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Opinion

Is the month of October critical?

By Ahmed Al-Jarallah
Editor-in-Chief, the Arab Times

IN LINE with the phrase "Light at the end of the tunnel," observers in decision-making corridors believe that October will witness the implementation of executive decisions based on high-level orders given to the Council of Ministers and other institutions. This will allow for the execution of major projects based on a specific, productive vision.



Al-Jarallah

Developments will include improvements to external roads and infrastructure, which have long been neglected but are crucial for local investment. Additionally, all forms of support and subsidies will undergo serious review to establish a clear vision and a new mechanism to minimize annual financial waste.

Only the needy and low-income earners should benefit from subsidies, whether for electricity, supplies, or other forms of support that have burdened public finances and contributed to financial deficits for decades. To improve state revenues, decision-makers suggest that the Public Institution for Social Security will undergo significant changes, including amendments to its law and leadership, and supporting it with expertise and minds that realize the importance of investments in infrastructure, entertainment projects, and other initiatives that help stimulate local investment. Additionally, efforts will be made to mitigate risks from foreign investments to shield them from international and local crises.

There are several ideas in this regard including Kuwait's need for a large workforce to implement major projects. At the same time, there is pressure on residential areas, making it crucial for the Public Institution for Social Security to develop labor cities. Such development would reduce direct interactions between expatriates and Kuwaiti citizens and families, as is currently happening.

Investments by the Public Institution for Social Security could stimulate economic activity. It has the potential to invest in residential cities, industries, and other projects, similar to initiatives in other Gulf countries. These nations invest in such projects and allow for long-term installment payments for housing, with the state taking care of the land only.

To achieve this, it is essential to implement agreements with major companies, both Chinese and Western, that have been stalled for years due to disagreements between the National Assembly and successive governments. This presents an opportunity for Kuwait to break free from the constraints it has faced over the past three decades.

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Amir receives Crown Prince, Premier and 1st Deputy PM

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 18, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received at Seif Palace on Sunday His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah.

His Highness the Amir also received His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah and First Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defense, and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yusuf Saud Al-Sabah.

His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah also received at Seif Palace on Sunday His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.

His Highness the Crown Prince also received First Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defense, and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yusuf Saud Al-Sabah.

Also, His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent a condolences cable on Sunday to the King of Saudi Arabia Salman bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud, over the passing of Princess Nouf bint Nasser Al-Saud.

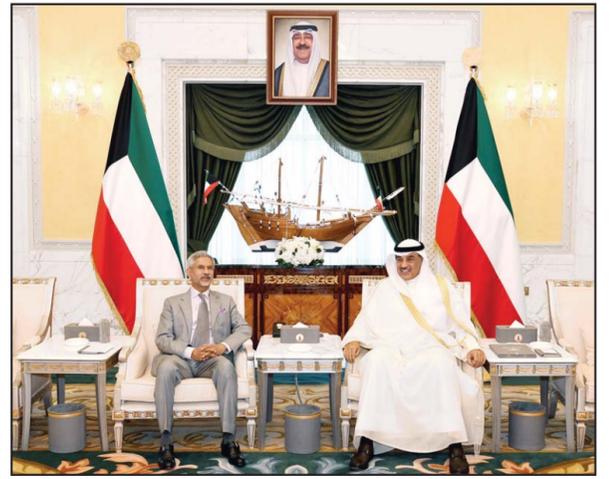
In the cable, His Highness the Amir prayed to Allah Almighty to bestow the deceased with mercy and grant Al-Saud Family patience and solace.

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HH Crown Prince meets Indian FM

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 18, (KUNA): His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah received Sunday Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Al-Yahya and Indian Minister of Foreign Affairs Dr. Subrahmanyam Jaishankar, on the occasion of his official visit to the country.

The meeting was attended by the Director of the Office of His Highness the Crown Prince, Lieutenant General (Ret.) Jamal Theyab, Undersecretary of Foreign Affairs at the Diwan of His Highness the Crown Prince Mazen Al-Essa, Assistant Foreign Minister for Asian Affairs Ambassador Samih Hayat, Ambassador of Kuwait to India Mishal Al-Shamali, and the Indian Ambassador to the country Dr. Adarsh Swaika.



His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah receives the visiting Indian Minister of Foreign Affairs Dr. Subrahmanyam Jaishankar in his office.

Trade boost eyed

'India-Kuwait ties poised for growth'

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

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 18: India's Minister of External Affairs, Dr. S. Jaishankar, who is on a brief visit to Kuwait today, shared his insights on India-Kuwait relations, trade, energy cooperation, and global diplomacy in an exclusive interview with the Arab Times newspaper.

On India-Kuwait relations, he expressed optimism, emphasizing that the longstanding partnership is built on mutual respect and historical connections. With a million Indians residing in Kuwait contributing significantly to remittances and economic exchanges, he believes, the relationship is poised for further growth.

He called the Indian Diaspora a "living bridge" that fosters intuitive understanding between nations. With over a million Indians residing in Kuwait, their presence facilitates smoother diplomatic and economic exchanges and emphasized that as India-Kuwait relations deepen, the role of the Diaspora will only grow more significant, serving as ambassadors for both nations.

According to Dr. Jaishankar, India's rapid economic growth, characterized by a consistent 7-8 percent growth rate, creates vast investment opportunities and highlighted the nation's impressive infrastructure development, and as a testimony of this he cited the construction of highways, railways, airports, and educational institutions.

He acknowledged Kuwait's role as one of India's key energy partners and underscored the expanding investment interest from the Kuwait Investment Authority (KIA) in India.

On the political front, he said, both countries maintain a consistent understanding of each other's interests, creating a solid foundation for an upgrade in bilateral relations.

Dr. Jaishankar also acknowledged that bilateral trade remains steady at \$10-15 billion annually, largely driven by the energy and food sectors. However, he noted a shift towards diversification, with more 'Made in India' products, such as vehicles and telecom equipment, entering the Kuwaiti market.

The discussions on a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) within the GCC framework, he said, are ongoing and there is interest in further cooperation in pharmaceuticals, food security and medical equipment.

Dr. Jaishankar also suggested exploring trade settlements in local currencies and connecting Kuwait's KNET payment system with India's UPI infrastructure.

While traditional energy cooperation remains crucial, Dr. Jaishankar highlighted India's ambitious renewable energy goals, including a target of 500 GW by 2030, with 195 GW already installed.

He emphasized India's leadership in promoting solar energy and biofuels through global initiatives like the International Solar Alliance and the Global Biofuel Alliance.

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Newswatch

CAIRO: Representatives of Arab nations, including Kuwait, assembled in the Egyptian capital Cairo for talks on Sunday aiming to ratchet up cooperation in a bid to keep potential environmental disasters at bay.

The three-day gathering comes with the primary objective of putting a place a "coordination system" linking Arab League states that seeks to ensure competent disaster management, the Cairo-based bloc's water resources and housing department chief **Shuhaira Wahbi** said in a statement. (KUNA)

BAGHDAD: The Iraqi Foreign Ministry summoned Sunday Britain's charge d'affaires in Baghdad to protest its ambassador's remarks about Iraq.

A statement issued by the ministry said that the comments of British Ambassador to Iraq, **Stephen Hitchen**, who is currently outside Iraq, "portrayed a bleak image of Iraq's security and political situation, reflecting negatively on the country's government and its diverse communities." (Xinhua)

CAIRO: The Arab League stressed on Sunday that the education sector in Palestine requires necessary support to mitigate the impact of the disaster it is facing as a result of the ongoing Israeli occupation aggression on **Gaza Strip**. This came in a speech by the Head of the Arab League's sector of the Palestinian Affairs and Occupied Arab Territories Ambassador **Saeed Abu Ali** at the opening of the emergency meeting of the Educational Affairs Council of the Palestinian Children. (KUNA)

Kuwait hit by expanded power cuts in fuel glitch

Rationalize electricity in peak hours: MEW

By Mohammad Ghanem
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

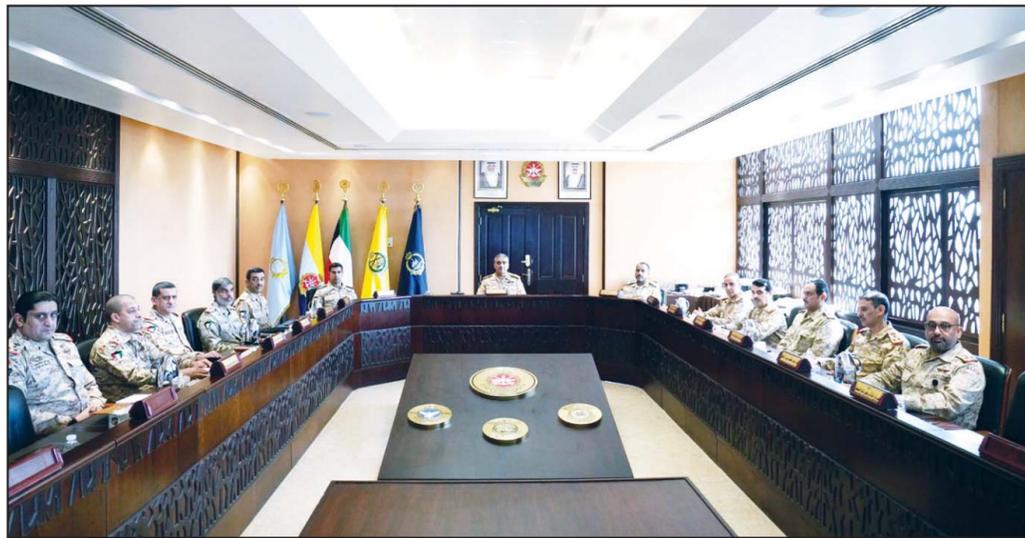
KUWAIT CITY, Aug 18: The Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy on Sunday announced that regrettably, it might have to cut off electricity in some areas with heavy electricity consumption in order to maintain the stability of the country's electrical system.

This is the aftermath of the disruption of gas supplies that led to the failure of a number of power generation units in Subiya and West Doha power plants on Sunday.

A total of 42 areas experienced power outage as follows: Rabia, Fahheel, Raqqi, Rehab, Abu Halifa, Mahboula, Sabahiya, Saad Al-Abdullah, Jaber Al-Ali, Sulaibikhat, Sabah Al-Salem, Mangaf, Ali Sabah Al-Salem (Umm Al-Hayman), Abdullah Al-Mubarak, West Abdullah Mubarak, Jaber Al-Ahmad, South Jahra, Fahad Al-Ahmad, Hadiya, Salmiya, East Hawally, Khaitan, Funaitees, Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh, Hawally, Mubarak Al-Kabeer, Sabah Al-Ahmad Residential City, Omariya, Farwaniya, Old Jahra, Abu Fatira, Abdullah Port, Subhan, Amghara Scrapyard, Sulaibiya Industrial Area, Rai, Shuwaikh Industrial Area, Abdally, Wafra, Sabah Al-Ahmad Residential City and Sabah Al-Ahmad Coastal Area.

The ministry affirmed that updates regarding the electricity network will be announced through its official social media accounts.

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Chief of Staff of the Kuwaiti Army, Lieutenant General (Pilot) Bandar Al-Muzaini meets the Military Defense Council and several army commanders.

Army chief reviews situation, future plans

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 18, (KUNA): Chief of Staff of the Kuwaiti Army, Lieutenant General (Pilot) Bandar Al-Muzaini, met on Sunday with the Military Defense Council and several army commanders to review recent developments and discuss future visions and strategies for the Kuwaiti Army.

The General Staff stated in a press release that the meeting began with a discussion of the latest developments and key military matters, along with several topics of interest.

The statement added that Lieutenant General Al-Muzaini emphasized the importance of monitoring the implementation of various tasks and duties, overcoming obstacles that may hinder military plans, programs, and strategies, and taking all necessary measures to enable army units to perform their duties effectively.

The meeting was attended by Deputy Chief of Staff of the Army, Major General (Pilot) Sabah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, as well as members of the Military Defense Council and senior army officers.

MoH officials assess preparedness

Kuwait's health system strong, can confront mpox, says Dr Al-Mutawa

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

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 18: The Undersecretary of the Ministry of Health Dr. Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi and Assistant Undersecretary for Public Health Affairs Dr. Al-Mundhir Al-Hassawi conducted an inspection tour of the Kuwait Center for Disease Prevention and Control.

The visit aimed to monitor work progress, review the efforts of health monitoring teams, enhance preventive measures and ensure full readiness to confront the current health challenges.

During the visit, Dr. Al-Mutairi studied the current work plans to monitor global health developments, especially after the declaration of a "global health emergency" due to the outbreak of mpox in some areas around the world.

He expressed appreciation for the tireless efforts exerted by the center's workers.

Dr. Al-Mutairi stressed the importance of enhancing cooperation and coordination between various health sectors to confront any potential health threats.

He said the ministry is taking all necessary

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Kuwait eyes young AI, e-security pros

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 18, (KUNA): Abdullah Al-Salem Cultural Center (ASCC) launched, Sunday, a training program for youths between the age of 16 and 23 on the basics of Artificial Intelligence and Cyber-security to promote their cultural and scientific awareness as well as cultivate their sense of innovation and creativity.

Program Director at ASCC, Rawan Al-Qahtani, told KUNA that the program "TechNext" is organized in cooperation with Kuwait College for Technology and communications company STC.

The program aims to provide participants with the skills and knowledge that have become a necessity in this digitalized world, she explained.

She underscored that these fields are not only pivotal for economic growth and sustainable development, but it also creates extensive versatile professional opportunities.

Today's youngsters are tomorrow's leaders, and makers of change, Al-Qahtani remarked saying that through this program they seek to empower them and equip them with modern day instruments, enabling their active participation in building a developed secure society.

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Some chalets on the state property.

Settle usufruct fees for state property immediately: MoF

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 18: The Ministry of Finance (MoF) has issued a formal notice urging individuals licensed to use state property, including chalets and plots of land, to promptly settle any outstanding usufruct fees, reports Al-Qabas daily.

The ministry emphasizes that legal measures will be enforced to ensure fee collection within 60 days, including potential cancellations of licenses and administrative vacating of properties for those who fail to comply.

According to the formal notice, li-

cencees are required to clear all outstanding amounts due for the usufruct of state property immediately.

Failure to do so, the ministry said, all necessary legal actions to recover the fees will be taken and may cancel licenses and vacate properties if payments are not made within the stipulated period.

The Ministry has identified 40 chalets and plots of land where occupants are delinquent in their payments.

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Suspects nabbed in sea drugs bust

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 18, (KUNA): The Ministry of Interior announced on Sunday that it thwarted an attempt to smuggle 164 kilograms of narcotics into the country by sea. The ministry's General Department of Security Relations and Media stated in a press release that the Coast Guard successfully prevented the smuggling operation. The narcotics were hidden under the water tank on a dhow coming from a neighboring country. The market value of the seized items is estimated at approximately 450,000

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Prayer Timings

Fajr 03:53 Asr 15:27
 Sunrise .. 05:18 Maghrib .. 18:26
 Zohr 11:52 Isha 19:48

Local

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

HH Crown Prince and Prime Minister send similar cables

HH Amir offers condolences to president of Chad over flood victims

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 18, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent a condolence cable on Sunday to the President of Republic of Chad Mahamat Idriss Déby over floods victims in northeast province of Tibesti.

Meanwhile, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-

Sabah sent a condolences cable to President Mahamat Idriss Déby over floods victims in northeast province of Tibesti.

Also, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah sent a condolences cable to President Mahamat Idriss Déby over the floods victims.

'Act For Humanity'

IOM in Kuwait commemorates the 'World Humanitarian Day'

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 18: The International Organization for Migration (IOM) in Kuwait joins the global community in commemorating World Humanitarian Day under the theme 'Act For Humanity'. This day honours the unwavering dedication of humanitarian workers who risk their lives to provide life-saving assistance to those in need.

In 2023, the humanitarian community faced significant challenges, with 280 aid workers killed by violence, marking the global humanitarian community's deadliest year on record. The sacrifice of those who have lost their lives in the line of duty underscores the urgent need for stronger protections and enforcement of International Humanitarian Law to ensure the safety and security of those who risk their lives to save others.



AboulHosn

IOM's work on the mobility dimensions of crisis had an operational reach of over 31.6 million people in 2023, including internally displaced persons, refugees, migrants and host communities, either directly or as part of community-based programmes. The organization worked with its partners to protect crisis-affected populations, ensure their basic needs were met and reduce barriers for marginalized and vulnerable individuals.

This month marked the 75th anniversary of the Geneva Conventions, which serves as a reminder of the enduring importance of these foundational treaties in safeguarding human dignity during armed conflicts. The Geneva Conventions have been instrumental in saving lives and ensuring humane treatment for those affected by war. However, the ongoing humanitarian crises around the world highlight the need for renewed commitment to these principles.

Mazen AboulHosn, Chief of Mission at IOM Kuwait, stated, "The International Organization for Migration (IOM) has over 27,000 staff, with the majority of them working in the field. This extensive presence allows us to effectively address the needs of migrants and displaced persons worldwide. De-

'Kuwait supports UNHCR'

By Fares Al-Abdan

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 18: Representative of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in Kuwait Nasreen Rabiaan confirmed that Kuwaitis -- individuals and institutions -- are exerting tremendous efforts to support the refugees and displaced persons.

In a statement on the occasion of the World Humanitarian Day, Rabiaan pointed out that Kuwait's humanitarian values are reflected in its commitment to extend a helping hand to organizations and institutions working in the humanitarian field; indicating this is embodied in the selection of Kuwait as a member of the Human Rights Council.

She also asserted that at the height of global crises; dedicated individuals risked their lives to protect the rights and dignity of those affected by conflicts and disasters, while ensuring their safety.

She added: "We count on the continued support of the State of Kuwait for the humanitarian activities of the UNHCR, considering the number of displaced persons by the end of 2024 is estimated at 130.8 million. The UNCHR needs about \$10.6 billion to implement its programs around the world. Its annual budget covers programs that support ongoing operations and complementary programs for emergency situations. This enables the UNHCR and its partners to provide protection, assistance and life-saving solutions in new displacement situations and those going on for years."

spite the significant challenges posed by conflict, limited access, and harsh conditions, our teams remain steadfast in their mission to provide essential support and protection to the most vulnerable populations in hard-to-reach areas such as Sudan and Gaza - where our staff work tirelessly to ensure that those affected by ongoing hostilities receive the humanitarian assistance they desperately need."

IOM continues to be one of the principal agencies responding to multiple and challenging displacement crises worldwide, ranging from disasters, environmental degradation and food insecurity to complex protracted conflicts.

As we observe World Humanitarian Day, let us remember the sacrifices made by humanitarian workers and renew our commitment to protecting those who risk their lives to help others.

Over 10 experts to lead sessions

New training program at Abdulaziz Hamad Al-Saqr Center to enhance workforce skills

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 18: At the Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Abdulaziz Hamad Al-Saqr Center for Development and Training is gearing up for a new chapter in its mission to enhance the skills of newly appointed employees, reports Al-Qabas daily.

After the success of its first batch in September 2023, where thirty trainees from both private and government sectors participated, the center is set to launch the second batch of its groundbreaking qualification and training project.

Scheduled from September 1 to 18, 2024, the new batch will take place at the Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry headquarters.

The center, which has been working at full capacity, has seen a surge of interest following the impressive response to its initial program. This year's initiative promises to be even more comprehensive, with registration open to all private and public entities.

The project will unfold over three weeks, divided into three main stages. It offers a diverse range of programs designed to build essential skills across several areas.

Trainees will delve into communication techniques, work ethics, problem-solving, and a brief overview of legal skills. Other key topics include marketing and sales basics, customer relationship management with a focus on cybersecurity, accounting for non-accountants, administrative report writing, and enhancing job efficiency through public speaking and teamwork.

Moreover, the participants will en-



KCCI headquarters

gage in practical exercises to address real-world challenges in the Kuwaiti labor market.

The program will also feature insights into the operations of both private sector companies and government institutions, offering a valuable perspective on how to navigate and contribute effectively within these environments.

Over ten national experts will lead the sessions, delivering content across thirteen specialized programs tailored to the needs of newly appointed employees.

This initiative, spearheaded by the Abdulaziz Hamad Al-Saqr Center for Development and Advancement, represents a pioneering effort in workforce development.

As a non-profit organization, the center has meticulously designed this project based on extensive research into the Kuwaiti labor market's needs.

With a rich history of implementing successful training programs, the center aims to foster a harmonious and integrated work environment, reinforcing its commitment to enhancing the capabilities and effectiveness of Kuwait's workforce.

Weather

Expected weather for next 24 hrs:

By Day: Hot and humid especially over coastal areas with light variable wind to light to moderate southeasterly wind, with speeds of 08-32 km/h.

By Night: Hot to rather hot and humid with light to moderate easterly wind to light variable wind, with speeds of 08-32 km/h.

Station **Max Exp** **Min Rec**
 Kuwait City 49 35

Kuwait Airport	48	32
Abdaly	48	28
Jahra	49	34
Salimiyah	45	34
Jal Aliyah	48	34
Nuwaisib	49	32
Wafra	48	30



His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah while receiving the Minister of Foreign Affairs of India, Dr Jaishankar.

Kuwait's PM, Indian FM discuss bilateral ties

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah received Sunday Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Al-Yahya accompanied by Indian Minister of Foreign Affairs Dr. Subrahmanyam Jaishankar, on the oc-

casional of his official visit to the country.

The bilateral ties between the two countries and ways of boosting cooperation were touched on during the meeting.

The meeting was attended by Head of the

Prime Minister's Diwan, Abdulaziz Al-Dakhil, the Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs for Asian Affairs, Ambassador Samih Hayat, and the Ambassador of Kuwait to India, Mishal Al-Shamali. (KUNA)

'87K visa applications ok'd, 759 Nepali domestics return home'

Nepalese envoy to Kuwait reports key achievements in 10 months



Photo shows heavy traffic flow leading to traffic congestion in one of the areas.

Mol directed to provide final report by Feb 1

Government unveils comprehensive plan in bid to combat traffic congestion issues

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 18: The Council of Ministers has taken significant steps to address the persistent issue of traffic congestion across the country, reports Al-Rai daily.

In a recent meeting, the Council reviewed proposals and recommendations submitted by various concerned authorities and assigned the Ministry of Interior to spearhead the coordination of efforts with several ministries and government agencies.

This comprehensive initiative aims to implement short, medium, and long-term solutions to ensure a sustainable improvement in traffic flow in coordination with the ministries of Finance, Public Works, Education, Communication, the Kuwait Municipality, Public Authority for Roads and Land Transport (PART), Civil Service Commission and the Fatwa and Legislation Department.

The Ministry of Interior has been directed to provide a final report by February 1, 2025, detailing the projects included in the implementation plan, actions taken by the involved

authorities, and the timeline for the plan's various operational stages.

Immediate and urgent solutions include, implementing more flexible working schedules across institutions to reduce peak traffic and promoting the use of transport buses for school students to minimize individual vehicle use.

This is in addition to developing key road entrances and exits, and addressing traffic density hotspots with 39 identified development proposals; providing data on crowded intersections during peak periods and exploring experimental measures, such as temporarily closing intersections controlled by signals on the Fourth Ring Road and ensuring the Kuwait Municipality only licenses high-density projects after conducting thorough traffic studies, with approvals linked to construction and licensing requirements.

The long-term solutions include urging the Ministry of Public Works to prioritize and fund road network projects like the development of

the Second, Third, and Fourth Ring Roads, Damascus Street, and the Fahaaheel Expressway; completing the regulatory framework for supervising bus operations and other public transport systems; fast-tracking decisions on the rapid transit system (metro), addressing gaps in the feasibility study, and determining the best approach to manage population growth.

This is in addition to developing a comprehensive vision to improve road infrastructure in the long term and exploring smart transportation solutions and preparing the necessary infrastructure.

Meanwhile, the Council of Ministers emphasized the importance of coordination among government bodies to develop a sustainable and strategic approach to managing traffic.

The plan addresses both immediate needs and long-term development goals, aiming for a cohesive solution that integrates public transportation, road network efficiency, and regulatory improvements.

Kuwaiti students win Huawei's regional Seeds for Future 2024 competition: KU

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 18, (KUNA): A team of the Kuwait University's College of Engineering and Petroleum students claimed the first place and the grand prix at the Huawei Seeds for the Future 2024 Middle East and Central Asia competition which concluded in Uzbekistan Sunday.

The Kuwait's Future Gadget Lab team also advanced to the global Tech4Good competition, which will be held in China, the Kuwait University announced in a statement on its website.

The university said the team comprised of six students of the College's Computer Engineering Department: Ahmad Al-Qattan, Talib Al-Rifai, Mohammad Mahdi, Saad Al-Majedi, Ghanima Bu-Abbas and Mariam

Al-Mutairi. They worked under the supervision of Assistant Professor of Computer Engineering Abbas Fairouz and Eng. Mariam Al-Jamaa.

The team is recognized by judges for its innovative use of technology through their "Helping Hands" gadget to assist stroke patients with limited hand mobility. It will go on to compete in the finals in China alongside qualifying teams from around the world and explore ICT's huge potential to drive sustainable development.

This year's edition of the Seeds for the Future program brought together 150 university students from 14 countries across the Middle East and Central Asia, representing leading universities from countries including

Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Iraq, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Oman, Pakistan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, UAE, and Uzbekistan.

The week-long event saw participants develop their Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) skills and work towards global digital inclusion while enhancing their cultural understanding through a series of sessions, classes, competitions, and cultural programs.

The Tech4Good competition aims to empower and engage the youth in driving positive change within their communities. This unique platform encourages young minds to address pressing social issues by harnessing the immense potential of the latest ICT technologies.

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 18: Nepalese Ambassador to Kuwait Ghana Shyam Lamsal has confirmed the return of 759 domestic workers; approval of about 87,000 work visa applications; renewal or issuance of more than 13,000 passports and the transfer of KD185,000 compensation to Nepal within 10 months since he assumed the position, reports Al-Rai daily.

In a telephone call with the daily, Lamsal revealed that he recently met with representatives of the Nepalese community in the country; during which he presented the embassy's achievements within the above-mentioned period.

He went on to disclose that 63 Nepalese died in Kuwait and Iraq, and their bodies were repatriated to Nepal over the past ten months. He added the embassy eased procedures for the return of 16 sick workers to Nepal, while four others are currently undergoing treatment in the country.

He added several areas that need improvement to better serve the Nepalese community here were discussed during the meeting; such as upgrading the embassy's facilities, addressing issues related to the employment and treatment of domestic workers, and raising public awareness on traffic safety and social media systems. He assured those who attended the meeting that their suggestions will be taken into consideration to continue improving the embassy's services and operations.

Minister checks traffic cameras' monitoring

KUWAIT CITY, July 18: First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense and Interior Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousuf Al-Sabah recently reviewed the progress of work in the Central Control Operations Room at the Operations Unit building of the General Traffic Department (GTD), reports Al-Shahed daily.

The minister also looked into how the traffic surveillance cameras monitor the traffic situation on the main roads and intersections, in addition to the mechanism for recording indirect violations.

He inspected the Ministry of Interior's plan to intensify security and traffic campaigns, including the establishment of more checkpoints in various areas to tighten security control and arrest violators.

He stressed the need to intensify the presence of traffic officers on vital roads and intersections to firmly deal with violations and practices that endanger the lives of road users.

'Will 3rd fingerprint improve gov't productivity and commitment?'

"THE recent proposal to introduce a third fingerprint check during work hours to ensure employees stay on-site raises some questions: Will it truly address issues of commitment, creativity, and productivity in government institutions?" columnist and former deputy director-general of Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) **Iqbal Al-Ahmed** wrote for **Al-Qabas** daily.

"Despite these efforts, the deeper issue lies in whether there are uniform and strict standards to measure performance and productivity across all ministries and government agencies. The current annual bonus system, for example, applies to all employees at varying rates, depending on evaluations by senior managers. But does this system really encourage fairness and performance, or does it merely serve to satisfy the majority of employees, even if evaluations are inconsistent and subjective?"

"A key issue is the lack of differentiation in rewards for highly skilled and productive employees versus those who barely meet expectations. Studies have shown that a significant percentage of Kuwaiti government employees have low daily productivity. For many, the workday is defined by when it starts and ends, marked by clocking in and out — soon to be supplemented by a mid-day fingerprint check."

"The question remains: How do we shift the focus from merely tracking attendance to fostering serious productivity, valuable work output, and proper utilization of work hours?"

"Moreover, after the closure of certain government bodies aimed at reducing spending, many employees from these institutions were transferred to other entities, often in roles misaligned with their expertise. This has contributed to hidden unemployment and diluted productivity in their new positions, leading to further inefficiency."

"Before focusing solely on monitoring attendance, attention should be given to leadership. Managers must set an example for their teams. When employees witness their managers' commitment to punctuality, productivity, and diligence, it cultivates a culture of self-discipline, making extensive monitoring systems like multiple fingerprint checks unnecessary."

"One manager, when asked why he arrived early despite being the boss, responded simply: 'If I, as a manager, do not adhere to working hours, how can I discipline a junior employee for doing the same?'" This highlights the need for managers who are not only capable but also lead by example, ensuring that employees follow suit in terms of commitment and excellence."

"The culture of respecting work needs to be instilled by leadership and reinforced through human interactions, not just by automated systems."

Also:

"Why all this tension? Why such animosity and a tendency to view everything outside the self with disdain? The Kuwaiti individual, and I am specifically focusing on our people, seems perpetually dissatisfied, often irritated, spending the day stressed and the night burdened by the weight of depression and fatigue," columnist **Abdul Latif Al-Duaij** wrote for **Al-Jarida** daily.

"People in other, more civilized parts of the world — outside of our Arab and Islamic regions — live in relative peace, acceptance, and harmony with their surroundings."

"Our situation is starkly different. Here, a person seems more preoccupied with seeking out what irritates or provokes them, criticizing anything that differs from their perspective, and rejecting anything that doesn't align with their beliefs or preferences."

"Even when confronted with something objectively better or more in tune with reality, our response is often to resist and deride it, rather than engage with it constructively."

"There's an almost compulsive need among some of us to critique others, insult those who differ, or mock practices and beliefs we don't share. If someone can't find a target to deride, the government becomes the default scapegoat. To be fair, the government does bear responsibility for many of the issues we face, but what's puzzling is the selective nature of this criticism."

"It's interesting — and somewhat surprising — that the same level of scrutiny is rarely applied to the

National Assembly or its members, even though historically, the Assembly has been at the heart of many of our pressing issues and crises. I believe this reluctance stems from a misguided sense that the Assembly and its members represent the people's choice, and therefore, they are immune from the same harsh criticism directed at other targets."

"However, this belief is flawed, as many of our assemblies since the 1980s have been shaped more by external influence and manipulation than by genuine democratic processes."

"This mindset illustrates just how far removed our constant state of tension and anger is from rational thought. Instead of engaging in endless debates about sectarian and tribal divisions—be they between Shiites and Sunnis, Bedouins and urbanites — why don't we focus on more meaningful discussions? Why not channel our energy into solving practical issues, debating scientific ideas, or exploring new innovations?"

"It's unfortunate that many of us lead lives marked by inactivity — sleeping away most of the day and idling through the night, with little to occupy our time beyond complaining and yawning from all the daytime sleep."

"This emptiness fosters the very discontent that drives the cycle of criticism and division, keeping us stuck in a pattern that serves no one."

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"One day, I went to an office to complete a transaction. The high temperatures left me feeling particularly irritable. As I sat waiting for my turn, I noticed there were many visitors compared to the number of employees and the empty offices. I began to wonder how long it would take to finish, as each transaction seemed to take a lot of time to complete," columnist **Sarah Al-Noums** wrote for **Al-Rai** daily.

"There was a large television screen set up for the visitors while they waited with a news channel showing the current situation in one of the towns in the Gaza Strip."

"My eyes quickly scanned every detail shown on the screen. There were people walking down a one-way street, each walking alone. They were of different ages, their clothes were shabby and they were pale. They had no expressions of joy or sadness. It seemed as though their minds had left their sluggish, barely moving bodies behind. In the background, I saw buildings that were completely destroyed, and the air was thick with dust and pollution."

"I did not listen to the report but the images alone explained the extent of the suffering of those people. On the same street, some people were selling a few pieces of raw materials, fruits and food items. A group of people stood in front of them to buy, while some were walking on the street."

"It seems very clear that there is no place for them to go. They are just walking to a place that does not exist. I studied their expressionless faces and asked myself, 'How many died in their family? What are their financial losses? Who is left for them?'"

"I immediately realized that my worries are insignificant compared to what these people are suffering. Life during times of war is harsh but it is even more cruel after war."

"I saw a picture of a Palestinian woman suffering from jaundice, and her eyes had become quite yellow. Medicines are not available, as Israel has been preventing the entry of medical supplies and medicines for patients."

"While I was still watching TV, I wondered, 'Were they able to bury all the bodies of the martyrs?'"

"A small number of people remain in the area that has been bombed since last October, as the war nears its first anniversary. Many have died, and those still alive are trying to survive and cope with the loss of everyone dear to them."

"The phrase 'so that we do not become accustomed to the scene' rings true, as many have become desensitized to this war, which is one of the harshest among the ongoing international conflicts fraught with threats."

"It is important for every individual to live their life, but it is crucial that we maintain a conscience that empathizes with the pain and suffering of others and supports their cause, either through words, art, or compassion."

"It saddens me that some people mock this issue. They seem unfraid of the passage of time, forgetting that everyone who has suffered was once safe and at ease."

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



Iqbal Al-Ahmed

Municipal team given judicial police status to enforce state property laws

Securitymen injured as 2 Bedouins fight over drugs; expat dies

By Inaas Awadh

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff and Agencies

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 18: The Minister of Finance and Minister of State for Economic Affairs and Investment Dr. Anwar Al-Mudhaf issued a decision to grant, in accordance with Decree Law No. 105/1980, judicial police status to the team members responsible for monitoring and removing encroachments on state properties in Kuwait Municipality.

The decision, which was published in the latest issue of the official gazette, includes five articles.

The first article is related to granting the judicial police status to 48 employees of Kuwait Municipality to monitor encroachments on state properties. The names and titles of the nominated employees were included in a table attached to the article.

The second article of the ministerial resolution specified seven powers for Municipality employees covered by the resolution. They are:

■ Controlling crimes related to encroachment on state real estate by either destroying it, vandalizing it, making it unfit to be used for purposes other than those designated for it, or reducing its value or benefit, and issuing reports regarding this matter

■ Having the right to enter state real estate and the headquarters of the projects established on it, following the issuance of a decision to vacate it administratively, inspect it completely, and inventory it completely.

■ Entering the headquarters of the administration offices for projects established on state real estate, after the end of the specified period for their use or after their contracts have been terminated, reviewing the documents contained therein related to the management of the project, seizing them, and issuing reports regarding this matter.

■ Reviewing information related to financial data such as records, books, documents, database or any other means for storing financial data for projects established on state real estate, and preserving them, and issuing reports regarding this matter.

■ Having the right to obtain any information related to the management of these projects upon request from the project management. In the event of closed doors in the project, the Kuwait Municipality's employee can request the project management to open them. If they refuse, he has the right to open them by force.

■ Inventorying, confining and seizing the belongings, documents, files, fixed and movable funds of the projects established on state property of all kinds and contracted by the ministry, and transferring what is necessary to the ministry's warehouses.

Article three of the decision highlighted the obligation of all officials in all projects to submit all data and documents required for employees covered by the decision to exercise their powers.

Article four of the decision mandates that a judicial control officer prepare an official report documenting all actions taken, including transferring, examining, seizing, and addressing cases of non-compliance or lack of cooperation from project management. The report must include the date, time, and location of its preparation, the name and signature of the officer, and a summary of the events encountered during the task.

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Security officers injured: Three securitymen and two soldiers from the Ministry of Interior sustained minor injuries while breaking up a knife fight that broke out between two Bedouin residents in Jahra, reports **Al-Anba** daily.

According to security sources, an elderly woman called the Operations Room of the Ministry of Interior to report that her son and his friend were fighting using sharp tools inside her home. When securitymen arrived at the house, they encountered violent resistance and sustained wounds and bruises. The suspects were brought under control and investigations revealed that the fight occurred due to drug use.

The two suspects were detained pending investigation into cases of fighting, resisting securitymen, and assaulting public employees while on duty.

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Expat commits suicide: An unidentified expatriate died by suicide inside a room in Al-Nayem scrapyard.

According to security sources, another expatriate called the Operations Room of Ministry of Interior and reported seeing the deceased hanging from the ceiling of the room. Securitymen and paramedics immediately rushed to the location, pulled down the man and checked him to discover he had already passed away. His body was sent to the Forensic Medicine Department for autopsy. A case was registered and investigations have been launched to uncover the circumstances surrounding the incident.

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One injured in car parking dispute: An expatriate filed an assault case against his compatriot and submitted a medical report stating he suffered from a broken hand and bruises after the accused attacked him when they had an argument over a parking space in Al-Rai Market, reports **Al-Rai** daily.

A security source told the daily that the victim disclosed he was waiting for a vehicle to leave the parking space, so he could park his car; but the accused got angry, blocked the way and uttered expletives at him in front of his family. He then asked the accused to respect him, but the accused assaulted him without any regard for his old age and the presence of his family, the source narrated.

The source said the victim went to the hospital and obtained a medical report confirming the injuries he sustained, and then went to the police station to file a case; which was classified as felony, because he got a fracture and some bruises. He provided the securitymen with the plate number of the accused and investigations are ongoing to verify the complaint, the source added.

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'Do not share personal info': The Ministry of Commerce and Industry has reiterated its warning to the public regarding the importance of safeguarding personal information, reports **Al-Seyassah** daily.

The ministry cautions against sharing any personal details with unknown callers claiming to be from the Consumer Protection Department or any related sector, as well as on untrusted websites.

To protect yourself, the ministry advises verifying the identity of any caller and ensuring the legitimacy of websites before providing any personal information.

Individuals who encounter suspicious activity or require assistance are encouraged to file complaints through the Ministry's Sahel application or visit one of the commercial control and consumer protection centers located across the governorates.

Non-commissioned officer training

DGFD holds public lottery to select 729 new recruits; over 1,600 apply

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 18: In a demonstration of transparency and fairness, the Public Relations and Media Department of the Directorate-General of Fire Department (DGFD) conducted a public lottery Saturday to select applicants for its non-commissioned officer training courses, reports **Al-Seyassah** daily.

The event, overseen by the acting head of the force, Major-General Khaled Fahd, and the Vice President of the Kuwait Transparency Society, Dr. Fahd Al-Raqeeb, accepted 729 students out of 1,625 who had passed earlier tests and interviews.

Major-General Fahd conveyed greetings from First Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defense, and Minister of Interior, Sheikh Fahd Al-Yousef, to those who have been accepted.

He emphasized the commitment of the DGFD to transparency and equal opportunities for all candidates who meet the stringent admission requirements.

The selected students will be attending six different courses — 150 students for the Machine Operator Sergeant course, 25 for the Occupational Health and Safety Sergeant course, 25 for the Security Sergeant course, 300 for the Prevention Inspector Sergeant course, and 150 for the Combat



Al-Seyassah photo
Announcing the names of those who have been selected.

Corporal Undergraduate course. An additional 79 students will be trained as Trainer Sergeants to meet the immediate needs of the fire department.

Despite the lottery, Major-General Fahd clarified that final acceptance hinges on passing medical examinations and analyses.

The event was held in public, with the presence of students, their families, media representatives, and the Kuwait Transparency Society to ensure the process was crystal clear and trustworthy for all involved.

Club president's release denied

Draft law eyed on transforming DGCA into an independent body

By Mohammed Al-Musleh & Jaber Al-Hamoud

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 17: In an effort to develop Kuwait International Airport and improve air traffic management in the country, the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) is studying a draft law to transform its administration into an independent body.

According to informed sources, DGCA received the draft law from the Fatwa and Legislation Department several months ago, after it was legally drafted. The draft is expected to be presented to the Cabinet soon for discussion, study, and approval.

It includes articles related to establishing an independent public body with a legal personality called the "Public Authority of Civil Aviation" which would operate according to economic principles and supervised by the relevant minister.

The draft law also includes conditions for operating aircraft, establishing civil airports, and developing ways to use them, as well as an operations guide for pilots and operations personnel to guide them in a way that ensures the safe operation of aircraft.

The draft law stipulates special requirements for enhancing security and safety measures on aircraft and the responsibilities

of the pilot in this regard, as well as flight rules and other technical procedures related to permits for aircraft and their workers.

It specifies the air carrier's responsibilities for damages to passengers, baggage, and goods. It has a full chapter on aviation accidents and their investigation, as well as articles related to penalties, which may include imprisonment and high fines for crimes committed on board aircraft within the country's territory.

The sources said DGCA has several powers, including monitoring, securing and ensuring the safety of airports and civil aircraft, in addition to regulating air navigation and services in accordance with the provisions of international and regional agreements and the governing laws.

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Club chief denied release: The Misdemeanor Court denied the release of Al-Arabi Club president Abdulaziz Ashour and postponed his trial until September 1 to arraign him before the court in the second case filed against him by a judiciary member.

Last week, the Court of Cassation decided to release the defendant in another case, where he had been sentenced to six months in prison for assaulting a judiciary member.



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Al-Zour refinery makes worldwide top 10 spot

Ranked 8th with 615,000 bpd refining capacity

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 18: Kuwait's Al-Zour Refinery, which began operations in 2022, has been ranked eighth globally among the top 10 oil refineries, with a refining capacity of 615,000 barrels per day, reports Al-Anba daily.

With this capacity, Al-Zour Refinery accounts for 8.54 percent of the total refining output from the world's ten largest refineries, which collectively process 7.197 million barrels of crude oil per day.

According to a report by Global Data, which was based on a report issued by Offshore Technology, Al-Zour Refinery, owned by Kuwait Integrated Petroleum Industries Company (KIPIC), is the only refinery from the Gulf and Arab regions to make the list of the top ten refineries worldwide.

The refinery received a score of 7.1 on the net refining index and was designed to process heavy crude oil and produce a range of high-value derivatives.

The report highlighted that the operation of Al-Zour Refinery greatly boosts Kuwait's refining capacity, putting the country in a position to better serve both regional and global markets.

It noted that the global oil industry is a vast and complex network, and it plays a crucial role in supporting economies and industries worldwide.

With 825 active refineries currently in operation, the refining sector is expected to experience significant growth. Crude distillation



Al-Zour Refinery

KUNA photo

unit (CDU) capacity, which is a key measure of a refinery's refining capability, is projected to increase by 15 percent between 2023 and 2027.

According to the GlobalData refinery database compiled by Offshore Technology in 2022, the United States led in crude distillation unit capacity, followed closely by China and Russia.

The top ten active oil refineries worldwide by crude distillation unit capacity in 2022 are as follows:

1. Venezuela's Paraguana Refinery, with a capacity of 955,000 barrels per day. Established in 1949, this cracking facility processes heavy crude oil into valuable products. Despite its age, the Paraguana Refinery remains a crucial asset for Venezuela's oil exports.

2. Ulsan Refinery in South Korea, with a refining capacity of 840,000 barrels per day, established in 1964.

3. Ruwais Refinery in the United Arab Emirates, with a capacity of

800,000 barrels per day, established in 1969.

4. Daoshan Island Refinery in China, with a refining capacity of 800,000 barrels per day, established in 2019.

5. Jamnagar Refinery II in India, with a capacity of 707,000 barrels per day, built in 2008.

6. Jamnagar Refinery I in India, with a capacity of 660,000 barrels per day, started operating in 1999.

7. Port Arthur Refinery II in the United States, with a capacity of 635,000 barrels per day, built in 1903.

8. Al-Zour Refinery in Kuwait, with a capacity of 615,000 barrels per day, fully operational in 2022.

9. Texas City Refinery III in the United States, with a capacity of 593,000 barrels per day, built in 1934.

10. Gurun Island Refinery I in Singapore, with a capacity of 592,000 barrels per day, built in 1966.

'Skills improvement essential for better results'

MoE launches in-depth training plan for 2024/25 academic year

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 18: The Ministry of Education, through its Education and Development Department, has announced the launch of its annual training plan for the 2024/2025 academic year, reports Al-Jarida daily.

The plan, aimed at enhancing the skills and knowledge of all ministry employees, encompasses 137 training programs designed for various administrative and educational roles.

Director Fahd Al-Hayyan emphasized the need to adapt to rapid changes in all fields by continually improving employee capabilities. The training programs are structured to boost individual and organizational performance, leading to increased work productivity and job satisfaction.

The key programs in the plan include: Combating Administrative and Financial Corruption -- For administration managers and supervisors, focusing on national integrity, transparency, and anti-corruption laws

Corporate Governance -- Introducing best practices and frameworks for effective governance

STEAM Applications in Scientific Projects -- Enhancing practical applications of STEAM (STEAM activities combine the traditional principles of science, technology, engineering, and math with a creative twist by adding the arts) in education

Certified Trainer Preparation -- Equipping individuals with skills to train others

Work Team Management -- Fostering effective management of teams

Handling Employee and Public Interactions -- Training on managing anger, dealing with the public, and support-

Registration until Aug 19

Ministry approves foreign missions for 40 students

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 18: Acting Undersecretary of the Ministry of Higher Education, Lamia Al-Mulhim, has announced the approval of foreign missions for students holding the English secondary school certificate and the International Baccalaureate (IB/DP) certificate for the 2024/2025 academic year, reports Al-Jarida daily.

Al-Mulhim said 40 students have been accepted into the program.

She emphasized the importance of completing registration by August 19 to secure placement in medical specialties covered by the Ministry's agreements. Students admitted after this deadline may not be considered by the universities, as no further names will be accepted.

ing gifted students

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Certified Educational Supervisor -- Targeting principals and assistant principals for advanced training

Al-Hayyan expressed hope that the plan will significantly elevate employee performance, aligning with the Ministry's vision and mission.

Public Works to update consulting data

MPW announces 27 upcoming new projects

By Mohammed Ghanem
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 18: The Ministry of Public Works has announced 27 project contracts as part of its annual plan for supply, contracting and service tenders that will be offered in fiscal 2024/2025; indicating that 16 of these projects are within the plan

of the Sanitary Engineering Sector and 11 projects for the Construction Sector.

In addition, the ministry announced Saturday on Kuwait Today newspaper its plan to update the data of local engineering consulting service providers at the Central Agency for Public Tenders (CAPT) for all specializations for the year 2024.

It also urged the local consulting service providers that did not submit username and password to the ministry to register or visit the Contractors and Consultants Qualification Department at the ministry to complete the procedures for sending the username and password; and then enter the ministry's website to pay the fees, register and update the data.

Bushehri set to appoint 12 acting posts

By Mohammed Ghanem
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 18: Minister of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy and Minister of State for Housing Affairs Dr. Mahmoud Bushehri is expected to appoint 12 acting assistant undersecretaries permanently soon, including the undersecretary position, say sources from the ministry.

Sources affirmed there has been a demand to expedite the filling up of vacant leadership positions in the ministry, especially since some acting assistant undersecretaries have been in such a position for several years.

Sources pointed out that the permanent appointment of acting assistant undersecretaries will push the wheel of achievement in various sectors and complete pending files -- the most important of which is the launching of energy production projects to meet the increasing demand for electricity during peak hours next summer, instead of resorting to programmed power cuts as it happened this summer, in addition to importing electrical energy from the Gulf Cooperation Council Interconnection Authority (GCCIA) and burdening the ministry's budget with exorbitant costs estimated at millions of Kuwaiti dinars.

57 programs to enhance admin skills

CSC announces comprehensive 2024/'25 training plan for government employees

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 18: The Civil Service Commission (CSC) has approved the training plan for the 2024/2025 training season, which includes 57 programs for six job categories - senior, middle, supervisory, executive, specialized, and administrative development, reports Al-Anba daily.

Chairman of CSC Dr. Essam Al-Rubaiaan explained that the CSC aims, through the plan, to provide an inspiring and stimulating training environment that gives employees the opportunity to learn and develop in a sustainable manner. A comprehensive guide for training programs has been prepared that includes all related details, objectives, and categories, in addition to timetables and

curricula.

Dr. Al-Rubaiaan stressed the importance of commitment to continue the learning process to face challenges.

Meanwhile, the Assistant Undersecretary for Administrative Development Affairs Mohammad Al-Ahmad explained that the plan meets the needs of government agencies, and aims to enhance rich and administrative skills, develop employees' capabilities, and motivate them to innovate and create.

Employees of government institutions who wish to participate must visit their place of work to complete the registration process according to the established mechanism

In addition, CSC announced the nomination of 60 male and female citizens who hold a Bachelor's degree in Communication Disorders, thus bringing the total number of candidates to 12,964 citizens till date.

According to sources, these citizens were employed in just two months.

'99 percent being circulated is false'

Media personality Al-Rashid dismisses accusations offending Kuwaiti society

By Najeh Bilal
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 18: In a recent statement to Al-Seyassah, media personality and political researcher Aisha Al-Rashid strongly denied any accusations of offending Kuwaiti society. She emphasized that "99 percent of what is being circulated on (X) is false" and announced her intention to take legal action against individuals who have defamed her online.

Al-Rashid praised the ongoing reform era in Kuwait, which she believes, is guided by the vision of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshaal Al-Ahmad.

She expressed her commitment to upholding Kuwaiti laws and stated that the current accusations are part of a broader attempt by the Muslim Brotherhood to incite division and discord.

She highlighted the support she received from various Gulf countries and Egypt following her release, noting that many flowers and calls of encouragement were sent to her from across the Arab world.

Addressing the role of social media in this controversy, Al-Rashid criticized the use of fake identities and vowed that the state's efforts would address these issues.

She asserted that any attempts to fragment Kuwaiti society through incitement and sedition would not succeed, as Kuwait remains unified and resilient.

She commended the high-level treatment she received from the security forces and expressed pride in Kuwait's security apparatus, judiciary, and Public Prosecution.

Al-Rashid acknowledged the significant role of First Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defense and Interior Fahad Al-Yousef, praising his efforts to combat corruption and restore the prestige of the Ministry of Interior. She noted his achievements in applying laws consistently and eradicating "connections."

Al-Rashid defended the handling of her case, clarifying that the treatment she received was lawful and not in violation of any regulations, as some critics have claimed. She highlighted the supportive role of the Minister of Interior in assisting female citizens with their transactions.

In conclusion, Al-Rashid expressed great appreciation for the Public Prosecution's role in safeguarding the country and praised the Kuwaiti security services for their sophisticated and professional handling of matters, reinforcing her pride in Kuwait's security framework.



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Int'l scholar Dr Molinaro discusses with Reconnaissance Research return to state-centered diplomacy

Westphalian revival: How Biden, Macron shaping global politics

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 18: Reconnaissance Research had the privilege of hosting Dr. Enrico Molinaro, a distinguished scholar in international relations, for a closed discussion via Zoom. During this session, Dr. Molinaro provided in-depth insights into the ongoing global political shifts, particularly the resurgence of Westphalian principles under the leadership of U.S. President Joe Biden and French President Emmanuel Macron. In this exclusive interview, we highlight the key points from our discussion with Dr. Molinaro, offering our readers a deeper understanding of these critical developments.

Q: Dr. Molinaro, you've indicated that despite facing significant criticisms, Presidents Biden and Macron are poised to lead Western-affiliated nations with their strategies. Could you provide some historical context that underpins their leadership roles?

Enrico Molinaro, Ph.D.: Absolutely. The competition between the Westphalian model, which emphasizes equality between independent States with defined national borders, and the Glocalist model, which prioritizes more fluid ideological or economic intra- or trans-border communities, has shaped global politics for centuries. Biden and Macron are champions of the Westphalian model, which is experiencing a resurgence after the latest cyclical period of Glocalist dominance in the years following the 9/11 attacks. The Westphalian model aligns collective identity with a State's physical borders, while the Glocalist model transcends these borders, connecting communities across ideological or economic lines.

Q: Given the current global landscape, how is this resurgence of Westphalian principles manifesting?

Enrico Molinaro, Ph.D.: We're seeing a clear shift back to state-centered politics, which is indicative of the growing influence of Westphalian principles. For example, the recent expansion of the BRICS group to include countries like Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Iran, the UAE, and Ethiopia signals that more than half of the world's population is now under the influence of Westphalian political-cultural coordination. Although Glocalist perspectives still play a role in certain events, the majority of global populations and their leaders continue to identify most strongly with their Nation-States, reinforcing the ongoing Westphalian cycle.

Q: How does President Biden's approach reflect Westphalian principles, particularly in light of recent global conflicts?

Enrico Molinaro, Ph.D.: Biden's approach is firmly grounded in the principles of state independence, equality, and diplomacy. Despite facing harsh criticisms, including the moniker "Sleepy Joe," his ability to broker key ceasefires, such as the one between Israelis and Palestinians, un-



Dr Enrico Molinaro



Reconnaissance Research logo

derscores his commitment to these principles. For instance, despite expectations of fierce retaliation following the assassinations of top Hezbollah Lebanese commander Shukr and Chief Hamas Palestinian negotiator Haniyeh, both Netanyahu and Hamas are negotiating within the context of Biden's proposed ceasefire framework, confirmed in the Joint Statement from the United States, Egypt, and Qatar of August 16, 2024, after the initial positive phase of the ongoing negotiations in Doha. This demonstrates Biden's effectiveness in navigating complex international conflicts. Interestingly, the intense scrutiny Biden has been recently facing paradoxically highlights his success in diplomacy—were he truly ineffective, his efforts would likely provoke less opposition.

Q: The incidents involving Shukr and Haniyeh are particularly significant. How do these events fit into the broader geopolitical dynamics under Biden's leadership?

Enrico Molinaro, Ph.D.: These incidents underscore the volatile nature of Middle Eastern politics, constantly under the danger of Glocalist threats to strategic, state-centered Westphalian diplomacy. Biden's ability to propose a ceasefire framework that both parties could accept, despite the charged atmosphere, highlights the strength of Westphalian principles in enhancing

state independence and equality (in ancient Latin: *Civitates Superiorem Non Cognoscente*). The predictable acceptance of the ceasefire proposal, even in such a tense situation, demonstrates how a state-centered approach may lead to de-escalation and stability.

Q: Shifting to France, Macron recently called a snap election and emphasized Westphalian values. What does this indicate about his leadership and its impact on France?

Enrico Molinaro, Ph.D.: Macron's decision to call a snap election on June 10, 2024, was a strategic move to counter the rising influence of Marine Le Pen's National Rally, following its success in the European Parliamentary elections. By emphasizing a new French political culture rooted in Westphalian principles, Macron was able to consolidate votes against Le Pen in the second round, securing his leadership. His Westphalian appeal to form a coalition excluding Glocalist extremist parties further reinforced France's commitment to state independence and national unity. Additionally, Macron's leadership during the Paris Olympics showcased the strength of collective national effort, marking a significant moment for Westphalian values in France.

Q: Macron has also engaged in direct diplomacy with other Westphalian leaders. Could you elaborate on the significance of these actions?

Enrico Molinaro, Ph.D.: Certainly. Macron has been playing a crucial role in regional stability through direct diplomacy. His communication with Westphalian Iranian President-elect Pezeshkian to prevent military escalation in Lebanon is a prime example. Additionally, Macron, along with his Westphalian European partners, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz and UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer, issued a Joint Statement on the Middle East on August 12, 2024, advocating for a ceasefire and the release of hostages. These actions emphasize Macron's commitment to Westphalian principles and his role in promoting regional stability.

Q: In conclusion, how do you see Presidents Biden and Macron shaping the future of global politics?

Enrico Molinaro, Ph.D.: Despite widespread skepticism, Biden and Macron are well-positioned to lead the West into a new geopolitical order, particularly in the Middle East. Their leadership, rooted in Westphalian principles, aligns with the current global trend toward state independence and equality. As they work toward resolving conflicts, such as the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the war in Ukraine, their success will depend on their ability to mobilize creativity and political will. While the future remains uncertain, their current strategies suggest a strong alignment with the ongoing Westphalian historical cycle.

New KDIPA resolution eases investment benefits process

Exemptions now exclude pre-existing contracts

By Marwa Al-Bahrawi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 18: Director General of the Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority (KDIPA) Sheikh Dr. Mishaal Al-Sabah issued ministerial Resolution No. 388/2024 which includes the requirements for obtaining benefits and exemptions for investment entities.

Through this resolution, investors applying to establish an investment entity are authorized to apply for an investment license and receive benefits in accordance with Law No. 116/2013, provided they meet the criteria specified in the KDIPA-approved mechanism for evaluating license applications and granting benefits.

The resolution also permits licensed investment entities, which have been operational for at least one year, to submit requests to KDIPA for benefits and exemptions in accordance with the specified terms and conditions that include KDIPA's evaluation mechanism, submit periodic reports regarding compliance with commitments and standards outlined in the work plan, and adherence to the approved timelines.

Furthermore, the resolution mandates the submission of a detailed work plan highlighting the achievements since the commencement of operations and future goals, specifying that exemptions will be granted from the date the application for benefits is submitted, following the completion of required documentation and payment of prescribed fees. However, this exemption does not cover any taxes and customs duties already paid in advance.

The resolution also outlines special provisions and controls for investors and investment entities seeking benefits and exemptions either at the time of applying for an investment license or afterward. This applies to entities with ongoing contracts or projects with either the government or private sector, in compliance with the KDIPA's standards, and any contract obligations acknowledged by the investor or entity.

It states that any exemption granted by KDIPA should not include ongoing contracts or projects that have submitted their bids before submitting the application. Also, the exemption does not apply to these contracts and projects even if they are transferred or assigned to another entity later.

The investment entity that receives an investment license and benefits is required to maintain independent financial accounts for the investment entity, separate from any contracts signed. The advantages and exemptions granted by KDIPA do not extend to any contracts that are already exempt from taxes and fees.

KUNA photo
Minister of Information and Culture Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi chairs the first meeting of the permanent committee to celebrate national holidays and events.

51 platforms to boost event

Al-Mutairi reveals 2025 national holidays plan

By Abdul Nasser Al-Aslami

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 18: Minister of Information and Culture Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi led the first meeting of the Permanent Committee for Celebrating National Holidays and Occasions for the upcoming year.

The meeting, held at Seif Palace, focused on planning and organizing events for Kuwait's national celebrations.

Al-Mutairi expressed appreciation for the efforts of Sheikh Amthah Al-Ahmad, Chairwoman of the Volunteer Work Center, and other committee members for their contributions to past national celebrations.

He emphasized the importance of continuing to present an exemplary model for organizing events that reflect Kuwait's reputation and status.

The minister outlined key upcoming events, including the Gulf Summit in early December, the Gulf Cup, and the national holidays starting from the flag-raising ceremony in February.

He highlighted the role of the Ministry of Information's 51 digital platforms in marketing these events, aiming to enhance their visibility and engagement with the public.

The committee is tasked with ensuring that the events are organized efficiently and in a manner that honors Kuwait's traditions and significance.

Is the

Continued from Page 1

Also, investing in islands and developing service facilities there could provide entertainment for citizens and residents, reducing the need for costly overseas travel, the bill of which has been increasing for years due to the country's closure.

There is no doubt that all this requires training Kuwaiti youth to work in these facilities.

Consequently, there is a vision to benefit from institutes and institutions to train Kuwaitis, including in the security and service sectors, with competitive salaries similar to those in other GCC countries. However, we will have to wait until October to see if the Cabinet can successfully implement these plans and meet the leadership's aspirations and expectations.

Amir receives

Continued from Page 1

His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah also sent a condolences cable to the King of Saudi Arabia Salman bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud, over the passing of Princess Nouf bint Nasser Al-Saud, praying to Allah Almighty to bestow the deceased with mercy. His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah sent a similar cable to the Saudi King over the passing of Princess Nouf bint Nasser Al-Saud.

'India-Kuwait

Continued from Page 1

The exploration of green hydrogen and ammonia presented new opportunities for bilateral cooperation beyond conventional hydrocarbons.

The booming sectors of innovation, fintech, and manufacturing, Dr. Jaishankar said, were drawing global investors, and expressed hope that Kuwaiti investors would increasingly recognize the potential in India.

Dr. Jaishankar noted that India's soft power grew alongside its global standing. In Kuwait and the Gulf, the Indian cinema, cuisine, and performing arts were widely appreciated, thanks in part to the large Indian Diaspora.

Additionally, India's contributions to global wellness trends, such as yoga, and its recognition of traditional health practices garnered attention worldwide. The expansion of India's tourism infrastructure, with 43 UNESCO World Heritage sites, offered further opportunities for cultural exchange.

India views the GCC as a key partner, particularly given the region's proximity and significance in terms of trade, energy, and Diaspora connections. Dr. Jaishankar also highlighted

the strong political dialogue between India and the GCC, as well as the growing interest from GCC nations in investing in India. The ongoing discussions on an FTA within the GCC framework underscore the importance of deepening economic ties.

India's increasing global influence is reflected in its participation in key initiatives like the International Solar Alliance and the Global Biofuel Alliance.

Dr. Jaishankar noted that India's proactive engagement in multilateral organizations aims to promote multipolarity and democratization. By welcoming Kuwait as an SCO dialogue partner, India reinforces its commitment to strengthening bilateral ties and supporting Kuwait's broader diplomatic interests.

India's multi-vector foreign policy is designed to preserve its independence and national interests in a polarized world. Dr. Jaishankar stressed that India's approach is based on transparency, mutual respect, and convergent interests. By prioritizing national interest and global good, India is able to navigate complex global dynamics while strengthening its sovereignty.

While the situations in Palestine and Ukraine are distinct, Dr. Jaishankar emphasizes the need for diplomacy in both cases. In the case of Palestine, India supports a two-state solution and provides humanitarian assistance; while in Ukraine, India advocates dialogue and diplomacy to resolve conflicts, maintaining its stance as a proponent of peace.

In summary, Dr. Jaishankar's insights underscore the evolving nature of India-Kuwait relations and the broader geopolitical landscape. As both nations look to deepen their partnership, opportunities for collaboration in trade, energy, culture, and diplomacy continue to grow.

Kuwait hit

Continued from Page 1

It called on the public to strictly comply with its instructions on the rationalization of electricity consumption during peak hours -- from 11:00 am to 5:00 pm.

Meanwhile, acting Undersecretary of the ministry Eng. Haitham Al-Ali explained that the ministry decided to cut off power in some residential areas due to the disruption of gas supplies; such that some units in Subiya and West Doha stations went out of service. He affirmed the concerned employees are exerting tremendous efforts to immediately resume the operation of the affected units.

In a televised statement on Sunday, Al-Ali pointed out that the power disruption coincided with the high temperature that reached 46.5 degrees Celsius and the humidity; indicating the temperature at the same time last year was 37.5 degrees Celsius. "We are

hoping for resumption of the operation of the affected units and improvement of the situation within the next 24 hours," he stressed.

He said the ministry started to cut off power in factories and farms, then some parts of certain residential areas within an hour to two in order to mitigate the impact. "We will announce the areas that will experience power cut to give time for the affected citizens and expatriates to be ready, especially with regard to elevators or providing a charger for some devices," he added.

He clarified that the quality of gas supplying the stations has improved compared to the situation on Saturday, but its effects remain, as some units are still out of service. "In this hot weather, they suffer from malfunction, but we are working hard to fix the malfunction and return the situation to normal within 24 hours," he concluded.

Army chief

Continued from Page 1

Meanwhile, the Kuwaiti military announced, Sunday, that troops would be carrying out a shooting practice with live ammunition on Monday and Tuesday, from 7:00 AM until 6:00 PM (local-time).

According to a statement from the Director of Moral Guidance and Public Relations of the Army, the shooting range will take place east of Ras Al-Julaia, extending to Qaruh Island, east of Ras Al-Zour, extending to Umm Al-Maradim Island.

They asked all citizens and residents to refrain from traversing that area during the aforementioned time for everyone's safety.

Kuwait eyes

Continued from Page 1

Ktech chief, Noura Al-Osaimi, emphasized to KUNA the importance of such a program in a world brimming with technological issues.

She mentioned that Ktech organizes a number of training programs as part of its social services, adding that the college offers a cybersecurity program, one of most sought after majors.

As for STC public relations officer, Anfal Al-Kandari, she said that this is part of a series of activities promoting its social responsibility program.

She stated that TechNext program is in line with STC's vision of stimulating creativity in the upcoming generation, as it sets out to inspire young minds to explore their capabilities and contribute to the journey of digitization.

TechNext is a program extending for a couple of weeks that is comprised of workshops presented by accredited trainers and specialists in the field.

Kuwait's health

Continued from Page 1

measures to protect the health of citizens and expatriates in Kuwait, and provide necessary support to the center's work teams to ensure continued efficiency and readiness in the face of developments.

Meanwhile, Dr. Al-Mundhir Al-Hassawi said the center's monitoring teams are closely following the global epidemiological situation, and are in continuous contact with international health organizations to keep pace with any new developments that may affect the health situation in Kuwait.

In addition, Director of the Infection Prevention Department at the Ministry of Health Dr. Ahmad Al-Mutawa affirmed the Ministry of Health's full readiness to deal with cases of the mpox virus if it appears.

He stressed that the Kuwaiti health system is strong and has experience in dealing with such situations, starting with the methods of testing and reaching correct diagnosis, all the way to the availability of treatments and vaccines for dealing with the virus.

In a special interview with Kuwait TV, Dr. Al-Mutawa explained that, "Dealing with the mpox virus is completely different from COVID-19 virus. The latter was an exceptional case worldwide, and we did not have any prior information about the virus. We did not know the correct methods of testing it, or we did not know anything about the treatments and vaccines for it. The situation is completely different with mpox, as there are vaccines for the virus. We know quite well the correct methods for diagnosis and we have the appropriate treatments."

He assured that the health situation in the country is stable, adding, "Despite cases of the virus emerging in countries with less advanced health systems, the Kuwaiti health system is strong and capable of handling the virus if it arrives. We are equipped with the necessary treatments, testing, and vaccines to combat it effectively."

Settle usufruct

Continued from Page 1

These properties are located in various areas, including Mina Abdullah, Al-Dabaiya, Al-Julaia, Bneider, Al-Zour, Al-Khiran, Al-Nuwaiseeb, Doha, Al-Subbiya and Al-Khuwaibat.

The Ministry calls on all affected parties to visit the Chalet Control Department at the State Property Contracts Department, located in the Ministries Complex, to settle their fees for the fiscal 2023/2024 and any previous fiscal years. The Ministry's action aims to ensure compliance and proper management of state property, emphasizing the importance of fulfilling financial obligations to the public treasury.

Kuwait's Dr Al-Zaid selected by EASD as council member

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 18, (KUNA): Kuwait's Dasman Diabetes Institute announced on Sunday that Dr. Fawaz Al-Zaid, Senior Scientist and Head of Bioenergetic and Neurometabolism, was selected by as a member by the European Association for the Study of Diabetes (EASD) - which consists of 10 members from various countries.



Dr Al-Zaid

In a statement, the Dasman Diabetes Institute highlighted that Dr. Al-Zaid was the first Kuwaiti to be chosen for this role, a recognition of his significant contributions to diabetes research on a global scale.

The statement added that Dr. Al-Zaid would collaborate with the EASD Board to enhance global awareness of diabetes and metabolic disorder initiatives, as well as foster research communication and cooperation between the EASD Board and governance bodies of national and regional organiza-

tions. The selection of Dr. Al-Zaid for this council underscores Dasman Diabetes Institute's commitment to conducting advanced and impactful research on diabetes and its complications, following the highest standards to improve patient care.

Dr. Al-Zaid expressed his gratitude for being selected for this membership, stating that it provided him with a unique opportunity to contribute to the advancement of diabetes research worldwide. He also expressed his eagerness to contribute to the association's mission on a global scale, representing researchers from Kuwait and the GCC region in this critical field.

Dr. Al-Zaid's work primarily focuses on the interactions between immunity and metabolism and their impact on diabetes development and related complications, as well as the disease's effects on adipose tissue, the liver, and the nervous system.

The Dasman Diabetes Institute remains dedicated to combating diabetes through advanced scientific research, innovative programs, and comprehensive awareness and training initiatives in Kuwait.

Ministry seeks 'nominations' for upcoming academic year

By Abdulrahman Al-Shemmari

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 18: Assistant Undersecretary for Public Education Affairs at the Ministry of Education Mansour Al-Dhafiri has requested for the lists of employees nominated to the working teams tasked to follow up preparations for the academic year 2024/2025.

The newspaper obtained a copy of Al-Dhafiri's letter addressed to the directors general of educational districts, director of the Department of Religious Education and director of the Department of Special Education

Suspects nabbed

Continued from Page 1

Kuwaiti dinars (about 1.4 million US dollars).

The ministry added that the accused and the seized items are being referred to the competent authorities for legal action. It stressed the continuation of security efforts to confront drug dealers and smugglers,

Schools. He stated in the letter that he is in the process of preparing models of approved academic year preparation team members to follow up the equipment and other preparations for the next academic year 2025/2024. He said the leader of a team will be the school principal or his representative from the assistant directors or department heads according to the attached form.

He stressed that each school should nominate two employees approved by the concerned supervisor, then the general manager of the educational district and the assistant undersecretary for Public Education Affairs.

disrupt criminal networks attempting to bring drugs into the country, monitor operations and movements of those involved in drug trafficking, and protect and preserve society.

The ministry called on everyone to cooperate with security forces and report any suspicious activity to the emergency number (112) or the hotline of the General Department for Combating Drugs (1884141).

World News Roundup

Europe

Sailor rescued

Quake strikes off Russia's far east

PETROPAVOVSK-KAMCHATSKY, Russia, Aug 18, (Agencies): A powerful earthquake with a preliminary magnitude of 7.0 struck in the Pacific off the far eastern coast of Russia near a major naval base early Sunday, but there were no early reports of damage or injuries.

The quake prompted a tsunami warning that was later lifted.

The earthquake occurred 18 miles (29 kilometers) below the surface and its epicenter was about 63 miles (102 kilometers) east of Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky, the U.S. Geological Survey said.

Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky is a port city of more than 181,000 people surrounded by volcanoes and sits across a bay from an important Russian submarine base.

The US National Weather Service's Pacific Tsunami Warning Center in Honolulu initially warned that hazardous tsunami waves were possible for coasts within 300 miles (480 kilometers) of the earthquake epicenter, but later announced the threat had ended.

The center said minor sea level fluctuations could occur in some coastal areas near the earthquake site for several hours.

Meanwhile, a volcano has erupted following a 7.0-magnitude earthquake that struck off Russia's east coast, spurring a column of ash miles into the air, said the Institute of Volcanology and Seismology Sunday.

Experts from the Kamchatka Branch of the Geophysical Service of the Russian Academy of Sciences reported that the Shivel'vok volcano ejected a column of ash to an altitude of 492 km.

In another development Russian President **Vladimir Putin** made significant appointments in the nation's defense and diplomatic leadership on Saturday, naming Anna Tsivileva as State Secretary and Deputy Minister of Defense, and Sergei Butin as First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Role

Tsivileva, who has served as a deputy minister of defense since June 2024, will now take on the additional role of State Secretary within the ministry.

Her responsibilities will include overseeing social and housing support for military personnel and liaising with the "Defenders of the Fatherland" state fund, which supports participants in the special military operation.

Tsivileva was born in 1972 in Ivanovo to a family of doctors. She holds degrees in psychiatry, healthcare organization, and public health from Ivanovo State Medical Academy and the Russian University of Peoples' Friendship. Additionally, she earned a Master's in Business Administration from the Russian Presidential Academy of National Economy and Public Administration in 2021.

In the diplomatic sector, Butin has been appointed as the First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Butin, born in 1964, is a seasoned diplomat with extensive experience in both domestic and international assignments. He graduated from the Institute of Asian and African Studies at Moscow State University and is fluent in English and Japanese.

Since 1996, Butin has held various positions within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and abroad, notably in Japan. From 2017 to 2023, Butin headed the secretariat of the Foreign Minister. In May 2023, he was appointed Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs to oversee personnel matters and the General Secretariat.

Ukraine capital under missile attacks: Russia fired ballistic and cruise missiles at the Ukrainian capital early on Sunday with neither casualties nor damage reported, the Kiev City Military Administration said in a statement.

At about 5 am local time (0200 GMT), ballistic missiles were launched at Kiev, but they were intercepted on the city's outskirts, the statement said.

"This is already the third ballistic strike on the capital in August, with an exact interval of six days between each attack," it said.

Two hours later, the Russian forces fired cruise missiles against Kiev from the southern direction, but the missiles were destroyed by the air defense, the city military administration said.

Sailor rescued: A sailor is thanking his lucky stars for being rescued unharmed from the dark waters of the east Mediterranean early Sunday, nearly five hours after falling 18 meters (60 feet) off a commercial ship.

Cypriot authorities say 24-year-old Lebanese national needed no medical attention after the Panamanian-flagged vehicles carrier NIVIN plucked him from the sea.

Cmdr. Andreas Charalambides, head of the Cyprus Search and Rescue Coordination Center, told The Associated Press that a helicopter was dispatched 185 kilometers (115 miles) southeast of the island nation shortly after sundown when the NIVIN sent a distress call that one of its crew had fallen overboard.

The helicopter, which was equipped with heat sensors to detect sources at night, couldn't locate the sailor after combing a 25 square kilometer (10 square mile) area for close to an hour. The helicopter returned to base for refueling, but Cypriot authorities gave the NIVIN the potential location of the sailor using computer models factoring in prevailing currents in the area at the time.

As the ship scoured the area in the dead of night, the crew heard the sailor crying out for help and managed to pick him up.

Charalambides said an investigation into how the man ended up in the water is the responsibility of the nation under which the ship sails.

Firefighters battle Croatia wildfires: For the past two days, firefighters have been battling fires in Sibenik, Zadar and Split, three major cities in Croatia, and some of the fires are still active, the Croatian Fire Association (HVZ) said in a statement on Saturday.

The fire that broke out in Sibenik on Friday afternoon is still active, and it is a fire of low vegetation, maquis and pine forest on an area of about 290 hectares, the statement said, adding that an extraordinary deployment from the Zagreb County with 30 firefighters and 10 fire engines arrived at the fire scene early Saturday morning to help firefighters there.

While in Split, three separate fires were reported, and they were fires of grass and low vegetation, the statement said, noting that two of them have now been extinguished.



Putin



The Ferris wheel after a fire broke out at the Highfield Festival near Leipzig, Germany on Aug 18. Inset: A burnt-out gondola of the Ferris wheel. (AP)

At least 23 injured when fire breaks out on Ferris wheel in eastern Germany

At least 23 people were injured when two gondolas of a Ferris wheel caught fire at a music festival near Leipzig in eastern Germany, news agency dpa reported Sunday.

The fire started in one gondola and then spread to a second one on Saturday night, police said. Four people suffered burn injuries and one suffered in-

juries from a fall. Others, including first responders and at least four police officers, were to be examined in the hospital for possible smoke inhalation, dpa reported.

The accident took place at the Highfield Festival at Stoermthaler Lake near Leipzig. Police are still investigating what caused the fire.

On Sunday morning, police were still unable to provide any concrete information about the condition of those injured. The exact number of casualties had also not been determined, dpa reported.

The operator of the Ferris Wheel told dpa that no passengers were sitting in the gondola in which the fire started. (AP)



US Democratic vice presidential nominee Minnesota Gov Tim Walz speaks at a campaign rally on Aug 17, at The Astro in La Vista, Neb. (AP)



Sullivan



Thao

America

Shooting kills 2 in Oakland: Two people were shot dead and two others injured Saturday morning after a verbal altercation, San Francisco Bay Area police said.

Officers were called to the 1600 block of 83rd Ave. in a residential part of East Oakland just after 9 am and found four victims with gunshot wounds, the Oakland Police Department said in a statement.

Two of the victims died on site and two others were taken to a hospital, police said in the statement.

Several people were engaged in a verbal altercation that became deadly when one of the individuals pulled out a firearm and fired multiple rounds before fleeing the scene in a vehicle, police said.

Police are withholding names of the victims until next of kin are notified.

Oakland is a city of 400,000 that has struggled with crime and public safety.

Oakland Mayor **Sheng Thao** faces a recall election in November, as does the county's district attorney, Pamela Price. (AP)

'Suspect dies at hospital': The man charged in the fatal shooting of a southwest Virginia sheriff's deputy and the wounding of another deputy earlier this month has died in a Tennessee hospital, a local prosecutor said.

Timothy Wayne Goodman, 65, of North Carolina, died early Friday at Johnson City Medical Center, according to a news release from Smyth County Commonwealth's Attorney Phillip Blevins.

Goodman had been charged with aggravated murder in the Aug. 9 death of Smyth County Deputy Hunter Reedy and with four counts of attempted murder and using a firearm in the commission of a felony, Blevins said earlier. The other Smyth County deputy wounded was released a day after the shootings and is recovering at home, news outlets reported.

Goodman was hospitalized after also being shot in an exchange with officers, according to police. (AP)

Phoenix police detail cases: The city of Phoenix and its police force have

Politics

Trump zigzags between economic remarks, insults

Walz touts Nebraska roots at Omaha rally

OMAHA, Neb., Aug 18, (AP): Tim Walz touted his Nebraska roots Saturday in his first trip back to his home state since becoming the Democratic vice presidential nominee, and drew sharp contrasts between Kamala Harris and Donald Trump.

Playing to the crowd, Walz noted his love of Nebraska football and joked about the historical significance of the Stonehenge replica built out of classic cars known as Carhenge that sits near where he taught in the Panhandle. He then emphasized the values he learned growing up of helping neighbors and minding everyone's own business.

"More than anything else - just like here in Nebraska - Minnesota's strength comes from our values," he said about the state he serves as governor.

Walz stressed that he and Harris believe in helping all Americans succeed - not just the millionaires and billionaires he said Trump and the GOP want to help. It was all part of his appeal for the lone electoral vote in Omaha's swing Second Congressional District that can be split off from the rest of the heavily Republican state that Democrats Joe Biden secured in 2020 and Barack Obama in 2008. That swing vote is sure to be contested. Republican vice presidential candidate JD Vance is expected to visit Omaha next week for a private fundraiser hosted by Nebraska Sen Pete Ricketts.

Importance

"I think it just proves the importance that we as the blue dot - CD2 - has," Omaha teacher Wes Jensen said.

Going after Republicans as intrusive in people's everyday lives, Walz said the fact they want to make decisions about Americans' health care in-

cluding abortion rights and try to hurt Social Security is "not just weird, it's dangerous. And when they try to overturn elections, that's not just weird, it's un-American."

He said Trump and his fellow Republicans are "super concerned with our bedrooms, our exam rooms and libraries."

Nebraska Democrats Chairwoman Jane Kleeb joked near the start of the event that Omaha has a new nickname, "Kamaha," as she encouraged everyone at the rally to work hard to elect Harris and Walz in November.

Supporters hope Walz's knowledge of rural America - he grew up in the small towns of Valentine and Butte in the Sandhills - could help Democrats appeal to wide swaths of Republican strongholds where they have rarely been competitive in recent elections.

Turn

Former state Sen Al Davis, who represented the Panhandle town of Alliance where Walz taught for six years before moving to Minnesota after meeting his wife, said he thinks Walz "can speak to rural parts of the country in ways that other candidates never could do." He added, "so I'm hoping that that will turn some votes in rural parts of Nebraska and across the Midwest."

Alliance residents are planning a local rally of their own next week to watch Walz speak at the Democratic convention in Chicago.

Even before Walz took the stage in Omaha, the Republican National Committee accused the Harris-Walz ticket of not representing "Midwestern values" and said Nebraska voters "will send a resounding message" when they help put the former president back in

office. Bill McCamley of Lincoln said he remembers that Walz was interested in government when he taught his social studies in the seventh grade in Valentine but he never expected him to go on to become governor or perhaps vice president someday.

McCamley said Walz came up with the idea on his own in the seventh grade to build a veterans memorial for everyone from Cherry County who had served in the military, and then he convinced local leaders to build a sidewalk for the memorial.

Also:

WILKES-BARRE, Pa.: Former US president **Donald Trump** on Saturday repeatedly swerved from a message focused on the economy into non sequiturs and personal attacks, including thrice declaring that he was better looking than Vice President **Kamala Harris**.

Trump wound back and forth between hitting his points on economic policy and delivering a smattering of insults and impressions of President **Joe Biden** and French President **Emmanuel Macron** as he held a rally in northeastern Pennsylvania.

The former president has seemed to struggle to adjust to his new opponent after Democrats replaced their nominee. Over the past week, he has diverged during campaign appearances away from the policies he was billed to speak about and instead diverted to a rotation of familiar attack lines and insults.

As he attacked Democrats for inflation at the top of his speech, Trump asked his crowd of supporters, "You don't mind if I go off teleprompter for a second, do you? Joe Biden hates her."

launched a new website in response to a recent scathing US Justice Department report outlining a pattern of excessive force and racial discrimination.

The website includes incident records, body camera footage and evidence in cases

mentioned in the report. The city had provided federal investigators with roughly 179,000 documents and 22,000 body camera videos during their investigation.

Interim Police Chief **Michael Sullivan** said in a statement that such information is

crucial for understanding the incidents that were included in the Justice Department report.

City Manager Jeff Barton said the website represents a commitment to accountability and transparency and that it provides the public with access to "the facts."

The DOJ report did not reference specific information such as incident numbers or dates, but Phoenix officials said city staff were able to identify many of the events and upload associated materials to the site. (AP)

Extreme heat sickens 100: Extreme heat at a Colorado airshow caused about 100 people to seek emergency treatment and sent 10 people to area hospitals on Saturday, officials said.

The majority of patients were treated by emergency personnel onsite at the Pikes Peak Regional Airshow, the Colorado Springs Fire Department said in a statement posted on social media.

Colorado Springs Fire Chief Randy Royal said the "quick actions" of organizers and emergency officials prevented serious injuries at the event held at the Colorado Springs Municipal Airport, about 81 miles (130 kilometers) south of Denver.

The airshow's website indicated tickets were sold out for both days of the event on Saturday and Sunday, featuring performances by the famed U.S. Navy Blue Angels flight exhibition team and displays of various types of modern and vintage aircraft. (AP)



People visit the 2024 Canadian National Exhibition (CNE) in Toronto, Canada, on Aug 16, 2024. As one of the largest community events in Canada, the annual 18-day event kicked off on Friday. (Xinhua)

Lat/Am

11 inmates dead in Haiti

Venezuelans rally to 'defend' opposition

CARACAS, Venezuela, Aug 18, (Agencies): Venezuelans across the world - some with flags and other patriotic paraphernalia - responded to a call from their country's political opposition Saturday and took to the streets to defend the faction's claim to victory over President Nicolás Maduro in last month's disputed presidential election.

The demonstrations in Tokyo, Sydney, Mexico City and several other cities were an effort by the main opposition coalition to make visible what they insist is the real outcome of the election. They also called on governments to throw their support behind candidate **Edmundo González** and express support to Venezuelans who are fearful in their home country of speaking against Maduro and his allies during a brutal repression campaign.



González

As thousands of Venezuelans waved the national flag, opposition leader María Corina Machado made her way through the streets of Caracas on a truck while shouting "brave" and "freedom." Then, before a crowd, she said it was the moment "that every vote is respected."

"Let the world and everyone in Venezuela recognize that the president-elect is Edmundo González," she said while being applauded by thousands of cheering supporters.

Earlier, González, the opposition candidate wrote on his X account: "They will not be able to cover up the reality of July 28: we won resoundingly." He didn't show up at the demonstration in Caracas.

Repeated

In Mexico City's Monument to the Revolution downtown, hundreds of people young and old alike loudly repeated the chants for "Freedom! Freedom!" that dominated the opposition's rallies ahead of the election. "Maduro out! Maduro out!" they then screamed as motorists going by honked their horns.

"What is happening right now is that Venezuela woke up ... so much so that the government doesn't dare to show the tally sheets," Antonia Imbernon said, referring to the voting results documents that are considered the ultimate proof of results. "What are they afraid of?"

Venezuela's National Electoral Council, whose members are loyal to the ruling party, declared Maduro the winner of the July 28 election hours after polls closed. Unlike previous presidential elections, the electoral body has not released the tally sheets' detailed voting data to back up its claim that Maduro earned 6.4 million votes while González, who represented the Unitary Platform opposition coalition, garnered 5.3 million. But González and opposition leader María Corina Machado shocked Venezuelans when they revealed they obtained more than 80% of the vote tally sheets issued by every electronic voting machine after polls closed. The documents, they said, showed González winning by a wide margin and were uploaded to a website for anyone to see.

Decision

Machado urged supporters to print the tally sheet from their voting station and take it to Saturday's demonstrations. In Mexico City, some held signs reproaching the decision by Mexico's government to not participate in a Friday hearing of the Organization of American States focused on Venezuela's election crisis.

"Mexico, we missed you at the OEA," a sign stated using the acronym in Spanish for the regional body.

The opposition has consistently expressed the need for the international community's help to get Maduro to accept the unfavorable results of the election.

"The derision is worse this time because there is proof; anyone can see them," said Janett Hurtado, 57, who left Venezuela two years ago, referring to the tally sheets. "(The government) took away other elections from us again." Hurtado said she has noticed Venezuelans' fear to speak against Maduro following the widespread arrests across the South American country in connection with protests sparked by the election results. She said she has friends who have not sent her a single text message since then.

Security forces have rounded up more than 2,000 people for demonstrating against Maduro or casting doubt on his claim he won a third term despite strong evidence he lost the vote by a more than 2-to-1 margin. The spree of detentions - urged on by Maduro himself - is unprecedented, and puts Venezuela on pace to easily exceed those jailed during three previous crackdowns against Maduro's opponents.

Also:

MONTEVIDEO: Uruguayan maritime authorities have seized 61 kg of cocaine from a vehicle attempting to cross into the country from Argentina via the Libertador General San Martín Bridge, the navy reported Saturday.

Alejandro Perez, a spokesperson for the navy, said that during a routine inspection, Fray Bentos Prefecture agents dismantled part of the vehicle and discovered the drug hidden in concealed compartments inside the fender, dashboard and one door.

The substance was seized, and the vehicle's driver was arrested. The case has been forwarded to the Specialized Prosecutor's Office for Organized Crime due to suspected ties to an international drug trafficking organization.

The international Libertador General San Martín Bridge, linking Fray Bentos and Puerto Unzué, is a key gateway into Uruguay from Argentina.

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti: Inmates broke out of a prison in the coastal town of Saint-Marc in central Haiti on Friday, police said, as authorities in the country struggle to quell widespread gang violence.

Eleven suspected escaped inmates were killed in shootouts with police and one was arrested, said Michel Ange Louis Jeune, spokesman for Haiti's National Police.

He did not provide further details, including how many inmates escaped. The newspaper Le Nouvelliste said officers at the prison went on strike to demand better treatment, and it quoted government commissioner Venson François as saying he feared a "mutiny," suggesting guards may have been complicit in the prison break. But the report did not elaborate.

Local officials could not be immediately reached. In a brief statement, police asked for help from the public in identifying escaped inmates.

Gunfire was heard near the prison, and videos posted on social media showed smoke and fire billowing from it. It wasn't immediately clear how many inmates the prison held.



In this photo released by the Thai government spokesman office, Thailand's new prime minister Paetongtarn Shinawatra, (front second right), and husband Pibol Sooksawat, (front right), pose for a photo with her mother Pojaman Na Pombejra, (front left), and father Thaksin Shinawatra, (front second left), after Paetongtarn Shinawatra received the royal endorsement for the post on Aug 18, at the Pheu Thai party headquarters in Bangkok, Thailand. (AP)

Asia

Paetongtarn becomes Thai PM

Vietnam's Lam visits China

BEIJING, Aug 18, (AP): Vietnamese leader Tô Lâm started a three-day visit to China on Sunday in his first overseas trip since assuming his country's top post about two weeks ago.

Lâm arrived in the morning in Guangzhou, an industrial and export hub near Hong Kong, Chinese state media reported. His agenda included visiting sites in the southern China city where former Vietnamese communist leader Ho Chi Minh spent time, the state-owned Global Times newspaper said in a social media post.

He is to meet with Chinese leader Xi Jinping and other senior officials during his trip.

Lâm was confirmed as general secretary of Vietnam's Communist Party, the top leadership position, on Aug. 3. He also has held the largely ceremonial title of the nation's president since May. Lâm succeeded Nguyễn Phú Trọng, who died on July 19 after 13 years as general secretary.

The new leader is expected to continue his predecessor's strategy of balancing ties with China, the United States and Russia, Yu Xiangdong, the director of the Institute for Vietnam Studies at China's Zhengzhou University, wrote Saturday in the Global Times.

Sign

"The fact that Lâm chose China as his first overseas visit destination since taking office is a sign that Vietnam attaches great importance to its relations with China," Yu said in an opinion piece. "But at the same time, judging from experience, the country is not by any means going to give the U.S. the cold shoulder."

Though they have long ties as one-party communist states, Vietnam and China have sparred repeatedly over territory that both claim in the South China Sea. A Vietnamese coast guard ship recently took part in joint drills in the Philippines, which has had a series of violent encounters with China over disputed territory in the same waters.

China also briefly invaded parts of northern Vietnam in 1979.

Still, Vietnam has benefited economically from investment by Chi-

nese manufacturers, which have moved production to the Southeast Asian country in part to skirt US restrictions on solar panels and other exports from China.



Paetongtarn Shinawatra, daughter of the divisive former leader **Thaksin Shinawatra**, became Thailand's prime minister after receiving a royal letter of endorsement Sunday, two days after she was chosen by Parliament following a court order that removed her predecessor.

She replaces another leader from the same Pheu Thai Party, at the head of a coalition that includes military parties associated with the coup that deposed the party's last government.

Returned

Paetongtarn is the third Shinawatra to hold the job, after her billionaire father and her aunt **Yingluck Shinawatra**. Both were removed from office and forced into exile in coups, although Thaksin returned to Thailand last year as Pheu Thai formed a government.

She received the letter of appointment in a ceremony at the party's headquarters in Bangkok, attended by senior members of parties in the governing coalition and her father, who has no formal role but is widely seen de facto leader of Pheu Thai.

The father and daughter held hands as they walked in with beaming smiles. Both wore white civil servants' uniforms, which are used for royal and state ceremonies.

Paetongtarn thanked the king, the Thai people and lawmakers, saying she will perform her duties "with an open mind," and will "make every square inch of Thailand a space that allows Thai people to dare to dream, dare to create and dare to dictate their own future."

Paetongtarn became Prime Minister days after the Constitutional Court removed Prime Minister Srettha Thavisin, after less than a year in office. The court found him guilty of a serious ethical breach for appointing a Cabinet minister who had been jailed for contempt of court after an alleged attempt to bribe a judge.

They are also to inaugurate an exhibition of Uzbek products, the statement said.

Earlier in the week, an Uzbek delegation held meetings with officials from the Ministry of Commerce. On Friday, Afghan media reported that a trilateral meeting among the economy ministers of Afghanistan, Uzbekistan and Azerbaijan was held in Kabul to discuss ways to enhance trade ties.

Uzbekistan and Afghanistan share a 144-kilometer (89-mile) border and recently there has been an improvement in relations between them. Afghanistan and Uzbekistan signed 35 memorandums of understanding (MoUs) worth 2.5 billion US dollars, the country's acting deputy prime minister for economic affairs office said in a statement on Saturday. (Agencies)

Africa

SADC opens

RSF kills 85 in village 'attack'

CAIRO, Aug 18, (Agencies): Fighters from Sudan's paramilitary group rampaged through a central village, looting and burning and killing at least 85 people, including women and children, authorities and residents said Saturday, the latest atrocity in the country's 18-month devastating conflict.

The paramilitary Rapid Support Forces began attacking Galgani in the central province of Sennar late in July and last week RSF fighters "indiscriminately opened fire on the village's unarmed residents" after they resisted attempts to abduct and sexually assault women and girls, Sudan's Foreign Ministry said in a statement. More than 150 villagers were wounded, it said.

The RSF has been repeatedly accused of massacres, rapes and other gross violations across the country since the war started in April last year, when simmering tensions between the military and the group exploded into open fighting in the capital Khartoum and elsewhere. Describing the hours-long attack, three residents said hundreds of RSF fighters stormed the village on Thursday, looting and burning houses and public properties.

Safety

As of Friday, the medical center had received at least 80 bodies, including 24 women and minors, said the worker, who spoke on condition of anonymity because of fears for his safety.

Mohamed Tajal-Amin, a villager, said he saw seven bodies - six men and one woman - laying in the street midday Friday.

"The Janjaweed are in the street and people are not able to recover their dead and bury them," he said, using the name of the Arab militias that became synonymous with genocide and war crimes in Darfur two decades ago and from which the RSF grew out. RSF spokespeople didn't return requests for comment Saturday.

In June, the RSF assaulted Sennar's provincial capital, Singa, about 350 kilometers (217 miles) southeast of Khartoum. They looted the city's main market and took over its main hospital, forcing thousands of people to flee.

Talks

The latest attack came as the United States has led efforts to resume peace talks between the military and the RSF. The talks, which are boycotted by the military, began last week in Switzerland.

Diplomats from Saudi Arabia, Egypt, the United Arab Emirates, the African Union and the United Nations were attending the talks. The RSF sent a delegation to Geneva but didn't take part in the meetings. "The RSF remains here ready for talks to start; SAF needs to decide to come," US Special Envoy for Sudan **Tom Perriello** posted on X on Friday, using the acronym for Sudan's Armed Forces.

The talks were the latest international effort to settle the devastating conflict that killed dozens of thousands of people and pushed the county to the brink of famine. Already famine was confirmed last month in a sprawling camp for displaced people in the western region of Darfur.

Also:

HARARE, Zimbabwe: The 44th Ordinary Southern African Development Community (SADC) Summit of Heads of State and Government opened in the Zimbabwean capital of Harare on Saturday, with regional leaders stressing the need to continue fostering political and economic stability to accelerate regional integration and industrialization.

In his welcoming remarks to the delegates, Zimbabwean President **Emmerson Mnangagwa** said Zimbabwe is greatly honored to host the regional meeting which will chart the region's development agenda over the coming year. Mnangagwa expressed gratitude to the regional grouping for standing with Zimbabwe during the over two decades of Western sanctions on the country, noting that many countries in the region resisted undue pressure from some Western countries to abandon the southern African country.



Venezuelan nationals protest against the official results that declared President Nicolás Maduro the winner of the July presidential election, in Lima, Peru on Aug 17. Venezuelans across the world - some with flags and other patriotic paraphernalia - responded to a call from their country's political opposition on Aug 18 and took to the streets to defend the faction's claim to victory over Maduro in last month's disputed presidential election. (AP)

Subcontinent

Maldives detains 22: Maldives Immigration on Saturday detained 22 foreigners working illegally during raids carried out in the country's capital city Male.

In an online post, Maldives Immigration said these people were apprehended during two separate raids, adding that both raids were carried out following complaints received by authorities.

In May this year, the Maldives government launched a multi-agency operation to collect biometrics of migrant workers. Maldivian Minister of Homeland Security **Ali Ihusan** said they will address the long-prevailing issue of illegal migrants within three years. (Xinhua)

Pakistan blast injures 3: A bomb went off in Pakistan's southwest Balochistan province, leaving at least three people injured, police said on Saturday.

The explosion occurred near a university in Sariab Road area of Quetta, the provincial capital of Balochistan province, according to police in Quetta.

According to initial investigations, the attack was carried out through an improvised explosive device, said police, adding that the target of the blast was ascertained.

The powerful blast was heard across the main city of Quetta, causing panic among residents. Following the incident, security forces and rescue teams rushed to the site and shifted the injured to a nearby hospital.

Security forces cordoned off the area and began a search operation.

No group or individual claimed responsibility for the blast. (Xinhua)

Aripov arrives in Afghanistan: Uzbek Prime Minister **Abdulla Aripov** arrived in Afghanistan on Saturday in the highest-level visit by a foreign official since the Taliban returned to power three years ago.

Aripov, heading a delegation, was welcomed at the Kabul airport by Abdul Salam Hanafi, the Taliban's deputy prime minister, and other senior members of the government, according to a statement released by the Ministry of Industry and Commerce.



Ihusan



Aripov

SAUDI	- Tadawul	Change +66.38	Closing pts 11,981.40	EGYPT	- EGX 30	Change -168.90	Closing pts 29,460.24
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Business

Kuwait real estate transactions reach 1.8 billion dinars in 2024

July real estate liquidity falls by 2.3% compared to June

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 18: The value of real estate transactions in Kuwait has surged to 1.8 billion dinars in the first seven months of 2024, marking a 16.9 percent increase from 1.61 billion dinars recorded in the same period last year, according to Al-Shayssah daily.

If the current market liquidity trends continue for the remainder of the year, the total value of transactions is projected to reach approximately 3.226 billion dinars, an 11.4 percent rise from last year's figure of 2.896 billion dinars.

The report highlights a decline in market liquidity in July 2024, with the total value of contract trading falling to about 309.2 million dinars. This represents a 2.3 percent decrease from June 2024's liquidity of 316.4 million dinars.

In July, a total of 438 real estate transactions were recorded, all of which were contracts. Ahmadi Governorate led the transactions with 151 deals, accounting for 34.5 percent of the total.

The Hawalli Governorate followed with 103 deals, making up 23.5 percent of the total, while Jahra Governorate had the fewest transactions with 35 deals, or 8.0 percent of the total.

Private housing transactions amounted to 135 million dinars in July, a significant increase of 26.2 percent compared to June's 107 million dinars. This sector's share of total real estate trades rose to 43.7 percent, up from 33.8 percent in June. The monthly average value of private housing trades over the past year was approximately 119.6 million dinars, making July's figure 12.9 percent higher than the average.

The commercial real estate activities contributed 66 million dinars to the July transactions, reflecting a robust segment within the broader market.

The Kuwaiti real estate market saw varied performance in July 2024, with notable changes across different sectors. The total value of real estate transactions in July reached 309.2 million dinars, reflecting a substantial 58.2 percent increase from the 195.4 million dinars recorded in July 2023.

However, this represents a 2.3 percent decline from June 2024's liquidity of 316.4 million dinars.

The value of investment housing transactions decreased by 5.8 percent to approximately 105.6 million dinars in July, compared to 112.1 million dinars in June. Its contribution to total market liquidity dropped to 34.2 percent, down from 35.4 percent in June.

NBK Wealth: The impact of ESG factors on investment strategies

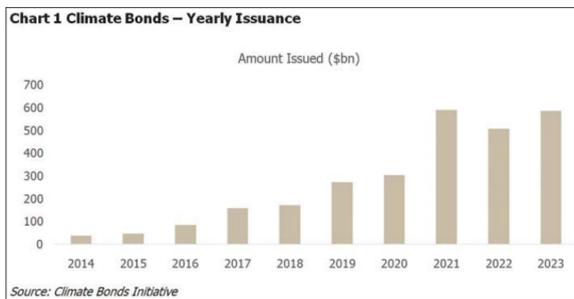
KUWAIT CITY, Aug 18: Sustainability, as defined by the United Nations, involves meeting the current needs, without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Sustainable investing is often referred to as socially responsible investing (SRI), ethical investing, or Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) investing. Sustainable investing is an approach that seeks to generate financial returns while also creating a positive social or environmental impact. This investment strategy integrates ESG factors into investment decisions to better manage risk and generate sustainable, long-term returns.

The first SRI mutual fund, the Pax World Fund, was created in 1971, and it avoided investments in companies producing weapons and tobacco or those involved in the Vietnam War. During the 1980s, investors increasingly pressured companies to divest from South Africa due to their apartheid system. The ESG framework took form in the early 2000s, and it has gained significant traction with both institutional and individual investors. Today, sustainable investing has become mainstream as a growing number of investors seek to align their portfolios with their values. According to the Global Sustainable Investment Alliance (GSIA), global sustainable investment AUM reached \$30.3 trillion in 2022.

Many companies are realizing the importance of making investments that benefit the environment, society, and the company itself. This entails considering factors such as a company's environmental impact, treatment of employees, and management practices. When companies prioritize these considerations, they not only contribute positively to the world, but it will also benefit themselves and their shareholders. Moreover, investors are increasingly using their influence to drive positive change in corporate behavior through engagement and shareholder activism.

The transactions in the commercial real estate sector fell to about 66 million dinars, with its contribution to total trading dropping to 21.3 percent from 29.6 percent in June.

Although the number of transactions decreased from 19 to 11, the value was 5.3 percent higher than the 12-month average of 62.7 million dinars.



Measuring impact is essential since investors need this information to evaluate their investments and determine if their investments have had the desired impact. The availability and quality of ESG data have improved significantly over the past decade. However, challenges remain, and investors often face difficulties in obtaining consistent, comparable, and reliable ESG data. A more harmonized regulatory framework will make ESG metrics more comparable, and regulators, investors and NGOs all have an important role to play in developing a common framework.

Improved and more harmonized ESG reporting standards will also help combat greenwashing which is when companies or investment managers mislead consumers or investors about the impact of their products to capitalize on the growing demand for sustainable products.

Increasing integration of ESG factors into mainstream investing is a key trend in sustainable investing and risk and investment opportunities related to climate change as well as the transition to a low-carbon economy are becoming increasingly important. Companies that fail to adapt to a low-carbon economy

may face regulatory risks, increased operational costs, and reputational damage, while successful companies will create value for investors. Another trend is the growth of green bonds which plays an important role in funding the transition to a sustainable economy.

In conclusion, sustainable investing will probably continue to grow, driven by several factors including increased awareness of global challenges, regulatory developments, technological advancements, and shifting investor preferences. The integration of ESG factors into mainstream investing is likely to continue, the focus on climate change and social issues, the enhancement of ESG data and analytics, and the rise of impact investing are among important trends going forward in sustainable investing.

Sustainable investing has the potential to drive significant positive change and, the investment community can play a crucial role in addressing some of the most pressing issues of our time, ensuring long-term prosperity for all stakeholders. However, investors, companies and policymakers will all need to work together to seize the opportunity to create a more sustainable and equitable future.

According to the Central Bank of Kuwait's monthly monetary statistical bulletin for June 2024, the balance of local public debt instruments, including bonds and securitization operations, decreased by 110 million dinars to 150 million dinars.

UK inflation rises to 2.2% in July

US producer price index falls to 2.2 percent annual growth

By National Bank of Kuwait
United States

US Producer Price Index
The Producer Price Index in the US saw a pullback to 2.2% annually from 2.7% previously. On a monthly basis, prices increased by 0.1%, lower than the previous and expected figure of a 0.2% rise. Core PPI also slowed to 2.4% annually and was flat on the month, indicating that the path towards lower inflation is right on track. Evidence of cooling inflation corresponded to a rally in equity markets, with all three major US stock indices notching over 1% gains. Meanwhile, the greenback also eased following the inflation report last seen trading at 102.65 as markets turned their attention to the upcoming CPI report.

US Consumer Price Index
US headline inflation fell to 2.9% in July, the first drop below 3% since March 2021, boosting expectations for a Federal Reserve interest rate cut in September. Core CPI, excluding food and energy, rose 3.2%, slightly down from 3.3% in June. Whilst concerns about economic contraction remain, markets now assign a 72% probability to a smaller quarter-point cut in September, down significantly from earlier this month. Despite recent market turmoil, the S&P 500 gained 0.4% on Wednesday, reflecting reduced recession fears and bringing US stocks to their first five-day rally in over four weeks.

Retail Sales m/m
US retail sales data significantly exceeded expectations, with overall retail sales rising 1% and core retail sales, excluding volatile items, increasing by 0.3%. While historical data was revised downward, the overall outcome remains stronger than anticipated. This robust performance, driven by significant gains in vehicle sales and other categories like electronics, building materials, and food, outweighs declines in other areas. Given this unexpected consumer spending resilience, which contradicts previous expectations of a slowdown after unusually hot weather, markets are increasingly leaning towards a smaller interest rate hike by the Federal Reserve in September.

Unemployment claims
The number of Americans filing new unemployment claims unexpectedly dropped for the second consecutive week, reaching 227,000, the lowest level since early July. This decline contradicts the recent slowdown in hiring and has surprised economists who predicted a higher figure of 235,000. While unemployment claims have been trending upwards this year, they remain relatively low compared to pre-pandemic levels. Additionally, the number of people continuing to receive unemployment benefits also decreased to 1.86 million. However, some economists and investors remain concerned about a potential faster-than-expected weakening of the labor market.

The Greenback was last seen trading at 102.403.

United Kingdom

UK Consumer Price Index
UK inflation accelerated to 2.2% in July from 2%, exceeding market expectations of 2.3% but still far from the Bank of England's 2% target. Core inflation also rose to 3.3% from 3.5%, a bit lower than forecasts. On a monthly basis CPI has declined by 0.2%. This increase is primarily attributed to a slower decline in gas and electricity prices compared to the previous year. However, the rise was less than anticipated due to an insignificant increase in services prices.

UK Retail Sales m/m
UK retail sales rebounded in July, increasing by 0.5% compared to the previous month. This follows a revised 0.9% decline in June. The boost came

- US Producer Price Index came in at 2.2% annually vs 2.7% previously.
- US Consumer Price Index y/y came in at 2.9% vs expectations of 3.0%.
- US Retail Sales m/m came in at 1.0% vs expectations of 0.4%.
- US Unemployment Claims came in at 227,000 vs expectations of 236,000.
- UK Consumer Price Index y/y came in at 2.2% vs expectations of 2.3%.
- UK Retail Sales m/m came in at 0.5% vs expectations of 0.6%.

from summer discounts and the European football championship, which drove sales in department stores and sports equipment stores by 0.7% and 1.4% respectively. While economists predicted a 0.6% growth, the actual figures met expectations. Capital Economics' economist Alex Kerr said that "if spending off the high street continued to hold up well, overall consumer spending may be more robust than the retail sales data imply".

The GBP/USD currency pair was last seen trading at 1.2944

Asia-Pacific

China Industrial Production
China's industrial production growth slowed to 5.1% y/y in July, missing expectations of 5.2%. Meanwhile, retail sales increased by 2.7%, surpassing forecasts and June's figures. China's three-year property market slump persists, with new and secondhand house prices in the country's largest cities declining 4.2% and 8.8% y/y respectively in July. Despite policymakers' measures to stabilize the market and boost demand, the downturn in property and industrial production has led to recent warnings from major Chinese steel producers. In July, unemployment increased to 5.2% versus 5.0% in June, whilst fixed asset investment also showed a weaker performance coming in at 3.6% versus 3.9% previously.

The CNY/USD currency pair was last seen trading at 7.1644

Reserve Bank of New Zealand

The Reserve Bank of New Zealand delivered the first rate cut in over four years, taking the cash rate down to 5.25% and taking some economists and market participants by surprise. The central bank signaled that more cuts are in the cards as inflation nears the target range of 1%-3%. RBNZ Governor Adrian Orr stated that growth has weakened substantially since May, and the central bank expects the country to tip into a technical recession compromising two consecutive quarters of economic contraction. Markets are pricing in 75 bps worth of cuts until year-end, taking the cash rate all the way down to 4.5%.

The AUD/USD currency pair was last seen trading at 0.6666

Kuwait

Kuwaiti Dinar
KUWD/KWD closed last week at 0.30550.

Currencies	Previous Week Levels			This Week's Expected Range			3-Month Forward
	Open	Low	High	Close	Minimum	Maximum	
EUR	1.0913	1.0910	1.1047	1.1028	1.0800	1.1200	1.1075
GBP	1.2754	1.2744	1.2945	1.2944	1.2700	1.3100	1.2954
JPY	146.73	146.07	149.39	147.58	144.00	150.00	145.71
CHF	0.8637	0.8617	0.8748	0.8660	0.8400	0.8800	0.8573

Cryptocurrency hacks surge to \$1.6 billion in first seven months of 2024

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 18: In a troubling trend, the value of cryptocurrency hacks nearly doubled to \$1.6 billion during the first seven months of 2024, according to a recent report by Chainalysis, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

This significant increase is attributed to rising crypto asset prices, which have amplified the value of stolen funds.

Chainalysis, a leading blockchain data analytics firm, reported that while the number of hacking incidents only rose slightly to 149 -- up from 145 in the same period last year -- the total value of stolen cryptocurrency surged. This surge is partly due to the notable increase in the prices of various crypto assets.

Eric Jardine, Head of Cybercrime Research at Chainalysis, noted that

Bitcoin's price, which peaked at a record high of approximately \$74,000 in March following the introduction of spot Bitcoin exchange-traded funds in the US, significantly contributed to the higher value of stolen funds.

Despite recent market volatility reducing some of these gains, Bitcoin is still up 38 percent year-to-date.

The report highlights that Bitcoin alone accounted for 40 percent of the proceeds from cryptocurrency thefts this year.

In comparison, the total value of stolen cryptocurrencies hit a record \$3.7 billion in 2022, a figure that fell to \$1.7 billion in 2023 as decentralized finance institutions enhanced their security measures and token prices struggled to recover from previous declines.

Report showcases commitment to diversity and employee development

Markaz unveils fourth sustainability report in line with GRI standards

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 18: In line with its continuous commitment to ensuring sustainability throughout all aspects of its operations, Kuwait Financial Centre "Markaz" has launched its fourth Sustainability Report covering 2022 and 2023. The report highlights the organization's performance in key Environmental, Social, and Governance areas (ESG),

in accordance with the latest international standards for sustainability reporting developed by the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI). The report also aligns with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), together with Kuwait's National Development Plan (KNDP) and Boursa Kuwait's sustainability indicators.

Commenting on the report, Deena Y. Al-Refai, Executive Vice President - Investor Relations at Markaz

said: "We are pleased to unveil our fourth sustainability report to our partners, clients, and stakeholders. At Markaz, we recognize the importance of integrating sustainable practices into our operations. Our sustainability initiatives have not only enhanced operational efficiency, but also contributed to the resilience and stability of our business. Markaz's sustainability approach, ingrained since inception, has undoubtedly bolstered a robust and secure foundation, manifestly reflected in the company's financial performance over the years. We remain dedicated to engaging with our stakeholders and providing them with insightful information on our impact in the communities in which we operate."

Sondos Saad, Vice President and Head - Corporate Communications at Markaz said: "Markaz being one of the first investment companies in Kuwait to voluntarily issue sustainability reports serves as a testament to our forward-looking approach and deep-rooted commitment to transparency, accountability, and ESG responsibility. This report provides a comprehensive overview of our sustainable practices



Markaz sustainability report.

and progress in key areas that matter most to our stakeholders, in alignment with global standards, demonstrating our dedication to long-term value creation."

Key Components of Markaz's Sustainability Report

Economy
In line with its belief that a diverse market leads to greater economic resilience and sustainability, Markaz has continued to attract and retain a client base of high net-worth individuals, governments, quasi-government institutions, and investment arms of corporations, both in the GCC and globally. In addition to building agility in challenging times, diversification supports Markaz's efforts to ensure a positive economic impact in Kuwait and contributes to achieving key national economic commitments linked to the UN Sustainable Development Goals and New Kuwait Vision 2035.

Markaz has not only played a pivotal role in our local economy but also in expanding our economic impact beyond the boundaries of Kuwait. For example, this is reflected by outsourcing research and support services to Marmore and other providers in developing countries, and by making significant investments in real estate, supporting job creation in the MENA region and internationally.

Corporate Governance
Markaz continued to ensure the applications of ESG principles and maintain its robust corporate governance and risk management framework across all its business functions. Markaz is dedicated

to safeguarding shareholders' rights, as evidenced by the approval of its Board of Directors' policies aimed at ensuring the protection of all shareholders' rights. These policies, an important aspect of ESG, grant shareholders the ability to exercise their rights as outlined in the Companies Law and the Capital Market Authorities directives. The institution's activities are closely aligned with the applicable regulatory requirements and international best practices, as well as internal policies, systems, and controls.

Our comprehensive anti-corruption policies and procedures are communicated and enforced amongst our employees. In addition, we have a mandatory training course on Financial Crime - Anti-Money Laundering, with over 1,200 hours of course training in 2022 and 2023 combined.

People
Markaz believes that investing in its people is one of the key elements of sustainable development. The organization's dedication to diversity and inclusion is reflected in its high levels of female employees in managerial positions who comprise 18.4% of the workforce. Markaz is also committed to empowering Kuwaiti nationals, with a Kuwaitization rate increase of 26.7% from 2022 to 2023. Investing in the growth and development of employees remains a key priority for Markaz as reflected in its two-year record total of 6,294 hours spent for training. The company continues to actively support team

members through performance management, learning opportunities, and policies that ensure their rights are upheld to the highest standards. As a result of improvement in the workplace environment, Markaz has maintained relatively high retention rates in 2022 and 2023.

Community
In alignment with UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Boursa Sustainability Indicators, and New Kuwait Vision pillars, among others, Markaz has focused its efforts on contributing to society through community empowerment, engagement, sponsorships and donations to reputable non-profit organizations. This is supported by Markaz's long-standing Corporate Social Responsibility strategy, which is founded upon the three main pillars of building human capacity, promoting good governance, and aligning its business environment with the principles of sustainable development. Markaz Graduate Development Program (MGDP), first inaugurated in 2017, is a primary pillar of our talent attraction/development efforts and is designed for Kuwaiti graduates to gain a year-long immersive experience that will equip them with essential skills for the job market.

The Environment
Markaz has consistently demonstrated a commitment to responsible business practices and the efficient utilization of resources. We have implemented various sustainable practices, including the collection and recycling of paper waste and the mindful reduction of single-use plastics. These efforts were supported by a shift towards digitalization and the launch of The Technology Champion initiative internally. The Technology Champion Initiative is a new initiative by Markaz designed to empower its employees to leverage innovative digital technologies, streamline daily operations and reduce paper usage significantly. The use of digital automation minimizes the need for physical documentation. These advancements not only aim to optimize workflow and reduce costs but also align Markaz with UN SDG's by minimizing paper waste.

Markaz continues to lead by example by placing the interests of key stakeholders at the heart of its extensive reporting and research efforts. With the publication of its 2022-2023 Sustainability Report, Markaz has further emphasized its commitment to transparency by delivering in-depth evaluation and reporting across the business that provides valuable insights on how it is contributing to a more sustainable tomorrow.

BUSINESS

Chinese electric minibuses boost Ethiopia's transition to green mobility

On a typical sunny day in the capital of Ethiopia, Adugna Adamu was advertising his business offering rides from Bole airport to the historic Piazza district with his electric minibus, one of the many now plying the streets of the city.

The introduction of modern electric vehicles (EVs) to public transport was part of the government's campaign initiated earlier this year to ban the import of gasoline or diesel vehicles, in a bid to accelerate its transition to electric mobility in the face of a global fuel price hike.

"These electric vehicles are bigger, quieter, more cost-effective and user-friendly than the conventional minibuses that run on gasoline," Adamu told Xinhua in an interview.

Ethiopia spent 6 billion U.S. dollars on the import of fuel in 2023, over half of which went to fuel vehicles, giving rise to off-the-charts pollution in city centers, the Ethiopian Ministry of Transport and Logistics said. Of the roughly 1.2 million vehicles in the country, many are over 20 years old and mostly secondhand im-

ports from Gulf states, often seen emitting black smoke from their exhausts.

"I used to drive different types of vehicles, but this one is unique in that it is more comfortable and does not pollute the air," Adamu said as he drove 15 passengers, most of whom were experiencing their first-ever electric vehicle excursion.

The electric minibuses are assembled by local company Belayneh Kindie Metal Engineering Complex, using components imported from China.

The Chinese Golden Dragon Company

supplies components for the vehicles to the local company, which assembles both EV minibuses and 12-meter-long big electric buses to meet the growing demand for EVs in Ethiopia.

Though electric minibuses are a fresh addition to Ethiopian public transport services, Besufekad Shewaye, general manager of the local company, is anticipating a promising market for EVs in Ethiopia due to the country's abundant hydroelectricity resources.

"Starting from mid-2023, we imported

completely knocked down (CKD) electric vehicles, assembled 216 electric minibuses and made them available to the Ethiopian market," said the general manager, adding that the company has so far sold 50 percent of the assembled electric minibuses to transportation service providers and government offices. The Ethiopian government aims to import nearly 500,000 electric automobiles to fast-track the country's shift to electric transportation as part of its 10-year development plan that runs from 2021 to 2030. (Xinhua)

Such action could disrupt US supply chain next week

Work stoppage at Canada's two largest railroads looms

DETROIT, Aug 18, (AP): Canada's two largest railroads are starting to shut down their shipping networks as a labor dispute with the Teamsters union threatens to cause lockouts or strikes that would disrupt cross-border trade with the U.S.

Both the Canadian Pacific Kansas City and Canadian National railroads, which haul millions of tons of freight across the border, have stopped taking certain shipments of hazardous materials and refrigerated products.

Both are threatening to lock out Teamsters Canada workers starting Thursday if deals are not reached.

On Tuesday, CPKC will stop all shipments that start in Canada and all shipments originating in the U.S. that are headed for Canada, the railroad said Saturday.

The Canadian Press reported that on Friday, Canadian National barred container imports from U.S. partner railroads.

Jeff Windau, industrial analyst for Edward Jones & Co., said his firm expects work stoppages to last only a few days, but if they

go longer, there could be significant supply chain disruptions.

"If something would carry on more of a longer term in nature, then I think there are some significant potential issues just given the amount of goods that are handled each day," Windau said. "By and large the rails touch pretty much all of the economy."

The two railroads handle about 40,000 carloads of freight each day, worth about \$1 billion, Windau said. Shipments of fully built automobiles and auto parts, chemicals, forestry products and agricultural goods would be hit hard, he said, especially with harvest season looming.

Both railroads have extensive networks in the U.S., and CPKC also serves Mexico. Those operations will keep running even if there is a work stoppage.

CPKC said it remains committed to avoiding a work stoppage that would damage Canada's economy and international reputation. "However we must take responsible and pru-

dent steps to prepare for a potential rail service interruption next week," spokesman Patrick Waldron said in a statement.

Shutting down the network will allow the railroad to get dangerous goods off of its network before any stoppage, CPKC said.

Union spokesman Christopher Monette said in an email Saturday that negotiations continue, but the situation has shifted from a possible strike to "near certain lockout" by the railroads. CPKC said bargaining is scheduled to continue on Sunday with the union, which represents nearly 10,000 workers at both railroads. The company said it continues to bargain in good faith.

Canadian National said in a statement Friday that there had been no meaningful progress in negotiations and it hoped the union "will engage meaningfully" during a meeting scheduled for Saturday.

"CN wants a resolution that allows the company to get

back to what it does best as a team, moving customers' goods and the economy," the railroad said.

Negotiations have been going on since last November, and contracts expired at the end of 2023. They were extended as talks continued.

The union said company demands on crew scheduling, rail safety and worker fatigue are the main sticking points.

Concerns about the quality of life for rail workers dealing with demanding schedules and no paid sick time nearly led to a U.S. rail strike two years ago before Congress intervened and blocked a walkout. The major U.S. railroads have made progress since then in offering paid sick time to most rail workers and trying to improve schedules.

Windau said the trucking industry currently has a lot of excess capacity and might be able to make up some of the railroads' shipping volumes, but, "You're not going to be able to replace all of that with trucking."

Building permits plummet

Germany's housing crisis getting worse

BERLIN, Aug 18, (Xinhua): Germany's housing crisis shows no signs of easing, with building permits for dwellings dropping by 19 percent year-on-year in June, according to data released by the Federal Statistical Office (Destatis) on Friday.

In a country already grappling with severe strain on the housing market, particularly in major cities, only 17,600 new dwellings received building permits in June. This represents a 42.1 percent decrease compared to the same period in 2022.

The total number of new apartments approved in Germany in the first half (H1) of this year was just 106,700, marking a 21.1 percent decrease compared to the same period last year.

The sharpest decline was seen in

single-family houses, with only 18,600 units approved in H1, a drop of nearly a third.

These results encompass building permits for apartments in both new residential and non-residential buildings, as well as for new apartments within existing structures.

The newly-released figures cast serious doubt on the German government's goal of building 400,000 new flats this year.

"The current level of building permits corresponds to only a little more than 200,000 newly built apartments per year," said Sebastian Dullien, scientific director of the Macroeconomic Policy Institute (IMK). "This indicates that the crisis in German housing construction is set to continue."

Norway PM opens Europe's 1st gigawatt battery factory

ARENDAL, Norway, Aug 18, (Xinhua): Norwegian Prime Minister Jonas Gahr Store on Friday inaugurated Europe's first gigawatt-scale factory for Lithium Iron Phosphate (LFP) batteries.

Located in Arendal, southern Norway, the factory is owned by the start-up Morrow Batteries. Achieving yet another significant milestone, Morrow Batteries can produce 3 million battery cells annually, amounting to a capacity of 1 GWh.

Addressing the opening ceremony, Store applauded Morrow Batteries' rapid rise as Europe's top battery manufacturer, highlighting its pivotal role in Norway's green transition and the increasing global demand for batteries.

He also acknowledged Norway's supportive policies for the industry but

emphasized that the primary responsibility lies with private investors.

"Arendal is now home to Europe's first gigafactory for LFP batteries, creating jobs, fostering value creation, and positioning itself for significant export revenues. We are eager to deliver our first commercial batteries to customers by the end of the year," said Lars Christian Bacher, CEO of Morrow Batteries.

Bacher said that test production is ongoing, with Morrow collaborating closely with customers to fine-tune production equipment for high-quality serial production in the coming months.

The factory currently employs about 150 workers on a shift schedule and is the first of four planned in Arendal. Morrow intends to construct three more battery factories in the region.

South African president signs a landmark electricity bill into law

JOHANNESBURG, Aug 18, (Xinhua): South African President Cyril Ramaphosa signed the Electricity Regulation Amendment Act into law on Friday, clearing the way for significant reforms in the country's energy sector.

The new legislation was aimed at addressing the country's long-standing power outage challenges by far-reaching reforms, including establishing a competitive electricity market.

"The bill assented to by the President amends the Electricity Regulation Act of 2006 to respond to current realities in the electricity sector and open up pathways to greater competition and reduced energy costs; increase investment in new generation capacity to achieve energy security; establish an independent transmission company as the custodian of the national grid; and impose severe penalties for damage to and sabotage of infrastructure," said the presidency in a statement.

The bill was passed through a major-

ity in the National Assembly in March. According to the presidency, its signing came as South Africa has shown improvement in stabilizing its energy supply over the past four months, with a reduction in rolling blackouts.

The presidency explained that the Electricity Regulation Amendment Act seeks to address the country's current energy issues by introducing competition and private sector participation.

As it does so, the bill would lead to the creation of an independent transmission company, empowered to impose stringent penalties for infrastructure damage and sabotage. "The Electricity Regulation Amendment Act provides for the establishment, duties, powers, and functions of the Transmission System Operator SOC Ltd (TSO) -- which must be established as an independent entity within five years -- and for the National Transmission Company of South Africa to act as the TSO in the interim.

US consumer sentiment up slightly on Dems optimism

Party positive over Harris' presidential prospects

WASHINGTON, Aug 18, (AP): A surge in optimism by Democrats over the prospects of Vice President Kamala Harris lifted U.S. consumer sentiment slightly this month.

The University of Michigan's consumer sentiment index edged up to 67.8 after coming in at 66.4 in July. Americans' expectations for the future rose, while their assessment of current economic conditions sank slightly.

The spirits of Democrats and political independents rose. Republicans' sentiment fell. The survey found that 41% of consumers considered Harris the better candidate for the economy, versus the 38% who chose Republican nominee Donald Trump. Before President Joe Biden dropped out of the presidential race and gave way to Harris, Trump held an advantage on the issue.

Joanne Hsu, the university's director of consumer surveys, said she expects the index to bounce with changing poll results as the election nears. Consumers on both sides of the partisan divide say their economic outlook "depends on who's going to win the election," she said.

The Michigan index has rebounded after bottoming out at 50 in June 2022 when inflation hit a four-decade high. But it remains well below healthy levels. Before COVID-19 hit the economy in early 2020 - causing a recession followed by an unexpectedly strong recovery that unleashed inflation - the Michigan index regularly registered in the 90s and occasionally crossed 100.

"Consumers are still pretty glum overall by historical standards, but sentiment is on an improving trend," said Carl Weinberg, chief economist at High Frequency Economics.

Economists watch measures of Americans' spirits to gauge whether they're in the mood to shop, important because their spending accounts for about 70% of U.S. economic activity.

Since inflation struck more than three years ago, Americans have been feeling grumpy. As the November presidential election approaches, many blamed President Biden for higher prices.

Despite their sour mood, American consumers have kept spending anyway. Largely because of that, the economy grew at a healthy 2.8% annual pace from April through June. Their spending has continued into the current quarter: The Commerce Department reported Thursday that retail sales climbed 1% from June to July, biggest jump since January 2023 on strong sales at electronics shops, supermarkets and auto dealerships.

The Federal Reserve responded to inflation's resurgence by raising its benchmark interest rate 11 times in 2022 and 2023, lifting it to a 23-year



A prospective buyer looks over a 2025 Cooper S hardtop displayed at a Mini dealership on July 22, 2024, in Highlands Ranch, Colo. (AP)

Shenzhen-LA economic and trade forum to promote local exchanges, cooperation

LOS ANGELES, Aug 18, (Xinhua): The Shenzhen-Los Angeles Economic and Trade Exchange Forum was held here on Friday, drawing over 200 entrepreneurs, business owners and officials from the southern Chinese city of Shenzhen and the western U.S. state of California.

Held by the U.S. Shenzhen Federation and Shenzhen General Chamber of Commerce in the City of Industry -- an economic hub for the San Gabriel Valley in eastern Los Angeles County, the forum aims to promote economic and trade exchanges and cooperation between Shenzhen, a landmark in China's reform and opening-up drive, and Greater Los Angeles, the most populous metropolitan area in the western United States.

Peng Jing, commercial counselor of the Chinese Consulate General in Los Angeles, noted in her remarks that the forum "has provided an important ex-

change platform for the business communities of the two cities."

"Although Shenzhen and Los Angeles are located on opposite sides of the Pacific Ocean, they share many similarities and are highly complementary. Both are vibrant global cities, have large ports which are among the busiest in the world, and possess strong atmosphere for innovation and entrepreneurship," said the commercial counselor.

"We hope that both sides can further strengthen communication and collaboration, leveraging their respective advantages to deepen practical cooperation in areas such as green ports, clean energy, cross-border logistics, culture, education and tourism, in order to make a greater contribution to the local exchanges between China and the United States," she added.

Liu Junlin, standing vice presi-

dent of Shenzhen General Chamber of Commerce, spoke about Shenzhen's development over the past four decades, morphing from a small fishing village into a modern metropolis.

She hopes to strengthen cooperation between Shenzhen and Los Angeles in various fields such as economy, trade, culture, sports and tourism and build a stronger bridge of friendship for people-to-people exchanges between China and the United States.

"By working together and improving our economic ties, we not only improve the quality of life for each of our regions, but really improve opportunities for those who are going to come after us," said Luis Portillo, president and CEO of the San Gabriel Valley Economic Partnership, reiterating the importance of strengthening economic cooperation between Shenzhen and the Greater Los Angeles region.

high. Inflation has cooled markedly since peaking at 9.1% in June 2022. By last month, it was down to 2.9%, edging closer to the Fed's 2% target.

The central bank is now widely expected to begin cutting rates at its next meeting in September.

The Michigan survey shows that consumers' expectations for future inflation have come down - though Americans remain frustrated that

prices are still nearly 20% higher than they were when inflation picked up in early 2021. For the second straight month, consumers said in August that they expect prices to be 2.9% higher in one year. In mid-2022, as inflation roared, they expected prices to climb 5.3% over the next 12 months.

Their expectations are important because they can drive behavior. If

you think something is going to be a lot more expensive in the future, you are more likely to buy it now, and that spending can drive prices higher. "If inflation expectations are high, that can be a self-fulfilling prophecy," Hsu said. "Policymakers do not want to see that." So the Fed's inflation fighters welcome signs that consumers foresee more modest price increases going forward.

Hydrogen sector gets policy catalysts for China's low-carbon shift

BEIJING, Aug 18, (Xinhua): Chinese authorities have rolled out policies to support the development of the hydrogen energy sector, paving the way for more diversified approaches to China's transition toward a more sustainable, low-carbon economy.

Authorities in northwest China's Shaanxi Province announced on Thursday at the second Western Hydrogen Energy Expo that the province will fully exempt hydrogen-powered vehicles equipped with ETC devices from expressway tolls. The new move will take effect on Sept. 1 and last for

three years. Meanwhile, subsidies will also be offered to facilitate the construction of hydrogen refueling stations on expressways.

This has made Shaanxi the latest player in China to adopt such supportive measures for hydrogen-powered vehicles. In March this year, Shandong Province, in east China, became the first to waive toll fees for hydrogen-powered vehicles. Sichuan and Inner Mongolia's Ordos soon followed suit, and experts believe these moves will play a positive role in optimizing the commercial operation of fuel-cell vehicles.

"At present, the cost of purchasing and running fuel-cell vehicles is quite high. In addition to relying on technological advancements and mass production to reduce costs, active government guidance and nurturing are also essential for the rapid development of this industry," said Liu Jianguo, head of the hydrogen energy science and engineering department at North China Electric Power University.

"Heavy-duty trucks powered by fuel cells are particularly promising, and by reducing or eliminating tolls on expressways, we can lower the total

cost of using these trucks over time," Liu said, adding that this will make it easier to introduce more of these vehicles, which in turn will boost the whole industry.

The China automotive strategy and policy research center has calculated that a 49-tonne fuel-cell truck costs about 20 percent more to operate than a similar diesel truck. If expressway tolls are waived, the operating cost could drop by 25 percent.

According to a blue book on China's hydrogen-powered vehicles, the current toll for heavy-duty trucks on ex-

pressways is approximately 2.6 yuan (about 36 U.S. cents) per kilometer. Assuming a truck operates 300 days a year at 800 kilometers per day, it would consume about 24 tonnes of hydrogen annually and incur tolls of roughly 600,000 yuan. Adding 100 more fuel-cell trucks to the fleet could stimulate nearly 300 million yuan in industrial chain value, including hydrogen production and refueling infrastructure, potentially boosting the overall industry value by 800 million to 1 billion yuan.

Hydrogen energy was highlighted

in China's government work report this year for the first time as a crucial emerging industry, as the country seeks to meet its carbon-emission targets.

According to a report by Sinopec Group, China's major oil refiner, the country's hydrogen energy consumption is projected to reach nearly 86 million tonnes by 2060 -- with an industry scale of 4.6 trillion yuan.

China aims to have 50,000 hydrogen fuel-cell vehicles on the road by 2025, according to a government plan on the hydrogen sector.

Cementing its role as a proactive corporate citizen in supporting the healthcare sector in Kuwait

Burgan Bank organizes its annual blood donation campaign for employees

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 18: Burgan Bank recently concluded its annual blood donation campaign for its employees in a new effort to show solidarity with the community and play a proactive role in supporting Kuwait's healthcare system. The campaign, organized in collaboration with the Central Blood Bank and the Ministry of Health at the Bank's headquarters, falls under Burgan's comprehensive social responsibility strategy and its continuous efforts to raise awareness about vital health and wellness topics.

"On behalf of Burgan's management, I would like to express my appreciation for every employee who participated in this year's blood donation campaign," said Mr. Naqeeb Amin, General Manager – Human Resources and Development at Burgan Bank. "Reinforcing our partnership with government institutions, such as the Ministry of Health and the Central Blood Bank, is among our top priorities. By organizing the annual blood donation campaign, we aim to raise awareness among our staff about the fundamental aspect of donating blood, underscoring the Bank's diligence in fostering a culture that ensures the availability of all blood types for all patients in need."

Mr. Naqeeb added: "We are proud to report that over 100 Burgan employees took part in the campaign and donated different blood types. Naturally, the success of the campaign would not have been possible without the sanitation and sterilization procedures and health precautions set forth by the Ministry of Health and the Central Blood Bank to ensure the utmost safety for all donors and participants."

It serves to note that Burgan Bank has a long history of participating in health awareness campaigns, which shed light on numerous topics, including diabetes, different types of cancer, and mental health and well-being. The Bank's health awareness efforts, held in partnership with leading health organizations in Kuwait, aim to benefit its staff and all community members, paving the path towards a healthier and more aware community.

About Burgan Bank

Established in 1977, Burgan Bank



Naqeeb Amin, General Manager – Human Resources and Development at Burgan Bank



Naqeeb Amin in a group photo with Burgan's Marketing and Communication Department.



Burgan employees donating blood as part of this year's campaign.

is a Kuwait-based conventional bank with a significant focus on the corporate and financial institution sectors. From its earliest days, the Bank has significantly sought to diversify its offering to cater to its growing retail and private banking customer base.

Burgan Bank has majority-owned subsidiaries, collectively known as the "Burgan Bank Group", in the MENA region. This Group is supported by one of the largest branch networks across the region and includes: Gulf Bank Algeria – AGB (Algeria), Tunis International Bank – TIB (Tunisia), and Burgan Bank Turkey. Furthermore, Burgan Bank has a presence in the UAE through its corporate office, Burgan Financial Services Limited.

The Bank has continuously improved its performance over the years, through an expanded revenue structure, diversified funding sources, and a strong capital base. The adoption of state-of-the-art services and technology has positioned it as a trendsetter in the domestic market and within the MENA region. Moreover, Burgan Bank's brand has been built on a foundation of real values – trust, commitment, excellence, and progression – which serve as a reminder of the high standards to which the Bank always aspires. In fact, the Bank's core philo-



Burgan employees donating blood as part of this year's campaign.

sophy of 'Driven by You' is the foundation on which its products and services are continuously developed.

The Bank obtained the ISO/IEC 27001: 2022 Information Security Management Systems certificate (ISMS), ISO /IEC 27701:2019 Privacy Information Management Sys-

tems (PIMS), ISO/IEC 20000-1: 2018 Information Technology Service Management System (ITSMS) and was re-certified with the prestigious ISO 9001:2015 Quality Management System (QMS), making it one of the few banks in the GCC and Kuwait to receive such certification for five con-

secutive times. The Bank also has the distinction of being the only Bank in Kuwait to have won the JP Morgan Chase Quality Recognition Award for twenty consecutive years. Moreover, in a testament to its dedication to the development of its human capital, Burgan Bank is the first bank in Kuwait to

be certified as a Great Place to Work®, earning the distinct honor in 2023.

Burgan Bank is a majority-owned subsidiary of KIPCO (Kuwait Projects Company), one of the largest holding companies in the MENA region. Burgan employees donating blood as part of this year's campaign.

Top 5 projects to win prizes at 'TechNext' closing ceremony

'TechNext' program introduced by stc to boost digital skills in Kuwait

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 18: Kuwait Telecommunications Company – stc, a world-class digital leader providing innovative services and platforms to customers, enabling the digital transformation in Kuwait, announced its sponsorship of the 'TechNext' program hosted by Sheikh Abdullah Al Salem Cultural Center.

The initiative, organized in collaboration with Kuwait Technical College (KTECH) and under the umbrella of stc's educational 'upgrade' initiative, aims to enhance the human capital and developing technological skills among the new generation and build on stc's extensive corporate social responsibility (CSR) program that focuses on empowering the younger generation.

The 'TechNext' program is designed to educate and empower young individuals between the ages of 16 to 23 by encouraging them to

channel their energy and creativity into innovation. The program that officially launched on Sunday, August 18, 2024, and will run for two weeks till August 29, 2024. The program reflects a commitment to supporting and developing youth skills, guiding them to use technology in ways that benefit society. This initiative aligns with Kuwait's development vision, which aims to achieve sustainable development by enhancing youth capabilities and providing them with essential skills and knowledge.

During the program, participants will engage in a series of workshops covering key areas such as programming, artificial intelligence, and cybersecurity. These workshops will be led by certified and specialized trainers from Google, KTECH and stc, providing participants with hands-on experience and the opportunity to develop valuable

skills in these fields. Additionally, in the closing ceremony that will be held at Sheikh Abdullah Al Salem Cultural Center, stc will be distributing valuable prizes to the top 5 projects presented under the program in recognition of the participants' creativity and effort.

A highlight of the program will be the cybersecurity workshop presented by Omar Al Sanae, Director of Cybersecurity at stc. The session will provide participants with essential knowledge and insights into the increasingly important cybersecurity domain. Considering stc's high level of attention on protecting customer data, Al Sanae will share valuable information on some of the protocols taken by stc to prevent cyber threats, as well as those that should be applied by customers.

Danah AlJasem, General Manager of Corporate Communications at stc, commented, "At stc, we are committed to empowering the youth of Kuwait by providing them with the tools and opportunities necessary to excel in the digital era. The 'Tech Next' program aligns perfectly with our vision to foster innovation and creativity among the next generation. Through this initiative, we aim to inspire young minds to explore their potential and contribute to the digital transformation journey of our country in line with Kuwait 2035 Vision."

AllJasem added, "As part of our ongoing activities to widen the scope of our extensive CSR program, we have formed strategic partnerships with various institutions across various sectors, one of which is KTECH. Our objective behind these partnerships is to broaden the scope of our initiatives, while collaborating with experts to share in the overall goal of supporting our community. Having said that, we are excited to witness all the activities that will take place under this program and look forward to witnessing the innovative projects that will be presented." AllJasem concluded by highlighting the role of Sheikh Abdullah Al Salem Cultural Center in hosting such an event as part of a series of purposeful activities hosted by the center for sustainable development among the young generation.



A group photo of the officials from stc and KTECH.



Participants during the first day of the program.



Photos from the campaign.

132 employees participate in blood donation initiative

ATC hosts successful blood donation drive with Kuwait Central Blood Bank

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 18: Advanced Technology Company (ATC), the leading distributor of comprehensive health and environmental care solutions across the public and private sectors, recently hosted a two-day blood donation drive in collaboration with the Kuwait Central Blood Bank at ATC's headquarters.

The initiative was coordinated in collaboration with Dr. Reem Al-Radwan, Director of Blood Transfusion Administration Services, as part of ATC's broader commitment to enhancing public health. A total of 132 ATC employees, including senior management, participated in the donation drive, reflecting the company's collective dedication to this cause.

"At Advanced Technology Company, we are committed to giving back to our community. The success of the blood donation drive reflects our team's dedication to making a tangible impact on public health and highlights our commitment to promoting a culture of care and social responsibility.

We extend our sincere thanks to the Kuwait Central Blood Bank for their collaboration and tireless efforts in saving lives," said Ghassan Mamlouk, CEO of ATC.

The event not only provided an opportunity to raise awareness about the life-saving importance of blood donation but also actively engaged ATC employees in a spirit of volunteerism. By encouraging this culture, ATC hopes to inspire other organizations in Kuwait to take on similar initiatives that contribute positively to society. The event also served as an educational platform for participants to learn more about the critical need for blood donations and the ongoing demand for blood supplies in the country.

"This initiative is an essential part of our commitment to the healthcare sector in Kuwait and reflects our responsibility to support the Ministry of Health," Mamlouk added. "We look forward to continuing our efforts to support public health in Kuwait."

Draws offer KD 1000 weekly, KD 100,000 monthly and KD 250,000 quarterly

KFH launches campaign for Al-Hassad investment account

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 18: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) has launched a new campaign for Al-Hassad investment saving account, allowing customers to enter weekly, monthly and quarterly draws based on their account balances.

The draws offer KD 1000 weekly, KD 100,000 monthly and KD 250,000 quarterly in addition to prizes between 100 to 250 thousand Kuwaiti dinars worth of value, as well as the year-end profits distribution.

KFH Deputy General Manager-Products, Nehal Almosalem, said that Al-Hassad is based on the Wakala investment principle. On such a basis, the Bank invests the entire account balance at an expected profit rate



Nehal Almosalem

agreed upon in advance with the customer. She added: "Al-Hassad offers weekly, monthly, and quarterly draws, a total of

400 prizes, in addition to the year-end profits distribution. The account meets the aspirations of a wide segment of customers who wish to invest in their funds through a multi-featured banking account." To facilitate customer access and provide the opportunity to a wider segment of clientele, Almosalem pointed out that Al-Hassad account can be opened in KFH branches, KFH online, and ATMs.

Speaking about the eligibility criteria, Almosalem explained that the customer must hold the balance for a period of 15 days for an opportunity to enter the draws. The customer will have one chance for every KD 50. If the balance is held for 90 days

before the draw date, the customer will get two chances for every KD 50, and three chances for every KD 50 if the balance is held for a period of 180 days prior to the draw date. The customer will have a maximum of 30 thousand chances in one draw. Accordingly, KFH will deposit the value of prizes in the winning customers' accounts.

Almosalem stated that Al-Hassad represents an excellent addition to KFH's comprehensive suite of financial products, offering a unique opportunity for customers in which the deposited amounts are invested in Al-Hassad based on the Wakala principle.

Al-Hassad.. at KFH

Quarterly
250,000KD
Monthly
100,000KD
Weekly
10,000KD

KFH Al-Hassad winners

Artists vs. Trump: Dion, Hayes' estate object to song use

NEW YORK, Aug 18, (AP) — Pop powerhouses, American classics, British artists and the estates of deceased legends — many musicians have objected to Donald Trump using their songs at campaign events.

After a video of Celine Dion performing her hit “My Heart Will Go On” was broadcast at a Trump campaign rally in Bozeman, Montana last weekend, the response from her team was swift.

“In no way is this use authorized, and Celine Dion does not endorse this or any similar use,” a statement posted on social media read. “... And really, THAT song?”

Dion joins a long list of performers who’ve objected to Trump using their songs. Ahead of the 2020 election, that included Bruce Springsteen, Rihanna, Phil Collins, Pharrell, John Fogerty, Neil Young, Eddy Grant, Panic! at the Disco, R.E.M. and Guns N’ Roses.

It also includes the estates of deceased performers, too, like Leonard Cohen, Tom Petty and Prince, as well as English acts from across the pond, like the Rolling Stones, the Beatles and Adele.

However, Trump has obtained the cosign from a few celebrity musicians, including Kid Rock and Lee Greenwood, known for his patriotic anthem, “God Bless the USA.” Also heard at Trump’s rally Thursday in Asheville, North Carolina: “Y.M.C.A.” by the Village People.

Since the 2020 election, several artists have objected to the use of their music at Trump rallies. The Smiths’ “Please, Please, Please Let Me Get What I Want” played at a few Trump events, including a rally in Rapid City, South Dakota last September and in January of this

year at a rally in Laconia, New Hampshire. On X, the Smiths’ guitarist Johnny Marr wrote, “Ahh...right...OK. I never in a million years would’ve thought this could come to pass. Consider this s--- shut right down right now.”

In 2022, David Porter, one of the songwriters behind Sam and Dave’s “Hold On, I’m Coming,” tweeted “Hell to the NO!” after learning Trump used the song at an NRA rally. (In 2017, it should be pointed out, Sam Moore of Sam and Dave performed “America the Beautiful” at a pre-inauguration concert for Trump.)

Copyright

Fast forward to Monday, when the son of the late soul singer Isaac Hayes, whose father co-wrote “Hold On, I’m Coming,” announced on social media that he and his family have threatened legal action against Trump “for 134 counts copyright infringement for the unauthorized use of the song ‘Hold On I’m Coming’ at campaign rallies from 2022-2024.”

Yes, however, artists rarely have full control over where, when, and how their music is played. Performing rights organizations that represent most recognizable recorded music — ASCAP and BMI — require political campaigns to obtain licenses that allow them to use large troves of songs from their vast catalogs.

That means a political campaign does not have to do individual negotiations over every song used.

If a political license is acquired, artists can object to its use, and the

song is pulled from the license.

The issue, of course, is that not every campaign immediately honors those requests.

And it is important to note that these political licenses go beyond a public performance license, which allows venues to play copyrighted music.

Continuing with “Hold On, I’m Coming”: In 2008, Moore asked former President Barack Obama, then still a candidate, to stop using the song. He didn’t want it to be considered an endorsement. They complied.

After Obama was elected president, Moore performed at the Creative Coalition’s Inaugural Ball alongside Sting and Elvis Costello.

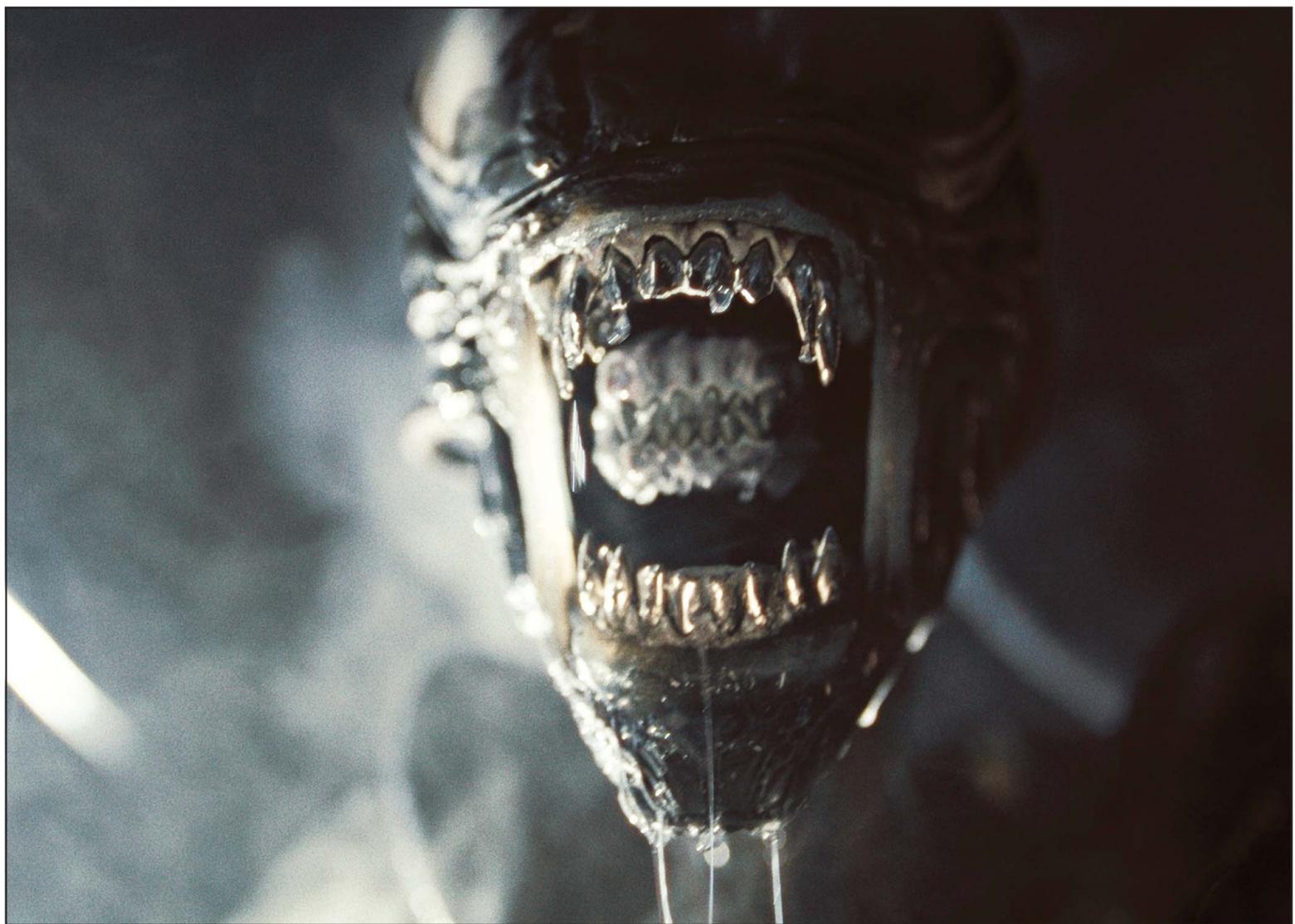
They can send cease-and-desist letters, like Pharrell Williams did after his song “Happy” was played at a Trump rally in 2018. John Fogerty did the same in October 2020 over the Trump campaign’s use of “Fortunate Son” by his band Creedence Clearwater Revival.

Few escalate to the point of suing, but it is not unheard of: Neil Young filed a lawsuit in August 2020 over the Trump campaign’s use of his music including “Rockin’ in the Free World.” He later voluntarily dismissed the case “with prejudice,” which means it cannot be brought again.

Eddy Grant sued Trump in September over the use of his 1980s hit “Electric Avenue” in a Trump campaign animated video that mocked Joe Biden.

MUSIC

Variety



This image released by 20th Century Studios shows Xenomorph in a scene from 'Alien: Romulus.' (AP)

Film

Features

ARABIC TIMES
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A very loud, very jumpy horror movie

Next-gen Xenomorphs in ‘Romulus’

By Jocelyn Noveck

“In space, no one can hear you scream,” went the tagline for the original “Alien” in 1979, a terrifying thought on multiple levels.

There may indeed be a scientific rationale for a space scream to be inaudible, but isn’t it scarier to simply realize nobody’s around to hear you? That was the case for Sigourney Weaver’s Ripley, once she became the last one standing against the fearsome Xenomorph. Nobody could hear her scream — nobody human, that is — because, duh, everyone was dead.

In any case, hearing won’t be a problem here on Earth at any multiplex showing “Alien: Romulus,” the much-anticipated new installment to the “Alien” franchise (not a sequel, but we’ll get to that in a minute.) This is a very big, very (very!) loud, very jumpy horror flick, and the screams will come, and they’ll be audible. Which is precisely what “Alien” fans are surely waiting for.

And speaking of Ripley, no, neither she (nor Weaver) are present in this new version by Fede Álvarez, closer in feel to the horror roots of Ridley Scott’s original than James Cameron’s more action-focused 1986 “Aliens.” But now we have Rain Carradine, played by rising star Cailee Spaeny (“Priscilla”), a new-generation Ripley in everything but name. Spaeny takes up the mantle of badass space fighter with aplomb, and is easily the best part of a movie that, like the 1979 original, is short on character development.

There are many other parallels (and winking nods) to the original (Scott is a co-producer here). But like we said, don’t call it a sequel. In fact it’s an “interquel,” which wouldn’t be a bad horror film title in itself. The dictionary explains that it’s neither sequel nor prequel, but rather a “middlequel” between installments, known as “quels.”

Just kidding! It’s not in the dictionary. But it’s worth noting that Álvarez, in placing his movie between existing versions to form a new trilogy, yet aiming also for standalone entertainment, risks some tonal confusion. Not that you’ll be able to hear your thoughts, should this occur to you.

The premise is new, sort of. Álvarez, who co-wrote the screenplay with Rodo Sayagues, has said he got the idea from a deleted scene from Cameron’s film, in which young kids were seen amongst workers in a mining colony, and wondering what their lives would be like when they reached their 20s.

At the beginning, we find out: life is bleak indeed in the colony on Jackson’s Star, owned by the worker-exploiting Weyland-Yutani firm.

Rain’s miner parents have died of lung ailments. They’ve left her a caring brother, Andy, who is actually a “synthetic,” or humanoid robot. The “human” element is crucial because it allows an empathetic David Jonsson, in the role, to connect to the audience in a way that otherwise only Spaeny does — the rest of the cast is given virtually nothing to work with.

Renaissance

In any case, the two are not long for Jackson’s Star. After Rain is turned down for a travel permit to finally escape dark colony life, she and Andy join a risky venture.

There’s an (apparently) decommissioned space station hovering above, and if they can raid it of hardware and other loot, they can bypass the brutal wait for permits and finally make it to a new home. And so, reluctantly, the two agree to join the others — Rain’s ex-boyfriend Tyler (Archie Renaux), his sister Kay (Isabela Merced), Bjorn (Spike Fearn) and Navarro (Aileen Wu) — on a bumpy flight to the Renaissance station.

Surely we’re not spoiling much to say that it’s best not to get attached to anybody.

Because, we all know what’s waiting up there, don’t we? It’s already been teased in the opening, with the rickety old station looking much like USSC Nostromo, that ill-fated space tug in the original.

We hardly needed the hint, though. This is an “Alien” movie and it’s all about the Xenomorph, that terrifying creature who is diabolically “perfect,” able to survive in any atmosphere and to multiply, obviously, in the most disgusting of ways.

It’s not really a party — or a movie — until the creatures

show up. And that, they do. Much has been made of this film’s use of practical effects, rather than a CGI-created universe. The actors have said this — as well as shooting in a linear fashion — helped them feel the genuine horror needed for their portrayals.

Does all this elevate the film beyond any of its predecessors? Like so many franchises that depend on intense fandom, that truly depends from what vantage point you’re joining in. Fans of the original will appreciate the many respectful echoes of that film (and perhaps the fact that, thank the lord, there’s no longer a gratuitous skimpy panty scene.) Fans of Cameron’s take will appreciate the action that comes later in the film.

And while some will applaud the wild, outlandish, creative and possibly ridiculous swerve of those final minutes — not to spoil it — others may even laugh rather than scream.

It’s all good, though. In space, probably no one can hear you laugh, either.

“Alien: Romulus,” a 20th-Century Studios release, has been rated R by the Motion Picture Association “for bloody violent content and language.” Running time: 119 minutes. Two stars out of four.

Also:

BEIJING: 20th Century Studios’ sci-fi thriller “Alien: Romulus” topped the Chinese mainland’s daily box office on Saturday, according to the China Movie Data Information Network.

The seventh installment of the successful “Alien” franchise, the movie grossed approximately 63.99 million yuan (about 8.95 million US dollars) on its second day of screening.

It tells the story of a group of young space colonists who encounter the universe’s most terrifying life form while scavenging the deep ends of a derelict space station.

Coming in second was the Japanese animation “Detective Conan: The Million-Dollar Pentagram,” which raked in approximately 40.94 million yuan on Saturday.

Domestic crime film “Go for Broke” came in third with 36.87 million yuan in revenue on the day.

The total box office revenue on the Chinese mainland on Saturday hit 220.15 million yuan. (Agencies)

LOS ANGELES: The brown felt fedora worn by actor **Harrison Ford** in the second installment of the Indiana Jones movies sold for \$630,000 at auction, film and TV memorabilia company Propstore announced Friday.

The hat featured in 1984’s “Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom” was expected to fetch between \$250,000 and \$500,000, according to the item’s online description.

The fedora comes from the personal collection of the late stunt performer **Dean Ferrandini**, who also wore it while standing in for Ford as Jones, the dashing archaeologist who really hates snakes.

Keeping the fedora in place during filming was an “ongoing challenge,” Propstore’s expert said in the online description, and foam pieces were inserted to make it fit more snugly.

Created by the **Herbert Johnson Hat Company in London**, it is made of sable-colored rabbit felt.

Other items sold include an Imperial scout trooper’s white “biker scout” helmet from 1983’s “Return of the Jedi,” which went for \$315,000, and a ghost costume worn by stars in the 1996 movie “Scream,” which sold for \$270,900.

“Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom” also featured **Kate Capshaw** as nightclub singer **Willie Scott** and **Ke Huy Quan** as **Short Round**. (AP)

ATHENS, Ala.: Country singer **Keith Urban** gave just a few hours’ notice before performing a free concert Friday night in the parking lot of a large convenience store and gas station in north **Alabama**.

Hundreds of people turned out for the show in **Athens**, about 100 miles (161 kilometers) south of **Nashville**. It was outside a Buc-ee’s, a chain of roadside stores known for barbecue.

“I came down to this Buc-ee’s about a month ago. And when I left, I went, ‘It’d be kind of fun to do a show there,’” Urban told the crowd during the concert, according to an Instagram video posted by WAFF-TV in **Huntsville, Alabama**.

Urban said his “cave man brain” told him it would be fun to set up a little stage for a small audience.

“I swear to you, I thought maybe 100, 200 people,” Urban said as a video showed a larger crowd.

People started gathering hours before the show, news outlets reported.

“I was at work and we heard it on the radio that there was going to be a surprise concert at Buc-ee’s in **Athens**,” **Cindy Wilson** told FOX 54 WZDX-TV in **Huntsville**. “And I was like, ‘Oh my God, it’s on my way home.’ And it’s



Urban

Ford

15 minutes from my house. So I couldn’t believe it.”

While he was at the store, Urban also worked behind a food counter. A video showed him wearing a Buc-ee’s T-shirt and apron as he poured barbecue sauce on some brisket and chopped the meat into smaller pieces. (AP)

BEIJING: “Das Rheingold,” the first part of **Richard Wagner’s** tetralogy “Der Ring des Nibelungen,” will grace the stage at the National Centre for the Performing Arts (NCPA) in Beijing from Aug. 28 to Sept. 3.

Based on Scandinavian and Nordic myths, this two-and-a-half-hour opera is the shortest of

the four works in “Der Ring des Nibelungen,” but it features the largest cast of characters.

As an important work in Wagner’s later oeuvre, “Der Ring des Nibelungen” represents the pinnacle of his artistic career. The composition began in 1848 and was completed in 1874, taking 26 years to create. (Xinhua)

People & Places

Television

Confidence boost

Collins has found 'Emily 2.0' in Paris

LOS ANGELES, Aug. 18, (AP) — The new season of "Emily in Paris" will have many of the same elements as the first three: daring fashion, flirty romance and workplace drama. One thing that has changed? The lead actor's confidence.

Lily Collins, who plays Emily Cooper, said her life has mirrored her character's growth since the series premiered in 2020.

"Walking onto set season four, I was a different person than walking onto set season one," Collins said in a recent interview with The Associated Press. "I'm a more well-rounded and understanding human in this space now because of the show."



Collins

In addition to starring in the series, Collins produces it. The first season marked her first producing gig, and she's taken on several other projects since.

"With the growth of Emily, there's come a real growth in myself within my role as an actor, but also as a producer," she said. "Being so collaborative with the writers and Darren (Star, series creator) and the other producers on this and having a voice on the show has really given me the confidence with other projects out there to do the same or want the same."

The upcoming fourth season follows Emily untangling a messy love triangle, but she's in a more stable place professionally than when we first saw her struggling to fit in at her new job in a new country. Even her French has improved as the series went on. Collins said some of her character's self-assurance has rubbed off on her.

"I've grown more confident as Emily, but also with Lily. I'm asking deeper questions about the entire project, more so than I would've season one," she said. "They're not just about aesthetics anymore, it's about the core values of the show and how to change things and how to bring new ideas to the table."

Evolution

Some of those new ideas include adapting Emily's headline-making wardrobe with each season, a process that Collins said required two eight-hour fittings. She said they broke their own record by securing 82 looks for the fourth season.

The costuming, by designer Marilyn Fitoussi, is a crucial part of the story, showing Emily's evolution from an expat sporting looks emblazoned with the Eiffel Tower to outfits more like that of an authentic Parisian woman. But the costuming is also a crucial part of Collins' process of stepping back into Emily's shoes — both literally and figuratively.

"It's the best way for me to start to feel like Emily again, but Emily 2.0," Collins said. "We really do tell a story with clothing in this."

Collins said at Wednesday's premiere that the depth of Emily's character has been a rewarding part of the process for her, especially in seeing how fans connect with Emily or are inspired by her.

"It means the world," Collins said. "I love playing a woman who's unapologetically herself and loves to work, and that's a positive thing, and that she's still struggling to find a work-life balance because I think that you're always trying to find what works for you. So not having it together all the time is actually an OK thing, and I love playing a character that celebrates that."

The fourth season of the show, which premiered its first half on Thursday, has been hotly anticipated among its growing fanbase since the third season was released two years ago. Netflix has yet to renew the series for a fifth season but Star, known for "Sex and the City" and "Beverly Hills, 90210," said he thinks the audience and popularity are only growing with time.

"It's not like it was a product of the pandemic and people not being able to travel so they liked to watch Paris on the screen. They can travel now and the show's increased in popularity and, in fact, it encourages people to travel, which was my biggest dream of the show," he said.

Even with his belief in the series, Star said it's always "gratifying" when audiences respond well to the final product. As a veteran in the television world, Star knows audiences' reception and viewership can be unpredictable.

"You just can never, ever know how the audience is going to respond and what the outcome's going to be, so I just really get mostly attached to the process and feeling happy about the season," he said. "I'm really happy about this season, I hope the audience loves it."

Also:

LOS ANGELES: The Fresh Prince is on summer break in season three of "Bel-Air." Peacock's updated, more dramatic version of the series that once starred Will Smith. Jabari Banks now plays the teen from West Philly. "Bel-Air" returned to Peacock on Thursday, Aug. 15. The parallels between Smith and Banks seem tailor-made for Hollywood. Like Smith, Banks is from West Philadelphia. He's also a musician working on his own EP.

Twelve fan favorite "Drag Race" contestants from around the world compete on "RuPaul's Drag Race Global All Stars" debuted Friday, Aug. 16 on Paramount+. The prize: \$200,000 and a spot in the coveted Drag Race Hall of Fame.

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.



French actor Alain Delon receives a Lifetime Award during an awarding show at the Locarno Film Festival, on Aug. 2, 2012, in Locarno, Switzerland. Alain Delon, the internationally acclaimed French actor who embodied both the bad guy and the policeman and made hearts throb around the world, has died at age 88, French media reported. (AP)

Obituary

Internationally acclaimed actor and heartthrob

French actor Delon dies at 88

PARIS, Aug. 18, (AP) — Alain Delon, the internationally acclaimed French actor who embodied both the bad guy and the policeman and made hearts throb around the world, died at age 88, French media reported.

With his handsome looks and tender manner, the prolific actor was able to combine toughness with an appealing, vulnerable quality that made him one of France's memorable leading men.

Delon was also a producer, appeared in plays and, in later years, in television movies.

His children announced the death on Sunday in a statement to French national news agency Agence France-Presse, a common practice in France. Tributes to Delon immediately started pouring in on social platforms, and all leading French media switched to full-fledged coverage of his rich career.

Earlier this year, his son Anthony had said his father had been diagnosed with B-cell lymphoma, a type of cancer.

Over the past year, Delon's fragile health condition had been at the heart of a family dispute over his care that gave rise to bitter exchanges through the media among his three children.

At the prime of his career, in the 1960s and 1970s, Delon was sought out by some of the world's top directors, from Luchino Visconti to Joseph Losey.

In his later years, Delon grew disillusioned with the movie industry, saying that money had killed the dream. "Money, commerce and television have wrecked the dream machine," he wrote in a 2003 edition of newsweekly Le Nouvel Observateur. "My cinema is dead. And me, too."

But he continued to work frequently, appearing in several TV movies in his 70s.

Delon's presence was unforgettable, whether playing morally depraved heroes or romantic leading men. He first drew acclaim in 1960 with "Plein Soleil," directed by René Clément, in which he played a murderer trying to

take on the identity of his victims.

He made several Italian movies, working, most notably with Visconti in the 1961 film "Rocco and His Brothers," in which Delon portrays a self-sacrificing brother intent on helping his sibling. The movie won the Special Jury Prize at the Venice Film Festival.

The 1963 Visconti film "Le Guepard" (The Leopard) starring Delon won the Palme d'Or, the highest honor at the Cannes Film Festival. His other films included Clément's "Is Paris Burning," with a screenplay by Gore Vidal and Francis Ford Coppola among others; "La Piscine" (The Sinners), directed by Jacques Deray; and, in a departure, Losey's "The Assassination of Trotsky" in 1972.

In 1968, Delon began producing movies — 26 of them by 1990 — part of a frenzied and self-assured momentum that he maintained throughout his life.

Delon's confidence was palpable in his statement to Femme in 1996, "I like to be loved the way I love myself!" This echoed his charismatic screen persona.

Captivate

Delon continued to captivate audiences for years — on the way courting criticism for comments deemed outdated. In 2010, he appeared in "Un mari de trop" ("One Husband Too Many") and returned to the stage in 2011 with "An Ordinary Day," alongside his daughter Anouchka.

He briefly presided over the Miss France jury but stepped down in 2013 after a disagreement over some controversial statements, which included critiques on women, LGBTQIA+ rights, and migrants. Despite these controversies, he received a Palme d'Honneur at the 2019 Cannes Film Festival, a decision that sparked further debate.

Born on Nov. 8, 1935, in Sceaux, just south of Paris, Delon was placed with a foster family after his parents' separation when he was 4. He then attended a Roman Catholic boarding school.

At 17, Delon joined the navy and was sent to Indochina. Back in France in 1956, he held various odd jobs from waiter to a carrier in the Paris meat market before turning to acting.

Delon had son Anthony in 1964 with his then-wife Nathalie Canovas, who played alongside him in Jean-Pierre Melville's "The Samurai" in 1967. He had two more children, Anouchka and Alain-Fabien, with a later companion, Rosalie van Breemen, with whom he produced a song and video clip in 1987. He was also widely believed to have been the father of Ari Boulogne, the son of German model and singer Nico, although he never publicly acknowledged paternity.

"I am very good at three things: my job, foolishness and children," he said in a 1995 L'Express interview.

Delon juggled diverse activities throughout his life, from setting up a stable of trotting horses to developing cologne for men and women, followed by watches, glasses and other accessories. He also collected paintings and sculptures.

Delon announced an end to his acting career in 1999, only to continue, appearing in Bertrand Blier's "Les Acteurs" (The Actors) the same year. Later he appeared in several television police shows. In 2022, in the last movie he made before his retirement, he starred with Juliette Binoche in "The Empty House," directed by Patrice Leconte.

His good looks sustained him. In August 2002, Delon told a weekly magazine, L'Humanité Hebdo, that he wouldn't still be in the business if that weren't so.

"You'll never see me old and ugly," he said when he was already nearing 70, "because I'll leave before, or I'll die."

However, it was in 2019 that Delon encapsulated his feelings about his life's meaning during a gala event honoring him at the Cannes Film Festival. "One thing I'm sure about is that if there's something I'm proud of, really, the only thing, it's my career."



Sylvie Ballyot, film director from France, poses with the award 'Mubi award-Debut Feature' of the 'First Feature' category for the movie 'Green Line' during a photocall at the 77th Locarno International Film Festival, in Locarno, Switzerland, Saturday, Aug. 17. (AP)



Kihn



Williams

Variety

NEW YORK: Maurice Williams, a rhythm and blues singer and composer who with his backing group the Zodiacs became one of music's great one-shot acts with the classic ballad "Stay," has died. He was 86.

Williams died Aug. 6, according to an announcement from the North Carolina Music Hall of Fame, which did not immediately provide further details.

A writer and performer since childhood, Williams had been in various harmony groups when he and the Zodiacs began a studio session in 1960.

They unexpectedly made history near the end with their recording of "Stay," which Williams had dashed off as a teenager a few years earlier.

Over hard chants of "Stay!" by his fellow vocalists, Williams carried much of the song and its plea to an unnamed girl. Midway, he stepped back and gave the lead to **Shane Gaston** and one of rock's most unforgettable falsetto shouts — "Oh Won't You Stay, Just a Little Bit Longer!"

Barely over 1 minute, 30 seconds, among the shortest chart-toppers of the rock era, the song hit No. 1 on the Billboard pop chart in 1960 and was the group's only major success.

But it was covered by the Hollies and the Four Seasons among others early on and endured as a favorite oldie, known best from when **Jackson Browne** sang it live for his 1977 "Running On Empty" album.

"Stay" also was performed by Browne, **Bruce Springsteen** and **Tom Petty** and others at the 1979 "No Nukes" concert at Madison Square Garden and appeared in its original version on the blockbuster "Dirty Dancing" soundtrack from 1987. (AP)



SAN FRANCISCO: Greg Kihn, a rock and roll musician best known for his '80s hit songs "Jeopardy" and "The Breakup Song," has died. He was 75.

Kihn died of Alzheimer's disease Tuesday, his management team said in a statement posted to Kihn's website.

Born July 10, 1949, in Baltimore, Kihn moved to the San Francisco area in the 1970s and was signed to Beserkley Records. With a songwriting style that blended folk, classic rock, blues and pop, his Greg Kihn Band had their first hit with "The Breakup Song," released in 1981.

In 1983, "Jeopardy" rose to No. 2 on the Billboard HOT 100 songs chart behind **Michael Jackson's** "Beat It." The song was also seen and heard regularly in the early years of MTV.

Kihn's albums often carried entertaining titles that played off his name — from "RockKihnRoll" and "Kihnntinued" to "Kihnntagious" and "Citizen Kihn."

Martha Quinn, an original MTV VJ, posted a tribute to him Thursday on social media, saying, "My condolences go out to his loved ones, and thank you Greg for the

Rock KIHN Roll."

"Weird Al" Yankovic did a parody of "Jeopardy" in the '80s called "I Lost on Jeopardy." Kihn said that he loved it and that it gave his song more of an afterlife than it might otherwise have had, Variety reported.

"It was a brilliant parody," Kihn said.

"He invited me to appear in his video, and I had a ball."

Kihn was also a longtime DJ starting in the mid-1990s for KUFJ radio in the San Francisco Bay Area and was a nationally syndicated nighttime radio host. (AP)

NEW YORK: Hettie Jones, an award-winning author, publisher and educator who was the first wife and early muse of the author-poet-activist **Amiri Baraka** and one of the few women in the Beat literary community, has died at age 90.

Jones died Tuesday, according to a statement released by her family. Additional details were not immediately available.

Born **Hettie Cohen** into a Yiddish-speaking family in New York City and a graduate of Mary Washington College, Jones was among many young bohemians who found a home in Greenwich Village in the 1950s and '60s and joined its thriving scene of writers, musicians, artists, actors and social commentators. On a given day, she would encounter **Ornette Coleman** or **James Baldwin** while out running errands or attend a party with Beat author **Jack Kerouac** and hear him gush that she had attended one of his readings and paid close attention.

"All night Jack kept running to me with different people: 'I didn't remember who she was,' he kept saying, 'but she was listening so hard at the reading, she was really listening to me — she understood what I said!'" she wrote in "How I Became Hettie Jones," a memoir published in 1990. (AP)



This image released by Netflix shows Lily Collins in a scene from 'Emily in Paris.' (AP)

Skin cancer makes up over 40pct of all cancer cases

Skin cancer awareness, early detection crucial to fight disease

'Triple therapy' effective in preventing diabetes

Diabetes seventh leading cause of death: Dr. Bou Abbas

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 18: Endocrine and hormone consultant Dr. Youssef Bou Abbas, founder of the Kuwaiti Obesity Diseases Association, has highlighted that diabetes ranks as the seventh leading direct cause of death, according to a recent report by the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), reports Al-Jarida daily.

The report revealed that heart disease remains the top cause of death, with over 60 percent of those affected suffering from

diabetes. Dr. Youssef Bou Abbas emphasized the importance of reducing heart disease and diabetes to lower mortality rates.



Dr. Bou Abbas

He advocates for preventing diabetes through a comprehensive approach, including "triple therapy"—a low-carbohydrate diet, daily walk-

ing, and weekly GLP1 agonist injections.

This combination, Dr. Youssef Bou Abbas notes, can lead to significant weight loss and improved management of type 2 diabetes, potentially aiding recovery for patients diagnosed within the past decade.

He stressed on the need for collaborative efforts to prevent and treat diabetes intensively to mitigate the risk of premature death from related heart diseases.

Chatbots using your data for AI training

How to keep chatbot conversations private: Opt-out options explained

LONDON, Aug 18, (AP): Be careful what you tell a chatbot. Your conversation might be used to improve the artificial intelligence system that it's built on.

If you ask ChatGPT for advice about your embarrassing medical condition, beware that anything you disclose could be used to tweak OpenAI's algorithms that underpin its AI models. The same goes if, for example, you upload a sensitive company report to Google's Gemini to summarize for a meeting.

It's no secret that the AI models underpinning popular chatbots have been trained on enormous troves of information scraped from the internet, like blog posts, news articles and social media comments, so they can predict the next word when coming up with a response to your question.

This training was often done without consent, raising copyright concerns and, experts say, given the opaque nature of AI models, it's probably too late to remove any of your data that might have been used. But what you can do going forward is stop any of your chatbot interactions from being used for AI training. It's not always possible but some companies give users the option:

Information

Google keeps your conversations with its Gemini chatbot to train its machine learning systems. For users 18 or older, chats are kept by default for 18 months, though that can be adjusted in settings. Human reviewers can also access the conversations to improve the quality of the generative AI models that power Gemini. Google warns users not to tell Gemini any confidential information or give it any data they don't want a human reviewer to see.

To opt out of this, go to the Gemini website and click the Activity tab. Click the Turn Off button and from the drop down menu, you can choose to stop recording all future chats or delete all your previous conversations. The company warns that any conversations that have been selected for human review won't be deleted and are stored separately. Whether you choose to turn your activity off or leave it on, Google also says all chats with Gemini will be kept for 72 hours to "provide the service and

process any feedback."

Gemini's help page also details the process for iPhone and Android app users.

Meta has an AI chatbot that's been butting into conversations on Facebook, WhatsApp and Instagram, powered by its open-source AI language models. The company says those models are trained on information shared on its platforms including social media posts and photos and caption info, but not your private messages with friends and family. They're also trained on publicly available information scraped from other parts of the web by "third parties."

Regulations

Not everyone can opt out. People in the 27-nation European Union and the United Kingdom, which have strict privacy regulations, have the right to object to their information being used to train Meta's AI systems. From the Facebook privacy page, click Other Policies and Articles from the list on the left side, then click the section on generative AI. Scroll down to find a link to a form where you can object.

There's a box to fill out with additional information to support your request, but no details about what you should say. I wrote that I was exercising my right as a U.K. resident to withdraw consent for my personal information to be used for AI training. I received an email almost instantly saying Meta had reviewed the request and would honor my objection. "This means your request will be applied going forward," it said.

People in the United States and other countries without national data privacy laws don't have this option.

Meta's privacy hub does link to a form where users can request that their data scraped by third parties not be used to "develop and improve AI at Meta." But the company warns it won't automatically fulfill requests and will review them based on local laws. The process itself is cumbersome, requiring users to provide the chatbot request that produced a response with their personal info and a screenshot of it.

There's no way to option to opt out for personal users. The best you

can do is delete your interactions with the Copilot chatbot by going to your Microsoft account's settings and privacy page. Look for a drop down menu labeled Copilot interaction history or Copilot activity history to find the delete button.

If you've got an OpenAI account, go to the settings menu on your web browser and then to the Data controls section, where you can disable a setting to "Improve the model for everyone." If you don't have an account, click on the small question mark at the bottom right of the web page, then click on settings, and you'll get the same option to opt out of AI training. Mobile users can make the same choice on the ChatGPT Android and iOS apps.

OpenAI says on its data controls help page that when users opt out, their conversations will still appear in the chat history but won't be used for training. These temporary chats will be kept for 30 days and reviewed only if needed to monitor for abuse.

Interactions

Elon Musk's X quietly activated a setting that allows the billionaire Tesla CEO's AI chatbot Grok to be trained on data from the social media platform. This setting has been turned on by default and allows Grok to use data including your posts, "interactions, inputs, and results" for training and "fine-tuning."

The change wasn't publicized and only came to light after X users spotted it in July. To opt out, you need to go to settings on X's desktop browser version, then click "Privacy and safety," scroll down to "Grok" and then untick the box. You can also delete your conversation history with Grok if you have any. There's no way to do it from the X mobile app, unfortunately.

Anthropic AI says its chatbot Claude is not trained on personal data. It also does not by default use questions or requests to train its AI models. However, users can give "explicit permission" for a specific response to be used in training by giving it a thumbs up or thumbs down or by emailing the company. Conversations that are flagged for a safety review could also be used to train the company's systems to better enforce its rules.

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 18: As summer brings its intense sun, awareness campaigns about the dangers of excessive sun exposure are intensifying. These campaigns emphasize the need to protect against harmful sun rays to prevent painful sunburns and reduce the risk of skin cancer, which can result from DNA changes caused by ultraviolet (UV) radiation.

Dr. Khaled Al-Saleh, Head of the Kuwaiti Cancer Awareness Campaign (CAN), underscores the pivotal role of public education in detecting cancer early. "Raising health literacy is crucial for identifying risk factors and recognizing early symptoms, which significantly boosts the chances of successful treatment," he told Al-Qabas daily.

Globally, skin cancer is on the rise, accounting for at least 40 percent of all cancer cases, particularly among those with lighter skin. Non-melanoma skin cancers, such as basal cell carcinoma and squamous cell carcinoma, are the most common, with 2-3 million new cases reported annually.

In Kuwait, however, skin cancer rates are relatively low. According to 2020 World Health Organization statistics, skin cancer deaths represented just 0.37 percent of total cancer deaths. Despite these low figures, Dr. Al-Saleh stresses the importance of continued awareness and early intervention to prevent future fatalities.

Skin cancer arises from abnormal cell proliferation in the skin, often triggered by frequent UV exposure. Skin cells normally reproduce in a regulated manner, but damage to DNA from UV rays can disrupt this process, leading to uncontrolled cell growth and cancer.



Dr. Khaled Al-Saleh

Dr. Al-Saleh explained that skin cancer can develop on sun-exposed areas or, less commonly, on areas not frequently exposed to sunlight, especially in individuals with darker skin.

Skin cancer is classified based on the cells affected such as:

Basal Cell Carcinoma (BCC): The most common and least severe form of skin cancer, usually appearing as a small, pearl-like bump

Squamous Cell Carcinoma (SCC): Often presents as a red, scaly patch or sore that doesn't heal.

Melanoma: The most aggressive type, characterized by changes in existing moles or the appearance of new, unusual growths. It is known for rapid spread and is the most dangerous form of skin cancer.

Signs of skin cancer can include a persistent, non-healing sore; a pearly or waxy bump on sun-exposed areas; red, irritated patches on the skin; changes in the color, size, or shape

of moles; new, unusual growths on the skin and hard, raised nodules or sores that don't heal.

The risk factors for skin cancer include fair skin, which offers less protection from UV rays; previous sunburns and excessive tanning; increased sun exposure, particularly in childhood and adolescence and weakened immune systems, such as those affected by leukemia or taking immunosuppressive drugs

Melanoma often emerges as a change in existing moles or as new, atypical growths. Normal moles are generally uniform in color and shape, while melanomas may show irregular edges, asymmetrical color, and rapid growth. Anyone noticing these changes should consult a dermatologist promptly.

To reduce the risk of skin cancer, Dr. Al-Saleh recommends:

■ Limiting sun exposure: Avoid prolonged sun exposure, especially during peak hours.

■ Protective clothing: Wear protective clothing, including wide-brimmed hats and long-sleeved garments, and use sunglasses.

■ Sunscreen: Apply broad-spectrum sunscreen with an SPF of 30 or higher. Reapply every two hours and after swimming or sweating.

■ Avoid tanning: Stay away from tanning beds.

■ Regular check-ups: See a dermatologist for any new or changing spots on the skin.

Raising awareness and adopting preventive measures are essential steps in reducing skin cancer risks and improving early detection and treatment outcomes.

Unusual and ambitious health study

Experts strive to find why heart disease rampant in the rural US

NEW YORK, Aug 18, (AP): Darrell Dixon's father was just 25 when he had a major heart attack in the rural Mississippi Delta. By his early 40s, a series of additional attacks had left his heart muscle too weak to pump enough blood to his body. He died in 2013 at the age of 49.

"It was a big jolt for our family," Dixon, 36, recalled. "For myself, personally, it also got me thinking about heredity. I just wondered whether I was next."

The death spurred Dixon to get involved in an unusual and ambitious new health study.

Public health experts from some of the nation's leading research institutions have deployed a massive medical trailer to rural parts of the South to test and survey thousands of local residents. The goal: to understand why the rates of heart and lung disease are dramatically higher there than in other parts of the US.

"This rural health disadvantage, it doesn't matter whether you're white or Black, it hurts you," said Dr. Vasan Ramachandran, a leader of the project who used to oversee the Framingham Heart Study - the nation's longest-running study of heart disease. "No race is spared, although people of color fare worse."

The researchers aim to test the heart and lung function of roughly 4,600 residents of 10 counties and parishes in Alabama, Kentucky, Louisiana and Mississippi while collecting information about their environments, health history and lifestyles. They are also giving participants a fitness tracker

and plan to survey them repeatedly for years to check for any major medical events.

Ramachandran, now dean of the University of Texas School of Public Health in San Antonio, said rural populations in the US rarely receive such personal, long-term attention from epidemiologists. More than a dozen institutions are helping with the study, including Johns Hopkins University, the University of California, Berkeley, and Duke University.

The 52-foot-long (16-meter-long), 27-ton trailer is outfitted with instruments that examine calcium in the arteries, the structure of the heart, lung capacity and other, more common health indicators such as blood pressure and weight. The initial exam can take more than three hours.

"They're reaching out and going out into the community in ways that I have not seen before," said Lynn Spruill, the mayor of Starkville, Mississippi, in Oktibbeha County, where the trailer arrived in 2022 and medical staff tested more than 700 people.

Disparity

Studies and data from US health officials show rural populations in the US are healthier and have lower life expectancy than Americans in urban areas. The health disparity is even greater in the South, where mortality rates from heart disease - the leading cause of death in the US - for people 35 and older are more than twice the national average in some rural communities. Lung conditions such as chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, or COPD,

which the study is also examining, are also more prevalent in the South.

Researchers have multiple theories for the disparity. Hospital closures and physician shortages have left many rural residents with limited access to care. Healthy food, fitness opportunities and public transit are often scarcer. Poverty rates are higher, and fewer people receive health coverage through their employers. In the rural South, poverty rates and the share of people without health insurance are even greater.

Smoking cigarettes is a major cause of heart disease, and at least 20% of adults smoked in Alabama, Kentucky, Louisiana and Mississippi, according to 2019 data from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Obesity is another factor. In 2022, self-reported height and weight put between 38% and 40% of adults in the four states in the obese body mass index category.

By closely examining local residents and their environments, the rural study seeks clearer answers about what's driving the additional health burden in the South. Researchers also want to understand what makes some rural counties there much healthier than others.

"We're interested in both the risk, but also the resilience piece of it," said Lindsay Pool, an epidemiologist with the National Heart Lung and Blood Institute, which has awarded more than \$40 million for the study.

To accomplish that goal, researchers are also visiting rural areas with low risk for heart and lung disease in three of the states - Louisiana, Mississippi and Kentucky - despite similar demographic

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SPORTS

Genoa hold Inter to draw despite Thuram double



Genoa's Koni De Winter, left, fights for the ball with Inter's Marcus Thuram during the Serie A soccer match between Genoa and Inter Milan, at the Luigi Ferraris Stadium in Genoa, Italy. (AP)

Sparks' home skid reaches five

Liberty beat Aces to bag 4th consecutive trip to playoffs

LAS VEGAS, Aug 18, (AP) Sabrina Ionescu had 23 points, Breanna Stewart scored 18 and Jonquel Jones added a double-double as the New York Liberty cruised to a 79-67 victory over the Las Vegas Aces on Saturday to earn their fourth consecutive trip to the playoffs.

Ionescu made 9 of 21 shots - 3 of 10 from 3-point range - and grabbed six rebounds as New York (23-4) maintained the best record in the league with its second road win over Las Vegas this season. The Liberty posted a 90-82 win in Las Vegas on June 15. The Aces beat the Liberty in last season's Finals to win their second straight championship.

Stewart added seven rebounds for

BASKETBALL

New York, which earned its sixth straight victory. Jones scored 10 points and snagged a season-high 17 rebounds. Leonie Fiebich pitched in with 12 points and seven rebounds.

A'ja Wilson finished with 24 points and 11 rebounds to pace Las Vegas (16-9). Kelsey Plum scored 11 of her 13 points in the first quarter. Chelsea Gray totaled 13 points, six rebounds and six assists.

Plum hit all four of her shots - two from 3-point range - to help the Aces take a 28-24 lead after one quarter. Plum's three-point play gave Las Vegas an 11-point lead, but Ionescu hit a jumper and a 3-pointer in the final 39 seconds to cap a 7-0 run and get the Liberty within four. Ionescu had 12 points in the first 10 minutes.

Kayla Thornton hit a turnaround jumper to begin the scoring in the second period and Ionescu followed with a 3-pointer to put the Liberty up 29-28. New York pushed its advantage to eight on an Ionescu floater, but Alysha Clark answered with a basket to get Las Vegas within 42-36 at halftime. The Aces hit 6 of 7 from beyond the arc to begin the game then missed 11 in a row heading into intermission. New York held Las Vegas to eight points in the second quarter.

Clark ended Las Vegas' 3-pointer drought - after 12 straight misses - with 3:52 left in the third quarter to pull the Aces within 50-47. Kennedy Burke sank a 3-pointer. Ionescu scored off a rebound, and the Liberty held the Aces

South Africa's du Plessis retains UFC title

PERTH, Australia, Aug 18, (AP) South African Dricus du Plessis took a flurry of body hits across four rounds before defeating Israel Adesanya by submission to retain his middleweight championship at UFC 305.

After scoring some early takedowns, du Plessis (22-2) had to withstand a flurry of body strikes from Adesanya through the middle rounds which appeared to be taking a toll on the 30-year-old South African as the fight progressed.

But a left hook followed by three rights helped bring Adesanya down which gave du Plessis the opening he wanted as he swiftly got the choke hold which forced the Nigerian-born New Zealander to tap out at 3:38 into the fourth round.

"This man is the king of getting back up," du Plessis said of Adesanya, who was bidding to become a middleweight champion for the third time. "I'm still alive, that's a bonus."

scoreless over the final 2:04 to build a 59-51 advantage after three quarters.

Stewart buried a 3-pointer 41 seconds into the final period to push New York's lead to double digits. Kiah Stokes and Gray made back-to-back 3-pointers and the Aces closed within 67-63 with 6:24 left to play. Fiebich answered with a 3-pointer, Ionescu sank two free throws, and Thornton connected from beyond the arc as the Liberty upped their lead to 12 with 4:46 remaining and weren't threatened from there.

It was the Aces' first game since the league took a month-long break for the Paris Olympics.



Las Vegas Aces forward Alysha Clark (7) picks off a pass intended for New York Liberty forward Breanna Stewart (30) during the first half of an WNBA basketball game in Las Vegas. (AP)

"I came here to die for this belt and to take a life. I'm still champion, baby."

Tensions ahead of Sunday's fight at the sold out RAC Arena at Perth, Australia had escalated after du Plessis, in response to Adesanya saying he'd take the belt back to Africa if he won, asked whether he would take his servants with him.

Despite the simmering animosity heading into the fight, which saw both fighters refrain from touching each other's gloves at the start, the pair appeared to reconcile immediately after the contest.

"I'm really sorry that it came across that I disrespected the fact that he's from Africa," Du Plessis said. "That was never my intention. Africa would have won regardless, but tonight South Africa was the victor."

It was the third time the South African has beat off challengers for the competitive middleweight division and

second time this year after he won with a split decision over Sean Strickland in January at UFC 297.

Next in line for du Plessis is a return title-defense bout with Strickland at a date to be determined.

The 35-year-old Adesanya (24-4) was making his first appearance since returning from an 11-month sabbatical after losing the middleweight title by unanimous decision to Strickland in Sydney in September last year but said Sunday's latest setback wasn't career-ending.

"This is the best I've ever felt. I'm 35, I'm doing the right things. I'm not ... leaving," he said.

Earlier, hometown favorite Steve Erceg's was defeated by a first-round technical knock out in his flyweight bout with New Zealand's Kai Kara-France. It was Erceg's first fight since he was unanimously outpointed by champion Alexandre Pantoja at UFC 301 in Brazil in May.

Lindsay Allen scored 16 points, Kamilla Cardoso and rookie Angel Reese posted double-doubles and the Chicago Sky rallied in the fourth quarter to beat Los Angeles 90-86, handing the Sparks their fifth straight loss at home.

Chicago (11-15) trailed 74-64 at the start of the final period, but a turnaround jumper from Allen and a Rachel Banham 3-pointer halved the Sky's deficit just 61 seconds in. Cardoso followed with a layup as Chicago scored the first seven points. Odyssey Sims answered with a layup for Los Angeles (6-20), but Reese had a layup and Cardoso scored twice inside to give the Sky a 77-76 lead with 6:35 left to play.

Stephanie Talbot pulled the Sparks even at 79 with a 3-pointer at the 4:43 mark. Reese hit 1 of 2 free throws to give Chicago the lead, Michaela Onyenwere followed with a layup and the Sky never trailed again.

Allen made 7 of 11 shots from the floor for Chicago. She added six assists. Cardoso scored 15 points and had 14 rebounds, while Reese tallied 14 points and 11 boards. Banham sank three 3-pointers and scored 14.

Parma draw at home to Fiorentina

MILAN, Aug 18, (AP) Marcus Thuram's double was not enough to let Inter Milan kick off its title defense with a win as a late penalty helped Genoa draw 2-2 in their Serie A opener.

Thuram had been a revelation in his first season in Italy with 15 goals and 14 assists across all competitions and he netted once in each half in Genoa to give Inter the lead after Alessandro Vogliacco's surprise opener.

SOCCER

However, Genoa was awarded a penalty deep in stoppage time and Junior Messias scored from the rebound after Yann Sommer saved his spot kick.

It was a rare Serie A match featuring two coaches who were also in charge of their teams last season. AC Milan is one of 14 teams which have a new coach in the league and Paulo Fonseca's first match in charge saw his team score two very late goals to salvage a 2-2 draw at home to Torino.

Simone Inzaghi's Inter ran away with the Serie A title last season and looked strong from the start in Genoa, with both Thuram and Hakan Calhanoglu having early chances.

But it was Genoa which took the lead in the 20th minute. Coach Alberto Gilardino had been forced to rebuild after losing his two main scorers in Mateo Retegui and Albert Gudmundsson and the opener came from an unlikely source.

A free kick was headed goalwards and Sommer appeared to have it under control but fumbled it onto the bar as he jumped backwards and Vogliacco was quickest to react on the rebound to poke it home.

It was the 25-year-old's first goal in more than 140 senior matches.

Thuram leveled 10 minutes later when he headed Nicolò Barella's cross from the right into the far bottom corner.

Inter was awarded a penalty shortly

afterwards but the referee revoked his decision after reviewing the incident on the pitchside monitor as Genoa captain Milan Badelj had got to the ball first and been kicked by Thuram, rather than the other way around.

The visitors came close to taking the lead just before halftime as first Yann Bisseck's shot was charged down, then Lautaro Martinez's follow-up was parried by Genoa goalkeeper Pierluigi Gollini and Federico Dimarco saw his effort on the rebound headed off the line by Badelj.

Dimarco had a goal ruled out for offside after the break and the flag went up again when Thuram had the ball in the back of the net six minutes from time with a delicious chip over Gollini. But it was adjudged to be on-side on VAR review.

Inter appeared to be heading for the win but in stoppage time half the Genoa bench were on their feet appealing for handball and another pitchside review deemed that Bisseck had handled the ball as he tried to head it clear.

Milan seemed all but certain to be heading for defeat a minute from normal time.

But then Álvaro Morata struck on his debut in the 89th minute - sticking out a boot to redirect a wayward shot into the back of the net - and Noah Okafor volleyed in the equalizer in the fifth minute of stoppage time.

Morata, who had two spells at Juventus, also had a goal ruled out and penalty decision in his favor revoked on his return to Serie A.

Torino had seemed comfortable following a first-half own goal by Malick Thiaw and Duván Zapata's header in the 68th.

Parma's first match back in Serie A ended with a 1-1 draw at home to Fiorentina, in Raffaele Palladino's debut in charge of the visitors.

Dennis Man curled in the opener for Parma in the 22nd minute but Cristiano Biraghi leveled in the 75th with an angled drive.

Fiorentina pushed for all three points but his chances diminished when defender Marin Pongracic was sent off in the 83rd following a second yellow card.

Palladino's former team, Monza, drew 0-0 at Empoli.

Visitors bag 2-match series

Maharaj helps SA secure 40-run win over Windies

PROVIDENCE, Guyana, Aug 18, (AP) South Africa bowled out West Indies for 222 to secure a 40-run victory on day three of the second test after Keshav Maharaj wrapped up the win with his fifth wicket of the match.

Maharaj became South Africa's most successful spinner in tests with 171 wickets after taking his tally to 13 in the series when he had Jayden Seales out for 4 for the last wicket.

That overshadowed a six-wicket haul by Seales in South Africa's second innings as the tourists were dismissed for 246 after resuming on 223-5.

That set the West Indies a winning target of 263 but they were in big trouble on 104-6 before Gudakesh Motie and Joshua Da Silva put together a 77-

run stand to give the hosts hope of a victory.

But Maharaj accounted for them both and then surpassed Hugh Taylor as South Africa's most successful spinner when Seales was caught by

CRICKET

David Bedingham at short leg to cue the South African celebrations.

South Africa scored 160 in its first innings after choosing to bat first and West Indies replied with 144.

The teams played to a rain-affected draw in the first test in Trinidad. The two-test series will be followed by three Twenty20 matches.

Salman relishes prospect of serving as Pak's sole spinner

RAWALPINDI, Pakistan, Aug 18, (AP) All-rounder Salman Ali Agha says he's excited by the prospect of serving as Pakistan's sole spin option in the upcoming first test against Bangladesh.

Pakistan's only specialist leg-spinner Abrar Ahmed was left out from the squad as Pakistan aims to prepare a green-top wicket to help its fast bowlers in the first of two test matches starting at Rawalpindi on Wednesday.

"I am excited to take up this challenge and I'm ready for it," Salman said at Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium ahead of the team's training session on Sunday.

"When I go out to bat, I only think that I am a batsman. Similarly, when I go out to bowl, I always think about bowling."

Rawalpindi will host both test match-

es in the series after the Pakistan Cricket Board moved the second test from Karachi due to the ongoing renovation work at the National Bank Stadium for next year's Champions Trophy.

Off-spinner Salman has picked up 12 wickets in 12 test matches and lately he has been bowling consistently in test matches. He bowled 76 overs and got three wickets during the last three-match test series in Australia when Abrar picked up an injury ahead of the series.

As a middle-order batter, Salman has scored 809 runs that include centuries against New Zealand at Karachi and his top-test score of 132 not out against Sri Lanka at Colombo last year. He also scored two half-centuries in Australia in a series that Pakistan lost 3-0.

Gomes' head injury overshadows Lille's win

Greenwood stars in Marseille debut

PARIS, Aug 18, (AP) Mason Greenwood scored twice in his debut for Marseille in a 5-1 victory over Brest in their French league opener, while Lille's game against Reims was halted for more than 30 minutes after Angel Gomes was knocked unconscious in a collision and needed lengthy treatment.

Greenwood, the former Manchester United forward who made a controversial move to Marseille this summer, had a hand in all five goals as he also provided two assists and won a penalty that Elye Wahi converted.

Greenwood's first Ligue 1 appearance was greeted with boos that echoed throughout the Francis-Le Blé stadium every time he touched the ball. The 22-year-old forward was arrested in 2022 and later charged with attempted rape, controlling and coercive behaviour and

assault. The case was dropped last year.

Brest, which finished third last season and is set to compete in the Champions League, struggled throughout the match. A missed penalty by Romain Del Castillo in the first half highlighted their lack of precision.

SOCCER

"This was not our level," Brest head coach Eric Roy said. "We gave them way too much space on the defensive end."

After PSG's 4-1 win over Le Havre in the season opener on Friday, Marseille leads the standings on goal difference after coach Roberto de Zerbi's first game in charge.

Lille's 2-0 victory over Reims was overshadowed by the serious head injury

sustained by Gomes, an English attacking midfielder, after a collision with Reims' Amadou Koné in the 11th minute. Gomes received medical attention for more than 20 minutes before being carried off on a stretcher. The 19-year-old Koné was shown a red card.

Lille later said on social media that Gomes had regained consciousness and was taken to a hospital for further evaluation.

"Angel is doing pretty well," Lille's club president Olivier Letang said. "But we'll wait to find out how he spends the night, with his additional tests, before saying that we have a clear happy ending."

When the match resumed after a 35-minute break, Lille quickly took control. Bafodé Diakité opened the scoring just before halftime, and Canadian striker Jonathan David sealed the victory in stop-

page time with a goal assisted by Ethan Mbappé, the younger brother of Real Madrid star Kylian Mbappé, who made his first appearance for Lille.

After the final whistle, both teams posed with a Reims jersey with the words "Take care Angel" written in French.

The final match on Saturday saw Monaco secure a 1-0 win against recently promoted Saint-Etienne after Takumi Minamino scored with a chip over the goalkeeper midway through the first half.

Minamino also appeared to have netted about 10 minutes earlier before it was disallowed following video review. That was the first of two goals canceled out by VAR, along with a second-half penalty kick that was originally awarded to Monaco. The other disallowed goal was one that briefly had Saint-Etienne thinking it had leveled the match in the 73rd minute.

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Limited-edition anniversary model to premiere at Monterey Car Week

The Porsche 911 Turbo 50 Years

STUTTGART/DUBAI, Aug 18: To mark the 50th anniversary of the 911 Turbo, Porsche is launching an exclusive anniversary model of its iconic sports car. The 911 Turbo 50 Years combines outstanding performance and the finest materials with exclusive design elements.

The interior and exterior evoke historic 911 Turbo models, complemented by timeless elegant and contemporary styling elements. An optional Heritage Design Package further refines the aesthetics of the anniversary model. Porsche has limited the 911 Turbo 50 Years, which is based on the last-generation 911 Turbo S, to 1,974 units in honour of the year in which the first 911 Turbo made its debut.

Unique anniversary model with Turbo feel and design

When it was introduced in 1974, the Type 930 Porsche 911 Turbo shifted the boundaries of what was possible. It brought the benchmark turbo technology from the 917/10 and 917/30 racing cars into a production sports car with superior performance and combined it with a unique design and unprecedented day-to-day usability.

The 911 Turbo 50 Years anniversary model – based on the 911 Turbo S introduced in 2019 – both pays tribute to and reinterprets this heritage. The standard side vinyl graphics are a nod to the historic livery of the Porsche 911 RSR Turbo presented at the Frankfurt Motor Show in 1973, itself a forerunner of the 911 Turbo. It features the current Porsche Turbo-exclusive colour Turbonite, which here makes its first appearance on a 911. Turbonite is also used on inlays in the rear engine cover, the fuel tank cap and in the Porsche crest. It is also being used as a contrasting colour in the Turbo 50 model logo. Another historical reference is the use of Anthracite Grey on the rear wing blade, rear apron, mirror base and air intake trims. A badge on the rear engine cover grille features a turbocharger icon and the years 1974–2024. When the door is open, the LED door projector projects the image of a turbocharger onto the ground next to the car. The 911 Turbo 50 Years comes with the 911 Turbo S Exclusive Design wheels in Turbonite as standard.

Interior recalls the zeitgeist of the 1970s

The interior of the 911 Turbo 50 Years is also redolent of Turbo history. As an exclusive tribute to the early Porsche 911 Turbo models, the iconic McKenzie tartan adorns the centre panels of the seat covers and the interior door panels. Additional contrasts in Turbonite further differentiate the car from the regular 911 Turbo S series-production model. These Turbonite accents include the seat belts, controls, decorative stitching, trim strips with decorative inlays in black leather and the



The interior of Porsche 911 Turbo.



Porsche 911 Turbo

Porsche crest on the GT sports steering wheel. An illuminated Turbo 50 logo, meanwhile, features on the door kick plates, which are finished in black brushed aluminium. The logo is embroidered into the headrests of the Adaptive Sports Seats Plus. There is also a Turbo 50 logo on the back of the left rear seat. Above the glove compartment is an anniversary plaque in aluminium, which bears both the Turbo 50 logo and the individual limited-edition number of the sports car. The A-pillar, sun visors and roof lining are upholstered in perforated Race-Tex. An analogue Porsche Design Sub-second clock with a special Turbo 50 design adorns the dashboard.

Even more history with Heritage Design package

The historically inspired, optionally available 50 Years of Turbo Heritage Design Package complements the anniversary model with numerous additional exclusive design and equipment features that hark back to the 911 Turbo models of the 1970s. The base colour of the Heritage Design Package is provided by the Aventurine Green Metallic paintwork. Alternative-

ly, both the standard 911 colours and Paint to Sample programme colours are also available. One component of the Heritage Design Package is a high-quality decorative graphic in White (satin finish) consisting of three elements: the lollipop with individually selectable car numbers between 0 and 99, the 50 years of Turbo logo and a Porsche logo. Those who prefer a minimalistic look can dispense with some or all of the graphic elements. The historic Porsche crest from 1964 is used on the front bonnet as well as on the centre caps of the Sport Classic wheels, painted in Brilliant Silver and White (satin finish). The Turbo 50 and Porsche logos on the rear are in Gold. In the interior, additional leather features and additional tartan design elements round off the anniversary model. The dashboard trim, glove box and seat backrest inlays are covered with the classic pattern. The historic Porsche crest is mounted on the steering wheel, while the centre console storage compartment bears the Porsche Exclusive Manufaktur logo embossed in the leather. The dials

in the instrument cluster and the Sport Chrono clock in the Heritage Design Package are finished in green.

Outstanding in performance, style and history

Technically, the Porsche 911 Turbo 50 Years is based on the 911 Turbo S that has been in production since 2019. Its 3.7-litre boxer engine with variable turbine geometry (VTG) twin turbocharging delivers 478 kW (650 PS) and 800 Newton metres of torque. With a kerb weight of 1,640 kilograms, the result is a power-to-weight ratio of 2.52 kg/PS. The 911 Turbo 50 needs just 2.7 seconds for the sprint from 0 to 100 km/h and hits 200 km/h in a mere 8.9 seconds. Power is transmitted to the wheels by the 8-speed dual-clutch transmission (PDK) and the active all-wheel-drive Porsche Traction Management (PTM) with Porsche Torque Vectoring Plus (PTV Plus), including the electronically controlled rear differential lock with fully variable torque distribution. A sports exhaust system with black tailpipes comes as standard. The 10 millimetre-lower Porsche Active Suspension Management (PASM) sports suspension and the lift system on the front axle are also included as standard, as are the LED matrix headlights, including the Porsche Dynamic Light System Plus. The brake callipers of the standard PCCB brake system feature a black finish.

Exclusive Chronograph for a timeless sports car

Exclusively for the owners of the 911 Turbo 50 Years, Porsche Design Timepieces is releasing a special timepiece as an homage to the anniversary model. The 911 Turbo 50 Years chronograph is equipped with the COSC-certified Porsche Design WERK 01.200 movement with flyback function. Like the vehicle, the watch is limited to 1,974 units and combines classic design with modern technology. Its black dial with elements in Turbonite is a perfect likeness of the timepiece on the dashboard. The strap, made of black vehicle leather with decorative stitching in Turbonite, features a folding clasp. The transparent case offers a view of the winding rotor in the same style as the wheels of the 911 Turbo 50. The limited-edition number engraved on the titanium housing corresponds to the limited-edition number of the vehicle. The chronograph is also available in a special version in conjunction with the Heritage Design Package.

Ready for immediate order

The limited-edition 911 Turbo 50 Years anniversary model can be ordered now. It can also be seen in the ongoing Beyond Performance – 50 Years of Porsche Turbo special exhibition at the Porsche Museum in Stuttgart-Zuffenhausen.

Whites near deal with Hashem

Kuwait Club signs Samido for the Arab Clubs Championship



Egyptian player Mamdouh Hashem.

By Khaled Al-Anzi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 18: Kuwait Club has secured a contract with former Burgan professional, Samido, who will join the team for the 39th Arab Clubs Championship. Kuwait Club will host the tournament at the Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Complex Hall from September 15-25. The club is also close to finalizing a deal with Egyptian player Mamdouh Hashem, currently playing in the French League, to strengthen its lineup for the same championship.

HANDBALL

Ahead of the Arab Championship, Kuwait Club will embark on an external training camp in Croatia from September 1-13, where it will engage in several friendly matches.

Following its participation in the Arab Championship, Kuwait Club will resume its postponed Federation Cup matches from last season. The team will then travel to Cairo for another

external camp before competing in the 27th Asian Handball Clubs Championships Championship to be hosted by Al-Rayyan in Qatar from November 13-24.

Meanwhile, Asian Handball Federation Sets Date for 27th Asian Men's Clubs League Championship Draw

The Asian Handball Federation has announced that the draw for the 27th Asian Men's Clubs League Championship "Super Globe Qualifiers - Egypt 2025" will take place on August 22. The draw will be held at the Qatar Handball Federation headquarters. The championship, featuring 11 clubs, will be hosted by Al Rayyan in Qatar from November 13-24.

Kuwait will be represented in the tournament by Kuwait Club and Kazma, alongside other teams including Al Rayyan (Qatar), Al Dhail (Qatar), Al Khaleej (Saudi Arabia), Sharjah (UAE), Al Shabab (Bahrain), Ahli Sidab (Oman), Al Karkh (Iraq), Uzbekistan, and Mes Kerman (Iran).

Alcaraz apologizes for his action at Cincinnati Open

CINCINNATI, Aug 18, (AP): Carlos Alcaraz has apologized for his behavior during afternoon's loss to Gael Monfils at the Cincinnati Open.

During the third set, Alcaraz destroyed his racket by repeatedly smashing it on the court in a rare show of frustration for the four-time Grand Slam winner. The No. 3 player in the ATP rankings lost 4-6, 7-6 (7-5), 6-4 to the 37-year-old Monfils.

Posting in Spanish on X on Saturday, Alcaraz said his attitude was not correct, and his actions should not have been done on the court. The 21-year-old added that it's difficult to control yourself when your heart rate is high, and he will work to ensure it doesn't happen again.

Alcaraz was playing his first match since earning a silver medal at the Paris Olympics after losing to Novak Djokovic, who also beat him last year in the Cincinnati final.

"I felt like it was the worst match that I've ever played on my career," Alcaraz said Friday. "I've been practicing really well. I was feeling great. But I couldn't play. I want to forget it and try to move on to New York."

The U.S. Open begins in New York on Aug. 26.

Marketa Vondrousova, the 2023 Wimbledon champion, and Cam Norrie pulled out of the U.S. Open because of injuries.

The 18th-ranked Vondrousova has been sidelined by a hurt hand, and the 47th-ranked Norrie has a forearm problem.

Vondrousova, a 25-year-old from the Czech Republic, won her first Grand Slam title at Wimbledon last year and was the runner-up at the 2019 French Open. She also won a silver medal at the Tokyo Olympics in 2021.

She hasn't played since a first-round loss at the All England Club in July, making her the first woman since 1994 to lose her opening match at a Wimbledon a year after winning the title.

Petra Martic replaces Vondrousova in the women's draw in New York, while Francisco Comesaña takes Norrie's spot in the men's bracket for the year's last Grand Slam tournament.

The draw for the U.S. Open is next Thursday; play begins on Aug. 26.

Kazma edge Salmiya in 7-goal thriller

Kuwait Club looks to continue fine form

By Hassan Musa

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 18: The second round of the Zain Premier League concludes with a single match between Kuwait Club and Fahaheel at Thamer Stadium, kicking off at 8:20 pm.

The Football Association postponed the match due to Kuwait Club's participation in the AFC Champions League 2 playoff, where it secured a 1-0 victory against Bahrain's Al-Ahli in a match held last Wednesday in Manama.

Both Kuwait Club and Fahaheel are aiming for their second consecutive win, with Kuwait Club defeating Al-Qadisiyah 1-0 and Fahaheel overpowering Khaitan 4-1 in the first round. Kuwait Club is in good form, having beaten a tough opponent at the start of the league and also qualifying for the AFC Champions League 2 group stage.

Fahaheel, on the other hand, hopes to capitalize on the high morale of its players after its resounding victory in the last match, though it knows the challenge ahead won't be easy.

SOCCER

In the same round, Kazma and played a thrilling match with Kazma coming from behind to win 4-3 at the Friendship and Peace Stadium.

Kazma secured its first win after a 0-2 loss to Al-Arabi in the opening round, while Salmiya missed the chance to notch its second victory after defeating Al-Nasr 3-1.

Salmiya took the lead through Brazilian Alex Lima in the 40th minute via a penalty, but Kazma responded with two goals from Brazilian Dudu, also from the spot, and Ahmed Al-Arsan, ending the first half 2-1.

In the second half, Kazma added two more goals through Colombian Hansel Zapata and Dudu, completing their quartet. Salmiya struck back late with goals from Muhannad Al-Muhamid and Saif Al-Hashan, but Kazma held on for the win.

Fortaleza beat Bragantino, go top of Brazil's Serie A

RIO DE JANEIRO, Aug 18, (Xinhua): Breno Lopes scored in the 90th minute as Fortaleza moved to the top of Brazil's Serie A with a 2-1 win at Bragantino.

Thomas Pochettino opened the scoring for the visitors by firing into the top-right corner after combining with Renato Kayzer.

But Pochettino went from hero to villain in the space of 10 minutes when he gave away a penalty for a rash challenge on Vinicius Pereira. Lincoln Henrique converted the resultant spot-kick to put the hosts on level terms.

Both sides had myriad chances to score in a free-flowing second half. It was Fortaleza who broke the deadlock as Lopes ran onto Kerwin Andrade's deft pass and sent his shot past goalkeeper Fabricio Souza and into the far corner.

Fortaleza goalkeeper Joao Ricardo, who made eight saves, said his side had proven it was among the title contenders.

"This was a very important victory," the 35-year-old said. "We are setting our goals high for this competition. This is a great win away from home but we have to keep our feet on the ground because there is a long way to go." Fortaleza are now two points clear of second-placed Botafogo while Bragantino are 11th in the 20-team standings, 18 points off the pace.

In other Brazilian Serie A fixtures on Saturday, Bahia won

2-0 at Gremio, Cuiaba drew 1-1 at Atletico Mineiro and Fluminense were held to a goalless home draw by Corinthians.

Rodrigo Castillo struck late to earn Gimnasia a 1-1 home draw with River Plate in Argentina's Primera Division on Saturday.

Ignacio Fernandez put the visitors ahead just before the hour with a low finish after combining with Franco Mastantuono.

The hosts had several chances to equalize in the second half but were repeatedly denied by the sharp reflexes of goalkeeper Jeremias Ledesma.

Castillo, who spent time at River Plate's youth academy as a teenager, finally made the breakthrough seven minutes from time when he volleyed home at the far post after Nicolas Colazo's floating cross from the left wing.

"Honestly, it wasn't my idea to celebrate the goal," Castillo told reporters after the match.

"The way we regrouped to get back on level terms in the final minutes made me react the way I did. I will always respect the club that opened the doors for me as a footballer." The result leaves Gimnasia 16th in the 28-team standings with 14 points from 11 games, two points behind eighth-placed River Plate.



Players challenging for the ball during Zain Premier League match.

Best of the Rest

Villa suffer home loss: Uganda's SC Villa suffered a 2-1 defeat to Commercial Bank of Ethiopia FC in the first preliminary round of the 2024/2025 CAF Champions League on Saturday.

The Uganda Premier League champions started on a high looking for an early goal at the Mandela National Stadium.

But it was the visitors who took the lead through Simon Peter Oketch after 20 minutes. After a defensive lapse, Oketch made no mistake in beating SC Villa goalkeeper Jeans Brady Wokorach.

Patrick Kakande should have leveled matters for SC Villa, but shot off the target from close range after 40 minutes.

SC Villa substitute Charles Lwanga was sent off after a nasty challenge on an opposite player.

SC Villa's coach Morley Byekwaso said he was not happy with the way they approached the first half because they gave the opponents lots of space. "But we improved later and we need to travel to Ethiopia for the return leg ready to fight on," added the coach.

SC Villa will now need to win by two goals in the return leg on August 24 to qualify for the second preliminary round. (Xinhua)

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Sao Paulo eye move for Rui: Sao Paulo have begun talks aimed at signing Portuguese left-back Mario Rui from Napoli, according to media reports in Brazil.

Rui's contract with Napoli runs until June 2026 but the 33-year-

old is seeking new horizons due to a lack of opportunities with the Italian club. Lance reported on Saturday.

The news outlet added that Sao Paulo manager Luis Zubeldia viewed Rui as an ideal replacement for Brazil U23 full-back Wellington, who will join Premier League side Southampton in January.

Brazil's mid-season transfer window ends on September 2 but Zubeldia is hoping to finalize a deal in the coming days, according to the report.

Rui has been capped 12 times for Portugal's national team in a career that has also included spells at Roma, Parma and Benfica, among other clubs. (Xinhua)

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Olympians to visit Macao: A delegation of Chinese mainland athletes returning from the Paris Olympic Games are to visit Macao from August 31 to September 2, the Macao Special Administrative Region's (SAR) Sports Bureau said Sunday at a press briefing.

The delegation will depart Hong Kong for Macao, where they will attend welcome activities organized by the SAR government, meet with local athletes and youths, participate in a gala, and visit the city's landmarks and local communities, said the bureau.

According to the briefing, Macao citizens may register for a chance to go to the gala which will be held on the evening of September 1 at the Macao East Asian Games Dome. (Xinhua)



Crystal Palace's Daniel Muñoz, left, and Brentford's Mathias Jensen battle for the ball during the English Premier League soccer match between Crystal Palace and Brentford at the Gtech Community Stadium, Brentford, England. (AP)

Sports

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Al-Hilal rout Al-Nassr for Super Cup

Ronaldo's early strike in vain

ABHA, Saudi Arabia, Aug 18, (AP): Cristiano Ronaldo is still waiting for his first domestic trophy in Saudi Arabia after Al-Nassr lost 4-1 to Al-Hilal in the Saudi Super Cup.

The five-time Ballon d'Or winner scored the opening goal just before halftime in the season's curtain-raiser between Saudi Pro League champion Al-Hilal and runner-up Al-Nassr.

However, the 39-year-old forward then cut a frustrated figure after Al-Hilal netted four times in 17 minutes in the second half, with former Newcastle and Fulham striker Aleksandar Mitrović getting two goals.

Ronaldo, who joined Al-Nassr in December 2022 and set a league record last season with 35 goals, scored from close range in the 44th minute after being teed up by

Abdulrahman Ghareeb.

Sergej Milinkovic-Savic scored 1-1 in the 55th, scoring first inside the area, and Mitrović then netted twice in six minutes. Brazilian winger Malcom added Al-Hilal's fourth to give the league champion a second successive Super Cup victory.

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"We showed how good we are in the second half," Mitrović said. "We had some problems in the first half and then changed in the second. We stayed calm and it feels good to get a trophy at the start of the season."

Al-Hilal, which is still waiting for Neymar to return from a knee ligament injury that has kept the Brazilian out since last October, kicks off its title defense against Al-Okhlood next Saturday. Al-Nassr takes on Al-Raed two days earlier.



Al-Hilal players celebrate after beating Al-Nassr to win the Saudi Super Cup.

Brentford 'top' Crystal Palace

LONDON, Aug 18, (AP): Brentford benefited from a fortunate bounce and a disputed refereeing decision to beat Crystal Palace 2-1 in their Premier League opener on Sunday despite striker Ivan Toney being left out of the squad ahead of a possible transfer.

Yoane Wissa bundled the winner into the net in the 76th minute after Palace goalkeeper Dean Henderson got his hands to a deflected shot by Nathan Collins but pushed it onto the legs of the Brentford forward.

It was the second time Brentford took the lead against the run of play, with Bryan Mbeumo having opened the scoring in the 29th before Palace equalized through an own goal by Ethan Pinnock.

Mbeumo's goal was doubly frustrating for Palace as it came just minutes after the visitors had a goal disallowed at the other end.

Eberechi Eze caught Brentford goalkeeper Mark Flekken out with a long-distance free kick from the right, hitting a shot straight into the net via the near post when Brentford was expecting a delivery into the box. However, referee Sam Barrott whistled for a foul on Palace midfielder Will Hughes as he jostled for position in a scrum of players on the edge of the area. While the decision enraged Palace manager Oliver Glasner, VAR could not review it as Barrott's whistle came before the ball had gone into the net.

And moments later, Mbeumo raced onto a ball down the right wing and then cut inside Marc Guehi to beat goalkeeper Henderson with a left-foot shot inside the far corner.

Palace continued to control proceedings and equalized when Daniel Muñoz met a cross with a header back across goal, and Pinnock pushed the ball into his own net as he tried to clear.

The visitors then had another goal disallowed for offside before Collins' winner.

Brentford manager Thomas Frank said before the game that Toney was left out of the squad because of "transfer interest," hinting that the England striker could be sold this month.

However, Guehi is in Palace's starting lineup despite Newcastle reportedly pursuing a deal for the England international.

Dortmund cruise past Lubeck in German Cup

Late drama as Leverkusen win German Supercup on penalties

Lewandowski brace propels Barcelona to 'winning' start

MADRID, Aug 18, (AP): Robert Lewandowski scored late in the first half and early in the second to give Barcelona a winning start in coach Hansi

Flick's Spanish league debut.

The goals by Lewandowski gave the Catalan club a 2-1 win at Valencia in its opening league match.

It was Flick's first official match in charge after he replaced former club great Xavi Hernández at the end of last season. "It was very important to debut with a victory," Flick said. "We made some mistakes in the first half but we improved in the second."

Valencia opened the scoring with a header by Hugo Duro in the 44th, but Barcelona rallied with goals by Lewandowski in first-half stoppage time and four minutes into the second half.

"The goal at the end of the first half was very important," Flick said.

Duro's goal was initially disallowed for offside, but video review determined it should stand.

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Lewandowski's first goal came after an assist from teenager Lamine Yamal, whose father was stabbed on Wednesday after an altercation near Barcelona. Mounir Nasraoui had to be hospitalized but his injuries were not life-threatening.

The 35-year-old Lewandowski gave Barcelona the lead by converting a 49th-minute penalty kick after forward Raphinha was fouled inside the area.

"My objective is to score goals. It's important to start the season like this to give us more confidence," Lewandowski said.

Flick used several players from Barcelona's famed La Masia youth academy, including Gerard Martín and 17-year-old Marc Bernal. Both made their first-team debut.

Barcelona defender Alejandro Balde had to be substituted in the second half because of an apparent muscle injury.

Barcelona, still struggling financially, finished second in the league last season, 10 points behind champion Real Madrid.

Promoted Leganes marked its return to the first division with a 1-1 draw at Osasuna.

The visitors opened the scoring through Juan Cruz in the 22nd before an own goal by Juan Soriano evened the score in the 79th.

Leganes had spent the last four seasons in the lower tier before winning the second division to earn promotion.

The club is owned by former Houston Astros general manager Jeff Luhnow, whose Blue Crow Sports Group has included investors from the United States, Mexico, El Salvador, Nicaragua and Canada.



Players of Bayer 04 Leverkusen celebrate victory after the 2024 German Supercup final match between Bayer 04 Leverkusen and VfB Stuttgart in Leverkusen, Germany. (Xinhua)

BERLIN, Aug 18, (AP): Bayer Leverkusen is taking its knack for late goals into the new season.

Patrik Schick equalized in the 88th minute to secure a 2-2 draw and Leverkusen went on to defeat Stuttgart 4-3 on penalties in the German Supercup.

Though it's considered the least important title of the season, both teams played as if it were the last.

Referee Tobias Stieler issued a host of yellow cards and sent off Leverkusen debutant Martin Terrier in the first half for an ankle-threatening tackle on Stuttgart's Ermedin Demirović.

Victor Boniface gave Leverkusen an early lead but Enzo Millot replied almost straight away and Stuttgart went on to hit the crossbar and the post.

SOCCER

Germany forward Deniz Undav put Stuttgart ahead 2-1 in the 63rd, a minute after coming on.

Leverkusen coach Xabi Alonso sent on Schick, Florian Wirtz and Jeremie Frimpong to boost his team's attacking threat for the final 15 minutes. As so often last season, his move paid off when Schick leveled the score in the 88th.

In the shootout, Leverkusen keeper Lukáš Hrádecký saved Frans Krätzig's effort before Silas missed the decisive spot kick for Stuttgart.

It was the first German Supercup game without Bayern Munich since 2011. Leverkusen went undefeated as it won the Bundesliga and Ger-

man Cup last season, while Stuttgart qualified by finishing runner-up in the league.

Ultras from both Leverkusen and Stuttgart boycotted the game, protesting because it meant the teams could not play their German Cup matches this weekend.

Borussia Dortmund crushed lower league side Lubeck 4-1 as three first-half goals set them on course for the second round of the German Cup.

BVB lived up to their billing as favorites from the kick-off and struck after less than three minutes. Pascal Gross' corner was headed home by Waldemar Anton at the far post.

As the game wore on, Dortmund dominated possession but couldn't find a way past a well-placed Lubeck defense. It was a fortunate penalty

that gave BVB their second goal qualified by finishing runner-up in the league.

Dortmund put the game beyond doubt just before the break when Gross' second assist of the night set up Julian Brandt for the third goal.

After the restart, Lubeck came out guns blazing as Obinna Iloka dispossessed Brandt before hammering the ball past Dortmund backup goalkeeper Alexander Meyer from the edge of the penalty area in the 55th minute.

The hosts gained momentum when Emanuel Adou danced through BVB territory before hitting the woodwork from the inside right on the hour mark.

Two minutes later, however, Dortmund took the wind out of Lubeck's sails when substitute Julien Duran-

ville restored a three-goal lead.

"It was a good start, and it was important that we won the game. There was no alternative. We can improve, but it was a good first competitive game. We've already shown good initial approaches," said Gross.

In other first-round matches, Leipzig came from behind to beat Rot-Weiss Essen 4-1. Borussia Monchengladbach also conceded an early goal, but the Foals bounced back to beat Erzgebirge Aue 3-1. Ruthless Heidenheim thrashed FC 08 Villingen 4-0. Junior Adamu's brace helped Freiburg to a 4-0 win over Osnabruck. Union Berlin battled their way into the second round as Yorbe Vertessen's sole goal gave them a 1-0 win over Greifswald, while Holstein Kiel edged Alemannia Aachen 3-2.



Patrik Schick (R) of Bayer 04 Leverkusen shoots to score during the 2024 German Supercup final match between Bayer 04 Leverkusen and VfB Stuttgart in Leverkusen, Germany. (Xinhua)



Barcelona's Lamine Yamal, centre left, and Valencia's Javi Guerra challenge for the ball during the Spanish La Liga soccer match between Valencia and FC Barcelona at the Mestalla stadium in Valencia, Spain. (AP)

Sheikh Nasser wins int'l endurance race



Sheikh Nasser bin Hamad crowned champion of the race.

BUDAPEST, Aug 18: Sheikh Nasser bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Representative of the King of Bahrain for Humanitarian Works and Youth Affairs and leader of the Royal Endurance Team, has emerged victorious in the Hungary International Endurance Race. This 120 km race was a key part of his final preparations for the upcoming World Championship in France next September.

Sheikh Nasser completed the challenging race in an impressive time of 7 hours, 22 minutes, and 59 seconds. Despite the tough terrain and demanding stages, he demonstrated exceptional skill and determination to secure first place.

Sheikh Nasser highlighted that this win serves as a significant boost ahead of the World Championship, which promises to be even more challenging. He noted that the Hungary International Race is one of the toughest events on the European endurance circuit, given its difficult terrain.

The race in Hungary marks the Royal Endurance Team's final European preparation before heading to the World Championship.