnson's handling of the situation in Afghanistan amid the Taliban takeover of the country. Speaking at an emergency session of parliament, Johnson told the MPs the collapse of Afghanistan's government happened faster than expected, but denied his government 'was unprepared or did not foresee this.' (Xinhua)

SA gov't 'joins forces' with businesses to boost economic growth, fight corruption

JOHANNESBURG, Aug 15, (Xinhua): South Africa's Government of National Unity (GNU) and the business sector on Wednesday pledged to work together to address the country's pressing issues, including boosting economic growth, creating jobs, improving port logistics, and fighting corruption and crime.

This commitment followed a meeting Tuesday between President Cyril Ramaphosa and business leaders to tackle these challenges facing the 7th administration. Following the meeting's decisive outcomes, the agreed-upon initiatives will be rolled out over the next 12 to 18 months.

In a statement issued by the presidency Wednesday, Ramaphosa confirmed that government and business leaders from various sectors, including energy and logistics, agreed to partner in tackling these challenges.

"The GNU has reaffirmed its commitment to urgently implement the reform agenda started by the 6th administration and to restore confidence and sentiment -- essential drivers of investment, inclusive economic growth, and job creation," he said.

Ramaphosa also said since the cooperation commenced last year, progress has been made, especially in the energy sector.

"We have reaffirmed our commitment to a dynamic partnership between government and business to foster South Africa's economic growth and social advance-

ment. Since the start of the partnership just over a year ago, we have made substantial progress toward stabilizing the energy sector, improving the performance of our rail and port system, and strengthening the fight against crime and corruption," the president said.

According to the statement, Adrian Gore, co-convenor of the business delegation, welcomed the partnership, announcing that over 130 chief executive officers pledged support, and the business sector invested more than 260 million rands (about 14.4 million U.S. dollars) and mobilized over 350 experts across the three focal areas in the first phase.

He was also quoted as saying that the reduction of the energy crisis in the past few months would boost economic growth. "Continued momentum could mean we are able to achieve 3 to 5 percent GDP (gross domestic product) growth by 2030. We will be launching the second phase of our partnership with this ambition in mind," Gore said.

"As we move forward with this partnership, we will intensify our work to address these pressing issues and expand our efforts to drive employment creation. We know that the challenges ahead are formidable. But with our continued partnership, we are well-equipped to navigate these complexities and contribute to sustainable growth for South Africa," concluded Ramaphosa in the statement.

cent, and year-on-year GDP growth has been below 3 percent.

In the second half of 2023, the British economy entered a technical recession, contracting for two consecutive quarters.

A major study by the Resolution Foundation, a leading British think tank, revealed that the British economy has been stagnating for 15 years, leaving low- and middle-income households "much poorer" than their counterparts in advanced economies such as France and Germany.

"Britain has huge strengths, but it is in relative decline," said Torsten Bell, chief executive of the Resolution Foundation. "A year or two of low investment and flatlining wages is survivable, but 15 years of stagnation is a disaster."

The economic outlook remains bleak, with the International Monetary Fund forecasting a GDP growth of just 0.7 percent in 2024 and 1.5 percent in 2025.

Austerity or stimulus
To alleviate pressure on public finances, Chancellor Reeves has announced that the Labour government will cut spending by 5.5 billion pounds this year and over 8 billion next year.

The government will review Conservative plans to build 40 new hospitals and reform the care sector. It also plans to reduce winter fuel payments for some pensioners and change ministerial severance pay. In education, a 20 percent value-added tax will be imposed on private school fees starting Jan. 1, 2025, to fund public education.

Analysts believe that the current fiscal challenges present a dilemma for the new government.

On the one hand, the large fiscal deficit and the need

for fiscal discipline require tax increases and spending cuts. However, this approach could further burden British households and businesses.

The Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR) reports that the tax burden, measured as tax revenues as a percentage of GDP, was at its highest level in over 70 years during the 2022-2023 financial year. Austerity measures could worsen the inadequate supply of public services while dampening economic activity and business confidence.

On the other hand, stimulating economic growth through tax cuts and increased public investment could address the fiscal problem more fundamentally. However, with the government already living beyond its means, raising funds through large-scale borrowing may be difficult in the short term, and significant tax cuts could also reignite inflation.

Professor Patrick Minford of Cardiff Business School cautioned that while raising taxes might improve fiscal numbers in the short term, it could harm Britain's long-term growth prospects.

"We have to get the economy into good shape," he said. "If the economy is in good shape and growing, then these issues pale into insignificance because money pours in to pay for the extra needs of public services."

Begg echoed this sentiment, stating that the government should focus on improving the economy's growth rate through public investment, infrastructure development, research and development, and innovation.

"All these factors affect the debt-to-GDP ratio. A higher GDP denominator will reduce the ratio even if the stock of debt remains unchanged," Begg said.

What's On



Photos during the event.

Focus on youth, social justice and economic growth in Independence Day address

Indian Ambassador Dr. Adarsh Swaika marks 78th Independence Day in Kuwait

By Paulo Francisco X. Fernandes
Arab Times/AI-Seyassah Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 15: Unfurling the Indian 'Tricolor' at the Indian embassy in Kuwait on the 78th Independence Day of India, the Indian Ambassador to Kuwait His Excellency Dr Adarsh Swaika extended his greetings to all Indians in Kuwait and friends of India across the country.

Following the unfurling of the flag, Dr Swaika read the message of the President of India, Droupadi Murmu which was broadcast to the nation on the eve of the Independence Day celebrations.

In her message, the Indian President said, "I extend my warmest Independence Day greetings to all. As we prepare to celebrate our 78th Independence Day, the sight of our national flag being hoisted across the nation fills our hearts with pride and joy. This day unites us, celebrating our shared identity as a nation."

On August 15, both in India and abroad, Indians gather for flag-hoisting ceremonies, cultural events, and patriotic celebrations. The voices of young children remind us of the sacrifices made by our freedom fighters, linking the past with the

aspirations of future generations.

As we honor those who fought for our freedom, we remember the struggles of our nation under foreign rule. Leaders like Mahatma Gandhi, Sardar Patel, and countless others unified our diverse country in the fight for independence. We also recognize tribal heroes like Birsa Munda, whose contributions are now more widely appreciated.

Today, as we observe Vibhajan Vibhishika Smriti Diwas, we remember the horrors of partition and stand in solidarity with those who endured that tragedy.

Our Constitution, she said, is a beacon of justice, equality, and liberty, continues to guide us. Despite challenges, we have remained committed to these ideals, allowing our democracy to flourish. The recent elections, with nearly 97 crore eligible voters, were a testament to our democratic strength, thanks to the Election Commission and all those involved.

India's economic growth has been remarkable, with poverty rates declining and significant strides made in agriculture, infrastructure, and technology. As one of the world's fastest-growing economies, we are poised to become a global leader. This progress reflects the hard work of our citizens, the vision of our leaders, and

the resilience of our democracy.

We also prioritize social justice, ensuring that affirmative action, gender equality, and climate justice remain central to our policies. Initiatives like PM-SURAJ and NAMASTE demonstrate our commitment to uplifting marginalized communities.

The youth are the future of India, and our focus on education, skilling, and employment opportunities will shape a developed nation by our centenary. Our advancements in science, technology, and space exploration, along with achievements in sports, highlight our nation's potential.

As we celebrate Independence Day, I extend my greetings to all, especially our brave armed forces, police, civil servants, judiciary, and overseas citizens. Let's honor our shared heritage and continue working towards a brighter future.

Meanwhile, Dr Swaika reiterated the commitment of the Embassy to assist those in need, saying the embassy doors are open to every Indian who seeks help. He also reminded those present that it is vital that we respect the laws and traditions of the host country, in addition to ensuring that all documents are in place and not violate the country's residence and labor laws.

Exclusive offers and ethnic fashion highlight week-long India festival

LuLu Hypermarket organizes grand 'India Utsav' celebration for Independence Day

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 15: As India celebrated its 78th Independence Day, LuLu Hypermarket transformed into a tri-colored symphony of all-things-Indian during the week-long 'India Utsav' promotion. Held from 14-20 August, the cultural and shopping extravaganza was a true celebration of the Indian spirit, showcasing the country's diversity and its unique blend of tradition and innovation.

The festivities kicked off with a grand inauguration ceremony on 14 August at the Al-Rai outlet, as Indian Ambassador to Kuwait H.E. Adarsh Swaika along with LuLu Kuwait's top management, revealed the wonders of the fest amidst the melodies of a traditional Indian music band.

The 'India Science Expo & Monuments Expo' for students was a show-stopper that displayed the creativity of young minds in exhibiting India's inspiring scientific advancements and architectural marvels. Winners of the expo were rewarded with exciting prizes, while all participants took home consolation prizes. The 'Future India' wall was another thought-provoking display.

As customers ventured through the hypermarket, they discovered a treasure trove of exclusive offers and discounts on products, ranging from fragrant Indian spices, groceries, meat & fish, fruits and vegetables to health and beauty, households, and fashion.

The 'Indian Ethnic Fashion and Food - Couples Show' was a visual feast, bringing out the elegance of Indian attire, and the diversity of its cuisines. Selfie enthusiasts were able to snap memories against vibrant backdrops of traditional monuments and displays, while cultural programs performed by Indian school students filled the air with music and dance that kept everyone entertained.

Enticing aromas wafted from special food stalls and free sampling counters, tempting taste buds with authentic Indian flavors. LuLu Hy-



Photos during the ceremony.

permarket also unveiled an array of new Indian products, catering to the diverse preferences of its customers.

LuLu Hypermarket's 'India Utsav' celebration was a cultural spectacle that will be remembered and cher-

ished by shoppers, a true celebration of India's diversity, spirit and splendor.

Bank's new digital account opening solution streamlines process

Warba announces 'Sunbula', 'Bloom' and 'Sunbula Kids' winners

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 15: Warba Bank - the best bank in banking services for the corporate sector and banking services for the investment sector in Kuwait - announced the winners of the weekly Sunbula, monthly Sunbula Kids and Bloom draws. The Bank will continue to make weekly draws for 10 winners for the Sunbula account and 5 for the monthly Bloom draws in the presence of a representative of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry and Warba Bank employees.

As for the lucky customers for the weekly Sunbula draw, 10 winners were chosen from Warba Bank's customers, each of whom received 1,000 Kuwaiti dinars. The winners are: Mrs. Nuha Ibrahim Al-Turkait, Mr. Ahmed Hasehoush Al-Khalidi, Mrs. Hessa Khaled Abdullah Al-Kanaan, Mrs. Hana Saleh Shaaban Al-Arabeed, Mr. Sultan Aber Al-Hussaini, Mrs. Dalal Khaled Suleiman Al-Jarallah, Mrs. Amna Farhan Humoud Al-Mulla, Mr. Mishari Rashid Mohammed Al-Khashem, Mr. Shaheen Malfi Mutia Al-Anzi, and Mr. Abdulaziz Abdullah Al-Sumairi.

As for the customers who were lucky during the monthly Sunbula Kids draw for children, 7 winners were announced from Warba Bank customers, and they are: Ms. Ghada Mishal



Ahmed Almutawa

Majed Al-Mutairi, Mr. Abdullah Mohammed Abdullah Al-Fahah, Mr. Othman Ghanem Mohammed Al-Hasawi, Ms. Aisha Mashari Abdullah Al-Houty, Mr. Musab Mubarak Ayash Al-Subaie, Mr. Ahmed Khalifa Ahmed Al-Shaaban, Mr. Nasser Talal Abdul Karim Ismail.

Warba Bank also congratulates the winners of the "Monthly Student Reward" draw for Bloom customers, who are: Ms. Ghadeer Mubarak Fahad Al-Anzi, Mr. Abdul Malik Adnan Al-Ibrahim, Ms. Balqis Fayeze Muzhid

Al-Anzi, Ms. Shaden Ali Fadel Al-Anzi, Mr. Khadija Othman Bader Al-Mutairi.

Warba Bank singles the "Bloom" customer segment with a unique digital banking experience that lives up to their ambitions and aspirations. It presents them with a private banking application-- the first of its kind not only in Kuwait; Rather, in the entire region -- inspired by social media applications in terms of design, interface, browsing methods and color choices, which targets young people.

Meanwhile, the Sunbula account is the perfect choice for all those who wish to save money and achieve great financial returns on their balances at the same time; in addition to multiple opportunities to win cash prizes throughout the year.

With regards to the conditions for winning the Sunbula, Mr. Ahmed M. Almutawa Director Region Retail Banking Group states: "Only 100 KD is required to enter the weekly Sunbula draws and other major draws, whereby the customer still gets one chance per every 10 KD in the account, and the chances are calculated according to the lowest balance in the account during a month. Therefore, a full month must have passed in the account to

qualify for the weekly draw, and two full months for the major draws to calculate the opportunities. There are no restrictions or limits for withdrawal and deposit, the higher the deposited amount, the greater the customer's chances of winning".

Notably, Warba Bank launched its latest Customer Onboarding banking solution in accordance with the terms of its ambitious five-year strategy, this will enable non-Warba Bank customers to apply for opening an account in an easy digital way through the bank's website without the need to visit any of the bank's branches, and within only five minutes - through the new and unique automated system used to enable this service - new customers will be able to complete the request to open an account at any time and any place.

It is worth mentioning that Warba Bank is one of the banks that achieved great successes in a short period of time, as it occupied a leading position in the field of digital Islamic banking services for individuals, and it is one of the most local banks in terms of the number of shareholders, and these are among the most prominent elements that make the bank close to all members of society.

Next Alfouz draw scheduled for Aug 19

ABK announces winner of 'Alfouz' weekly draw

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 15: Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) is excited to announce ABDULFATTAH MOHAMMAD ALRASHID as the winner of Alfouz KD 10,000 weekly draw on Monday, 12 AUGUST, 2024. The draw took place in the presence of a Ministry of Commerce and Industry representative, ensuring transparency.

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

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

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



ABK Logo

ABK encourages everyone to open an Alfouz draw account or increase their balance to participate in the upcoming weekly draw, which is scheduled to take place on Monday, 19 August, 2024.

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

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

Bank advocates financial safety

KIB boosts banking culture among Assima Mall visitors

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 15: Kuwait International Bank (KIB) announced the setup of a special booth at Assima Mall with the aim of raising banking awareness and financial literacy among community members. This effort aligns with KIB's ongoing and dedicated initiatives to support the directives and recommendations of the "Let's Be Aware" (Diraya) financial awareness campaign, launched by the Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) and the Kuwait Banking Association (KBA) in cooperation with local banks. It also comes as part of KIB's commitment to its leading role in guiding customers, helping them make sound financial decisions, and protecting the security of their banking data.

In this regard, Mariam Al-Nasser, Area Manager of Retail Banking at KIB, said: "We at KIB are proud to be an integral part of the sustainable development plans in our community. We are always pleased to contribute to spreading financial literacy and raising awareness among customers and community members about the importance of safeguarding their financial and personal information. This is especially crucial amid the increasing instances of fraud, phishing, and other malicious activities aimed at stealing data and money."

Al-Nasser added: "Our presence at Assima Mall presented an important opportunity for our staff to directly engage with the mall's visitors, providing detailed explanations and extensive information on the best solutions and methods for the safe use of banking cards and protecting their accounts. They also discussed customer rights and banking duties, steps to avoid falling victim to fraud and phishing, as well as raising awareness about the importance of adopting a culture of investment and savings. Additionally, they highlighted the role of banking institutions in financing, particularly Islamic financing. Moreover, visitors were introduced to our diverse and innovative range of products and services, designed to enhance their ex-



Mariam Al-Nasser



KIB's Diraya campaign.

perience amid the rapid advancements in the financial and banking sector."

It is worth noting that KIB is committed to its leading and effective role in raising community awareness, which is considered an essential part of its comprehensive social responsibility strategy. The Bank constantly strives to launch initiatives that broadly enhance financial literacy and to participate in promising events that support the goals of the "Let's Be Aware" campaign, embodying its main slogan, "Bank for Life".

Swifties flock to London after Vienna concerts canceled

LONDON, Aug 15, (AP) — For Herve Tram, being a Taylor Swift fan isn't just about the music.

The 28-year-old computer network engineer from Paris sees himself as part of a community, one of the Swifties as they are known. So when the pop superstar's shows in Vienna were canceled last week because of a terror threat, Tram took a small personal step: He gave away two extra tickets to her upcoming concerts in London to two fans who missed the chance to see their guiding light in the Austrian capital. "That's the power of this fandom," Tram said. "We look (out) for each other."

The community of Swift fans, who have flocked to stadiums around the world to see the 3 1/2-hour shows on her Eras Tour and sing along with songs they know by heart, have been shaken in recent days.

First, a knife-wielding attacker murdered three little girls at a Swift-themed dance class in northern England, touching off a week of anti-immigrant unrest across the UK after right-wing activists spread misinformation about the suspect. Then the shows in Vienna were canceled after police arrested three Islamic State-inspired extremists they believed were planning to attack the concert venue.

But none of that has dampened fans' enthusiasm to see Swift during five shows Thursday through Tuesday at London's Wembley Stadium that will close out the European leg of the Eras Tour. The fans want to wear Swift-inspired outfits, swap handmade friendship bracelets and,

of course, dance.

Take Meagan Berneaud, 30, of Columbus, Ohio, who has been a Swift fan since she was 13.

Berneaud had second thoughts about traveling to London after recent events reminded her of the 2 1/2 hours she spent locked down during a 2016 terror attack at Ohio State University. But she decided to go and even set up a thread on X, formerly known as Twitter, to connect fans who missed the Vienna shows with people who were willing to sell or give away tickets to the London concerts. She's had more than 3,000 views.

"I just have to tell myself not to live in fear," she said. "I have to put my trust ... that law enforcement can do their best to keep us safe."

Anxieties

Some fans who had planned to see the show in Vienna were willing to overcome their anxieties to try to attend another show, taking encouragement from Swift's song, "Fearless."

"And I don't know why. But with you I'd dance in a storm. In my best dress. Fearless."

It's a number that she belts out while swirling and twirling in an assortment of sparkly frocks in the song's music video.

Preslila Koleva, 26, a design engineer from Cambridge, England, had been looking forward to seeing Swift in Vienna for more than a year,

buying a copy of a green dress that Swift wears during the Folklore set on the Eras tour and making 30 bracelets to trade with other fans. She was heartbroken when the shows were canceled.

But then she connected with Tram, who gave her one of his tickets. That dress will be worn.

"There (are) good people that will do something nice for someone that they don't know, just because they've seen that they've been through this really awful situation," she said. "It could have ended in such a bad way."

The enthusiasm of Swift's fans and a set list that includes more than 40 songs from all phases of her career have helped make the Eras Tour the biggest revenue earner of all time, with more than \$1 billion in ticket sales last year, according to Pollstar Boxoffice, which collects data on the live music industry. The tour is expected to push that record to more than \$2 billion before it ends later this year in Indianapolis.

Demand for the London concerts shows no signs of slacking, with ticket prices hitting thousands of pounds on unregulated sites.

With Swift's tour coming to an end in Europe and youthful fans who have flexible schedules, especially during the summer, recent events won't hurt demand for tickets to the London shows, said Rafi Mohamed, an expert on pricing strategies and founder of the Cambridge, Massachusetts-based consultancy Culture of Profit.

Music

Variety



This image released by Netflix shows Halle Berry, (left), and Mark Wahlberg in a scene from 'The Union.' (AP)

Film

Mark Wahlberg and Halle Berry bring friendship to film

A middling spy comedy in 'The Union'

LOS ANGELES, Aug 15, (AP) — "The Union," an action comedy with Mark Wahlberg and Halle Berry, should have been more fun. Or more exciting. It certainly had a lot working in its favor, including big stars and a budget for globetrotting. But it's lacking a certain charm that could help it be something more than the Netflix movie playing in the background.

"The Union," streaming Friday, is a fairy tale - a very male one, about a middle-aged everyman (Wahlberg) whose life never quite got started and who gets recruited to be a spy out of the blue. Mike is a broke construction worker still living in his hometown of Patterson, New Jersey (yes, there are Springsteen songs) with his mother and hanging with his old friends in bars. His biggest win of late was a one-night stand with his seventh grade English teacher and the one event on his calendar is his friend's wedding in a few weeks. He's the best man.

That's all to say that for Mike, it is a breath of fresh air when his old high school girlfriend Roxanne (Berry), walks into the bar one evening looking like a punk-rock superhero in a leather motorcycle jacket. Glamorous and confident and never bothered by the flop of hair getting in her eyes, she has clearly found a life outside Patterson. The problem, or a problem, I think, is that we already know what she does. Instead of putting the audience in Mike's shoes, as the fish out of water trying to figure out why he's woken up in a luxury suite in London after meeting his high school ex in his hometown bar, "The Union" starts on Roxanne. It begins with a kind of "Mission: Impossible"-style extraction gone wrong, in Trieste, Italy, where most of her team ends up dead. She decides that they need some working class grit to reboot.

The idea for the movie came from Stephen Levinson, Wahlberg's longtime business partner, who together helped bring another middle-of-the-road Netflix action-comedy to life in "Spenser Confidential." It's directed very basically by Julian Farino, a journeyman who helmed many episodes of "Entourage," and written by Joe Barton and David Guggenheim. And there is a sort of charming fantasy about the notion that anyone could be a moderately successful international spy given the opportunity and a few weeks of training. In the movies, women get to find

out they're secret royalty and men get to find out they're secretly great spies.

But "The Union" never quite hits its stride tonally. It's not silly enough to be a comedy, though I think that's what it would prefer to be. J.K. Simmons is given too little to work with as the head of this secret agency, which also employs undercover characters played by Jackie Earle Haley, Adewale Akinnuoye-Agbaje and Alice Lee. One of the more moderately successful running jokes is that Mike's undercover character is from Boston (get it?). A hulking English henchman even has a heart-to-heart with him about "Good Will Hunting."

Berry and Wahlberg are fine together, with an easy rapport, but zero chemistry. This would not be problem if the movie wasn't also trying to be a will-they-won't-they romance between a woman who forgot her roots and a guy who needs to. I never quite bought into the idea that either of them are actually still thinking about their high school relationship and what went wrong. There's been a lot of life in the interim to dwell on decisions you made at 17. Not everyone can be Cary Grant and Katharine Hepburn, or even Helen Hunt and Bill Paxton - but maybe in this case the story should have changed to serve its actors better.

That's a nitpick for something with much larger problems. And ultimately "The Union" suffers the fate of many high-priced streaming movies before it: There's just not enough there - action, comedy, romance, art - to demand (or, rather, earn) your full attention. "The Union," a Netflix release streaming Friday, is rated PG-13 by the Motion Picture Association for "sequences of strong violence, suggestive material and some strong language." Running time: 107 minutes. One and a half stars out of four.

Also:

NEW YORK: Alyssa Milano hopes to charm audiences when she makes her Broadway debut this fall in the musical "Chicago," adding her celebrity to a show that skewers celebrity culture.

"The beauty of theater is that you get to try new things every night," she tells The Associated Press. "That's what I used to love about doing theater. And that's what I hope

that I can find again in doing 'Chicago.'"

Milano, former star of "Who's the Boss?" and "Charmed," steps into the role of Roxie Hart at the Ambassador Theatre beginning Sept. 16 for an eight-week engagement through Nov. 10.

For Milano, hitting the stage is a return to her roots. She was in a national touring company of "Annie" at age 8 and she went on to star in Wendy Wasserstein's "Tender Offer" at the off-Broadway Ensemble Studio Theater and "All Night Long" at Second Stage. She was in the first American musical adaptation of "Jane Eyre" and produced and starred in a Los Angeles production of "Butterflies Are Free."

Milano says doing a stint on Broadway never felt right until now. Her children - ages 9 and 12 - are settled in school and extracurricular activities, and her husband is in a good place in his career.

"It just felt like when this offer came up that everything fell into place," she says. "My 9-year-old daughter looked at me and said, 'Mom, you would be an idiot not to do this.'"

In recent years, she was in the movies "Brazen" and "Wet Hot American Summer: Ten Years Later" and the Netflix series "Insatiable." Milano also lent her stardom and voice to the #MeToo movement, launched clothing, jewelry and eyewear lines and has been a host of Lifetime's "Project Runway All-Stars."

Set in the 1920s, "Chicago" is a scathing satire of how show business and the media make celebrities out of criminals. It has Bob Fosse-inspired choreography, skimpy outfits and killer songs such as "All That Jazz" and "Cell Block Tango."

"Chicago" tells the story of Roxie, a housewife and dancer who murders her on-the-side lover after he threatens to leave her. To avoid conviction, Roxie hires Chicago's slickest criminal lawyer to help her dupe the public, media and her rival cellmate, Velma Kelly, by creating shocking headlines.

Milano says she wants to honor Ann Reinking - the iconic Fosse collaborator who originated Roxie in the 1996 revival and created the choreography in Fosse's style. "I'm really trying to pay homage to her choreography and her portrayal of Roxie. Because she was profound."

DOHA: The second edition of the Qatar Toy Festival concluded on Wednesday with a record-breaking 100,000 attendees, marking a 33.3 percent increase from last year's inaugural event, Qatar Tourism reported.

The 31-day festival featured 10 themed zones, along with daily live performances, competitions, and concerts.

Highlights included performances by prominent Arab musicians.

Kuwaiti singer Humood AlKhuder, Syrian artists Tarek Alarabi Tour-gane and Rasha Rizk, and Qatari singer Dana Al Meer contributed to the festival's vibrant atmosphere.

Hamad Al Khaja, acting head of events and festivals technical support at Qatar Tourism, said that the event's success highlights Qatar Tourism's commitment to hosting diverse events throughout the year, reinforcing Qatar's reputation as a top family-friendly travel destination. (Xinhua)

MADRID: In her new music video, Katy Perry pretends to be one of the thousands of tourists having the time of their lives on Spain's Balearic Islands in the Mediterranean. But some parts, filmed in a protected natural enclave, could bring trouble.

The regional government is investigating the video for her latest song, "Lifetimes," for the clips in which the 39-year-old American singer and songwriter appears jumping and running across dunes of the Ses Salines Natural Park, a protected area on the islands of Ibiza and Formentera, apparently without permission.

The images taken on the dunes of the private islet of S'Espalmador, "one of the most ecologically valuable sites on the islands" and in an area cordoned off from the public with sticks and ropes, sparked the controversy, according to local media.

The regional authorities have opened "preliminary investigation proceedings," according to a statement released Tuesday, after the production company failed to apply for the appropriate permits. The filming wouldn't have been an environmental offense, because this type of production can be authorized with a permit, the department of natural environment added.

Her label, Universal Music, said the local video production company had assured it that all necessary

permits for the video were secured. When it learned one permit was still being processed, "we were given verbal authority to go ahead" a day before the shoot, which took place July 27, a label spokesperson said in an email to The Associated Press.

"We adhered to all regulations associated with filming in this area and have the utmost respect



AlKhuder



Perry

for this location and the officials tasked with protecting it," the statement said. (AP)

NEW YORK: Does signing up for Disney's popular streaming service mean you have agreed to never sue the entertainment giant over anything forever?

That is what Disney argues in a wrongful death lawsuit involving a 42-year-old New York doctor whose family claims had a fatal allergic reaction after eating at an Irish pub in Disney Springs in October.

Disney is asking a Florida court to dismiss a lawsuit brought by Jeffrey Piccolo, the widow of Kanokporn Tangsuan, a family

medicine specialist with NYU Langone's office in Carle Place, on Long Island. The company argues Piccolo had agreed to settle any lawsuits against Disney out of court through the arbitration process when he signed up for a one-month trial of Disney+ in 2019 and acknowledged that he had reviewed the fine print. (AP)

Features

ARABIC TIMES

FRIDAY-SATURDAY, AUGUST 16-17, 2024

People & Places

Television

Dream come true

Vaughn brings good fun to 'Bad Monkey'

LOS ANGELES, Aug 15, (AP) — There's an old saying "don't meet your heroes" but for TV creator, showrunner Bill Lawrence, it was a dream come true. Lawrence's new series "Bad Monkey" for Apple TV+, premiered Wednesday, is based on a novel by Carl Hiaasen, one of his favorite authors.

"I started reading Carl Hiaasen books when I was 15-years-old. There's a direct line from Carl's surreal satires and wildly insane character pieces to, like, "Scrubs," explained Lawrence, who also created that long-running Zach Braff sitcom. "The guy helped me to be a storyteller. He turned out to be as cool as I hoped and such a good dude."

"Bad Monkey" stars **Vince Vaughn**, whose observational humor and quick one-liners make him a good fit for the writing styles of both Hiaasen and Lawrence.



Vaughn

Vaughn plays Andrew Yancy, a former Miami police detective now living in the Florida Keys and working as a restaurant inspector. (A scene where we see Yancy on the job leads to a running joke about how he's lost his appetite for the foreseeable future and is Vaughn at his reactionary finest.)

A friend asks Yancy for a favor: deliver a human arm that washed up on the beach to a medical examiner (played by Natalie Martinez). When he later meets Eve (Meredith Hagner), the widow of the man whom the arm belonged to, Yancy finds himself unable to shake the case. The story unfolds, touching on themes of greed and power.

"He can't let himself leave something where he knows there's some wrongdoing there," Vaughn said about Yancy, who he describes as "like the Energizer Bunny." "He can't help himself. And then no matter how many times he falls, gets hit in the face, or things don't go his way, he's going to just keep marching forward. That's just such an inspirational quality to have."

Generation

Vaughn goes back more than 25 years with Lawrence — they played poker together. "He used to make me laugh. Just to watch his career do so well from afar, it was easy for me," Vaughn said about agreeing to the role.

For Lawrence, he said Vaughn's 1996 indie movie "Swingers" "helped shape a generation of writers. "When he burst onto the screen saying, "You're so money you don't even know it," everyone wanted to write that type of dialogue."

Michelle Monaghan plays Bonnie, Yancy's sort-of girlfriend who flits in and out of his life. She's a minor presence in the novel and Monaghan credits Lawrence for fleshing out her story.

"She's equal parts very delusional but also very naive," said Monaghan, laughing. "When we first meet her she's very fun, playful and aloof but as the show goes on we see she's also quite predatory. ... Bill creates characters that do outrageous things."

When it came time to try alternative takes and improvise, not everyone was as comfortable as Vaughn. "Vince would encourage the other cast members like, 'I'll set you up if you say this. It will be funny,'" recalled Lawrence.

Ronald Peet, who plays a fisherman named Neville whose storyline runs concurrent to Vaughn's, said he had to grow accustomed to having freedom to deviate from the script.

"Every day I showed up to work, I was doing something that, you know, my mind was like, 'I don't know how I'm going to do this,'" said Peet. "That's how you grow, and that's how you expand, so I feel grateful."

Episodes were filmed on location in South Florida so the cast experienced that kind of lazy humidity that slows down the pace of the everyday world.

"I don't know what's wrong with me. When I'm in a comfortable soundstage, I don't like it. When it's hot, I'm not in my head in the same way. And I kind of love being like, 'I'm not thinking,'" said Hagner.

"I think my hair had to be a little more hair-sprayed," recalled Vaughn. "The Keys were spectacular. The nature, the ocean, the wildlife. I really enjoyed it."

Martinez is from Miami so the job gave her an opportunity to connect with family.

"I've been in Los Angeles for 20 years, but I was born and raised in Miami. My entire family is there, so it was nice to be able to have my goddaughter or my aunt come on set and kind of see what I do. I had a break ... and I was able to go to my grandmother's house and have lunch with her."

Making "Bad Monkey" gave Lawrence a cherished opportunity to work with his daughter Charlotte, who has a recurring role as Eve's stepdaughter, Caitlin. This was the first acting role for Charlotte, who is a singer-songwriter.

Charlotte is well-aware of the nepo baby discourse and said she's grateful for the "massive chance" she was given.

"I was in musical theater and plays growing up, but I always just loved performing. I just never really connected the dots, you know, or actually envisioned myself being able to do this as a career," said Charlotte. "I think because my parents were so involved in it, I kind of wanted to rebel and do my own thing and not be connected to them. But, it couldn't have been more fun."

"If you can work with your kids, do it forever," said Lawrence. "That's my advice to everybody. And who cares what other people say. It's awesome."

Also:

LOS ANGELES: **Eric Goode**, the director of Netflix's "Tiger King," has a new docuseries about the private ownership of chimps. At the center is an exotic animal broker named **Tonia Haddix** who calls herself "The Dolly Parton of Chimps," and raises chimpanzees as her children. "Chimp Crazy" debuts Sunday, Aug. 18 on HBO and will be available to stream on Max.

James Cameron dives back into the ocean with his new six-part National Geographic series called "OceanXplorers." Cameron teamed with BBC Studios and the nonprofit research organization OceanX to explore remote parts of the ocean. They used a 285-foot research vessel called OceanXplorer to get there. The docuseries premieres Sunday, Aug. 18 on National Geographic and streams next day on Disney+ and Hulu.



Actor Gena Rowlands poses for a portrait at the London West Hollywood hotel in West Hollywood, Calif., on Dec. 4, 2014. Rowlands, hailed as one of the greatest actors to ever practice the craft and a guiding light in independent cinema as a star in groundbreaking movies by her director husband, John Cassavetes, and later charmed audiences in her son's tear-jerker "The Notebook," has died at age 94. (AP)

Obituary

Acting powerhouse and indie film icon

Actress Gena Rowlands dies at 94

LOS ANGELES, Aug 15, (AP) — Gena Rowlands, hailed as one of the greatest actors to ever practice the craft and a guiding light in independent cinema as a star in groundbreaking movies by her director husband, John Cassavetes, and who later charmed audiences in her son's tear-jerker "The Notebook," has died. She was 94.

Rowlands' death was confirmed Wednesday by representatives for her son, filmmaker Nick Cassavetes. He revealed earlier this year that his mother had Alzheimer's disease. TMZ reported that Rowlands died Wednesday at her home in Indian Wells, California.

Operating outside the studio system, the husband-and-wife team of John Cassavetes and Rowlands created indelible portraits of working-class strivers and small-timers in such films as "A Woman Under the Influence," "Gloria" and "Faces."

Rowlands made 10 films across four decades with Cassavetes, including "Minnie and Moskowitz" in 1971, "Opening Night" in 1977 and "Love Streams" in 1984.

She earned two Oscar nods for two of them: 1974's "A Woman Under the Influence," in which she played a wife and mother cracking under the burden of domestic harmony, and "Gloria" in 1980, about a woman who helps a young boy escape the mob.

"He had a particular sympathetic interest in women and their problems in society, how they were treated and how they solved and overcame what they needed to, so all his movies have some interesting women, and you don't need many," she told the AP in 2015.

In addition to the Oscar nominations, Rowlands earned three Primetime Emmy Awards, one Daytime Emmy and two Golden Globes. She was awarded an honorary Academy Award in 2015 in recognition of her work and legacy in Hollywood. "You know what's wonderful about being an actress? You don't just live one life," she said at the podium. "You live many lives."

A new generation was introduced to Rowlands in her son's blockbuster "The Notebook," in which she played

a woman whose memory is ravaged, looking back on a romance for the ages. Her younger self was portrayed by Rachel McAdams. (She also appeared in Nick Cassavetes' "Unhook the Stars" in 1996.)

In her later years, Rowlands made several appearances in films and TV, including in "The Skeleton Key" and the detective series "Monk." Her last appearance in a movie was in 2014, playing a retiree who befriends her gay dance instructor in "Six Dance Lessons in Six Weeks."

One of her career triumphs was 1974's "Woman Under the Influence," playing a lower middle-class housewife who, the actor said, "was totally vulnerable and giving; she had no sense of her own worth." In "Gloria" (1980) she portrayed a faded showgirl menaced by her ex-boyfriend, a mobster boss. She was Oscar nominated as best actress for both performances.

Career

She and Cassavetes met at the American School of Dramatic Arts when both their careers were beginning. They married four months later. In 1960 Cassavetes used his earnings from the TV series "Johnny Staccato" to finance his first film, "Shadows." Partly improvised, shot with natural light on New York locations with a \$40,000 budget, it was applauded by critics for its stark realism.

Gena (pronounced Jenna) Rowlands became a seasoned actor through live television drama and tours in "The Seven Year Itch" and "Time for Ginger" as well as off-Broadway.

Her big break came when Josh Logan cast her opposite Edward G. Robinson in Paddy Chayefsky's play "Middle of the Night." Her role as a young woman in love with her much older boss brought reviews hailing her as a new star.

MGM offered her a contract for two pictures a year. Her first film, a comedy directed by and costarring Jose Ferrer, "The High Cost of Loving," brought Rowlands comparisons to one of the great 1930s stars, Carole Lombard.

But she asked to be released from her contract because she was expecting a baby. Often during her career she

would absent herself from the screen for long stretches to attend to family matters.

In addition to Nick, she and Cassavetes had two daughters, Alexandra and Zoe, who also pursued acting careers.

John Cassavetes died of cirrhosis of the liver in 1989, and Rowlands returned to acting to assuage her grief. Between assignments she sometimes attended film festivals and societies for Cassavetes screenings.

"I want everyone to see his films," she said at the San Sebastian Festival in 1992. "John was one of a kind, the most totally fearless person I've ever known. He had a very specific view of life and the individuality of people."

Virginia Cathryn Rowlands was born in 1930 (some sources give a later date) in Cambria, Wisconsin, where her Welsh ancestors had settled in the early 19th century. Her father was a banker and state senator. She was a withdrawn child who loved books and make-believe. Her mother encouraged the girl's ambition to become an actor.

Rowlands quit the University of Wisconsin in her junior year to pursue an acting career in New York. Like other actors of her generation, she gained invaluable experience in the thriving field of television drama in the 1950s, appearing on all the major series.

After leaving her MGM contract, she was able to choose her film roles. When nothing attracted her, she appeared in TV series such as "Alfred Hitchcock Presents," "Bonanza," "Dr. Kildare" and "The Virginian." One of her career delights was co-starring with her icon Bette Davis on the TV movie "Strangers" in 1979.

Her other movies included "Lonely Are the Brave" with Kirk Douglas, "The Spiral Road" (Rock Hudson), "A Child Is Waiting" (with Burt Lancaster and Judy Garland, directed by Cassavetes), "Two Minute Warning" (Charlton Heston), "Tempest" (co-starring with Cassavetes and Molly Ringwald, in her screen debut) and the mother who wants to do right by her children in Paul Schrader's 1987 study of a blue-collar family "Light of Day."



Alessia Cara arrives at the premiere of 'Emily in Paris' at the Egyptian Theatre, Wednesday, Aug. 14, in Los Angeles. (AP)



Madonna



Harry

Variety

BOGOTA, Colombia: **Prince Harry** and his wife **Meghan** will arrive in Colombia on Thursday at the invitation of Vice President **Francía Márquez**, where they will take part in several events, including a forum against cyberbullying, the office of the Colombian vice president said Wednesday.

The couple, in the South American country for the first time, will participate in several events Thursday and Friday in the capital, Bogotá, before leaving for **Cartagena** and **Cali**, in the Caribbean and in the Colombian Pacific, where they are expected to be during the weekend.

The events surrounding the couple's visit will kick off Thursday with a press conference by Márquez, Colombia's first Black vice president, in which she is expected to offer more details on the purpose of Harry and Meghan's visit. The statement did not clarify whether the Duke and Duchess of Sussex will make statements.

Harry and Meghan will also be visiting a school in Bogotá where they will "interact directly with students who are exploring the digital landscape and its effects on society," the statement added. (AP)

NEW YORK: **Kate McKinnon**, **Malcolm Gladwell** and **Eva Mendes** will be among the featured speakers this fall at the 92nd Street Y in Manhattan, a leading venue for arts events.

McKinnon will be promoting her expansively titled children's story, "The Millicent Quibb School of Etiquette for Young Ladies of Mad Science," and Gladwell his new book, "Revenge of the Tipping Point." Mendes will discuss her picture book, "Desi, Mami, and the Never-Ending Worries," a family-friendly version of life with the two children she has with husband **Ryan Gosling**.

Other guests at the Y will include Michigan Gov. **Gretchen Whitmer**, whose "True Gretch" came out this summer; **Josh Brolin**, who has written the memoir "From Under the Truck"; and designer **Bob Mackie**, who will be discussing a documentary about him, "Naked Illusion." (AP)

ROME: **Madonna** will celebrate her 66th birthday with a private evening tour of the famed Italian archaeological site at Pompeii, officials said.

Naples Prefect **Michele Di Bari** denied Italian media speculation the singer was planning a big birthday bash at the ancient city, destroyed in A.D. 79 when Mount Ve-

suvius erupted. But he confirmed Madonna was planning a private evening tour on Friday that was purely cultural in nature. "She loves Pompeii, loves the archaeo-

logical park, and can't wait to come," he told reporters Tuesday.

For decades, archaeologists have been excavating the ruins of Pompeii, regularly



Turkish director Gurcan Kelttek, (left), and actor Erol Babamaoglu, pose on the occasion of the presentation of the movie "Yeni safak solarken" (New Dawn Fades) at the 77th Locarno International Film Festival, in Locarno, Switzerland, Thursday, August 15. (AP)

uncovering beautifully preserved frescoes, pottery and, just this week, a new set of human remains.

Madonna, whose family hails from Italy's Abruzzo region, has been in Italy for several days, reportedly as a guest of designers **Domenico Dolce** and **Stefano Gabbana**. (AP)

LONDON: On the 10th day, after creating the mountain goat, elephants, pelicans, a rhinoceros and a gorilla, among other animals, Banksy rested.

The elusive street artist's menagerie that appeared around London over nine consecutive days apparently came to a conclusion after a final mural surprised staff who arrived early to feed the animals Tuesday at the London Zoo.

There was nothing new posted Wednesday on the artist's website or his Instagram page, where his avid fans typically learn of his recent work. Those who live close enough often rush out to view it and snap photos - sometimes before it can be snapped up.

The zoo mural depicting a gorilla lifting up the entrance gate as birds took flight, a sea lion waddled away and three sets of eyes peered out from the darkness inside, was the last in the series, the BBC reported. A spokesperson for Banksy did not return multiple messages by The Associated Press. (AP)

Experts say try it cautiously

People with ADHD turning to AI apps to help with tasks

NEW YORK, Aug 15, (AP): Becky Litvintchouk didn't think she'd be able to manage the mountain of tasks needed to become an entrepreneur. Every other part of her life has been overwhelming because of ADHD, which can impact her ability to concentrate.

So, she turned to AI. The app Claude helps her decide which contracts made the most sense for her hygienic-wipes business, GetDirty, without having to read them word for word. She also created business plans by telling the generative AI bot what her goals were and having it create steps for her to get there.

"It's been just massively instrumental. I probably would not be where I am today," she said of using AI for about two years.

Experts say generative AI tools can help people with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder - who experience difficulties with focusing, organizing and controlling impulses - to get through tasks quicker. But they also caution that it shouldn't replace traditional treatment for ADHD, and also expressed concerns about potential overreliance and invasion of privacy.

Emily Kircher-Morris, a counselor who focuses on neurodivergent patients, said she's seen the tools be useful to her clients with ADHD. She even uses them herself since she has ADHD.

Her clients, she said, seem to have varying levels of comfort with the idea of using AI. But for those who take to the technology, "it really can help to hook people in, like, 'Oh, this is kind of a fancy new thing that catches my interest. And so I really want to dig in and explore it.'"

She also said it's good to use caution. John Mitchell, an associate professor at Duke University School of Medicine, added that AI apps should be used more as "one tool in a toolbox" instead of replacing traditional treatments such as develop-

ing organizational skills or taking prescription medications.

"If you're kind of treading water in your job and AI's a life preserver, well, that's great you're staying above water, but, you know, you still don't know how to swim," he said.

Litvintchouk, a married mother of four living in New York City, dropped out of high school and left the workforce - all things that research shows are more likely to happen to people with ADHD, putting them at higher risk of economic instability.

Aside from helping with her business, she uses ChatGPT to help with grocery shopping - another thing that can be fraught for people with ADHD because of the organization and planning skills needed - by having it brainstorm easy-to-prepare recipes with a corresponding grocery list.

Struggles

When she shared her technique with another mom who also has ADHD, she felt more people needed to know about it, so she started creating videos on TikTok about various AI tools she uses to help manage her ADHD struggles.

"That's when I was like, you know what? I need to, like, educate people," she said.

Generative AI tools can help people with ADHD break down big tasks into smaller, more manageable steps. Chatbots can offer specific advice and can sound like you're talking with a human. Some AI apps can also help with reminders and productivity.

Software engineer Bram de Buyser, said he created Goblin.tools with his neurodivergent friends in mind. Its most popular feature is the "magic to-do," where

a user can enter a task and the bot will spit out a to-do list. They can even break down items on the list into smaller tasks.

"I'm not trying to build a cure," he said, "but something that helps them out (for) two minutes out of the day that they would otherwise struggle with."

Husson University professor Russell Fulmer describes the research around AI and ADHD as "inconclusive." While experts say they see how artificial intelligence could have a positive impact on the lives of people with anxiety and ADHD, Fulmer said, it may not work perfectly for everyone, like people of color with ADHD.

He pointed to chatbot responses that have been racist and biased at times.

Valese Jones, a publicist and founder of Sincerely Nicole Media, was diagnosed with ADHD as a child and uses AI bots to help with reading and responding to emails and proofreading public relations plans. But its responses don't always capture who she really is.

"I'm southern, so I talk like a southerner. There are cadences in my writing where you can kind of pick up on the fact that I'm southern, and that's on purpose," said Jones, who is Black. "It doesn't pick up on Black women's tone, and if you do put in like, 'say it like African American,' it automatically goes to talking like 'Malibu's Most Wanted.'" And de Buyser said while he sees a future where AI chatbots function more like a personal assistant that is "never tired, never sleeps," it could also have privacy implications.

"If you say, 'Oh, I want an AI that gives me personal information and checks my calendar' and all of that, you are giving that big company access to your emails, your calendar, personal correspondence, essentially your deepest, darkest secrets just so it can give you something useful back," he warned.

Extreme heat endangers kids

Experts find why immune system decline with aging

SYDNEY, Aug 15, (Agencies): Australian scientists have made a breakthrough in solving the mystery of why an organ responsible for human immune defense shrinks and weakens with age, according to a study published on Thursday.

In a world-first, researchers from the Walter and Eliza Hall Institute of Medical Research (WEHI) in Melbourne discovered new cells that drive the aging process in the thymus - a finding they say could unlock ways to prevent immunity waning with age.

Located in the upper chest under the breastbone, the thymus is the only organ in the body that can make T lymphocytes - also known as T cells - a type of white blood cell that helps fight against pathogens and eliminate infected or cancerous cells.

However, the thymus is also the first organ in the body to start shrinking with age, causing diminished T cell production and a weakened immune system.

The WEHI team discovered two new cell types that cause the thymus to lose its function.

By using advanced imaging techniques and animal models, researchers found that the cells, which were found only in the defective thymus of older humans and mice, form clusters around T cell growth areas, impairing production, and "scars" in the thymus that prevent the organ from restoring itself after damage.

WEHI Laboratory Head Professor Daniel Gray said T cell production declines significantly after puberty and virtually ceases by age 65, making it harder for the body to deal with new infections and cancers.

"This is also why adults who have depleted immune systems, for example due to cancer treatment or stem cell transplants, take much longer than children to recover," he said in a media release.

The discovery provides a new angle for thymic regeneration and immune restoration, and could unravel a way to boost immune function in vulnerable patients in the future," Gray said.

Extreme heat: Children in West and Central Africa are increasingly exposed to extreme heat, which further endangers their health, according to a new report by UNICEF published Wednesday.

The frequency of heatwaves in the region has more than quadrupled since the 1960s, according to the report. West Africa experienced an unprecedented heat wave earlier this year that led to a surge in deaths.

One hospital in Mali reported 102 deaths in the first four days of April, compared to 130 deaths in the entire month of April last year. It's unknown how many of the fatalities were due to the extreme weather as such data cannot be made public under the regulations imposed by the country's military rulers.

'New disease strain could be more contagious'

Mpox declared a global health emergency, what's WHO doing?

LONDON, Aug 15, (AP): The World Health Organization declared Wednesday that the increasing spread of mpox in Africa is a global health emergency, warning the virus might ultimately spill across international borders.

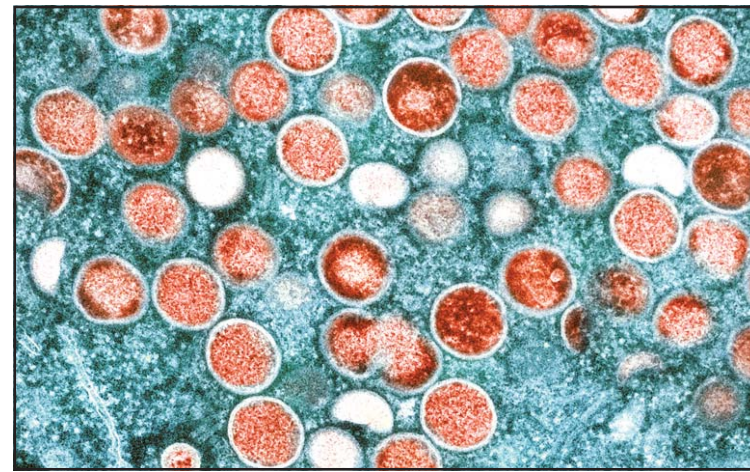
The announcement by WHO director-general Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus came after a meeting of the UN health agency's emergency committee. The Africa Centers for Disease Control and Prevention declared mpox a public health emergency on the continent on Tuesday.

WHO said there have been more than 14,000 cases and 524 deaths in Africa 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



This undated image provided by the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases shows a colorized transmission electron micrograph of monkeypox particles (red) found within an infected cell (blue), cultured in the laboratory that was captured and color-enhanced at the NIAID Integrated Research Facility in Fort Detrick, Md. (AP)

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 across the world that had not previously reported mpox.

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. Tedros said there was concern for the further spread of the disease within Africa and beyond.

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.

WHO's emergency declaration is meant to spur donor agencies and countries into action. But the global response to previous declarations has been mixed.



NASA astronauts Suni Williams, left, and Butch Wilmore stand together for a photo enroute to the launch pad at Space Launch Complex 41 Wednesday, June 5, 2024, in Cape Canaveral, Fla., for their liftoff on the Boeing Starliner capsule to the international space station. (AP)

Return Boeing capsule without crew

NASA weighs extending 2 astronauts' ISS stay

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla., Aug 15, (Agencies): NASA said Wednesday it's still deciding whether to keep two astronauts at the International Space Station until early next year and send their troubled Boeing capsule back empty. Rather than flying Boeing's Starliner back to Earth, Butch Wilmore and Suni Williams would catch a ride on SpaceX's next flight. That option would keep them at the space station until next February.

The test pilots anticipated being away just a week or so when they rocketed away as Starliner's first crew. But thruster failures and helium leaks

marred the capsule's trip to the space station, raising doubts about its ability to return safely and leaving the astronauts in limbo. NASA officials said they're analyzing more data before making a decision by end of next week or beginning of the next. These thrusters are crucial for holding the capsule in the right position when it comes time to descend from orbit.

NASA's safety chief Russ DeLoach added: "We don't have enough insight and data to make some sort of simple, black-and-white calculation."

DeLoach said the space agency wants to make room for all opinions

unlike what happened on NASA's two shuttle tragedies, Challenger and Columbia, when dissenting views were ignored.

Switching to SpaceX would require bumping two of the four astronauts assigned to the next ferry flight, currently targeted for late September. Wilmore and Williams would take the empty seats in SpaceX's Dragon capsule once that half-year mission ends.

Also:

MOSCOW: Russia successfully launched the Progress MS-28 cargo spacecraft into orbit on Thursday via

the Soyuz-2.1a carrier rocket, Russia's state space corporation Roscosmos said Thursday.

The launch took place at 06:20 Moscow time (0320 GMT) from the Baikonur Cosmodrome, with the spacecraft carrying supplies, scientific equipment, and fresh produce for the International Space Station (ISS).

The Progress MS-28 is expected to reach the ISS in approximately two days, with docking scheduled for Saturday at 08:56 Moscow time (0556 GMT). It will connect to the Zvezda service module of the ISS, delivering a total of 2,621 kilograms of cargo.

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Savea retains the captaincy in absence of Barrett

All Blacks make 4 changes for 2nd Rugby Championship match vs Argentina

WELLINGTON, New Zealand, Aug 15, (AP) — Head coach Scott Robertson has made only four changes to his starting lineup for Saturday's second test against Argentina at Eden Park, resisting a broader reshuffle after last week's shock 38-30 loss in the first test.

Winger Will Jordan who started on the bench in Wellington last weekend has been named in the starting 15, as has center Rieko Ioane who was demoted to the bench last weekend and replaced by Anton Lienert-Brown, who now returns to

the reserves.

Jordan replaces Sevu Reece on the right wing and Caleb Clarke comes in on the left wing for Mark Tele'a, who drops to the bench.

RUGBY

Robertson has named Tamaiti Williams in place of Ethan de Groot at loosehead prop.

T.J. Perenara has been retained at scrumhalf, though he had a poor match last weekend both with his

kicking and passing. Former captain Sam Cane has been named on the bench.

Robertson might have tempted to make far more changes after the All Blacks were outplayed by Argentina in Wellington. The Pumas achieved only their third win over the All Blacks in 42 tests but all three of those wins have been achieved in the last four years.

The Argentina forwards were more physical than the All Blacks in the first test but Robertson has only tinkered with his pack, bringing in

Williams because de Groot has a neck injury.

There were no scrums until the 60th minute in Wellington which made the New Zealand front row ineffective.

The New Zealand loose forwards also have been off the pace this season but Robertson has named an unchanged backrow. Ethan Blackadder on the blindside flank looked out of his depth in the first test and Ardie Savea does not look at his best on the back of the scrum.

Savea retains the captaincy in the

absence of Scott Barrett who is recovering from a finger injury. But with Barrett or Savea in charge, the All Blacks have lacked leadership on the field.

At the same time, Robertson and his coaching team have looked bereft of ideas to lift the team's performance.

"We've reflected deeply on our performance and our preparation individually and collectively is something we have all owned," Robertson said. "Our intent and focus has shifted solely to Eden Park."

The All Blacks have not lost at Eden Park in 30 years but that record looks more under threat than ever.

New Zealand Squad: Beauden Barrett, Will Jordan, Rieko Ioane, Ethan Blackadder, Caleb Clarke, Damian McKenzie, T.J. Perenara; Ardie Savea (captain), Dalton Papali'i, Ethan Blackadder, Sam Darry, Tupou Vaa'i, Tyrel Lomax, Codie Taylor, Tamaiti Williams. Reserves: Asafo Aumua, Ofa Tu'ungafasi, Fletcher Newell, Josh Lord, Sam Cane, Cortez Ratima, Anton Lienert-Brown, Mark Tele'a.

Penarol dominate The Strongest, eye Copa Libertadores last eight



Raphael Veiga of Brazil's Palmeiras, left, and Igor Jesus of Brazil's Botafogo battle for the ball during a Copa Libertadores round of 16 first leg soccer match at Nilton Santos stadium in Rio de Janeiro. (AP)

Lanus edge toward Copa Sudamericana quarters

RIO DE JANEIRO, Aug 15, (Xinhua) — Uruguay's Penarol moved to within touching distance of a place in the Copa Libertadores quarterfinals on Wednesday by romping to a 4-0 home victory over Bolivian side The Strongest.

Leonardo Fernandez, Maximiliano Silvera and Jaime Baez struck before halftime and Facundo Batista completed the rout 18 minutes from time.

"These are games in which everything goes right," Penarol manager Diego Aguirre told reporters in a post-match press conference.

"We started the first half very well, with a great attitude, and that gave us momentum for the rest of the match." The return fixture will be played in the high altitude of La Paz next Wednesday. Aguirre stressed that his team was not yet assured of a place in the competition's last eight.

"The result was very good for us, but we still have work to do," he said. "Now we have to go to La Paz and play well in a game that is going to have many difficulties. Anything is possible in football, and we have to make sure that we stay focused." In other Copa Libertadores round of 16 first leg fixtures on Wednesday, River Plate won 1-0 at Talleres Cordoba and Botafogo secured a 2-1 home victory over Palmeiras.

SOCCER

Meanwhile, Argentine side Lanus recovered from a goal down to clinch a 2-1 away win over Ecuador's LDU Quito in the Copa Sudamericana round of 16.

Alex Arce gave the hosts an early lead, but Gonzalo Perez equalized in the 23rd minute before Marcelino Moreno doubled the advantage on the stroke of halftime.

The result means Lanus need only a draw in next Wednesday's return leg in Argentina to reach the competition's last eight.

Earlier, Joaquin Varela struck twice as Colombian side Independiente Medellin drew 2-2 at Chile's Palestino.

Varela put the visitors ahead on the stroke of halftime before goals from Ivan Ramiro and Nicolas Linares in quick succession swung the momentum in Palestino's favor.

Varela equalized in the 93rd minute to set up a tantalizing second leg in Medellin.

In Wednesday's only other Copa

Bavarians determined to head back for success

German Cup turns into first stress test for Bayern coach

BERLIN, Aug 15, (Xinhua) — Vincent Kompany's sonorous voice is heard in every corner of Bayern Munich's training pitch.

From his first day as the successor of the departed, Thomas Tuchel relied on a strict pattern of discipline and intense training to turn things for the better for the struggling Bavarians and initiate a successful re-start after a disappointing title-less last season.

Ahead of the 2024/25 season's curtain raiser in the first round of the German Cup against newly promoted second-division side SSV Ulm this Friday, the wind of change seems to encourage the German record champion.

Not only did England captain Harry Kane speak about the National League title, but the entire squad seems determined to head back for success.

Significant changes regarding the squad and tactical system turn the 2020 treble winner into a fortune bag.

While the defenders in the person of Matthijs de Ligt and Noussair Mazraoui left for United, on-loan fullback Josip Stanisic (Leverkusen), midfielder Joao Palhinha (Fulham) and Michael Olise (Crystal Palace) joined the club and are said to play a vital role.

Several late arrivals due to the 2024

UEFA Euro and the Paris Olympics burdened the new coaches' start, but the former Citizen defender is keeping his statements free of complaints.

Instead, the 38-year-old is referring to his roots in the streets of Brussels as a street footballer having relied on resilience to survive.

The Cup case against Ulm might give first hints of how the Belgian's approach is already blooming as the season opener follows intense training sessions and a newly implemented high-pressing approach.

SOCCER

Not to speak of Bayern's goal to regain the top spot in the German league after former Bayern midfielder and Leverkusen coach Xabi Alonso took the 2023/24 title coming along with Bayern's German Cup and Champions League exit.

There seems not much time for Kompany to get his squad back on track and setbacks don't seem part of the package while French 2018 world champion and winger Kingsley Coman might leave.

Rumors speak of the FC Arsenal as

the most likely target.

Bayern is meanwhile said to be considering the signing of Leverkusen defender and German international Jonathan Tah, but negotiations seem to have come to a halt for the moment.

Over the past weeks, the Bayern coach tried to spread the teams' new approach coming along with the basic goal of dominating the game with a forward style.

After Stanisic returned from Leverkusen, German international Joshua Kimmich is said to return to a midfield position while Leon Goretzka might leave this summer as the 29-year-old was told by the coach and club officials such as managing director Max Eberl, he is far from first choice for future games. Bayern is starting the league season on August 25th in Wolfsburg.

Bayern's sporting director, Christoph Freund, expressed optimism regarding a satisfying new season and praised the club's efforts to refurbish its squad.

"We feel a new spirit with our newly formed team and our new coach. We can't wait for the start," the former RB Salzburg manager said following two victories in friendlies against Tottenham (2-1/3-2).

Shakib playing positive role

Sudamericana clash, Argentina's Rosario Central were held to a 1-1 home draw by Brazilian side Fortaleza.



Rodrigo Aliendro, left, of Argentina's River Plate and Marcos Portillo of Argentina's Talleres vie for a header during a Copa Libertadores round of sixteen first leg soccer match at Mario Alberto Kempes stadium in Cordoba, Argentina. (AP)

ISLAMABAD, Aug 15, (AP) — Bangladesh spin bowling coach Mushtaq Ahmed said the senior cricketers, including former lawmaker Shakib Al Hasan, are helping the team to focus on the test series against Pakistan after political turmoil at home disrupted preparations.

"All the players are very mature and are very excited," Mushtaq told reporters in Lahore on Thursday. "Management is very good with the players and seniors like Shakib are playing a positive role by talking with the young guys."

The Bangladesh squad flew into Lahore on Tuesday, four days ahead of schedule, after training was disrupted by protests back home that forced Prime Minister Hasina Wajid to resign and parliament to be dissolved.

The Pakistan Cricket Board made special arrangements for Bangladesh to have an additional three days of training in Lahore ahead of the first test in Rawalpindi next Wednesday. Karachi will host the second match on Aug. 30.

'Petition vexatious, ...'

AOC hits out at criticism of controversial breaker Gunn

SYDNEY, Aug 15, (AP) — The Australian Olympic Committee has criticized an anonymous online petition attacking controversial Paris Games breaking competitor Rachael Gunn, saying the petition was "vexatious, misleading and bullying." Last weekend, the sport of breaking made its Olympic debut. One of the last-thing images was the performance of an Australian b-girl known as Raygun - 36-year-old Sydney university professor Gunn - who did a "kangaroo dance" among other questionable moves during her routine, and scored zero points.

Gunn was subsequently heavily criticized for her performance with parodies even being played out on a late night television show in the United States.

OLYMPICS

Gunn, who has not yet returned to Australia following the Games, received strong support from Australian team chef de mission Anna Meares while still in Paris. On Thursday, the AOC went a major step further, refuting numerous erroneous stories it says have appeared online since.

Chief executive officer Matt Carroll said the AOC had written to change.org, which had published a petition criticizing Gunn and the AOC, demanding that it be immediately withdrawn.

More than 40,000 people have signed the petition claiming Gunn had "manipulated" Olympic qualification processes.

Carroll says the petition "contained numerous falsehoods designed to engender hatred against an athlete who was selected in the Australian

Olympic team through a transparent and independent qualification event and nomination process." "It is disgraceful that these falsehoods concocted by an anonymous person can be published in this way," Carroll said. "It amounts to bullying and harassment and is defamatory. We are demanding that it be removed from the site immediately. No athlete who has represented their country at the Olympic Games should be treated in this way . . ." Online criticism this past week has included suggestions that the Oceania qualifying event held in Sydney last October was set up to favor Gunn, and questioned the judging which allowed Gunn to qualify.

The AOC said Thursday the Oceania qualifying event was conducted under the Olympic qualification system determined by the international governing body, World DanceSport Federation (WDSF) and approved by International Olympic Committee.

It said the judging panel for the event was selected by the WDSF and consisted of nine independent international judges.

Unattributed social media comments also suggested Gunn and her husband, fellow breaker Samuel Free, had held positions within Australian breaking organizations.

"Rachael Gunn holds no position with AUSBreaking or DanceSport Australia in any capacity," the AOC said Thursday. "She is simply an athlete who competed in the qualifying event which she won." Breaking at the Olympics might be a one-and-done in Paris. It is not on the competition list for the next Olympics in Los Angeles in 2028, and also is unlikely to appear in 2032 at Brisbane, Australia.

Conway turns down N. Zealand contracts to play in T20 leagues

WELLINGTON, New Zealand, Aug 15, (AP) — Top-order batters Finn Allen and Devon Conway have become the latest Black Caps players to turn down New Zealand central cricket contracts to play in lucrative Twenty20 leagues overseas.

Allen and Conway join fast bowler Trent Boult and former captain Kane Williamson who already have made that choice, potentially limiting their future international careers.

New Zealand Cricket said Thursday that as a matter of policy it will choose contracted players ahead of non-contracted players whenever possible. Scheduling clashes between major T20 leagues and New Zealand's international fixtures also are likely to limit players' availability.

Some players have moved onto casual contracts with New Zealand Cricket but NZC said those contracts would only be offered sparingly.

"In the current environment it's important to have flexibility in our system to navigate some of the challenges posed by franchise cricket and this is another example of how we're working hard to retain our best players," NZC chief executive Scott Weenink said.

South Africa-born Conway has played for New Zealand in all formats since he qualified residentially in 2020. He said the desire to play in the South Africa T20 league from January was a key part of his decision.

"Playing for the Black Caps is still the pinnacle for me and I'm hugely passionate about representing New Zealand and winning games of international cricket," Conway said.

Also ISLAMABAD: India has turned down an offer from the International

Cricket Council to replace Bangladesh as host of the Twenty20 World Cup for women in October.

The ICC is contemplating a change of venue following political turmoil in Bangladesh. More than 300 have been killed during unrest that started in July, with protests against a quota system for government jobs that later morphed into a movement against what was considered Prime Minister Hasina Wajid's increasingly autocratic administration.

The uprising eventually forced Hasina to leave office and flee to India, ending her 15-year rule.

"They (ICC) have asked us if we would stage the World Cup. I have categorically said no," Jay Shah, secretary of the Board of Control for Cricket in India told the Times of India on Thursday.

CRICKET

"We would be in the monsoon season and on top of that we will host the Women's ODI World Cup next year. I don't want to give any kind of signals that I want to hold consecutive World Cups."

The United Arab Emirates and Sri Lanka are also being considered as possible hosts.

The ICC said earlier this week it is "closely monitoring developments" in Bangladesh along with the domestic cricket board, with the priority being the safety and well-being of the players.

Several countries, including England, India and Australia, have issued strong travel advisories since an interim government was installed in Bangladesh.



Bangladesh spin bowling coach Mushtaq Ahmed speaks during a press conference regarding test series against Pakistan, in Lahore, Pakistan. (AP)

'Inherently abusive' decision-making process: EPL chief**Soccer heading for 'point of saturation' as more games added to calendar**

LONDON, Aug 15, (AP): Soccer will reach saturation point if more matches are added to the calendar, the head of the Premier League said.

England's top league is part of a legal challenge against FIFA, alongside other domestic competitions in Europe and player unions. They argue the game's global governing body has not consulted with them in any meaningful way on the sport's calendar and have been urging a rethink on what they claimed was an "inherently abusive" decision-making process, including expanding the men's World Cup and Club World Cup.

SOCCER

Richard Masters, the Premier League's chief executive, believes too much soccer risks turning people off.

"It's a really difficult thing to predict when saturation takes hold," said Masters, speaking ahead of the new Premier League season starting Friday.

"Obviously, we have lots of football. The Premier League is part of it. It's part of the picture, our clubs participate in multiple competitions, and we're adding to that calendar, so it should be a concern. I think that we will reach a point of saturation, yes."

The U.S. will host a relaunched Club World Cup next June-July, with 32 teams - 12 from Europe, including Real Madrid, Manchester City and Bayern Munich - playing a maximum of seven games.

Masters insisted the legal move



Leeds United's Joel Piroe, left, and Middlesbrough's Aidan Morris battle for the ball during a Carabao Cup first round soccer match at Elland Road in Leeds, England. (AP)

was not solely about the Club World Cup itself, more about the impact its scheduling could have on existing competitions.

"If our clubs get to the final of those competitions, what sort of teams are they going to be able to field at the start of the (2025-26)

Premier League season when we have an obligation to the players to give them three weeks' rest, which they won't get?" Masters

said. "In the end, it doesn't add up. So a new accommodation has to be reached. The Club World Cup

is a relevant competition that should be able to develop in its own way, but not at the expense of other people's competitions."

Shnaider eliminates Zhang**Top-ranked Swiatek, Sinner advance in Cincinnati Open**

MASON, Ohio, Aug 15, (AP): Top-ranked Iga Swiatek survived in her return to hard courts Wednesday night in the Cincinnati Open, outlasting Varvara Gracheva 6-0, 6-7 (8), 6-2.

Playing for the first time since finishing third for Poland in the Paris Olympics on clay, Swiatek set up a third-round match against Marta Kostyuk - a 6-3, 7-5 winner over Lulu Sun.

"For sure, the transition is probably the hardest, from like the slowest surface to the fastest surface," Swiatek said.

"But that's why I'm still happy with my performance, and looking forward to another match to kind of still do the grinding and implement what I was working on, but not really focusing on the results."

Swiatek won her third straight French Open title in May and has six WTA Tour victories this season. On the men's side in the U.S. Open tuneup event, top-ranked Jannik Sinner got past American Alex Michelsen 6-4, 7-5 in his first match.

In the late match, Jiri Lehecka upset fourth-seeded Daniil Medvedev 7-6 (2), 6-4.

Earlier in women's play, 17-year-old Mirra Andreeva beat

11th seeded Emma Navarro 6-2, 6-2. Andreeva was playing her first match since taking a silver medal in doubles in Paris.

"I just went out there, tried to show my best level, and tried to win a match, and I think I did it," Andreeva said.

Andreeva will face 2016 Cincinnati champion Karolina Pliskova. Toronto semifinalist Diana Shnaider of Russia, Andreeva's doubles partner in Paris, beat Zhang Shuai 6-1, 6-4.

Sinner improved to 25-2 on hard

TENNIS

courts this season and advanced to a third-round meeting with Australia's Jordan Thompson. Sinner is trying to reach the quarterfinals in Cincinnati for the first time.

"I'm very happy to be in the next round," the Italian star said. "For me this is a place where I used to struggle a lot in the past years, so let's see what I can do this time."

Thompson beat Sebastian Baez 6-2, 6-4.

Stefanos Tsitsipas, in his first tournament since announcing he would no longer be coached by his father, rallied to beat Jan-Lennard Struff 4-6, 6-4, 6-3.

Tsitsipas, the No. 9 seed, revealed that Apostolos Tsitsipas would no longer coach him after losing to Kei Nishikori in his first match last week in Montreal.



Swiatek

Al-Qadisiya seek redemption as Al-Arabi aim for 2nd straight win

Al-Salmiya visit Kazma, Al-Nasr take on Khaitan

By Hassan Musa

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 15: Al-Qadisiya aims for redemption today as it hosts Al-Yarmouk at 7:00 pm at Mohammed Al-Hamad Stadium in the second round of the Zain Premier League. Meanwhile, Al-Arabi seeks to secure its second consecutive victory when it faces Al-Tadamon at 9:15 pm at Abdullah Al-Khalifa Stadium.

SOCCER

The round continues tomorrow with two more matches. In the first, Al-Nasr takes on Khaitan at 7:00 pm at Abdullah Al-Khalifa Stadium. In the second match, Al-Salmiya will visit Kazma at 9:15 pm.

The round concludes next Monday with a match between Al-Fahaheel and Kuwait Club at Al-Shabab Stadium. This match was postponed due to Kuwait Club's participation in the AFC Champions League 2 play-off match. Al-Qadisiya looks to rebound from

Fire, Shaqiri mutually agree to terminate his deal

CHICAGO, Aug 15, (AP): The Chicago Fire and midfielder Xherdan Shaqiri have mutually agreed to terminate his contract, opening senior and international roster spots for the club ranked next to last in Major League Soccer's Eastern Conference.

Shaqiri, 32, had 16 goals and 20 assists in 75 matches with 63 starts across all competitions with the Fire after joining in February 2022 as a designated player via transfer from Lyon of France's Ligue 1. His totals included two goals and two assists in nine chances over 12 contests this season for Chicago (6-

12-7, 25 points).

The Fire's announcement on its website included a photo of the Swiss international with the headline, "Thank you, Shaq." Chicago sporting director Georg Heitz thanked Shaqiri for his contributions and wished him success in the release and said agreeing to part ways "is in the best interest of all parties."

Shaqiri thanked the club and fans and also wished the Fire success but added, "I believe this is the right time for me to explore new opportunities in my career."

its 1-0 loss to Kuwait Club in the first round, particularly after its second-half performance, where the team was largely absent despite a strong first

half. Coach Mohammed Al-Mishaan knows that a win is crucial to restoring confidence and getting back on track to compete for the title, which has eluded

the team for eight seasons.

On the other side, Al-Yarmouk, who drew 4-4 with Al-Tadamon in the first round, is eager to make an impact in today's match.

In the second match, Al-Arabi, under the leadership of Coach Nasser Al-Shatti, hopes to replicate its strong performance from the first round against Kazma, where it secured a 2-0 victory. Conversely, Al-Tadamon aspires to gain something positive from this encounter.

In tomorrow's matches, Al-Nasr is determined to bounce back from its 3-1 defeat to Al-Salmiya in the previous round. The club's management is working hard to complete the registration of its professional trio, Bernardo Villar (Brazil), Carlos Ventura (Dominican Republic), and Onanuga Babatunde (Nigeria). Khaitan is also looking to recover after its 4-1 loss to Al-Fahaheel.



Mohammed Al-Mishaan

Tonali available for Newcastle again from Aug 28**Man U captain Fernandes signs extension**

LONDON, Aug 15, (Agencies): Manchester United captain Bruno Fernandes has signed a contract extension that will keep him at Old Trafford until the end of June 2027, with the option to extend his stay until 2028.

The new contract is a boost for the club on the verge of starting the new Premier League season.

The 29-year-old Portuguese midfielder moved to Manchester United from Sporting Club de Portugal in January 2020 and has scored 79 goals in 234 appearances, as well as giving 67 assists.

He had previously signed a new contract in 2022, and this had been due to expire in 2026. He was named as club captain ahead of Harry Maguire in the summer of 2023.

"Everybody knows the passion I have for Manchester United. I can see how positive the future is going to be, and I am relishing leading this team forward." "I understand the responsibility and

significance of wearing this shirt, and the levels of dedication and desire required to represent this incredible club," commented the player on the club website.

SOCCER

Italy international **Sandro Tonali** will be available again for **Newcastle** from Aug. 28 following his ban for breaching betting rules.

The midfielder has been serving a 10-month ban issued by the Italian federation for betting on teams he played for, which has ruled him out of action since October. An independent regulatory commission also sanctioned Tonali with an extra two-month ban that was suspended until the end of the coming season.

Newcastle said it has received confirmation from Italy's soccer federation that Tonali's sanction will run up to and including Aug.

27. Tonali will miss Newcastle's opening two Premier League games, against **Southampton** and **Bournemouth**, as well as the English League Cup match against **Nottingham Forest** on Aug. 27.

His first match back could be at home to **Tottenham** on Sept. 1.



In this file photo, Manchester United's Bruno Fernandes in action during an English Premier League soccer match at Elland Road in Leeds, England. (AP)

Tottenham suspend Bissouma for the Premier League opener

LONDON, Aug 15, (AP): Tottenham midfielder Yves Bissouma will miss the start of the Premier League season after being suspended by the club following an investigation into footage showing him appearing to inhale nitrous oxide, or laughing gas.

Bissouma uploaded clips of himself using nitrous oxide, which is now a Class C drug according to British law, onto social media site Snapchat last weekend.

The Mali international has apologized and acknowledged in a statement his "severe lack of judgement"

Following an investigation, Bissouma was handed a one-match suspension - meaning he will miss Tottenham's Premier League opener at Leicester on Monday.

"He is a footballer of this club - he has responsibilities to the club, to his teammates, to our supporters, to everyone associated with the club, and he has failed in those duties," Tottenham manager Ange Postecoglou said Thursday.

"He won't be available for Monday ... but beyond that, there is also some trust-building that needs to happen between Biss and me, and Biss and the group."

That's what he needs to work hard at, to win that back."

Nitrous oxide is used medically as an anesthetic and pain reliever. But people also use the drug to get high. Heavy use can cause damage to brain and nerve tissue.

Postecoglou said the sanctions for

SOCCER

Bissouma also needed to involve some education for the player, to give him an "understanding of why he did what he did and how wrong it was."

"There's a person involved," the Australian coach said. "In this case, it's Biss and he's made a really poor decision. You want to understand that and try and help him through that, as a club, ... to make sure he doesn't make those kind of choices and decisions in the future."

Bissouma, who joined Tottenham from Brighton in 2022, made 26 starts under Postecoglou during the 2023-24 season.



Bissouma



Kuwaiti players hold training session on the eve of their departure to Slovenia to commence an external training camp.

Sports

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Al-Adwani leads the Kuwaiti delegation

Kuwait's handball team prepares for WCup with Slovenia training camp

By Khaled Al-Anzi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 15: The Kuwait national handball team's first delegation departed for Slovenia to commence an external training camp, which will run until August 30. This camp is part of the long-term preparation plan for the Blues they gear up for the 29th World Cup finals, scheduled to take place across Croatia, Denmark, and Norway from January 14 to February 2, 2025.

In the World Cup draw, Kuwait has been placed in Group C, alongside France, Austria, and Qatar.

The delegation is led by the Secretary General of the Kuwait Handball Association, Qaed Al-Adwani, and includes team manager Abdulaziz Al-Zaabi, head coach Saeed Hijazi, and assistant coach Mohammed Masoudan.

HANDBALL

The squad features 24 players: Abdullah Al-Khamis, Fawaz Al-Mishari, Hamad Al-Saqr, Othman Dayef, Mohammed Amer, Saif Al-Adwani, Fawaz Mubarak, Haider Dashti, Abdulaziz Salmeen, Mohammed Al-Bahr, Bandar Al-Shammari, Ali Naseer, Abdulaziz Dayef, Abdulrahman Saeed, Saleh Al-Moussawi, Mishal Taha Al-Harbi, Hussein Al-Mutawa, Mohammed Al-Sanea, Abdulrahman Al-Shammari, Hassan Al-Mahdi, Fahd Abdulhadi, Ali Safar, Mohammed Bouyabas, and Suleiman Al-Khamisan.

During its stay in Slovenia, the team will play 5-6 friendly matches to hone its skills.

Meanwhile, junior team has left for Egypt to hold an external training camp in preparation for future international competitions. This is part of the Handball Federation's strategy to elevate the technical skills of players by increasing their exposure and field experience through early preparation.

Additionally, Kuwait Handball Association's Referees Committee will conduct an external training camp for referees in Croatia from August 19 until September 2, 2024, as part of their preparation for the upcoming season. The referees have already begun their local training sessions at the Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Complex Hall.

The Federation also announced the second coaching course for Category C, certified by the International Handball Federation. The course will be held at the Leaders Preparation Center in Al-Khaldiya from August 22 to 29, in line with the Federation's coaching requirements as set by the International Federation.



Mohammed Marhoon celebrates after Kuwait Club defeated Al-Ahli of Bahrain to qualify.

Kuwait Club in 4th tier as draw nears

By Hassan Musa

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 15: Kuwait Club is eagerly awaiting the draw for the inaugural edition of the AFC Champions League 2, set to take place today in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

Kuwait Club has been placed in the fourth tier of the East region, alongside Al-Wehdat (Jordan), Ravshan (Tajikistan), and Altyn Asyr (Turkmenistan).

The first tier features Sepahan (Iran), Shabab Al-Ahli (UAE), Al-Taawoun (Saudi Arabia), and Al-Wakrah (Qatar). The second tier includes Tractor (Iran), Sharjah (UAE), Nasaf (Uzbeki-

SOCCER

stan), and Al-Quwa Al-Askari (Iraq). The third tier is comprised of Al-Husseini (Jordan), Esteghlal (Tajikistan), Mohun Bagan (India), and Al-Khaldiya (Bahrain).

The AFC Champions League 2 is the second-tier tournament organized by the Asian Football Confederation for men's teams, boasting the largest number of participating teams. The tournament will be divided into eight groups, with four in the West and four in the East.

Teams in the group stage will each receive \$300,000, with the amount doubling for those advancing to the later stages. The tournament winner will be awarded \$3.28 million.

Kuwait Club, which secured its spot by defeating Al-Ahli of Bahrain 1-0 at Khalifa International Stadium. Kuwait's winning goal was scored by Bahraini professional Mohammed Marhoon in the 83rd minute. The home team struggled after two of its players were sent off, affecting their performance.



Real Madrid's Luka Modric lifts the trophy after winning the UEFA Super Cup Final soccer match between Real Madrid and Atalanta at the Narodowy stadium in Warsaw, Poland. Real Madrid won 2-0. (AP)

Mbappé makes dream debut as Real win UEFA Super Cup

Madrid beat Atalanta 2-0

WARSAW, Poland, Aug 15, (AP): A goal and a trophy. How about that for a debut by Kylian Mbappé for Real Madrid?

The France captain pulled on the famous white jersey of the Spanish champions for the first time in a competitive match and marked the occasion with the second goal in a 2-0 win over Atalanta in the UEFA Super Cup.

Mbappé, who started and played 82 minutes at the National Stadium in Warsaw, met a pass from Jude Bellingham across the area with a shot into the top corner in the 68th minute.

SOCCER

"He is inevitable," Bellingham said of Mbappé.

"It's a big step for him - people have been talking about him coming here for a long time - and it feels like he's been here for a while."

After putting both arms across his chest for his trademark celebration, Mbappé was congratulated by Vinicius Júnior and Rodrygo, the other members of Madrid's star-studded strike force that might be sending tremors around European soccer heading into the new season.

Federico Valverde tapped home a cross from Vinicius in the 59th to set Madrid on its way to a record sixth victory in the Super Cup, the annual match between the Champions League winners (Madrid) and the Europa League champions (Atalanta).

Madrid is used to holding records - no team has more European Cup titles than its 15 - and owning the world's best players.

Mbappé certainly belongs in that category and it was a strong start to life at the world's top soccer club, one he dreamt of playing for as a kid before fulfilling that reality by moving from Paris Saint-Germain after a drawn-out saga.

Now he is Madrid's No. 9 and started the Super Cup as the team's central striker - to limited success, aside from a couple of spins and tricks that wowed the crowd in the first half - before moving out wide for the second half to

IOA expresses shock at CAS's decision

Indian wrestler's petition for silver dismissed

NEW DELHI, Aug 15, (Xinhua): India's wrestler Vinesh Phogat's petition for a joint silver medal in the Paris Olympics was dismissed by the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS).

"The application filed by Vinesh Phogat on 7 August 2024 is dismissed," local media quoted the CAS initial order delivered as having said.

Phogat was disqualified hours before her finals in the women's 50kg freestyle match at the Paris Olympics for being overweight by 100 gm.

Her disqualification broke over a billion hearts in India, with people taking to social media to express their support and sympathy for the wrestler.

Following her disqualification, she requested CAS to award her a joint silver medal.

Indian Olympic Association (IOA) president PT Usha expressed her shock and disappointment at CAS's decision to dismiss Phogat's application against the United World Wrestling (UWW) and the International Olympic Committee (IOC).

"The operative part of the August 14 decision, which dismisses Vinesh's application to be awarded a shared silver

medal women's 50 kg category at the Paris Olympic Games 2024, has significant implications for her in particular and the sporting community at large," the IOA said in a statement.

"The marginal discrepancy of a 100 grams and the resultant consequences has profound impact, not only in terms of Vinesh's career but also raises serious questions about ambiguous rules and their interpretation."

The IOA added that it was exploring more legal options. "The IOA firmly believes that the total disqualification of an athlete for such a weight infraction on the second of two days warrants a deeper examination. Our legal representatives had duly brought this out in their submissions before the Sole Arbitrator." The IOA further said it would provide any possible assistance to Vinesh going forward.

"In light of the order of the CAS, the IOA continues to stand in full support of Phogat and is exploring further legal options. The IOA is committed to ensuring that Vinesh's case is heard. It will continue to advocate justice and fairness in sports, ensuring that the rights and dignity of athletes and everyone in the sports fold are upheld at all times." the IOA said.

greater effect.

"We have a new-look team and it seemed to just click tonight," Bellingham said. "Sometimes it takes a bit of time - the first half we were still adjusting - and the second half it all came

together and we were brilliant."

Vinicius and Bellingham, stars of Madrid's run to the Champions League and La Liga titles last season, were the game's standout players, however, as Carlo Ancelotti's team

eventually overpowered Atalanta after an even first half that saw both sides hit the crossbar.

Madrid defender Eder Militao deflected a cross onto his own bar before Rodrygo fired in a shot just before halftime that struck the top of the bar.

"At one point, the game was within our reach," Atalanta coach Gian Piero Gasperini said.

Atalanta almost took the lead early in the second half when Mario Pašalić had a header tipped aside by goalkeeper Thibaut Courtois but Madrid was dominant thereafter, with Vinicius operating more down the middle.

It might take a while for Ancelotti to find the ideal formula up front - Brazil striker Endrick, a summer signing like Mbappé, didn't even come off the bench for the match - but it's an enviable dilemma for the Italian coach.

"The most difficult thing, what we are looking for, is finding balance in the team with the quality we have up front," Ancelotti said. "If we are able to do this, we can have a very good season. We have a fantastic squad, to be honest."



Real Madrid's Kylian Mbappé, right, is challenged by Atalanta's Isak Hien during the UEFA Super Cup Final soccer match between Real Madrid and Atalanta at the Narodowy stadium in Warsaw, Poland. (AP)