



cricket Page 16



Cabinet enhances governors' role to implement development plans

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 21, (KUNA): The Kuwaiti Cabinet approved a draft bill to amend some articles of Act 81 (2014) on governorates' affairs with a view to activating the governors' supervisory powers in the implementation of the state policy and the development plan.

The amendments aim to promote the government services across the country and highlight the civilized aspect of the State of Kuwait, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Shereeda Abdullah Al-Mousherji said after the weekly Cabinet meeting.

The meeting, held at Bayan Palace on Tuesday under the



PM Diwan photo

Some of the ministers at the Cabinet meeting.

chairmanship of His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, heard a presentation by First Deputy Prime Minister, Defense and Interior Minister Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah on the Sovereign instructions regarding enhancement of governors' participation in national development.

The Cabinet tasked the ministers with coordination with governors and meeting their demands related to improvement of services for citizens and residents, Al-Mousherji noted.

The Cabinet members welcomed the return of Deputy Prime Minister and Oil Minister Dr. Imad Mohammad Al-Atiqi safely to the country after a health problem he underwent abroad.

They wished Dr. Al-Atiqi everlasting wellbeing to continue contributing to the welfare of the country and the people. Minister of Information and Culture Abdulrahman Bdah Al-Mutairi offered a presentation on the agenda of the National Council for Culture, Arts and Literature (NCCAL) for the celebration marking the selection of Kuwait as Capital of Arab Culture 2025.

The events on the agenda highlight Kuwait's trailblazing role in culture and the joint Arab efforts to promote cultural movement, Al-Mutairi told the Cabinet.

The meeting also heard a presentation by Minister of Social Affairs, Labor, Family and Childhood Affairs, and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Dr. Amthal Hadi Al-Huwailah about the preparations for Kuwait hosting of the 26th Arabian Gulf Cup (Khaleeji 26) between December 21, 2024, and January 3, 2025.

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Amir gets Saudi invitation to grace forum



Amiri Diwan photo

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah receives a message from the Saudi Crown Prince, delivered by Saudi Ambassador to Kuwait Prince Sultan bin Saad Al-Saud.

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 21, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received Wednesday an invitation from Saudi Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman Al-Saud, to attend the Future Investment

Initiative Forum 2024, to be held in the capital, Riyadh, next October. The invitation was handed to His Highness the Amir by the Saudi Ambassador to Kuwait Prince Sultan bin Saad Al-Saud.

Inflation rates in July surged three percent

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 21, (KUNA): The Consumer Price Index (CPI) in Kuwait recorded a 3% year-on-year increase in July 2024, according to data released by the Kuwait Central Statistical Bureau (KCSB). The KCSB also reported a slight month-on-month rise of 0.15% compared to June, attributing the overall inflation to price hikes in key sectors such as clothing, food, education, and housing.

The food and beverage sector saw a notable increase, with prices rising by 5.89% compared to July 2023. The clothing sector followed closely, with a 5.63% increase. Other significant contributors to inflation included home furnishings (up 3.79%) and health services (up 4.07%).

Housing services experienced a more modest rise of 0.91%, while transportation costs increased by 0.49% compared to the same period last year. The communications sector also saw a 2.45% rise, while entertainment and cultural expenses grew by 2.35%. Education costs increased by 0.96%.

The hospitality industry, including restaurants and hotels, saw a 2.52% increase, and various goods and services rose by 4.86%. Excluding the food and beverage sector, the overall inflation rate in Kuwait for July stood at 2.35% on a year-on-year basis, reflecting a broad-based increase across multiple sectors.

Mangaf 'fire-related' firm banned from bidding: KPC

By Najeh Bilal

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 21: The Higher Tenders Committee at Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) has banned the company, which owns the Mangaf property where the fatal fire incident occurred in June and claimed the lives of dozens of Asians, from participating in any tender floated by the corporation and its subsidiaries, say sources privy to the affairs of the committee.

In this regard, an official source from the corporation told the newspaper that he finds this procedure surprising, considering the Public Prosecution had already referred the company's case file to the Investigations Department in preparation for its referral to the Misdemeanor Court, not the Criminal Court.

The source pointed out that the company has high level of expertise in this field, stating the company was established in 1977 and has operations in Kuwait and the Gulf region.

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Newswatch

CAIRO: Egypt's Foreign Minister **Badr Abdelatty** and UN Secretary General **Antonio Guterres** on Wednesday collectively urged an "immediate" ceasefire in the Gaza Strip, subsequently allowing humanitarian aid to pour into the Palestinian enclave.

Discussing the current developments in the Gaza Strip in a conversation over the phone, the Egyptian top diplomat told the UN chief that the wider Middle East region has witnessed a "dangerous escalation" of violence, while Cairo is doing everything in its power to contain the unrest, the minister



Guterres

underlined. (KUNA)

DUBAI: A Greek-flagged oil tanker traveling through the Red Sea came under repeated attack Wednesday, leaving the vessel "not under command" and drifting ablaze after an assault suspected to have been carried out by Yemen's Houthi rebels, the British military said.

The attack, the most serious in the Red Sea in weeks, comes during a monthlong campaign by Houthis targeting ships over the ongoing Israel-Hamas war in the Gaza Strip that has disrupted a trade route through which \$1 trillion in cargo typically passes each year. (AP)

BAGHDAD: Six people from one family were killed in an attack by Islamic State (IS) militants on their home in Iraq's Salahudin province Wednesday, said the provincial police.

The attack occurred in the morning when the militants stormed a house in a village near the city of Samarra, some 120 km north of Baghdad, killing a man, two women, and three children. Colonel **Mohammed al-Bazi** from the media office of the police command of the Salahudin province told Xinhua. (Xinhua)

Private sector faces hike in fines for not hiring Kuwaitis

PM seeks 50 percent youth in oil sector: study



KUNA photo

The Minister of Health Dr. Ahmad Al-Awadhi instructing the medical staff at the new fertility unit.

Pledge to provide better health services

New fertility unit opened in Farwaniya Hospital

By Marwa Al-Bahrawi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 21: Minister of Health Dr. Ahmed Al-Awadhi has inaugurated the Fertility and Assisted Reproduction Unit at the new Farwaniya Hospital.

In a press statement during the opening ceremony, Al-Awadhi emphasized that this unit is an added value to the health system and a qualitative leap in medical services.

He also disclosed this is the third such unit in the country; preceded by the Fertility and Assisted Reproduction units at the Maternity Hospital and Jahra Hospital.

He affirmed that it is a remarkable achievement, reflecting the Health Ministry's commitment to provide the best healthcare services to the people of Kuwait, in addition to its contribution to the effort to reduce the waiting period for patients.

He said the unit has the most competent Kuwaiti consultants and specialists who can greatly contribute to the ongoing efforts to provide the best medical services in accordance with the latest international standards.

Meanwhile, Chairperson of the Obstetrics and Gynecology Departments Council and Director of the Obstetrics Department at Farwaniya Hospital Dr. Amal Khader revealed that the opening of the unit is a manifestation of the hard work and dedication of the ministry's employees -- medical, nursing and

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Kuwait offer to host talks on Palestinian support gets nod

CAIRO, Aug 21, (KUNA): An Arab gathering in the Egyptian capital Cairo on Wednesday urged support for the Palestinians in efforts to limit the risk of environmental disasters, allowing them to build a national system to bring that goal to fruition.

The talks that brought together environment ministers from across the wider region to discuss efforts to curtail the risk of environmental disasters, yielded a number of significant decisions including a Kuwait initiative to host talks on the matter slated for October.

The ministers collectively warned of the "perils" posed by the open warfare launched by Israeli occupation forces against the Palestinians, which could be detrimental to the wider Arab region as a whole, they agreed, slamming the "double standards" by which the international community is dealing with the issue.

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Kuwait steadfast on 'boycott'; pro-Israel eateries bear brunt

By Najeh Bilal

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 21: The boycott of certain restaurants and brands that support Israel has become a key tool for those standing in solidarity with Gaza.

According to experts, this campaign is crucial to curbing financial support for companies linked to the Zionist entity. Since the outbreak of the war, the boycott has reportedly cost well-known companies over \$50 billion in losses.

This sentiment resonates strongly in Kuwait, where people are determined to continue the boycott as a means of expressing solidarity with the Palestinian cause.

Sources revealed to Al-Seyassah that the ongoing boycott by Kuwait and the wider Arab and Islamic world against restaurants and companies supporting Israel has led to losses exceeding \$50 billion since the outbreak of the Israeli war on Gaza until mid-2024.

As evidence, a manager of a well-known international restaurant stated that a prominent franchise system suffered losses of no less than \$7 billion in the first quarter of 2024 alone.

Muhammad Al-Furaih, the former head of the Food Specifications Department at the Ministry of Commerce and Food Security Advisor, emphasizes the importance of continuing the Kuwaiti popular boycott of establishments that back the Israeli entity.

He highlighted Kuwait's strong stance in support of the Palestinian people and notes that the boycott has already inflicted billions of dollars in losses on Israel.

Al-Furaih expressed hope that the boycott will extend to all international companies and restaurants with branches worldwide, urging these nations to reconsider their sup-

port of the Zionist entity. In his view, the economic boycott remains the only effective weapon for the Arab peoples at this time.

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KUNA photo

Kuwait MPW's officials and UAE's Fujairah Corporation at the MoU signing ceremony.

Focus on quality of gravel as Kuwait and Fujairah ink MoU

By Mohammad Ghanem

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 21: The Ministry of Public Works announced the signing of a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the Fujairah Natural Resources Corporation of the United Arab Emirates on Wednesday for the import

of gravel to the State of Kuwait, in the presence of the Director General of the Fujairah Natural Resources Corporation, Ali Mohammed Qasim.

The Acting Undersecretary of the Ministry of Public Works Eid Al-Rashidi said the memorandum comes

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Prayer Timings

Fajr	03:55	Asr	15:26
Sunrise ..	05:19	Maghrib ..	18:23
Zohr	11:51	Isha	19:44

Local

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

Weather

Expected weather for next 24 hrs:

By Day: Hot and humid with light variable wind to light to moderate southeasterly wind, with speeds of 10-38 km/h.

By Night: Hot to rather hot and humid with light to moderate

southeasterly wind to light variable wind, with speeds of 08-32 km/h with a chance for light fog forming over some areas.

Station	Max Exp	Min Rec
Kuwait City	45	38

Kuwait Airport	46	30
Abdaly	47	31
Jahra	46	33
Salmiyah	42	37
Jal Aliyah	46	30
Nuwaisib	46	32
Wafra	45	29

New committee's work to focus on five key areas

PADA seeks to boost financial benefits for persons with disabilities, caregivers

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 21: The Public Authority for the Affairs of Persons with Disabilities (PADA) is intensifying efforts to review and enhance the financial benefits and entitlements provided to persons with disabilities and their caregivers, reports Al-Rai daily.

This initiative follows directives from Dr. Amthal Al-Huwailah, the Minister of Social Affairs, Family and Childhood Affairs, and Minister of State for Youth Affairs, to ensure the efficient allocation of these benefits to genuinely deserving individuals.

The minister is forming a technical committee to be headed by Al-Humaidi Al-Mutairi, the Acting Director General of PADA.

The committee, which includes representatives from seven government agencies, will conduct a thorough review of Law No. 8 of 2010 concerning the rights of persons with disabilities.

The review aims to provide a comprehensive evaluation of the law's provisions and applications, leading to practical proposals

and recommendations for improvements.

The committee's work will focus on five key areas such as reassessing the criteria and conditions for caregivers to receive financial support and reviewing how financial and in-kind benefits are allocated to this category of people and their caregivers.

This is in addition to determining how well the current procedures improve the quality of life for persons with disabilities and to promote their independence and establishing stronger oversight to ensure that only eligible individuals receive benefits and preventing misuse.

The legal basis will be assessing the alignment of the law with the principles of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), to which Kuwait is a signatory.

This initiative underscores Kuwait's commitment to enhancing support systems for persons with disabilities while maintaining transparency and fairness in the distribution of resources.

Beware of investing in global markets without proper licensing: 'Commerce'

Unlicensed trading firms targeting Kuwaiti investors

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 21: Currency traders in Kuwait have recently uncovered new fraudulent tactics employed by certain companies under the guise of "smart copying" in global markets, including gold, energy, and currency trading, reports Al-Jarida.

Affected investors explained that these companies promote "smart trading," which involves copying the trading orders of global traders without guaranteeing successful outcomes. This lack of assurance has led to significant financial losses for some investors – up to 80% of their investments. The companies in question claim that the losses are beyond their control, attributing them to the volatile nature of global markets and regional geopolitical conditions.

One investor, who experienced losses after trading in gold – despite its substantial gains globally this year – called on regulatory authorities to address these emerging fraud schemes. They emphasized the difficulty in distinguishing between legitimate and fraudulent trading companies, particularly with the proliferation of electronic trading platforms. Novice traders are especially vulnerable, often falling victim to unlicensed firms disguised as legitimate entities.

Government agencies face challenges in tracking these companies, especially those licensed abroad, which mislead Kuwaiti investors into believing they hold local licenses. While some firms claim to operate with official permits, others engage in deceptive practices such as price manipulation or stock tampering, deliberately causing losses for traders. These companies exploit the lack of investment knowledge among many investors.

Verifying

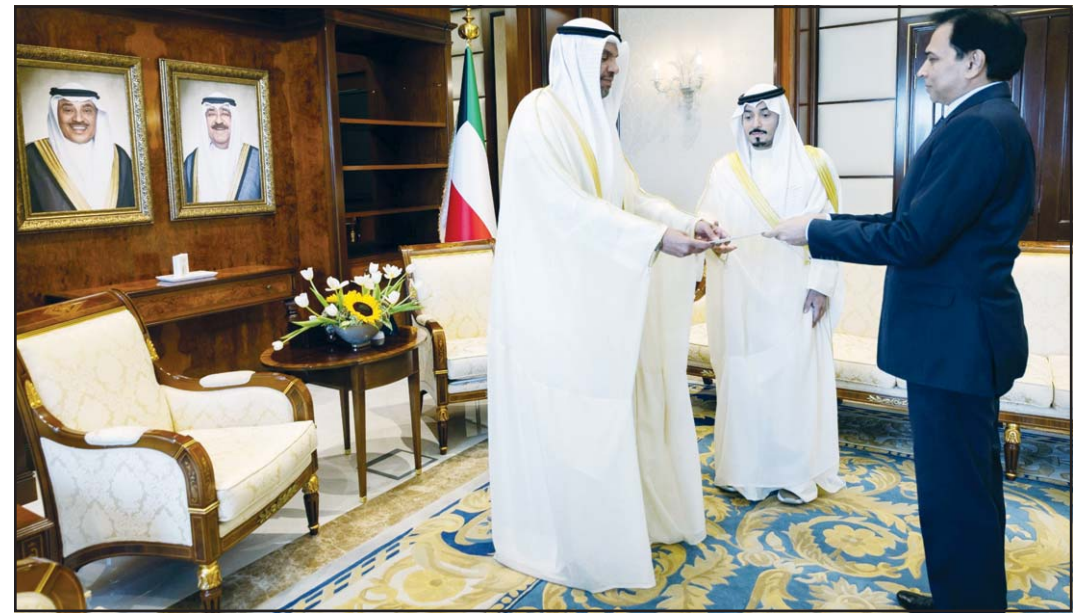
Sources stressed the importance of verifying the licenses of these trading firms, as they fall under the jurisdiction of regulatory bodies. Investors are urged to verify the legitimacy of companies by checking their license numbers with relevant authorities. The rapid growth of Kuwait's trading market has made it an attractive target for scammers, who continuously evolve their methods to capitalize on the ambitions of investors seeking quick profits.

Among the latest fraud techniques are the use of advanced technologies, including artificial intelligence, to deceive traders. Fake trading platforms are also a common method, with scammers creating bogus platforms that mimic the names of well-known, licensed companies or presenting themselves as promising new firms. Investors are lured in by enticing offers and unrealistic profit claims, only to realize they've been duped when they attempt to withdraw their funds.

Social media has become another avenue for fraud, with scammers setting up fake accounts posing as trading experts or successful international investors. These fraudsters share fabricated trading results and provide misleading investment advice to attract unsuspecting victims. Additionally, "groups" operating beyond the reach of regulatory oversight use text messages to send investment offers or warnings about potential losses, further enticing investors into unsafe investments.

New investors are often enticed with lucrative offers, such as large deposit bonuses or promises of doubling their profits quickly. These fraudulent platforms may also manipulate prices and fees, resulting in further losses for investors.

In response, regulatory authorities have made several attempts to regulate the trading market, focusing on monitoring companies that operate as brokers. Their goal is to protect investors from fake trading firms and marketing companies that use brokerage roles in Forex, currency, and metal trading as a cover for scams. The Ministry of Commerce and Industry has issued warnings against investing in global markets without proper licensing, aiming to curtail the spread of these fraudulent activities

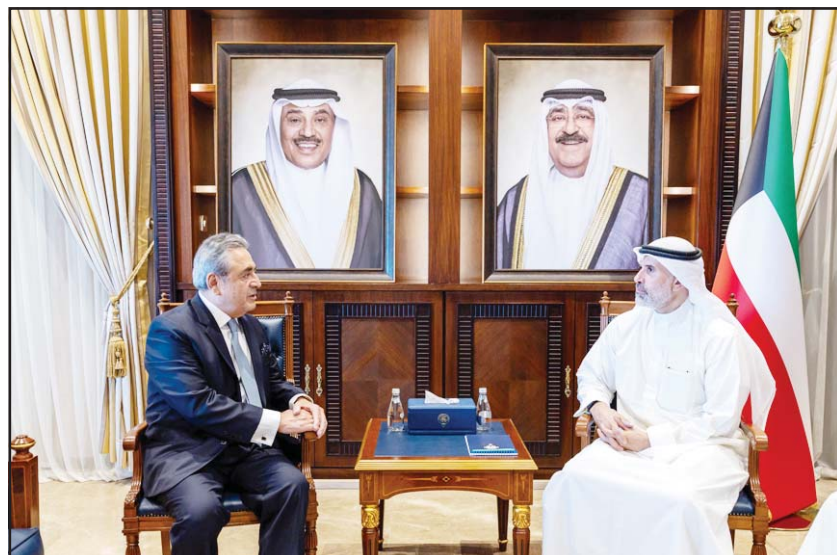


The Minister of Foreign Affairs receives a copy of the credentials of the Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan.

FM receives credentials of new Pakistani ambassador

Kuwaiti Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Al-Yahya received on Wednesday, the credentials of the new Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan to

Kuwait, Zahir Iqbal. During the meeting, Al-Yahya wished the new ambassador success in his tasks and further boosting ties between the two nations. (KUNA)



Deputy FM Sheikh Jarrah Jaber receives the ambassador.

Deputy FM receives ambassador of Peru

Deputy Foreign Minister Ambassador Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah received Wednesday Peru's

Ambassador to Kuwait Carlos Manuel Alfredo Velasco Mendiola, on the occasion of the end of his tenure. (KUNA)



Ahmadi Governor Sheikh Hamoud Jaber receiving Omani Ambassador Al-Kharousi.

Sheikh Hamoud receives Al-Kharousi

Ahmadi governor, Omani envoy discuss ways to boost joint co-op

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 21: Ahmadi Governor Sheikh Hamoud Jaber Al-Ahmad hosted Ambassador Saleh Al-Kharousi of the Sultanate of Oman at the governorate's general office, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The discussion focused on the strong bilateral relations between Kuwait and Oman and explored ways to further enhance cooperation across various fields.

Sheikh Hamoud Jaber extended his best wishes to Ambassador Al-Kharousi, expressing his hope for the ambassador's

success in advancing the relationship between the two countries.

He emphasized the importance of strengthening these ties both bilaterally and within the framework of the Gulf Cooperation Council.

Ambassador Al-Kharousi conveyed his gratitude for the warm reception and the exceptional hospitality extended to the Omani diplomatic mission and its citizens in Kuwait. He highlighted the deep connection between the people of Oman and Kuwait, underscoring their shared destiny and enduring bonds.

'Funds estimated at \$2.5 billion'

Iraq commends Kuwaiti efforts in recovering embezzled funds

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 21: The Iraqi ambassador to Kuwait, Al-Manhal Al-Safi, has expressed his deep appreciation to the Kuwaiti government for its diligent efforts in addressing the issue of recovering looted Iraqi funds, reports Al-Jarida daily.

The funds in question, estimated at \$2.5 billion, are connected to a tax money theft case involving two people holding Kuwaiti nationality.

Al-Safi said Judge Haider Hanoun, head of the Integrity Commission praised Kuwait's commitment to supporting anti-corruption and money laundering initiatives.

Al-Safi also highlighted the desire to establish a memorandum of understanding between Iraq and Kuwait to further combat corruption and protect foreign investors, including Kuwaiti investors, in Iraq. This commitment, he said, includes

cooperating with Iraq to strengthen judicial and regulatory ties between the two countries.

Counselor Saad Al-Safran, the Public Prosecutor, underscored Kuwait's dedication to combat corruption, which aligns with its national priorities.

A legal complication has arisen concerning the extradition of the accused individuals, who hold both Kuwaiti and Iraqi nationalities.

The extradition request was made directly to Kuwaiti authorities rather than through Interpol. The case, known as the "theft of the century," involves the theft of \$2.5 billion from a government bank, and Kuwait is now actively involved in this high-profile investigation.

The Kuwaiti authorities have pledged to revoke the citizenship of the accused and take measures to freeze and seize their assets.



Kuwait Red Crescent Society implements drinking water project in Gaza Strip.

KRCS provides potable water to displaced people in Gaza

The Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) announced Tuesday the implementation of a project to provide clean drinking water for displaced people in shelters in central and southern Gaza Strip.

In a statement to KUNA, Secretary-General of KRCS Maha Al-Barjas said that the Israeli occupation aggression on the Gaza Strip destroyed

hundreds of water and sanitation facilities, causing acute shortage in clean water supplies.

The water distribution project has benefited more than 30,000 people in the 19 Khan Younis camps under the supervision of the Taawon (Welfare Association) organization in the Gaza Strip. (KUNA)

'Total aid ... now stands at one million meals'

United Nations WFP praises Agility's significant contribution to Gaza Strip

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 21: The United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) has expressed its gratitude for Agility's latest donation, which marks a significant milestone in their support for Palestine, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

Agility, a global leader in supply chain services and innovation, has contributed one million meals to the Gaza Strip through WFP since the end of 2023.

Tarek Sultan, Vice Chairman of Agility, praised the company's employees for their bravery and dedication in delivering humanitarian aid.

"Since our initial involvement, Agility has worked closely with WFP in over 20 countries. We've supported their efforts to provide food aid and offered supply chain services and logistical resources to humanitarian relief organizations worldwide," Sultan said.

This generous contribution will enable WFP to provide approximately 779,000 hot meals to Gaza's most vulnerable populations, addressing the severe hunger crisis exacerbated by ongoing challenges. The total aid from Agility and its employees now stands at one million meals,

a testament to their commitment to alleviating food insecurity in the region.

Mageed Yahia, WFP Representative to the GCC, emphasized the critical nature of Agility's support. "Agility's contribution comes at a crucial time for Palestine, where food insecurity and humanitarian needs are escalating. The involvement of the private sector, especially leaders like Agility, is essential to our mission of ending hunger and providing life-saving assistance."

Agility's ongoing support highlights the important role of private sector engagement in addressing global humanitarian crises and reinforces the collective effort needed to tackle such pressing challenges.

In the Gaza Strip, WFP is at the forefront of efforts to stave off famine and address worsening humanitarian conditions. Agility's recent donation underscores its leadership in humanitarian efforts, furthering its role as a member of the Logistics Emergency Team (LET).

This alliance, founded by Agility, the World Economic Forum, and three leading global transportation firms, focuses on

delivering essential logistics supplies for emergency support.

Agility's long-standing partnership with WFP, which began in 2008, has been crucial in enhancing the program's emergency response capabilities. The company has supported humanitarian efforts across more than 75 crises by providing expertise and free logistics services such as transportation and warehousing.

In July alone, WFP assisted 1.1 million people, with nearly 1 million in Gaza receiving in-kind food rations and around 150,000 in the West Bank receiving cash assistance.

However, WFP requires \$303 million by the end of the year to maintain vital support for Gaza and the West Bank.

The latest Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) reports reveal that 96 percent of the population in Gaza faces acute food insecurity, with nearly half a million in catastrophic conditions. The situation calls for continued and expanded humanitarian aid, including fresh food, improved dietary diversity, clean water, sanitation, healthcare access, and the rebuilding of essential facilities like clinics and hospitals.

diwaniya ديوانية

A DIGEST OF PUBLIC OPINION

'Choosing silence over anger can lead to personal victory'

"THERE are times when silence is the most appropriate and powerful response to certain situations. Silence often speaks louder than empty or meaningless words," columnist and former deputy director-general of Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) **Iqbal Al-Ahmed** wrote for *Al-Qabas* daily.

"They say that staying silent when angry is a sign of strength, and when provoked, it's a form of victory. Wise people always advise against responding or making decisions in anger, as the consequences can be disastrous, often turning situations on their head.



Iqbal Al-Ahmed

"That's why silence in moments of anger is truly a sign of strength. Controlling the inner turmoil, which could otherwise erupt like lava and burn, damage, and sting our relationships -- no matter how strong or close they may be -- is vital. Silence cools the heat of this lava and halts its spread before it reaches the delicate threads of love, respect, and connection.

"When you remain silent despite being provoked, you're winning a battle within yourself. Provocation is often a cheap attempt to expose your vulnerabilities. By exercising patience, you rely on your inner strength, allowing it to grow and shine even brighter.

"The most admirable silence is the one you maintain when wronged. In these moments, your silence reflects your wisdom, strength, and the depth of your character.

"It's easy to lash out when offended, but staying silent during such times allows you to feel yourself growing internally while also earning respect in the eyes of others. It's the height of good manners to remain silent when someone offers advice, even if they are younger in age, position, or experience.

"Silence in need speaks of dignity. We are often irritated by those who beg persistently, or who repeatedly express their wants and needs. Yet, the truly needy person is the one who remains silent, trusting that those with a compassionate heart will naturally sense their plight.

"What's painful is that many people mistake silence for weakness, using it as a stepping stone to achieve their shallow ambitions.

"In the end, silence is an art, a power, and a style understood only by those who rise above situations that they neither comprehend nor control -- a fact lost on many who live among us.

"Choose when to be silent, when to smile, when to accept, and when to reject based on your understanding of the context, the people involved, and the significance of the moment.

"If speech is silver, then silence is golden."

Also:

"I began writing this article about a month ago and finished it just yesterday. It seems that a close analysis of the strategic developments currently unfolding in the aggressive expansion driven by the occupying entity in collaboration with Iran has reached its conclusion," columnist, Constitutional expert **Dr. Mohammed Al-Maqati** wrote for *Al-Jarida* daily.

"This scenario was devised, supported, financed, and armed by the United States, Britain, Germany, France, and several European countries. Ladies and gentlemen, what we are witnessing is the expansion of the Zionist entity through a planned tactical war.

"The outcome of this plan would see the entity occupying southern Lebanon and potentially larger parts of Syria and Iraq. This would be achieved through a calculated withdrawal by Iran, handing these regions over to the Zionists under the guise of a supposed war -- a war that is, in fact, both tactical and premeditated.

"The silence and acceptance from the Americans and the Zionist entity regarding Iran's unprecedented expansion in the region -- now controlling four Arab countries -- are baffling and contradict the ostensibly hostile relationship between Iran and the criminal Zionist regime, despite the heated rhetoric exchanged between them.

"The true nature of Iran's stance has been exposed, even in the face of direct aggression by the Zionist entity against Iran's assets or territories.

"What is particularly striking is that this Iranian expansion has taken place in countries that directly confront the Zionist occupation. Iran's presence in

Syria and Lebanon, along with its influence in Iraq, has positioned it in nations either adjacent to the Zionist entity or those traditionally recognized as 'steadfast and confrontation states'.

"Despite all this, the Zionist entity and its American backers (who facilitated Iranian expansion) have responded with calmness, showing no real concern. We must set aside the superficial, pre-arranged clashes between them as these events continue to unfold.

"The unfolding sequence of events clearly indicates that this grand strategy is advancing toward its intended conclusion. In my view -- and I might be wrong -- the outcome will likely be the fulfillment of the Zionist entity's longstanding ambition to expand within the region according to their malevolent and well-known plan.

"But how will this be executed? It will be done in a tactically palatable manner, avoiding the appearance of direct collusion or overt cooperation.

"The answer lies in a deliberately staged tactical war, which will result in the expansion of the Zionist entity.

"A new political, geographical, and military reality will be imposed upon us by Zionist-American hegemony, leading to the establishment of the 'entity state.'"

"Although some may argue that the entity's demographic capabilities do not support such expansion, there are numerous precedents, such as the settlements surrounding Gaza, where population density is not a significant factor.

"However, the will of God Almighty awaits them, and by His permission -- and through the efforts of leaders, youth, and the power of the Arab and Islamic nation -- this satanic plot will be foiled, and the Arab lands will remain protected."

□ □ □

"The electricity crisis this summer is not an isolated issue ... It is a clear indication of failed solutions, despite any justifications. All officials must acknowledge this truth. The crisis, which has occurred under such critical weather conditions, has highlighted the mismanagement that impacts Kuwaitis' daily lives, causing material losses and even endangering lives, even if the outage lasted only a few hours," columnist **M. Adel Al-Jarallah Al-Kharafi** wrote for *Al-Seyassah* daily.

"Technically, there are weak justifications that do not hold up under scrutiny. This must be taken into consideration when holding any officials accountable for underestimating this critical issue.

"In terms of planning, the situation highlights the absence of a development program for a capable and wealthy country like Kuwait. Administratively, it reflects poor decision-making, indicating that a major overhaul is needed to prevent further issues and to ensure that ineffective officials do not continue undermining public trust.

"Given Kuwait's sensitive weather conditions, with its long and intense summer season and the significant temperature fluctuations, officials must prioritize the development of power stations, especially in light of urban expansion. Building new stations is a crucial and ongoing necessity, and technical solutions should always be a priority for any responsible official.

"The justifications offered during the recent crisis reveal poor planning and major administrative failure, particularly in a country that does not face any oil or financial shortages. This raises a critical question - Why are officials not fulfilling their responsibilities?"

"This question leads to another one - When the first crisis occurred, was it addressed promptly by tackling all underlying issues, or was it met with complacency?"

"In countries that uphold standards of accountability, those responsible for such failures would be dismissed. Unfortunately, this has not happened here, nor is it likely to happen, due to the prevailing attitude of favoritism and lack of accountability.

"Electricity is not a luxury that can be dispensed with when temperatures exceeding 50 degrees, or even 35 degrees. It is unacceptable that a deficit in pumping water from the sea to the gas refining stations could lead the entire country into a crisis. This issue should have been addressed long ago, particularly in a climate as hot as Kuwait's.

"The Council of Ministers must acknowledge that the deficit was evident from the decisions made during its initial 100 days in office. Instead of achieving progress, the decisions have led to a series of failures, reflecting poor management and an inability to foster development."

— Compiled by PFX Fernandes

'A tribute to global relief efforts' Ministry of Defense honors humanitarian heroes

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 21: The Ministry of Defense recently held a ceremony to honor its members, as well as government institutions and organizations, dedicated to humanitarian relief efforts, reports *Al-Rai* daily.

This recognition was given for their unwavering commitment to provide aid to those in need throughout the world.

During the ceremony, Kuwait Army Chief of Staff Lieutenant General Pilot Bandar Al-Muzain praised the Army personnel for their devotion and sincerity in implementing humanitarian directives. He also commended the Kuwait Air Force for its vital role in delivering relief supplies; highlighting the significant contributions of the Air Force and Medical Services Authority in transporting humanitarian, medical and relief aid to various affected regions.

Undersecretary of the ministry



MoD photo Army Chief of Staff Lieut-Gen Al-Muzain during the honoring ceremony.

Sheikh Dr. Abdullah Al-Sabah confirmed the commitment of Kuwait and its people to extend a helping hand to those in need around the world. He pointed out the exem-

play role that Kuwait and its people play in translating humanitarian principles into action, and its leadership in providing support through various government agencies and

institutions. He said the World Humanitarian Day is a global occasion that highlights the tremendous efforts exerted by those who dedicate their lives to providing aid under difficult circumstances. He explained it is aimed at encouraging others to participate in humanitarian activities in order to build a more compassionate and helpful world.

The ceremony concluded with the presentation of certificates of honor and commemorative shields to the representatives of the honored entities, amid widespread acclaim for their contributions to humanitarian work.

Present at the event were Deputy Chief of Staff of the Army Air Vice Marshal Sheikh Sabah Al-Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, Assistant Undersecretary for External Equipment Sheikh Eng. Dr. Shamail Al-Ahmad, senior military and civilian officials, and representatives of the honored entities.

Panel bans importing frozen, fresh poultry meat from certain US states

Inmate acquitted of drugs smuggling bid charge into prison

By Jaber Al-Hamoud

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff and Agencies

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 21: The Criminal Court acquitted a Central Prison inmate who had been accused of attempting to smuggle drugs into the Central Prison.

According to the case file, an officer testified that when the accused inmate was transferred from the general prison to Central Prison along with other inmates, their luggage was searched using an electronic inspection device, as per prison regulations. During the search, two phones were discovered hidden inside a blanket, along with suspicious items found next to them.

Lawyer Bashar Al-Nassar, who represented the inmate, stated that his client denied the charges and demanded his acquittal of all charges against him based on the absence of the elements of the crime, the maliciousness of the accusation, and the accused lack of connection to the seized items.

□ □ □

Ban imposed of meat imports: The Community Nutrition Affairs Sector at the Public Authority for Food and Nutrition (PAFN) recently organized a workshop entitled, "Food Safety and Shopping for Students Employed during Summer," in cooperation with Dahiyah and Mansouriyah Co-operative Society, reports *Al-Anba* daily.

According to the secretary of the Supreme Committee for Food Safety at the authority; the committee decided during its meeting No. 7/2024 to lift the ban on importing fresh, chilled, processed and frozen poultry meat of all types, derivatives and products, including table eggs; in view of the end of the outbreak of the highly pathogenic bird flu disease in some places in the United States of America.

On the other hand, the committee banned the import of fresh, chilled, processed and frozen poultry meat of all types, derivatives and products, including table eggs; unless they are heat-treated at 70 degrees Celsius, due to the outbreak of highly pathogenic bird flu in some areas in Iowa and Minnesota.

Meanwhile, the Capital Governorate inspectors issued 30 violation citations and closed 12 food establishments during their recent inspection campaign.

The inspectors uncovered various violations like selling food items found to be unfit for human consumption due to changes in their natural properties such as the color, shape and smell, as well as adulterated food; selling food without obtaining a health certificate; hiring workers who have no health certificate; non-compliance with the rules and regulations on public sanitation at work; and operating a food establishment without obtaining a license from the authority.

□ □ □

One dies, several injured in accidents: One person died and another was injured in a traffic accident on the Sixth Ring Road, reports *Al-Seyassah* daily.

The accident was dealt with by the Kuwait Fire Force (KFF). The cause of the accident is not known.

Meanwhile, seven people, including six women, were treated for injuries following a two-vehicle collision on Abdali Road, reports *Al-Anba* daily.

Air ambulance and emergency medical service providers, swiftly transported the injured to nearby hospitals for treatment. The accident was managed by traffic sector personnel.

According to a security source, the Ministry of Interior's Operations Department received the accident report at 9 a.m. The victims, six women and one man, were members of a Gulf family traveling to a neighboring country. Their injuries ranged from minor to severe.

□ □ □

60 warnings issued to violating cars: The Public Relations Department at Kuwait Municipality has confirmed that the field inspection teams at the public sanitation and road occupancy departments in various governorates continue to intensify their efforts to uncover and address public sanitation and road occupancy violations; in addition to activating the role of the supervisory bodies to strictly implement the regulations of the Municipality, reports *Al-Anba* daily.

The field inspection team at the Public Sanitation and Road Occupancy Department in the Municipality branch in Hawally has been conducting extensive inspection campaigns throughout the government in order to maintain public cleanliness, remove anything that obstructs the road and distorts the image of the governorate, and ensure proper disposal of waste.

Starting Aug 23

'Akasa Air' to fly Kuwait, Mumbai route every day

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 21: The Directorate-General of Civil Aviation has approved Indian airline Akasa Air request to operate direct flights between Kuwait International Airport and the Mumbai Airport, reports *Al-Jarida* daily.

Starting from August 23, 2024, Akasa Air will operate seven flights per week, with one flight each day.

Raed Al-Taher, Air Transport Controller for Aviation Operations at the DGCA, shared the news with Kuwait News Agency (KUNA), highlighting the efforts of the directorate-general to enhance connectivity by adding direct flights to key destinations.

Initially, Akasa Air will offer flights exclusively to Mumbai, but there are plans to expand services to additional airports across India in the future.

Al-Taher emphasized that Akasa's entry into the Kuwaiti market is expected to meet the growing demand for travel between Kuwait and India, benefiting both Kuwaiti citizens and residents by improving flight options.



Al Seyassah photo Governor Sheikh Athbi poses for a photo with Brigadier Al-Hajraf and Colonel Al-Otaibi.

Sheikh Athbi stresses on students' safety

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 21: Farwaniya Governor Sheikh Athbi Al-Nasser has emphasized the importance of collaborative efforts to ensure the safety and security of school students, particularly when it comes to preventing traffic accidents, reports *Al-Seyassah* daily.

He said this during a meeting with Acting Director General of the Farwaniya Governorate Security Directorate, Brigadier Nayef Al-Hajraf, and Assistant Director of Farwaniya Traffic, Colonel Abdullah Mu'nis Al-Otaibi.

He stressed that achieving traffic safety for students requires the involvement of everyone -- from families, schools, and educational bodies to school bus supervisors and drivers.

The governor also called for intensified traffic patrols and putting in place control measures to monitor both the main and secondary roads near schools to help ease traffic flow, prevent congestion, and ensure safe transportation for students as they travel to and from school.

20 warnings issued to number of properties

Capital Municipality assesses safety measures

By Inaas Awadh

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 21: The Safety Department of the Capital Municipality recently conducted a field inspection to assess safety standards in demolition and restoration operations, as well as at defacement sites. They also checked the availability of construction debris containers at these locations within the governorate.

This inspection represents the third activity in a campaign launched by the municipality this month to ensure that contractors across the country's governorates comply

with safety and construction requirements. The field tour conducted by the Safety Department of the Capital Governorate Municipality led to the issuance of 20 warnings and two citations to a number of properties in the Shuwaikh Industrial Area for failing to meet safety systems and requirements, thereby posing risks to passersby in the area.

The department urged property owners to implement all necessary safety measures and adhere to municipal regulations. This includes providing containers for solid construction waste and ensuring regular removal of construction debris by both the contractors and property owners to avoid legal violations.



KUNA photo

Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs receiving the ambassador of Somalia.

Deputy FM discusses ties with Somali envoy

Kuwait's Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Sheikh Jarrar Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, received on Wednesday, the Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Somalia

to the State of Kuwait, Dr. Abdullah Muhammad Sheikh Abdullah, where they discussed bilateral relations and ways to consolidate them in all fields. (KUNA)

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KFAED reinforces 'global solidarity' with ongoing humanitarian efforts

Fund provides approximately \$377.5 mln in grants

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 21: The Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development (KFAED) continues to play a crucial role in global humanitarian efforts, particularly in supporting refugees and vulnerable communities, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

Recently, Abdullah Al-Musaybih, KFAED Director of the Operations Department, participated in the World Humanitarian Day celebration organized by the Ministry of Defense. The event brought together representatives from local and international organizations, including the United Nations, Kuwait Red Crescent Society, Patient Aid Fund, and Al-Sadu Crafts.

The celebration, held under the patronage of Sheikh Dr. Abdullah Meshaal Al-Sabah, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Defense, highlighted the vital contributions of various entities to humanitarian relief efforts. Sheikh Dr. Abdullah praised the regional and international collaborations that have helped provide aid to those in need, emphasizing that such efforts reflect the spirit of solidarity and brotherhood rooted in Islamic values.

During the event, Al-Musaybih reiterated that KFAED has been at the forefront of international solidarity, especially through its humanitarian relief initiatives.

Over the past two decades, the Fund has intensified its support, making relief aid for refugees in conflict and disaster-stricken areas an essential part of its activities. Al-Musaybih noted that Kuwait has been proactive in aiding Syrian refugees since the outbreak of the Syrian conflict.

The Fund has implemented numerous health, education, and service projects for displaced Syrians in countries like Lebanon, Jordan, Turkey, Egypt, and Iraq. In total, the Fund has provided approximately \$377.5 million in grants for these projects.

The global community has recognized Kuwait's significant role in humanitarian relief. In 2014, the United Nations designated Kuwait as a "Humanitarian Center," and the late Emir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah was honored as the "Leader of Humanitarian Work" for his dedication to global aid efforts.

Anwar Al-Hassawi, Deputy Chairman of the Kuwait Red Crescent Society, commended the Kuwait Fund's contributions, particularly in disaster and conflict zones. He emphasized the Fund's crucial support



The third plane arrives from the new Kuwaiti air bridge to support those affected by war and floods in Sudan.

Kuwait's 3rd aid-loaded plane lands in Sudan

Kuwait's third plane carrying 10 tons of relief aid, donated by the Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) landed in Sudan on Tuesday to help those affected by the war and floods.

The plane, arriving at Port Sudan, was received by Kuwaiti Ambassador to Sudan Dr. Fahad Al-Dhafaeri and the Sudanese Red Crescent Society officials.

He pointed out that this aid plane is part of the Kuwait air bridge to help Sudan which was launched last week upon directives from His

Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

Al-Dhafaeri said that planeloads will continue to be sent to Sudan and that they are working on delivering aid through Merowe airport, north of the country and most affected by the floods.

Sudanese Human Aid Commissioner Salwa Adam is set to visit Kuwait to discuss aid arrangement and priorities along with concerned entities, added Al-Dhafaeri. (KUNA)

Through a grant from the late Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, the Fund, in partnership with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), helped provide 1,500 homes, as well as access to electricity, water, and other essential services.

The Kuwait Fund remains committed to supporting humanitarian initiatives worldwide, demonstrating Kuwait's enduring dedication to aiding afflicted populations and fostering international solidarity.

in assisting Syrian refugees in Lebanon and its collaborative efforts with the Red Crescent in providing relief to Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh.

The Fund's initiatives have included supplying essential goods, medical supplies, and sustainable housing to improve the living conditions of refugee families.

The event also showcased a video documenting KFAED's efforts to improve the living conditions of Syrian refugees in Iraq's Domiz 1 and Domiz 2 camps.

Training and expansion in progress

New specialized classes to boost integration of disabled students

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 21: The Ministry of Education is making significant strides in its project to integrate students with disabilities into general education schools, reports Al-Jarida daily.

Recently, the Ministry completed the setup for opening specialized classes for students with learning difficulties and slow learning, set to begin in the upcoming academic year.

Educational sources revealed that the Ministry has finalized the arrangements for these new classes across various educational regions.

Initially, the Ministry had launched a limited number of such classes in the Mubarak Al-Kabeer and Al-Ahmadi regions, targeting schools with identified learning difficulties.

Now, efforts have been made to expand this initiative, ensuring that educational services for students with disabilities are available in more regions.

The Ministry has outlined plans for further expansion, aiming to include students with mild to moderate disabilities in general education schools.

As part of this initiative, the Ministry is developing comprehensive training programs for teachers, administrators, and school staff to support the successful integration of these students and achieve the objectives of the specialized classes.

Additionally, the Ministry is accepting applications from teachers interested in transferring to these specialized classes, prioritizing Kuwaiti teachers with the relevant qualifications.

This initiative follows the establishment of the Sadeem Model School in 2011, which was specifically designed for students with severe learning difficulties.

The ongoing efforts reflect the Ministry's commitment to enhancing educational opportunities and support for students with disabilities, promoting their inclusion in mainstream education.

PAY will transfer to Shuwaikh Complex

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 21: Dr. Amthal Al-Huwailah, Minister of Social Affairs, Family and Childhood Affairs, and Minister of State for Youth Affairs, announced that the Public Authority for Youth will relocate to Building No. 1 in the Shuwaikh Complex, which is part of the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

This move, scheduled to occur in the coming months, is intended to rationalize spending and align with the government's fiscal policy.

In a press statement, Minister Al-Huwailah explained that relocating from the Authority's current rented premises to a government-owned building aims to optimize resource utilization and enhance integration between government agencies.

This move is expected to improve the work environment for employees and exemplifies the government's commitment to efficient and coordinated use of public assets.

She commended the cooperation of Dr. Adel Al-Adwani, Minister of Education and Higher Education, and Dr. Hassan Al-Fajjam, Director General of the Public Authority for Applied Sciences, in facilitating this transition. Minister Al-Huwailah highlighted that the relocation will positively impact the job stability of the Youth Authority's employees.

To ensure a smooth transition, she directed the Youth Authority officials to implement the move effectively, minimizing disruption and maintaining job satisfaction among the staff.



Dr Al-Huwailah

Abdullah Al-Salem University eyes partnership with Otago University

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 21: Dr. Moudi Al-Hamoud, Chairperson of the Founding Board of Directors of Abdullah Al-Salem University, welcomed a delegation from the University of Otago, New Zealand, to the university's campus in Khalidiya, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The visit, which also included Muhammad Malallah, Director of the Department of Cultural Relations and Missions, focused on exploring opportunities for academic and cultural collaboration between the two institutions.

Dr. Al-Hamoud emphasized the strong bilateral relations between Kuwait and New Zealand, noting the existing academic cooperation that involves Kuwaiti students studying at various New Zealand universities.

She expressed Abdullah Al-Salem University's commitment to enhancing international academic part-



Dr. Moudi Al-Hamoud presenting a commemorative plaque to the visiting delegation.

nerships and highlighted the potential for sharing experiences and knowledge between the two universities.

The discussions covered various aspects of partnership, including potential frameworks for academic and research collaboration, student and faculty exchanges, and the promotion of scientific and cultural understanding. The

aim is to foster a generation equipped with global perspectives and expertise.

In appreciation of the visit, Dr. Al-Hamoud presented a commemorative gift to the delegation, expressing her hope that the meeting would lead to successful and fruitful cooperation between Abdullah Al-Salem University and the University of Otago.

Kuwait's pioneering role highlighted

Al-Safa Charitable Society reaffirms pledge on World Humanitarian Day

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 21: On World Humanitarian Day, Muhammad Al-Shaya, Chairman of the Board of Directors of Al-Safa Charitable Humanitarian Society, underscored Kuwait's exceptional contributions to global humanitarian efforts and the country's leading role in charitable work, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

Al-Shaya emphasized that World Humanitarian Day serves as a significant occasion to acknowledge and celebrate Kuwait's substantial impact in providing comprehensive development to communities worldwide.

He praised Kuwait's position as a pioneer in the charitable sector, highlighting the remarkable efforts of Kuwaiti charitable organizations, which have become key players in global humanitarian initiatives.

"World Humanitarian Day is a moment to express gratitude for Kuwait's leadership in humanitarian work and to commend the dedication of those involved in this vital field," Al-Shaya stated.

He noted that Kuwaiti charitable societies have made a notable mark through their extensive efforts to support those in need and have established Kuwait as a global humanitarian hub.

Al-Shaya expressed pride in Kuwait's leadership and the noble humanitarian actions of the country's leaders, charitable workers, and generous citizens, who consistently demonstrate kindness and commitment to helping others.

He reassured that "Al-Safa Humanitarian" will continue its mission to provide support and aid to those in need across the globe. The organization's impressive achievements in promoting sustainable development are testament to the leadership of Kuwaiti charitable work.

Al-Shaya extended his gratitude to all those involved in charitable institutions and to everyone who contributes to alleviating

MoE bans 7 types of food and beverages

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 21: The Ministry of Education is racing against time to fully prepare for the next school year, ensuring that all necessary resources are in place to facilitate a smooth start across all educational levels, reports Al-Rai daily.

In preparation for the new school year, the Educational Facilities Sector has instructed its engineering teams to finish equipping the schools before September in order to provide everything needed; such that classes in all educational stages will start without any problems.

As part of preparations concerning school cafeterias; the ministry has approved a range of food products for these cafeterias; including juices, pies, milk, sandwiches, various types of biscuits, crackers, salads and fruits.

On the other hand, the ministry banned seven types of food and beverages like soft drinks, canned juices, sports drinks and energy drinks.

It also approved 14 food and beverage companies to supply items that meet the Public Authority for Food and Nutrition's standards. These companies are required to adhere to strict health guidelines; such as providing fresh milk products, sandwiches, pies and pastries on the day of production, as well as ensuring that no food items are accepted if they have more than a month left on their shelf life.

the suffering of others.

He affirmed that humanitarian work is a proud badge for all engaged in this field and called upon God to protect Kuwait and its people from all harm.



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LOCAL



KUNA photo
The Director General of Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) with the Chargé d'Affaires at the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

KUNA Chief, Dutch Chargé d'Affaires discuss enhancing media cooperation

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 21, (KUNA): Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) Director-General Dr. Fatima Al-Salem and Chargé d'Affaires of the Netherlands Embassy to Kuwait, Caroline Rietveld, discussed Wednesday enhancing media cooperation.

During a meeting between the two sides, media cooperation and topics of common interest were touched on.

Dr. Al-Salem stressed the importance of enhancing media cooperation between the two

sides and the need to conclude agreements between KUNA and Dutch media outlets in the field of exchanging news and professional expertise.

She also pointed out the importance of cultural openness between peoples.

In turn, Rietveld stressed the depth of relations between her country and Kuwait, which are witnessing continuous development in various fields at all levels, hailing the Kuwaiti culture.

No changes approved

Sports Authority dismisses reports on Law 87/2017 amendments 'premature'

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 21, (KUNA): The Public Authority for Sports (PAS) has denied reports circulating in the media and on social platforms about the cancellation of the current sports law or its replacement with a new one. PAS emphasized that any talk of amendments to Law 87 of 2017 is "premature," noting that no amendments or new clauses have been approved as of yet.

In a press statement issued on Tuesday, Acting Director General of PAS Bashar Abdullah clarified that the recent discussions were merely in response to an inquiry about a proposal submitted earlier by a former sports leader. He added that the proposal had been referred to the Fatwa and Legislation Department for review, but no decisions have been made.

Abdullah reiterated PAS's commitment to following legal rules and procedures in a responsible, professional, and transparent manner. He stressed that no changes to the law would be enacted until thorough consultations with all relevant sports bodies, including the Kuwait Olympic Committee, are completed. The goal is to ensure that any amendments are well-considered and based on sound principles without causing unintended consequences.

PAS reaffirmed its dedication to supporting and developing sports activities in Kuwait, aiming to create a stable and encouraging environment for athletes. The authority seeks to elevate Kuwaiti sports to higher levels of competitiveness and align with the country's broader developmental goals.

MEW avoids outages despite high demand

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 21: The electrical load indicator has once again neared the red zone due to high demand and complications from gas processing problems, reports Al-Anba daily.

Despite reaching a peak load of 16,840 megawatts, the Ministry of Electricity and Water has managed to avoid implementing scheduled outages. Over the past two days, approximately 700 megawatts of previously lost capacity were restored, improving energy efficiency and reducing network pressure.

According to ministry sources, halted units have been gradually reactivated, and the efficiency of other units has been increased, leading to an improvement in energy availability. The remaining units are expected to be brought back into service by tomorrow. The ministry is working diligently to address the gas processing issue and has resolved a significant portion of the problem.

The ministry emphasized the importance of customers adhering to guidelines for rationalizing electricity and water consumption, as detailed on their social media platforms. These steps are critical in easing the pressure on the network and ensuring continuous service for all customers.

Preventing abuse of State benefits CSC to tackle employee leave regulations

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 21: The Civil Service Commission (CSC) will discuss new employee leave regulations in its ordinary meeting scheduled for the end of this week, reports Al-Anba daily quoting sources.

Other sources announced that CSC has prepared an objective and comprehensive report on employee leave, as the Cabinet had earlier assigned it to review the laws and regulations on the vacation days of State employees to ensure this privilege is not exploited. Sources said the report is aimed at polishing rules on leave days and other employment benefits.

Asked about the possibility of converting unused sick leaves into periodic leave, sources explained the sick leave is a right guaranteed by the regulations in order to protect the employee's health; because the purpose of such leave is for

Deputy FM receives outgoing French envoy

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 21, (KUNA): Kuwait's Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, received on Wednesday, the Am-

bassador of the French Republic, Claire Le Fleischer, on the occasion of the end of her term as her country's ambassador to the State of Kuwait.

the sick employee to undergo treatment, rest and fully recover. They pointed out that allowing the conversion of unused sick leaves into periodic leave defeats the purpose of granting such benefit to employees. They added this move contravenes the regulations and decisions in force, stressing that converting sick leaves into periodic leave or stopping the benefit necessitates the issuance of a decision on the part of the CSC.

Moreover, another group of sources stated that a report on electronic sick leave system will be reviewed one year after the implementation of the decision in this regard. Sources clarified that obtaining sick leave electronically does not entail waiving the employee's right to obtain sick leave again if they go to the health centers, provided it is done in accordance with the regulations.

CMA launches 'Authority Pioneers' initiative for post-retirement phase

Program aims to ensure smooth transition

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 21: The Capital Markets Authority has launched a new initiative, "Authority Pioneers," aimed at preparing its members for the post-retirement phase of their lives, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

This internal rehabilitation program is designed to support employees as they transition from their professional careers to retirement, addressing common uncertainties and providing guidance on planning for this significant life change.

The initiative encompasses a preparatory phase before retirement, where all Authority members can access various programs focused on psychological and social readiness for retirement.

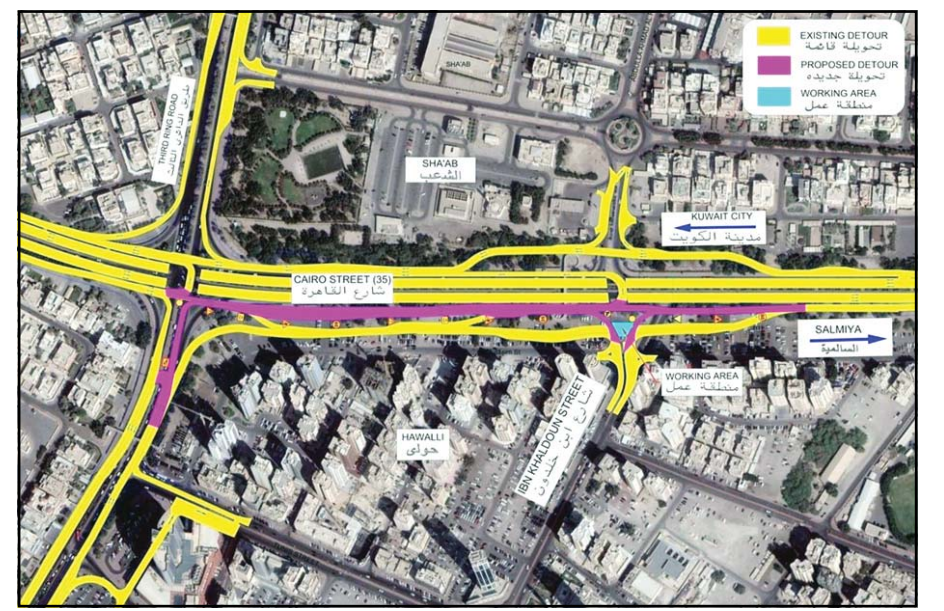
This preparation aims to help employees navigate the complexities of retirement, including understanding retirement conditions, entitlements, and the potential social and psychological impacts of this transition.

Professor Dr. Ahmed Al-Malhem, Chairman of the Board of Commissioners and Executive Director, emphasized the importance of the "Authority Pioneers" initiative.

He described it as a crucial step in ensuring that retirees can leverage their professional experience and smoothly transition into the next phase of their lives.

He stated, "The Authority's Pioneers Campaign reflects our commitment to valuing the contributions of our members and supporting them as they embark on their retirement journey."

"Our goal is to equip our employees with the tools they need to effectively plan for their future beyond their professional careers," he added.



Temporary traffic diversion on Second Ring Road.

Second Ring Road temporarily closed

The Public Authority for Roads and Transportation (PART) has announced the opening of a temporary traffic diversion due to the closure of the Second Ring Road towards Cairo Street for vehicles coming from Road 30 with the cooperation

of the General Traffic Department, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The road will be closed from dawn of Friday, August 23 to the following day, for the application of the final asphalt layer.

Disbursement based on strict eligibility criteria

MoH disburses bonuses to employees

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 21: The Ministry of Health has disbursed excellent performance bonuses to eligible employees in all its sectors and facilities, reports Al-Anba daily.

According to informed sources, the ministry will soon form a committee to study the grievances related to these bonuses. It has introduced the option of online submission of complaints. Applications will be considered for approval based on the conditions set for disbursement of bonuses, the most important of which is that the applicant has not previously received any excellent performance bonuses.

The Ministry of Health allocated approximately KD 12 million for these bonuses, and they were distributed according to specific terms and conditions. These condi-

tions include the following:

- Eligible employees must have served in the ministry for at least one calendar year from January 1, 2023, to December 31, 2023.

- They must be appointed to the general salary schedule or must be on a salary-based appointment.

- They need to have worked at least 70 percent of their scheduled shift days or 180 actual working days, excluding periods of suspension, loans, full-time work of any kind, missions, vacations, official holidays, Fridays, and breaks, except for sick leave during hospitalization.

The disbursement of these bonuses for the employees of the Ministry of Health is based on the Civil Service Bureau's schedule for granting excellent performance bonuses.

3rd annual campaign to promote physical activity starts

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

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 21: Dr. Abeer Al-Buho, Director of the Health Promotion Department, will launch the third annual campaign to promote physical activity, Thursday, at the Plaza Complex.

This initiative aims to raise awareness about the significance of physical activity and aims to reduce physical inactivity in Kuwait by 15 percent over the next five years.

Dr. Al-Buho emphasized the urgent need for this campaign, given the alarming rise in obesity rates among Kuwaiti adults, which currently stands at about 43.7 percent, according to the Nutrition Surveillance Program (KNSS) of the Ministry of Health.

The Ministry of Health is committed to increasing awareness about physical activity. Dr. Al-Buho noted that addressing physical inactivity in Kuwait requires a comprehensive approach that spans multiple sectors. Studies and surveys have highlighted a noticeable gap in physical activity between men and women.

This disparity is attributed to conservative cultural norms, limited sports facilities for women, high temperatures, work obligations, and other barriers.

Dr. Al-Buho also pointed out that non-communicable diseases, including cardiovascular diseases, cancer, diabetes, and chronic respiratory diseases, are leading causes of death in the Eastern Mediterranean Region. These diseases account for 1.7 million deaths annually and place a significant burden on health care systems.

She defined physical activity as any movement produced by skeletal muscles resulting in energy expenditure, including work, leisure, housework, and transportation activities. In contrast, physical inactivity involves minimal energy expenditure while awake.

Dr. Al-Buho advised increasing physical activity levels through walking, cycling, and sports. Regular physical activity can reduce the risk of heart disease, stroke, diabetes, certain cancers, high blood pressure, weight gain, and obesity.

It also benefits mental health, sleep quality, cognitive function, and overall quality of life.

Private sector

Continued from Page 1

The Public Authority for Manpower is working with all relevant parties to preserve the rights of national workers in the private sector so that this sector will attract Kuwaitis rather than repel them.

It is worth highlighting that the latest statistics of the Public Authority for Civil Information revealed that the number of Kuwaiti workers in the government sector reached about 404,900 as of mid of this year, compared to 397,500 at the end of 2023. On the other hand, the number of Kuwaiti employees in the private sector reached about 72,800 by end of June, 2024.

New fertility

Continued from Page 1

administrative staff.

She added the unit offers medical consultation services for delayed pregnancy cases; tests to determine the causes of delayed pregnancy; and various infertility treatments like inducing ovulation, Intracytoplasmic Sperm Injection (ICSI) and In Vitro Fertilization (IVF), in addition to using modern and approved scientific and international methods.

She said the unit also provides male infertility treatments, in cooperation with urology consultants and male infertility specialists; as well as helping couples with genetic diseases to have a genetically healthy child through IVF and genetic screening tests.

She went on to disclose that the unit consists of six medical consultation rooms equipped with the latest devices for fertility, urology and genetic doctors; two artificial insemination rooms; two semen collection rooms; one embryo culture laboratory; one semen

analysis and preparation laboratory; one microinjection laboratory; one genetic testing laboratory; two anesthesia rooms; and two operating rooms. She affirmed all of these facilities are equipped with the most advanced devices; including an egg retrieval device and a surgical microscope for collecting testicular tissue for treating male infertility.

Mangaf 'fire-related'

Continued from Page 1

KPC and its subsidiaries are among the largest integrated oil and gas companies in the world. KPC is a State-owned corporation that adopted all eight companies under its umbrella to form an integrated oil industry in Kuwait.

It aims to establish central industry planning in an efficient manner by using large scale engineering entities in order to closely coordinate with different bodies in order to distribute oil and gas operations accordingly.

Its objectives include achieving carbon neutrality by 2050 and the zero goal, improving the quality of life, and to take care of the planet.

Kuwait steadfast

Continued from Page 1

Economic expert and former Municipal Council member, Abdullah Al-Roumi, echoed these sentiments in a statement to Al-Seyassah, urging the continuation of the economic boycott against any products in Kuwait where profits benefit Israel.

Al-Roumi stressed that every purchase from international franchise restaurants equates to funding a bullet against the Palestinian people. He advocates for prioritizing Kuwaiti res-

taurants and products, which not only supports the Palestinian cause but also bolsters Kuwait's own economy.

Al-Roumi also dispelled misconceptions about international franchise operations, pointing out that the idea that such restaurants do not benefit the Zionist entity is incorrect. He explained that franchising involves granting the rights to use a brand's trademark, ensuring the same level of service and quality, in exchange for a percentage of the profits paid to the parent company. This is a common practice in the restaurant industry.

Al-Roumi questioned whether it is realistic to believe any company could use a famous international logo without paying fees to the original brand owner.

He further explained that the first well-known franchise restaurant was launched in 1955 and saw significant success as it expanded globally in the following decades.

By the early 1970s, the brand had transformed into multiple companies operating worldwide under franchise agreements. Today, this famous restaurant chain has approximately 50,000 branches globally, underscoring the wide reach of such entities.

Prominent voices in Kuwait are intensifying calls for a boycott of restaurants and products linked to companies that support Israel.

Writer Osama Al-Thuwaini also underscored the necessity of continuing the boycott, citing its profound impact on the adversaries of the Islamic world. He pointed out that capitalist nations are highly motivated by profit, making economic pressure one of the most effective means of influencing their policies.

Al-Thuwaini argued that the most potent weapons against countries supporting the Zionist entity -- especially the United States -- are Gulf oil resources and the billions of dollars invested in the American market.

Al-Thuwaini called for halting any business ties between Kuwait and the

United States as long as it continues to back Israel. He emphasized that America and the Zionist entity are closely intertwined, with the ongoing massacre in Gaza over the past ten months made possible through American military, financial, and political support.

Kuwait offer

Continued from Page 1

The talks ratcheted up pressure on Israel to abide by UN protocols and allow the unobstructed entry of emergency teams into Palestinian territories to assist with environmental disaster risk management, while also allowing the Palestinians to build a full-fledged system to ensure their protection.

League of Arab States underscored on Wednesday importance of international and regional cooperation and the exchange of knowledge to effectively combat natural disasters.

League assistant secretary general for economic affairs, Ambassador Ali Al-Malki, addressed second ministerial congregation saying that Arab countries are facing a plethora of natural disasters including drought, desertification, sand storms, floods, forest fires, hurricanes, earthquakes, landslides, climate change, as well as manmade disasters.

Cabinet enhances

Continued from Page 1

Al-Huwailah, the chairperson of the higher organizing committee of the championship, and leaders of the Public Authority for Sport, elaborated on the efforts made by the higher organizing committee and the affiliate committees to set the stage for the highly important regional sports event.

The Minister of Health Dr. Ahmad Abdulwahab Al-Awadhi updated

the Cabinet on the outbreak of mpox (monkeypox) in some parts of the world and the preventive measures made by his ministry to protect the citizens and residents from this viral disease.

The Ministry of Health detected no case of mpox infection, he affirmed, noting that the necessary medical supplies were secured and competent work teams were put on alert.

The Cabinet appreciated the efforts exerted by officials and staffers of the Ministry of Health to protect the public.

Minister of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy, and Minister of State for Housing Affairs Dr. Mahmoud Abdulaziz Bushehri updated the meeting on the state of affairs in power plants across the country, including the current production capacity and the future projects.

The Cabinet reviewed the recent decision by Nazaha (Kuwait Anti-Corruption Authority) to refer a number of former officials and staffers to the Public Prosecution under the charge of usurpation of state funds, and tampering with wealth statements in contravention of Act 2 (2016), the founding act of Nazaha.

The Cabinet reaffirmed resolve to continue combat against corruption, protect the state funds and apply the rule of law on everybody without exception.

The Cabinet approved the minutes of the higher committee on verification of nationality of Kuwait, including the nationality withdrawals from some persons who had been illegally naturalized in contravention to the provisions of Act 15 (1959) and the subsequent amendments.

Focus on

Continued from Page 1

within the framework of consolidating cooperation and achieving

Al-Jarida photo

World News Roundup

Europe

India's PM Modi visits Poland: Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi is visiting Poland for top-level security and trade talks before heading to neighboring Ukraine, which is at war with India's strategic partner, Russia.

Modi will hold talks Thursday in Warsaw with Poland's Prime Minister Donald Tusk and President Andrzej Duda, which are expected to focus on security, especially in the region bordering Ukraine.

Ukraine chastised Modi for his visit to Moscow last month, when he met and hugged President Vladimir Putin. Modi has avoided condemning Russia while emphasizing a peaceful settlement to the war in Ukraine.

Poland's deputy prime minister, Wladyslaw Kosiniak-Kamysz, who is also the defense minister, has said he counts on intensifying cooperation with India in various areas, including new technologies.

In a statement ahead of his arrival in the NATO and European Union member nation, Modi said Poland remains India's key economy partner in Central Europe.

The Indian leader's visit also marks 70 years of official bilateral relations between New Delhi and Warsaw, and comes 45 years after the previous visit by an Indian government leader, Morarji Desai.

According to the figures cited by the Embassy of India, from 2013-2023, the total bilateral trade value increased from \$1.95 billion to \$5.72 billion, with India's exports accounting for majority of it.

On Wednesday, Modi was to lay wreaths at two monuments in Warsaw marking joint chapters of World War II. of Monte Cassino, Italy.

Modi's statement said he is also to meet with representatives of the Indian community in Poland. (AP)

Moscow sees one of Ukraine largest drone attacks: Moscow came under one of the largest attacks yet by Ukrainian drones since the start of fighting in 2022, Russian authorities reported Wednesday, saying they destroyed all of those headed toward the capital.

The drone attacks come as Ukrainian forces are continuing to push into Russia's western Kursk region.

"This was one of the biggest attempts of all time to attack Moscow using drones," Moscow Mayor **Sergey Sobyanin** said on his Telegram channel. He said strong defenses around the capital made it possible to shoot down all the drones before they hit their intended targets. Russia downed 45 Ukrainian drones overnight, including 11 over the Moscow region.

Alexander Bogomaz, the governor of the Bryansk region, which borders Ukraine, reported a "mass" attack on his region but said that all 23 drones were destroyed. (AP)

Putin makes surprise trip to Chechnya: Russian President Vladimir Putin on Tuesday made an unscheduled trip to Chechnya, a mainly Muslim republic within the Russian Federation, his first visit in nearly 13 years, as Ukraine's stunning cross-border incursion into western Russia entered its third week.

Putin was greeted by Chechnya's self-styled strongman leader Ramzan Kadyrov, before visiting a special forces academy bearing his own name and speaking with volunteer fighters who train there prior to being deployed in Ukraine.

Pro-Kyiv volunteers loyal to Dzhokhar Dudayev, the late Chechen pro-independence leader, are the sworn enemies of Chechen forces that back Putin and Kadyrov. (AP)

Russia's ex-deputy defense minister detained: A former Russian defense official was ordered held in pretrial detention on corruption charges after a court rejected an appeal against his arrest, state media reported Wednesday.

Former Deputy Defense Minister Gen. Dmitry Bulgakov was detained in Moscow last month pending an investigation and trial, Russia's Investigative Committee said in a statement. He is part of several recent high-profile military arrests.

"The court examined the appeal of Bulgakov's defense and decided to leave the appeal unsatisfied and the decision of the first instance unchanged," state news agency Tass reported, citing the judge's decision.

According to Tass, Bulgakov is charged with large-scale embezzlement. He reportedly oversaw the creation of a system to supply low-quality food rations to Russian troops at inflated prices. If found guilty, Bulgakov faces up to 10 years in prison.

His ouster came shortly after Kyiv made swift territorial gains during a counteroffensive in the northeastern Kharkiv region. (AP)

Court refuses to release Navalny's lawyers: Russia's Supreme Court on Tuesday refused to release three lawyers who once represented Russia's slain opposition leader, Alexei Navalny, and are now facing charges of extremism. It also refused to transfer their case to a different court, even as the defense alleged a conflict of interest.

Vadim Kobzev, Igor Sergunin, and Alexei Liptser were arrested in October in a case widely seen at the time as a means to ramp up pressure on the Kremlin's fiercest foe.

Lawyers for the three attorneys had petitioned the Supreme Court to transfer their case away from a court in Russia's western Vladimir region, claiming it may not be objective or impartial. (AP)

Man arrested on suspicion of murder: A man has been arrested on suspicion of murder after allegedly setting a house fire Wednesday that killed a woman and three children in northern England, police said.

An initial investigation showed the fire in the city of Bradford was deliberately set and is believed to be a domestic-related crime, police said.

Two girls - ages 9 and 1 - and a 5-year-old boy died at a hospital from their injuries. A 29-year-old woman was dead at the scene.

"This is an absolutely devastating incident in which three children and a woman have lost their lives," Det Chief Inspector Stacey Atkinson of West Yorkshire Police said. "Our thoughts remain with their family, friends and loved ones." (AP)

School employee kills 3 in Bosnia: A school employee shot and killed three people Wednesday in a town in northwestern Bosnia, police said. The shooter was severely injured after trying to kill himself.

The shooting took place around 10 am local time in a secondary school building in Sanski Most, about 300 kilometers (180 miles) northwest of Bosnia's capital, Sarajevo, said regional police spokesman Adnan Beganovic.

Beganovic told The Associated Press that the man used a "military weapon, an automatic rifle." He then attempted to kill himself and is in serious condition in a hospital in nearby Banja Luka.

Bosnian schools are closed for the summer holiday, but Beganovic said there were people in the school as repeat examinations were underway. (AP)

Greek authorities detain migrants on Crete: Authorities on the southern Greek island of Crete detained 76 migrants early Tuesday after they arrived on three boats, as smugglers seek new routes in the region to evade coast guard patrols.

The migrants from Syria, Egypt, Sudan and Bangladesh included six children and arrived before dawn on the tiny island of Gavdos, near Crete's southern coast, local officials said. Usually, such migrants are detained for identification and processing, after which they can apply for asylum while waiting in refugee camps, with cases accessed on an individual basis. (AP)



Water from an overflowing Kuskokwim River floods Napakiak, Alaska on Aug 18. (AP)

Western Alaska Yup'ik village floods as river rises from series of storms

Storm-battered residents in the western Alaska village of Napakiak were preparing for the third storm in a week Tuesday, days after a minister had to use a front loader to free people from flooded homes.

Napakiak, a Yup'ik village of about 350 residents in the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta, was flooded Sunday after heavy rains swelled the Kuskokwim River.

Conditions beforehand were "pretty brutal," with winds and a lot of rain, said Job Hale, the minister of Armory Baptist Church. Then the water sud-

denly started rising as river currents pushed into town.

It caught everyone by surprise because it wasn't the normal spring or fall flooding, which residents prepare for, Hale said. People scrambled to move vehicles to higher ground, remove firewood from underneath their raised homes and secure water tanks.

"I have a front loader, which became very handy because there were several people that actually got

stuck in their homes," Hale said. Even though homes are elevated, the water level was 3 feet (about 1 meter) or more and coming up through floors.

Three times he maneuvered the front loader to people's doors, and they climbed inside the bucket for a ride to dry ground.

It was also used to rescue one person who needed medical aid, Hale said, adding that several residents told him they couldn't remember flooding this bad in years. (AP)

Politics

Barrasso and Hageman win GOP primaries

Obamas point warnings about Trump

CHICAGO, Aug 21. (AP) - Warning of a difficult fight ahead, former President Barack Obama and Michelle Obama on Tuesday called on the nation to embrace Kamala Harris in urgent messages to the Democratic National Convention that were at times both hopeful and ominous.

"America, hope is making a comeback," the former first lady declared. She then tore into Republican Donald Trump, a sharp shift from the 2016 convention speech in which she told her party, "When they go low, we go high."

"His limited and narrow view of the world made him feel threatened by the existence of two hardworking, highly educated, successful people who also happened to be Black," Michelle Obama said of Trump.

Barack Obama, the first Black president in US history, insisted the nation is ready to elect Harris, who is of Jamaican and Indian heritage and would be the nation's first female president. He also called Trump "a 78-year-old billionaire who hasn't stopped whining about his problems since he rode down his golden escalator nine years ago."

"It's been a constant stream of gripes and grievances that's actually gotten worse now that he's afraid of losing to Kamala," he said.

Coalition

The fiery messages from two of the Democratic Party's biggest stars underscored the urgency of the moment as Harris works to stitch together a broad coalition in her bid to defeat Trump this fall. The vice president is drawing on stars like the Obamas and other celebrities, officials from the far left to the middle, and even some Republicans to boost her campaign.

And while the theme of the night was "a bold vision for America's future," the disparate factions of Harris' evolving coalition demonstrated,

above all, that they are connected by a deep desire to prevent a second Trump presidency.

In an appearance perhaps intended to needle Trump, his former press secretary Stephanie Grisham - now a harsh critic of her former boss - also took the convention stage.

Trump "has no empathy, no morals and no fidelity to the truth," Grisham said. "I love my country more than my party. Kamala Harris tells the truth. She respects the American people. And she has my vote."

Sens. Chuck Schumer, the Senate Democratic leader, and Bernie Sanders, the Vermont independent beloved by progressives, both praised Harris.

Schumer called on voters to elect another Democratic majority to the US Senate. "She can't do it alone," he said of a prospective President Harris.

Agenda

Sanders, a self-described democratic socialist, said he was eager to work with Harris in the White House as well. Their policy goals, he said, are "not a radical agenda."

As Democrats addressed the nation from Chicago, Harris faced an estimated 15,000 people in battleground Wisconsin in the arena where Republicans held their convention last month. She said that she was running "a people-powered campaign."

"Together we will chart a new way forward," the vice president said in remarks that were partially broadcast to the DNC. "A future for freedom, opportunity, of optimism and faith."

Still, it was not all serious on the second night of the four-day convention.

A symbolic roll call in which delegates from each state pledged their support for the Democratic nominee turned into a party atmosphere. A DJ played a mix of state-specific songs - and Atlanta native Lil Jon ran out dur-

ing Georgia's turn to his hit song with DJ Snake, "Turn Down for What," to the delight of the thousands inside the cavernous United Center.

Also:

WASHINGTON: Wyoming Republican primary voters opted Tuesday to stick with long-serving U.S. Sen. **John Barrasso** and U.S. Rep. **Harriet Hageman**, the first-term congresswoman who ousted **Liz Cheney** two years ago.

Barrasso beat **Reid Rasner**, a financial adviser from the Casper area, and is now heavily favored to win the general election and a third full term in the Republican-dominated state.

An orthopedic surgeon and former state lawmaker from Casper, Barrasso was first appointed to the Senate in 2007 after the death of Sen. **Craig Thomas**. He was elected to finish Thomas' term the following year.

Barrasso has risen to prominence as chair of the Senate Republican Conference, the third-ranking GOP position in the chamber, and ranking member of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee.

He has been an outspoken critic of the **Biden** administration's policies on immigration and, especially, fossil fuel development and air pollution regulations that affect Wyoming, a major producer of coal, oil and natural gas.

"It's the Wyoming economy. It's preserving our jobs, our economy, protecting our resources, our values, representing the folks of Wyoming," Barrasso said by phone after AP called the race. "There is a war out of **Washington** against the hidden **America**, the people that put the food on the table and the energy that turns on the lights and puts fuel in your vehicle."

Rasner ran on similar positions but as a proponent of term limits. He called Barrasso "bad for Wyoming and out of touch with reality."

sociated Press on Tuesday night. (AP)

ACLU sues Medford: The American Civil Liberties Union of Oregon (ACLU) is suing the city of Medford, saying its police department has been unlawfully monitoring progressive political activists who aren't

suspected of criminal activity.

City officials insisted they have not monitored the groups because of their views or constitutionally protected activities, but only to prepare for possible public safety impacts, such as traffic disruptions, conflicts between protesters and counter-protesters, and property damage.



Chinese Premier Li Qiang, accompanied by senior Russian government officials, reviews the honor guard during a grand welcome ceremony at Vnukovo Airport in Moscow, Russia on Aug 20. Li arrived on Tuesday to hold the 29th regular meeting between Chinese and Russian heads of government and visit Russia at the invitation of Russian Prime Minister Mikhail Mishustin. (Xinhua)

In the early 1980s, after revelations that Portland police had routinely surveilled civil liberties, racial justice and other groups, the Oregon Legislature approved a law barring law enforcement agencies from collecting information about the political, religious or social views or activities of any individual or group unless it directly relates to a criminal investigation. "The Medford Police is blatantly disregarding a three-decades-old state law that prohibits this type of surveillance," **Kelly Simon**, ACLU of Oregon legal director, said in a written statement. (AP)

3 people charged in Calif: A federal prison inmate and two other people were charged Tuesday with conspiring to mail drugs to a penitentiary in California where a mailroom supervisor died this month after opening a letter that prosecutors said was laced with fentanyl and other substances.

According to prosecutors, Jamar Jones, a prisoner at the US Penitentiary in Atwater, California, plotted with Stephanie Ferreira, of Evansville, Indiana, and Jermen Rudd III of Wentzville, Missouri, to send him drugs that he could sell at the prison. They disguised the shipment as "legal mail" from a law office, investigators said.

The penitentiary's mailroom supervisor, Marc Fischer, fell ill on Aug 9 after opening a letter addressed to Jones that contained multiple pages that appeared to be "soaked," or coated with drugs, according to an FBI affidavit filed in connection with the charges. Fischer's cause of death remains undetermined pending toxicology reports, the affidavit said. (AP)

Lat/Am

Colombians deported

Haiti's ex-prez hit with US sanctions

WASHINGTON, Aug 21, (AP) - The US has imposed sanctions on the former president of Haiti, **Michel Joseph Martelly**, Tuesday following accusations that he abused his influence to facilitate drug trafficking into the US and sponsored gangs that have contributed to instability in the Caribbean country.

The Treasury Department's acting undersecretary for terrorism and financial intelligence, Bradley T. Smith, said the action "emphasizes the significant and destabilizing role he and other corrupt political elites have played in perpetuating the ongoing crisis in Haiti."

Haiti is engulfed in gang violence while peaceful protesters are tear-gassed by police as they call on law enforcement to help them stop the gangs that have been violently seizing control of neighborhoods.



Martelly

Hundreds of police officers from Kenya have arrived in Haiti for a U.N.-backed mission led by the East African country to deal with the gangs.

A July United Nations report states that gang violence in Haiti has displaced more than 300,000 children since March - with many children living in makeshift shelters, including schools in poor hygienic conditions, placing them at risk of disease.

Financing

Martelly, who served as president from 2011 to 2016, was previously sanctioned by the Canadian government in November 2022 for financing gangs.

Meanwhile, police in Haiti's capital tear-gassed hundreds of peaceful protesters Monday as they called on law enforcement to help them stop the gangs that have been violently seizing control of their neighborhoods.

Protesters burned tires to show their anger over the police action and express their frustration as recent moves to quell rampant gang violence in Port-au-Prince have largely been unsuccessful.

Protesters like 24-year-old phone repairman Marcellin Jean-Pierre said he took to the streets "to express my anger towards the government, who isn't listening."

Jean-Pierre lives in the hillside neighborhood of Solino, which since last year has become a battleground for gangs seeking to take over the area.

Local media reported that the attacks were carried out by a coalition of gangs led by Kempes Sanon, a convicted kidnapper who escaped from prison in 2021, and notorious gang leader Jimmy Cherizier.

Panama deports 29 Colombians: Panama deported 29 Colombians on Tuesday on a flight that the government said was the first paid for by the United States under an agreement the two countries signed in July.

The Colombians had entered Panama illegally through the Darien jungle, a path used by more than 500,000 migrants headed north last year. The vast majority of those were Venezuelans.

But at least for now, Panama is not able to deport Venezuelans because the relationship between the countries has turned tense since Panama - like most other countries in the region -- has refused to recognize the results of Venezuela's election giving President Nicolas Maduro another term. The two countries have suspended their diplomatic relations.

Panama President José Raúl Mulino, who took office July 1, pledged to stop that migration flow, an interest he shares with the US government.

Mulino had originally said the flights would be "voluntary" repatriations, but those deported Tuesday had criminal records, officials said.

Roger Mojico, director of Panama's National Immigration Service, told reporters Tuesday that Panama is speaking with other countries such as Ecuador and India about coordinating repatriation flights.

Ex-FARC fighters abandon village: Dozens of former guerrilla fighters and their families were forced to abandon their village in southern Colombia on Tuesday, after receiving death threats by a rebel group that is still fighting the government, authorities said.

The displaced former fighters were members of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, the guerrilla group that signed a peace deal with Colombia's government in 2016.

For the past seven years, the former fighters had been living in Miravalle, a village built for them by Colombia's government, where they worked on farming projects, raising chickens and even organized whitewater rafting trips for tourists.

But in June, the Iván Díaz front, a rebel group that is vying for control of farmland and drug trafficking routes in Colombia's Caqueta province, accused the residents of Miravalle of aiding another rebel group in the area, and gave them 40 days to leave.

Sinaloa infighting rises in Mexico: The murders of about a dozen people in the northern Mexican state of Sinaloa appear to be linked to infighting in the dominant drug smuggling cartel there, confirming fears of repercussions from the July 25 detention of two top cartel leaders.

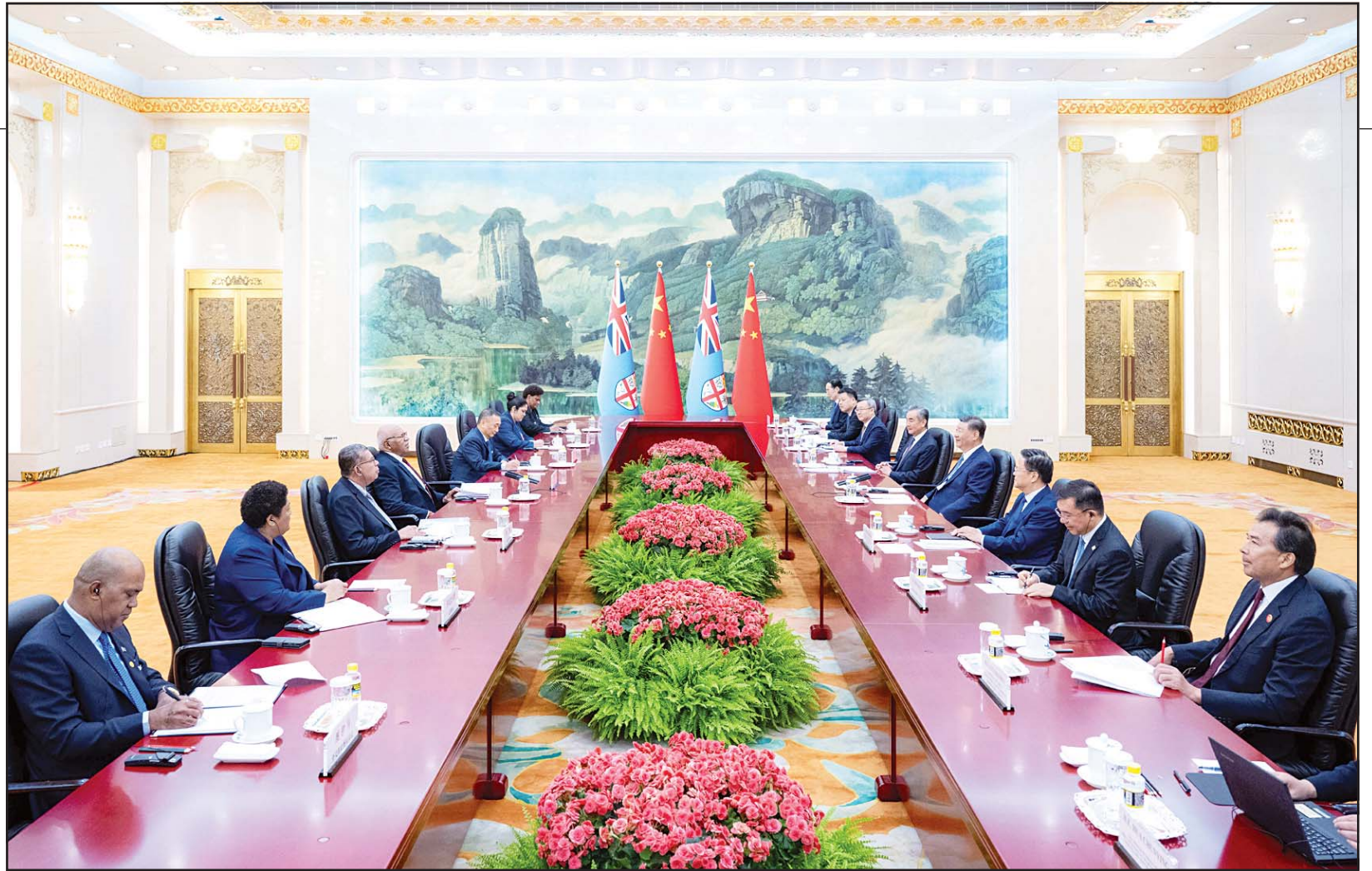
Last month, Joaquín Guzmán López, a capo from one faction of the Sinaloa cartel - the Chapitos or "Little Chapos," the sons of imprisoned cartel leader Joaquín "El Chapo" Guzmán - turned himself in to U.S. authorities. However, he allegedly abducted the leader of the rival faction, Ismael "El Mayo" Zambada, forcing him on to the same flight to El Paso and turning him in.

Mexican authorities are caught in the middle of the coming storm: they weren't involved in the July 25 capture, but they are unwilling to use the opportunity to crack down on the Sinaloa cartel. The cartel is splintering, and what's at stake is who will take over Zambada's faction now that he is in a US jail.

Power outage in Puerto Rico: Tens of thousands of customers remained without power across Puerto Rico on Tuesday, a week after Ernesto swiped the US territory as a tropical storm. Authorities pledged to restore electricity to everyone by the weekend.

The National Weather Service issued yet another excessive heat advisory, warning of "dangerously hot and humid conditions."

More than 40,000 out of nearly 1.5 million customers remained without power in the afternoon. All schools should have electricity by late Tuesday, officials said, and noted that some 80% of emergency medical clinics, which exclude hospitals, have power.



Chinese President Xi Jinping meets with Prime Minister of the Republic of Fiji Sitiveni Rabuka, who is on an official visit to China, at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing, capital of China on Aug 20. (Xinhua)

Asia

Haley calls for more int'l support for Taiwan

Macao leader will not seek another term

HONG KONG, Aug 21, (Agencies) - Macao leader Ho Iat Seng announced Wednesday he would not seek another term due to health reasons, less than two months before the election for the top official of the casino city.

Ho said in a statement that he has deep feelings for Macao and has done his best for the development of the semi-autonomous Chinese city, neighboring Hong Kong, since he began his five-year term in 2019.

"However, due to my health not fully recovering, and for the long-term development of Macao, I have decided not to participate in the sixth election for the Chief Executive," he said.

He did not elaborate on the reasons for his decision but thanked Beijing and the people in the former Portuguese colony for their trust.

The election for Macao's top job is set to be held in October, with a 400-member committee - mostly dominated by establishment figures - picking the leader. People interested in becoming a candidate can submit their application between August 29 and September 12.

In July, a government announcement about Ho's decision to extend his leave to 39 days in total sparked concerns about his health, local media reported. But his administration insisted at that time that Ho was in good health and undergoing routine medical check-ups and receiving treatment, the reports said.

Diversify

It is unclear who will take over Ho's job when his term ends in December. But one main goal for the Macao government is to diversify the city's economy with retail trade, entertainment and other industries and to reduce reliance on gamblers from the mainland, its main revenue source.

A businessman, Jorge Chiang, announced last month his intention to run for the leadership post on Facebook.

Macao, with a population of 687,000, returned to China's rule in 1999 and will mark the 25th anniversary of the handover in December.

'More int'l support for Taiwan': The former US ambassador to the United Nations, **Nikki Haley**, on Wednesday called for more international backing for Taiwan and a coordinated pushback against China's claims over the self-ruled democracy. "The United States should elevate Taiwan on the world stage. You should

no longer be silenced in global affairs," Haley told an audience at Ketagalan Forum, a Taipei conference focused on security issues in the Asia-Pacific.

She called for Taiwan to become a full member of the UN even though it's being blocked by China from representation in international bodies. Beijing claims Taiwan as its own territory, to be brought under its control by force if necessary. China also prohibits countries it has international relations with from having formal ties with Taipei.

While the US doesn't formally recognize Taiwan, it is the island's strongest backer and arms provider. Haley, who served at the UN under former President **Donald Trump's** administration, ran a yearlong presidential campaign as a tough-on-China candidate before dropping out of the race in March. She has endorsed Trump in the November elections.

At the Taipei forum, she called on the US and its Western allies to rally around Taiwan and "relentlessly push" for the island's global acceptance.

Exclusion

Yoshihiko Noda, Japan's former prime minister who also addressed the forum, echoed Haley's calls for greater representation for Taiwan in international organizations. He decried Taiwan's exclusion from the World Health Organization and said he was determined to push for its participation as an observer, which China opposes.

Heavy rains in South Korea: A tropical depression dumped heavy rain in southern South Korea and the populous Seoul region Wednesday after weakening from a tropical storm.

Some southern parts of the mainland and the island of Jeju recorded 10 to 17 centimeters (3.9 to 6.6 inches) of rain. Some areas in the capital region saw 10 to 12 centimeters (3.9 to 4.7 inches) of rain Wednesday.

The depression that was once Tropical Storm Jongdari made landfall Wednesday morning, and South Korea's weather agency said the system was continuing to weaken.

Weather conditions in the afternoon weren't strong enough to deter people from walking on the streets.

No injuries have been reported. About 20 vehicles were damaged by floods in the southern town of Ulju, the nearby city of Ulsan and the central city of Seosan, according to South Korea's Ministry of the Interior and

Safety. Emergency workers also responded to several flooded buildings and homes, the ministry said.

Xi meets Fijian PM in Beijing: Chinese President **Xi Jinping** met with Prime Minister of the Republic of Fiji **Sitiveni Rabuka** in Beijing on Tuesday.

Xi congratulated Fiji's Men's Rugby Sevens team on winning the silver medal at the Paris Olympic Games.

Noting that Fiji was the first Pacific island country to establish diplomatic relations with China and that next year will mark the 50th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic ties, Xi said that for nearly half a century, the two countries have always supported and helped each other, setting a good example of equal treatment and friendly cooperation between countries large and small.

China attaches great importance to China-Fiji relations and is willing to continue to provide assistance to the best of its ability for Fiji's economic and social development, and work with Fiji to grasp the general direction of bilateral relations and promote the building of a China-Fiji community with a shared future to better benefit the two peoples, Xi said.

Australia, Indonesia upgrade ties: Australia and Indonesia have agreed to upgrade their defense ties to a treaty-level agreement.

Australian Prime Minister **Anthony Albanese** and **Prabowo Subianto**, Indonesia's President-elect and Defense Minister, on Tuesday announced the conclusion of negotiations to upgrade the Australia-Indonesia Defence Cooperation Arrangement after meeting for talks in Canberra.

The treaty-level pact includes provisions for joint drills and for the Australian and Indonesian militaries to operate from each other's countries.

"It will be a vital plank for our two countries to support each other's security, which is vital to both countries but also to the stability of the region we share," Albanese told reporters at a joint press conference with Prabowo and **Richard Marles**, the Australian minister for defence and deputy prime minister.

The agreement, negotiations on which began in February 2023, will also improve education links between the countries and escalate cooperation on maritime security.



Children have fun in the Old Town of Mombasa, Kenya, on Aug 17. The Old Town of Mombasa, located on the southeast side of Mombasa Island, has become an important tourist destination in Kenya due to its diverse culture and historical sites. (Xinhua)



Kagame

Chakwera

Africa

Congo boat accident kills 20: A boat accident on the Lukeni river in western Congo over the weekend left at least 20 people dead and hundreds missing, a local official said Tuesday.

It was the latest deadly boat accident in the central African country, where overloading is often to blame, including in June when an overloaded boat sank near the capital and 80 passengers lost their lives.

In the latest accident, the motorized wooden boat was carrying about 300 passengers and navigating by night when it crashed into a sunken barge, Kutu territory administrator Jacques Nzenza Mongie said during a news conference.

At least 20 corpses were found during searches Tuesday, Mongie told The Associated Press. An additional 46 people were rescued and hundreds were still missing, he said.

Navigating by night is illegal in Congo, and a provincial commission is currently at the site of the accident to determine who was responsible, Gov Lebon Nkoso Kevan of Mai-Ndombe province said Tuesday. (AP)

2 missing in Malawi plane crash: A small plane crashed into Lake Malawi on Tuesday with three people onboard, an official in Malawi said. A Dutch passenger survived and was rescued by fishermen but another passenger and the pilot were missing.

Malawi's Information Minister Moses Kumkuyu said in a statement that the rescued passenger is female but did not give her age. She sustained minor injuries and is being treated at a hospital, he added.

The plane crashed close to the shoreline of Lake Malawi in shallow water, Kumkuyu said. He said the aircraft had been located and a rescue effort was underway.

The plane was a Cessna C210-type aircraft, which can typically carry six people, going from the central town of Nkhosakota on the shore of the lake to the southern town of Liwonde. It was operated by the Nyasa Express charter airline, according to the statement. (AP)

Malawi gets insurance payout: The Malawian government has received an insurance payout of \$11.2 million for a crippling El Nino-linked drought that led the southern African nation to declare a state of disaster earlier this year.

The payout was given to Malawi this month, the African Development Bank said Monday. Malawi had a drought insurance policy through the bank and the African Risk Capacity Group, an agency of the African Union.

The funds will support food assistance to around 235,000 households in some of Malawi's hardest-hit regions and also help with direct relief payments to more than 100,000

households, the African Development Bank said. Malawian President **Lazarus Chakwera** said the payout was "a lifeline for our vulnerable populations."

Malawi, which is already one of the world's poorest countries, has had its food

supply ruined by the drought, which has been attributed to the El Nino natural weather phenomenon that lasted a year before ending in June. The country declared a state of emergency in March and said there was a food crisis in 23 of its 28 districts.



Colombian migrants walk in handcuffs and shackles to a plane for deportation at Marcos A. Gelabert de Albrook Airport in Panama City on Aug 20. Panama deported 29 Colombians on Tuesday on a flight that the government said was the first paid for by the United States under an agreement the two countries signed in July. (AP)

Crops have failed across the region after El Nino brought below-average rainfall between November and April. Tens of millions of people rely on small-scale agriculture to feed themselves and make a living across southern Africa.

Southern African bloc SADC said at a heads of state summit in Zimbabwe this weekend that around 17% of the region's population - approximately 68 million people - are in need of help because of drought. (AP)

Kagame urges cooperation: Rwandan President **Paul Kagame** on Monday urged the country's leaders to work together in carrying out their duties during the swearing-in ceremony of the recently appointed Cabinet.

"An individual who has done very well and has dedicated himself or herself to everything is not enough. One person alone cannot take us anywhere or will not take us where we want to go as a nation, because no one works alone, no one lives alone," Kagame said in a speech at the parliament building in Kigali, the capital of Rwanda.

The president stressed the need for government institutions to work together to deliver on national goals.

"When I say institutions, I mean people. People must work together; institutions must work together; our national institutions must complement each other to spearhead our economic transformation journey. There is no shortcut to the development goals we want to achieve," he added. (Xinhua)

oil plunges

The price of Kuwaiti oil went down by USD 2.13 to USD 76.95 per barrel on Tuesday as opposed to USD 79.08 pb, Monday, said the Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) on Wednesday.

At the global level, the price of the Brent Crude went down by 46 cents to USD 77.20 pb, the same occurred to the West Texas Intermediate, which went down by USD 74.04 pb. (KUNA)

Kuwait is in advanced discussions with Qatar Energy to secure a significant long-term supply of liquefied natural gas (LNG) to meet its growing energy demands, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The proposed deal involves Qatar supplying Kuwait with three million metric tons of LNG annually for 15 years, beginning in 2026. This agreement will be sourced from Qatar's North Field project, which is slated to commence operations in 2026.

The current negotiations are expected to conclude by the end of this year, with the final deal anticipated to be announced in the last quarter of 2024.

This new agreement builds on an existing 15-year contract signed in 2020, under which Qatar has been supplying Kuwait with three million tons of LNG per year, set to expire in 2035. With the new deal, Qatari LNG supplies to Kuwait could potentially reach six million tons per year. Kuwait, a major oil producer and OPEC member, is increasing its reliance on imported gas to meet its rising energy needs, particularly during the hot

Kuwait in advanced talks with Qatar for long-term LNG supply

summer months when air conditioning usage surges. This move aligns with Kuwait's strategic focus on boosting gas production while addressing supply challenges.

This summer, Kuwait experienced scheduled power outages due to gas supply disruptions. The country relies on gas for 55 percent of its electricity production.

To address these challenges, Kuwait is also preparing to receive a shipment of 66,000 tons of LNG from Nigeria in early September, sourced from the Niger River fields.

Recent data from the Energy Research Unit in Washington highlights a rise in Kuwait's LNG imports. From January to June 2024, Kuwait imported 3.02 million tons of LNG, up from 2.28 million tons during the same period in 2023. Qatar and Nigeria were the top suppliers, with Qatar exporting 1.89 million tons and Nigeria 0.44 million tons to Kuwait in the first half of 2024. Kuwait has solidified its position as the largest market for liquefied natural gas (LNG) imports in the Middle East, largely due to the operational capacity of the receiving port in the Al-Zour area.

Market Movements

21-08-2024

	Change	Closing pts		Change	Closing pts		
SAUDI	- TASI	+83.62	12,187.44	JAPAN	- Nikkei 225	-111.12	37,951.80
DUBAI	- DFMGI	+40.03	4,294.90	PHILIPPINES	- PSEi	-44.14	6,900.62
PAKISTAN	- KSE 100	+513.45	78,295.50	EGYPT	- EGX 30	-0.95	29,914.29

Business

Gulf markets mostly positive

Boursa continues hesitation, indices show minor declines

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 21: The Boursa Kuwait experienced continued hesitation during yesterday's trading, with most indices showing minor declines similar to previous day's performance, reports Al-Jarida daily.

The General Market Index fell by 0.13 percent, or 9.48 points, ending at 7,117.68 points. Trading volume remained steady at 44.5 million dinars, with 225.1 million shares changing hands through 16,406 transactions.

Out of 133 traded shares, 59 gained, 53 lost, and 21 remained unchanged.

The Premier Market Index decreased by 0.11 percent, or 8.59 points, closing at 7,748.23 points. This segment saw liquidity of 27.8 million shares traded through 8,467 transactions, with 34 shares traded, 17 gaining, 12 losing, and 5 unchanged.

The Main Market Index also fell by 0.24 percent, or 14.57 points, settling at 6,035.76 points. This market segment saw 7,939 transactions involving

99 shares, with 42 gaining, 41 losing, and 16 remaining unchanged.

Despite the overall market decline, liquidity levels showed a positive trend at the start of trading. Speculative stocks, including GFH, IFA, Arzan, Aayan, Unicap, and Innovest, attracted significant attention. Smaller stocks, such as those priced below fifty fils, dominated trading, while large stocks like KFH and the National Bank experienced less activity.

The market showed volatility, with significant fluctuations in stocks such as Unicap and Al Khaliji, which initially declined but later recovered some of their losses. A notable rise in small and medium-sized stocks, such as Wan-ovest, Equipment, Homes, and Arab Real Estate, provided some balance to the market.

In the Gulf region, the performance was generally positive, with five indicators rising. However, Kuwait and Bahrain indices experienced declines.

Exports to Japan fall 5.1% YoY

Kuwait's trade surplus with Japan narrows 11.1% in July

TOKYO, Aug 21, (KUNA): Kuwait's trade surplus with Japan narrowed 11.1 percent from a year earlier to JPY 57.9 billion (USD 375 million) in July, down for the first time in three months due to slowing exports, government data showed on Wednesday.

However, Kuwait stayed in black ink with Japan for 16 years and six months, as exports still offset imports in value, the Finance Ministry said in a preliminary report.

Overall Kuwaiti exports to Japan fell 5.1 percent year-on-year to JPY 82.3 billion (USD 542 million) for the first decline in three months. Imports from Japan grew 13.0 percent to JPY 24.4 billion (USD 156 million), up for the third month in a row.

Middle East's trade surplus with Japan widened 7.4 percent to JPY 733.9 billion (USD 5.0 billion) last month, with Japan-bound exports from the region rising 11.8 percent from a year earlier.

Crude oil, refined products, liquefied natural gas (LNG) and other natural resources, which accounted

for 94.3 percent of the region's total exports to Japan, increased 10.8 percent. The region's overall imports from Japan jumped 22.1 percent on demand for automobiles, machinery and steel.

Japan's global trade balance returned to deficit in July with JPY 621.8 billion (USD 4.3 billion), as the weaker yen contributed to increase the value of its imports.

Exports grew 10.3 percent, buoyed by shipments of semiconductors and related equipment, and automobiles. Imports soared 16.6 percent, as pharmaceutical products, communication devices and crude oil inflated costs amid the yen's depreciation against the dollar.

Both exports and imports marked the largest amount for the month of July since comparable data became available in 1979. China remained Japan's biggest trade partner, followed by the US. The trade data are measured on a customs-cleared basis before adjustment for seasonal factors.

Long-term Saudi Vision 2030 plans could boost Renminbi use in trade

China-Saudi oil trade in Renminbi faces challenges, S&P Global says

By S&P Global

Slow progress of renminbi-based oil trade

China's push for yuan-based oil trade with Saudi Arabia began with President Xi's first visit to the kingdom in January 2016. Two years later, in March 2018, the Shanghai International Energy Exchange launched its first ever renminbi-denominated crude oil futures contracts, establishing a yuan-based oil pricing system and an international benchmark that competes with the US's West Texas Intermediate and London's Brent.

Despite this early start, progress in yuan-based oil trade between the two countries remains limited due to major obstacles that challenge the economic rationale of such trades. The first obstacle is that the yuan is not broadly used in international trade and finance. Given this, trading oil in yuan will incur additional risks for oil exporters.

Most major oil exporters have substantial positive trade balances with China. If their trade with the country were fully conducted in yuan, they would have much more income than outlays in the currency. While some of this could be held or invested, the excess "petroyuan" will need to be exchanged into other currencies, thereby incurring additional costs and exchange rate risks.

Complicating this is the fact that Gulf exporters' currencies are pegged to the US dollar, including those of Saudi Arabia, UAE, Iraq, Oman, and others. If the dollar appreciates against the renminbi, as it has been for the past year, selling oil in yuan will cut their incomes in domestic-currency terms.

Moreover, Beijing has yet to lay out a roadmap for resolving these issues and for liberalizing the country's currency and capital account. This leaves a high degree of uncertainty on the ability to manage future petroyuan-related risks. It also obstructs broader use of the currency in trade despite the substantial progress made so far.

The yuan's headways into global trade

The renminbi has made substantial progress since its global launch in July 2009, when the pilot scheme for renminbi cross-border settlement in Hong Kong was expanded to corporates, which introduced the yuan as a currency for international trade.

Since then, the People's Bank of China (PBOC) has promoted the currency's use mainly via two channels. First, through expanding trade and setting up bilateral clearing and settlement infrastructure for the trading of goods in yuan. Second, through developing and deepening the offshore renminbi markets that enable international participants to access renminbi financial markets.

China has made meaningful progress in the first channel. Its share of world trade tripled over the last two decades, from 4% in 2002 to 13% last year. As growing trade increases the scope for settlement in yuan, use of the currency in crossborder trade settlement has also tripled in this period, rising from less than 1% in 2012 to over 3% last year.

The renminbi is currently the third-most-used currency in SWIFT trade finance settlements, accounting for 5.3%, just behind the euro's 5.9%, although both remain far from challenging the dollar's dominant 84% position.

Push and pull factors behind use of the renminbi

The yuan's substantial headways into global trade belie the fact that its progress has been unsteady, characterized by episodes of advances and setbacks, due to push and pull factors both economic and non-economic. Between 2012 and 2015, China's efforts to expand global trade, set up renminbi clearing facilities, and sign

Highlights

Recent talks of China paying for Saudi oil in renminbi led to expectations that China's massive purchases from the kingdom will push more of their oil trade to be denominated in the Chinese currency. S&P Global believes yuan-based oil trade between the two countries face significant challenges, and may take decades to grow to a meaningful scale, but deepening bilateral ties and aligning long-term interests between Beijing and Riyadh may help facilitate this process.

Discussions on the prospect of yuan-based oil trade often focus on the ability to pay in renminbi. However, the ability to settle trades in yuan alone is unlikely to boost its use, as the volume of such trades depends on oil exporters' willingness to accept the currency for payment, which in turn depends on their ability to use the resulting proceeds.

As the renminbi is not broadly used in international trade and finance, there are relatively few outlets to spend these proceeds. Cumulating the inflow would therefore incur substantial costs and raise currency risks. This explains why the yuan's use remains limited in Saudi-China oil trade despite Riyadh's willingness to discuss, and Beijing's aims to promote, more use of the currency.

This dynamic may change, as President Xi's visit to the kingdom in December 2022 set in motion a transformation of Saudi-China ties from one focused on oil to one that is comprehensive in nature. Aside from the booming oil trade that continues to anchor their core relationship, long-term plans such as Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030, are driving new institutional, financial, and cultural linkages between the two countries.

These broadening linkages will provide more outlets for the yuan's use, such as paying for Chinese engineering and construction services in the kingdom or investing in firms or projects in China across a widening range of sectors. Through these channels, deepening bilateral ties could help facilitate more use of the renminbi in Saudi-China oil trade in the decades to come.

swap agreements with trading partners accelerated the yuan's global use. However, much of this progress was reversed in late 2015 when the currency depreciated substantially against the dollar.

The resulting exchange rate volatility highlighted the risk of trading in the Chinese currency and reduced demand for yuan settlement in the years that followed. Use of the yuan did not start to recover until 2018, and when it did, its upward climb was at a third of the previous pace.

From early 2022, rising geopolitical risks gave the yuan a push as a dollar alternative. Momentum behind use of the currency in global trade surged during the year from 2% to over 3% — the same extent as in the previous four years.

These episodes underscore the pull forces of trade and the push forces of geopolitical risks that continue to characterize the renminbi's use. Both these forces are at play in the use of the currency in Saudi-China trade.

Booming oil trade anchors potential for broader yuan use

China's rapidly growing trade with the Middle East is the key factor that anchors the long-term potential for broader renminbi use by Gulf states. China's trade with the region has more than tripled over the past two decades. Between

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 21: Several major shareholders of listed companies in Kuwait are actively seeking financial facilities from local banks to increase their ownership stakes by acquiring additional shares, according to market sources. In response, banks have shown a willingness to extend financing by offering loans secured against shares, along with additional guarantees to ensure repayment, reports Al-Jarida daily

Sources report that delegations from various banks have recently visited prominent clients in the market, particularly those engaged in sectors requiring further development or expansion. These clients have been offered exceptional financing rates, with some banks even extending direct personal loans to boost their ownership positions.

Banking insiders noted a significant liquidity surplus and high deposit levels in the market. However, the scale of new projects has remained below expectations, as prolonged implementation cycles continue to slow progress. Despite calls for accelerating the award and execution of projects, little has changed in practice. Sources highlight that the time from announcing a project award to its signing and implementation often spans more than two financial quarters, a delay that has become a recurring issue in the market.

Historically, the Kuwaiti market has absorbed substantial banking liquidity, but it has also experienced periods of stagnation. Recently, there have been notable breakthroughs driven by changes in business models, client solvency, and more stringent risk assessments. Banks have increasingly focused on evaluating these factors to ensure the

Sheikh Nawaf Al-Sabah Tops Kuwaiti CEOs

Seven Kuwaitis featured on Forbes Mideast 2024 most powerful CEOs

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 21: Forbes Middle East has recognized seven prominent Kuwaiti business leaders, including two women, in its 2024 annual list of the most powerful CEOs in the region, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The rankings were based on achievements, innovations, initiatives, and performance over the past year, as well as the size and impact of the companies they lead.

The list features 100 CEOs from 19 nationalities, with Emiratis leading with 27 CEOs, followed by Egyptians with 21, and Saudis with 14.

Here are the Kuwaiti CEOs recognized: Sheikh Nawaf Saud Al-Sabah - Vice Chairman and CEO of Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC), ranked first among Kuwaitis and sixth in the Middle East. Al-Sabah, who joined KPC in 1999, assumed his current role in 2022.

Issam Al-Saqr - Vice Chairman and Group CEO of the National Bank of Kuwait (NBK), ranked second in Kuwait and eighth in the Middle East. Al-Saqr has been with NBK since 1978 and has held his current position since 2014.

Badr Al-Kharafi - Vice Chairman and CEO of Zain Group, ranked third in Kuwait and 38th in the Middle East. Al-Kharafi joined Zain's board in 2011, became Vice Chairman in 2014, and CEO in 2017. In March 2024, he also became Chairman of Gulf Bank's Board of Directors.

Sheikha Adana Al-Sabah - CEO of Kuwait Projects Company (Holding) (KIPCO), ranked fourth in Kuwait and 60th in the Middle East. She has led KIPCO since January 2022 and serves on the boards of Kamco Invest and OSN.

Donna Sultan - President and CEO of KEO, ranked fifth in Kuwait and 73rd in the Middle East. Sultan became KEO's CEO in 1991 and assumed the role of President and CEO in 2016.

Talal Al-Ajmi - Founder and CEO of VI Markets, ranked sixth in Kuwait and 94th in the Middle East. Al-Ajmi founded VI Markets in 2010, which now serves over 130,000 traders monthly.

Salem Al Hindi - CEO of Rotana Music Group, ranked seventh in Kuwait, highlighting his significant role in the entertainment sector across the region.

These leaders represent Kuwait's growing influence in the business world, contributing significantly to the region's economic landscape.

Despite these challenges, many clients who have secured financing remain optimistic about their companies' future performance. They expect stable distribution rates to contribute to meeting financial obligations, given their companies' regional presence and anticipated growth in operational contracts during the second half of the year.

One key factor contributing to delays in disbursing the full amounts allocated for projects and capital spending is the lengthy bureaucratic and procedural processes. Even when procedures move smoothly, grievances, complaints, or objections from competitors can further slow progress.

Copper prices up 0.1%, nickel prices rise 1% on LME

Aluminum prices surge to highest levels since mid-July

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 21: Aluminum prices have surged to their highest levels since mid-July, driven by a notable increase in Chinese imports despite robust domestic production and rising fund purchases, reports Al-Jarida daily.

Recent customs data revealed that China's aluminum imports grew by 11.5 percent year-on-year in July, reaching 129,898 tons.

In yesterday's trading session, aluminum futures on the London Metal Exchange (LME) climbed 1 percent, reaching \$2,470 per metric ton. Earlier, the price had touched \$2,482, marking the highest point since July 15.

Copper prices on the LME also saw a modest increase of 0.1 percent, settling at \$9,461.50 per ton, while nickel prices rose by 1 percent to \$16,825 per ton.

2009 and 2023, China's imports from the Middle East surged 3.7x to US\$217 billion while exports increased 3.1x to US\$169 billion.

Saudi Arabia has kept pace with this boom and remains China's largest trading partner in the Gulf. Its share of China's imports from the Middle East has stayed at a stable 30%-35% range since 2010, while its share of China's exports to the region has risen from some 15% a decade ago to roughly 25% in recent years.

As the boom in Saudi-China trade was largely driven by oil, oil's share of China's imports from the kingdom has risen steadily from two-thirds a decade ago to 84% last year. Meanwhile, the Saudis' trade surplus with China has widened from the lows of US\$5 billion to \$10 billion in 2015-2016 to as high as US\$20 billion to US\$40 billion in the last three years.

If Saudi-China oil trade were fully conducted in renminbi, it would be challenging to hold, spend, or convert the resulting tens of billions of petroyuan through existing bilateral or international channels. This helps explain why the yuan has made little progress in becoming a meaningful currency for oil settlement despite booming trade between the two countries.

Strategic considerations extend past rationale

Weak economic rationale means the yuan's entry into oil markets may need to rely on non-economic factors such as strategic considerations.

Escalating geopolitical events, shifting national interests, and growing non-US trade, particularly with Asia, in recent years led some emerging economies to look to diversify their external relations.

For example, during the BRICS summit in August 2023, some founding members of the group, which comprises Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa, emphasized their intentions to increase direct local-currency transactions between member states. Some Gulf states, including Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Iraq, are also exploring ways to conduct trade in non-dollar currencies to broaden their economic diplomacy and foreign policy influence. Beijing's stated interest in promoting renminbi use provides a strategic justification for use of the currency that extends beyond pure economic considerations of the past.

Such justifications will not fully overturn challenges noted above, but they could lead to incremental or gradual progress in renminbi-based trade. While the prospect of this remains highly uncertain for crude, other oil products, natural gas, or other traded goods may be easier to implement, and may lead the way.

These trends led Iraq to allow trade settlement with China in yuan for the first time in February 2023. A month later, China made its first purchase of liquefied natural gas produced in the UAE in yuan. As for oil, Russia mainly trades crude in renminbi currently, while Iran and Venezuela also sell some of their oil in euro and renminbi.

Diversification interest invites renewed renminbi push

The Saudis may have considered non-dollar oil trade as early as April 2019, when Reuters reported that the kingdom raised this possibility to US officials and discussed it with other OPEC members. These talks did not lead to major actions, and they fell by the wayside during the COVID-19 years.

Escalating geopolitical events in early 2022 revived these considerations and created an opening for the yuan. This coincided with Beijing's renewed push for the renminbi as soon as the country came out of the pandemic.

In March 2022, The Wall Street Journal reported that Saudi Arabia and China were in active talks to price some of the kingdom's oil sales in yuan, and that Saudi Aramco (Aramco) was considering including yuan-denominated futures contracts in its pricing model.

Alaska Air clears a big hurdle in its proposed merger with Hawaiian Airlines

Alaska Air is one step closer to acquiring Hawaiian Airlines after the U.S. Department of Justice chose not to challenge the \$1 billion deal that the carriers say will create a company better able to serve travelers.

Alaska Air announced in December that it would pay \$18 in cash for each share of Hawaiian. The deal includes \$900 million in debt held by Hawaiian Airlines.

The brands of both airlines would be preserved after the merger, which is rare in an industry where decades of acquisitions have left only four big carriers dominating the U.S. market.

Alaska and Hawaiian say they have few overlapping routes and the intent of a tie-up is to allow the

new airline to better compete with the nation's Big Four: American Airlines, Delta Air Lines, Southwest Airlines and United Airlines.

Alaska Air and Hawaiian Holdings, the parent company of Hawaiian Airlines, said in regulatory filings with the Securities and Exchange Commission Tuesday that the review period for the Justice Department, which had already been extended several times, expired just after midnight.

The closing is still subject to approval from the Department of Transportation. Alaska and Hawaiian have been working with Transportation on lingering issues, according to the SEC filing.

The decision by the Justice Department to give the deal a pass runs counter to the Biden administration's opposition to two recent attempts at further consolidation in the airline industry. The Justice Department successfully sued to block JetBlue Airways from buying budget carrier Spirit Airlines and prevented JetBlue from striking a partnership with American Airlines in the Northeast. In both, the administration argued that allowing the deals would have reduced choice and driven up prices for consumers.

If Alaska and Hawaiian close their agreement, it will be the first combination of sizeable U.S. airlines since 2016, when Alaska outbid JetBlue to buy Virgin

America.

Shares of Hawaiian Holdings Inc. jumped more than 12%. Alaska Air Group Inc. shares were flat.

Hawaiian has not recovered from the coronavirus pandemic as have larger airlines, including Alaska.

Hawaiian depends heavily on tourism from Japan, which dropped sharply after the outbreak of COVID-19 and now suffers from the weakness of the yen, which has fallen by about 40% in comparison with the dollar since the start of 2021. In addition, Hawaiian faces more competition on flights between the islands and the U.S. mainland and from Southwest on intra-islands service. (AP)

Many businesses will be hurt if they do

Canadian freight trains could stop moving today

TORONTO, Aug. 21, (AP) — Businesses across a variety of industries are bracing for freight trains to stop moving Thursday at both major Canadian freight railroads if they can't resolve a contract dispute with the union that represents engineers, conductors and dispatchers.

The impact will be widespread because so many companies rely on Canadian National and CPKC railroads to deliver their raw materials and finished products. Railroads carry more than \$1 billion Canadian (US\$730 million) worth of goods each day and delivered more than 375 million tons of freight last year.

More than 32,000 commuters will also be affected in Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver because they rely on CPKC dispatchers to direct those trains over that freight railroad's tracks.

Government officials are playing a more active role in trying to resolve the dispute, with the labor minister meeting with the parties at the CN negotiations in Montreal on Tuesday and with CPKC contract negotiators on Wednesday in Calgary. But so far, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has been reluctant to force the Teamsters Canada Rail Conference union to accept a deal. Many business groups have urged the government to intervene and force arbitration.

Both railroads are offering raises to what are already well-paying jobs that they say are consistent with other recent deals in the industry. The negotiations are primarily hung up on issues related to the way rail workers are scheduled and concerns about rules designed to prevent fatigue. At CN, there are some additional concerns about provisions that would help the railroad temporarily relocate workers when it is short in other regions.

Nearly 10,000 workers are covered by these contracts. CN said its engineers make about \$150,000 a year while conductors earn about \$120,000, and CPKC says its pay is comparable.

Two years ago, quality-of-life concerns about demanding schedules and the lack of paid sick time drove U.S. railroads to the brink of a strike before Congress and President Joe Biden intervened and forced the unions to accept a deal.

Businesses in Canada are especially concerned because CN and CPKC are slated to shut down simultaneously Thursday at 12:01 a.m. EDT. Past labor disputes have sometimes stopped the trains at just one of the railroads for a brief period — most recently in March 2022 at CPKC — but not both at the same time.

"Nobody can go very long without a constant source of supply, and a lot of commodities are shipped by rail," said Dan Kelly, president of The Canadian Federation of Independent Business.

Losing rail shipments would be especially painful for companies that rely on bulk shipments over long distances because there is no way for trucks to make up the difference. Chemical manufacturers, refineries and exporters of grain and fertilizer are especially dependent on rail. And many consumer goods travel by rail once they are unloaded off massive ships.

All rail traffic in Canada and any rail freight that goes into or out of the United States will stop moving if a lockout or strike occur, but the railroads' numerous trains within the United States and Mexico will continue operating.

A few examples of the potential impact: The railroads stopped accepting new shipments of hazardous materials to ensure that none of those dangerous commodities would be stranded along the tracks if the railroads shut down. Shipments of perishable goods were also put on hold early. All other shipments are being gradually halted before Thursday.

Depending on how many supplies they have on hand and how much storage space they have for finished products, some chemical plants may have to quickly start cutting pro-

duction or even consider shutting down.

One key example is chlorine that is used to treat drinking water across Canada, all of which is shipped by rail, according to Greg Moffatt, executive vice president of the Chemistry Industry Association of Canada. Most water treatment plants have a 10-to-14-day supply of chlorine on hand.

"The clock is ticking," Moffatt said. "And there is no ability to move chlorine by truck."

Even for chemicals that can be hauled by truck, it's not practical. It would take at least three trucks to haul the same amount one rail tank car carries.

Grain, fertilizer and most other bulk products such as timber, construction materials and coal all move by rail. Western Grain Elevators Association executive director Wade Sobkovich said the contract dispute is happening at a time when demand for Canadian grain is at its highest: About \$50 million of grain moves every day.

"This isn't just grain. This is forest products, this is automotive, this is coal, mine products. ... It's going to have a huge impact to consumers in Canada and our customers around the world that need food ingredients," he said.

Ports rely on railroads to haul containers filled with all kinds of goods across the country after they are unloaded from massive ships.

Trains haul about 60% of the cargo containers that come into the port, according to Port of Halifax spokesperson Lori MacLean.

"Canadian gateways have already seen a reduction of volumes due to the uncertainty around rail operations," she said.

The Vancouver Fraser Port Authority has told ships that are currently en route to slow down and delay their arrival time to prevent further congestion in the port.

International shipping giant Maersk is making contingency plans but continues to ship goods into Canadian ports for now.

There really isn't any alternative to rail when it comes to moving large goods across North America, says Dennis Darby, president of Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters, the country's largest trade and industry association.

If the railroads shut down, the problems will reverberate throughout Canada and the U.S., Darby said.

"We are all a part of the same supply chain," he said.

Trudeau is likely waiting to intervene until it looks like there is no other alternative because his Liberal Party doesn't want to "alienate the labor movement," said Daniel Béland, a political science professor at McGill University in Montreal.

"The politics are tough indeed ... Yet, as they recognize, the ongoing strike has a detrimental impact on the country as a whole," he said.

Both Canadian National and CPKC had proposed shifting away from a longstanding system in which train crews are paid based on the miles they travel, to a system based on the hours they work. The railroads said that would make it easier to give workers more predictable schedules.

But the union resisted. It believes the change will erode schedule provisions designed to reduce fatigue that they have fought so hard for over the years.

"We don't want to go backward and give concessions to very, very profitable companies that should be improving conditions," union spokesman Christopher Monette said.

In hopes of reaching a deal, CPKC dropped its proposal to use an hour-based pay system like that used in the United States, said railroad spokesperson Patrick Waldron.

But a remaining sticking point is how much train crews should be paid when they are resting at a hotel on the road between trips.

The railroads say they are making sure these new contracts reflect the latest Canadian rules, which require additional rest between trips.

Australia OKs solar precinct

NEWCASTLE, Australia, Aug. 21, (AP) — An ambitious plan to build a massive solar farm in remote northern Australia that would transmit energy by submarine cable to Singapore is a step closer after the Australian government granted environmental approvals for the 30 billion Australian dollar (\$19 billion) project Wednesday.

Australian company Sun Cable plans to build a 12,400-hectare solar farm and transport electricity to the northern Australian city of Darwin via an 800-kilometer (497-mile) overhead transmission line, then on to large-scale industrial customers in Singapore through a 4,300-kilometer (2,672-mile) submarine cable.

The Australia-Asia PowerLink project aims to deliver up to six gigawatts of green electricity each year, which according to Australian Environment Minister Tanya Plibersek will "help turn Australia into a renewable energy superpower" and boost its economy.

"This massive project is a generation-defining piece of infrastructure," Plibersek said in a written statement on Wednesday. "It will be the largest solar precinct in the world - and heralds Australia as the world leader in green energy."

The project was initially backed by Australian mining magnate Andrew Forrest and Atlasian co-founder Mike Cannon-Brookes. The plans were highlighted during a state visit by then Singapore Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong and Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese as part of a "Green Economy" agreement in 2022.

In January 2023, the project collapsed when Sun Cable entered voluntary administration due to a funding dispute between Forrest and Cannon-Brookes. By May of that year, a consortium led by Cannon-Brookes' Grok Ventures acquired the company, finalizing the takeover in September 2023.

Japan records trade deficit

TOKYO, Aug. 21, (AP) — Japan racked up a 621 billion yen (\$4.3 billion) trade deficit in July, as prices of imports surged, according to government data released Wednesday.

Japan's imports grew nearly 17% from a year ago to 10.2 trillion yen (\$70.6 billion), while exports grew 10% to 9.6 trillion yen (\$66 billion), the Finance Ministry said.

Imports grew in meat and other food, as well as iron, underlining a relatively healthy domestic economy, where consumer spending improved amid rising wages.

Exports grew to the U.S., China and Brazil, but auto exports continued to suffer amid a scandal involving falsified testing that stalled production at some manufacturers, including Japan's top automaker Toyota Motor Corp.

Earlier, auto production was hit from parts shortages caused by production disruptions from the coronavirus pandemic.

Japan's exports in July grew from a year ago in plastic, paper products and computer parts.

"Exports slightly missed the market consensus, but showed a robust acceleration, suggesting the economy is in recovery," said Robert Carnell, regional head of Research Asia-Pacific at ING Economics.

New surveys show signs of optimism among small business owners in US

Business Optimism Index rose 2.2 points in July to 93.7

NEW YORK, Aug. 21, (AP) — Small business owners overall are feeling positive about their business and achieving the goals they set for this year despite inflation and high labor costs, according to two new surveys.

"At the mid-point of 2024, we asked small businesses to look back on the goals they set for the year, and we found that they're satisfied with their progress and successes over the first half," said Gina Taylor Cotter, executive vice president and general manager of American Express' small business products.

The American Express survey of more than 1,100 small business financial decision makers found that 83% of owners said that the past few years have required them to think more creatively than ever before, and 87% said that each year they feel more confident in their skills as business owners.

The National Federation of Independent Business, meanwhile, said its Small Business Optimism Index rose 2.2 points in July to 93.7, the highest reading since February 2022. Still, it is the 31st consecutive month below the 50-year average of 98. Inflation remains the top issue among small business owners, with 25% reporting it as the single most important problem in operating their business.

"Despite this increase in optimism, the road ahead remains tough for the nation's small business owners," said NFIB Chief Economist Bill Dunkelberg. "Cost pressures, especially labor costs, continue to plague small business operations, impacting their bottom line."

China-Africa economic cooperation scales up

BEIJING, Aug. 21 (Xinhua) — China-Africa economic and trade cooperation has continued to scale new heights since the 2021 Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC), delivering tangible benefits to the people of both China and Africa. Assistant Minister of Commerce Tang Wenhong said Tuesday.

Tang made the remarks at a press conference detailing the progress and achievements that have been made under the nine cooperation programs China announced during the FOCAC's 8th Ministerial Conference held three years ago in Senegal.



Small businesses line the boardwalk in Wildwood, N.J., on Aug. 9, 2024. (AP)

Bid to curb surging Chinese imports

Indonesia searches for ways to protect domestic industries

JAKARTA, Indonesia, Aug. 21, (AP) — A flood of Chinese products into Indonesia has hit local manufacturers hard, prompting the government to look for ways to placate domestic producers while avoiding angering the country's biggest trading partner.

Garment makers — both home-based piece work producers and factories — have appealed for help as they lose market share to low-cost apparel and textiles from China. A surge of products bought online has added to the problem.

A protest by workers in Jakarta prompted Indonesian Minister of Trade Zulkifli Hasan to announce in July that the government will impose import tariffs of up to 200% on some products from China, particularly textiles, clothing, footwear, electronics, ceramics and cosmetics, to try to protect local businesses and prevent layoffs.

"The United States can impose a 200% tariff on imported ceramics or clothes, so we can do it as well," Zulkifli said, to ensure micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises and industries "survive and thrive."

But China is Indonesia's largest trading partner, with two-way trade exceeding \$127 billion in 2023. Imposing higher tariffs could prompt Chinese manufacturers to invest in more in factories in Indonesia, but could also backfire, leading Beijing to retaliate. As a result, the government announced in July that it was setting up a task force to monitor and handle problems related to certain imports.

It's an urgent matter, Hasan said, given the flood of imported products that has caused closures of textile factories and mass layoffs. From January to July 2024, at least 12 textile factories shut down operations, causing more than 12,000 workers to lose their jobs, according to the Nusantara Trade Union Confederation.

In Bandung district in Indonesia's West Java province — an area famous for textiles such as batiks, handwoven fabrics and silks — imports of Chinese products have left thousands of workers idle and without regular incomes, said Neng Wati, a manager at manufacturing company Asnur Konveksi.

"Now they take turns. The number of workers

stays the same, but the work is divided up and not all get some. Some of them have been off for two weeks, some of them haven't gotten work for a month," Wati said.

That's a hard blow coming after the slow days of the COVID-19 pandemic, when many workers were shifted to e-commerce to make ends meet, said Nandi Herdianan, head of a local organization of small- and medium-sized entrepreneurs. Only 60% of the 8,000 members of the association kept working after the pandemic.

Now, the biggest challenge is cheap imports from China. In the past two months, output from home-based industries has fallen by 70%, the industry organization says.

The uptick in imports of Chinese products is partly seen as the result of trade friction between the U.S. and China, which has led to increased American tariffs on Chinese goods. But it also reflects rising trade within Asia as the region implements various free trade pacts, as well as weakening demand in Western markets for Chinese exports.

British firms in England, Wales going bankrupt jumped 16% in July

LONDON, Aug. 21, (KUNA) — The number of firms in England and Wales going bust last month rose by 16 percent year-on-year, the British government agency Insolvency Service figures showed on Tuesday.

Commentators said the 2,191

company insolvencies in July showed how many businesses were still recovering from the impact of high inflation and borrowing costs despite growing optimism about the UK's economic outlook.

The figure was 7 percent down on

June's total, but insolvency levels remain much higher than those seen during both the COVID-19 pandemic and in the years following the 2008/09 financial crisis, officials said.

The seasonally adjusted figures, from the Insolvency Service and Com-

panies House, include 320 compulsory liquidations, the highest monthly total since before the pandemic.

Meanwhile, individual insolvencies rose by 24 percent year-on-year in July, separate official figures showed on Tuesday.

The total of 10,524 was similar to June's figure, and included 634 bankruptcies, 4,163 debt relief orders and 5,727 individual voluntary arrangements. However, levels remain below those seen during the pandemic.



Amal Bukhamseen, Director of Communications, Public Affairs and Corporate Responsibility, at talabat Kuwait, with Academy-X female students.



Director of Communications, Public Affairs and Corporate Responsibility at talabat, Amal Bukhamseen, giving a lecture to Academy-X students.

Shaping future female innovators and leaders in tech entrepreneurship

talabat hosts students from Coded's Academy X for immersive learning experience

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 21: In a testament to its dedication to empowering youth and women in the technology and entrepreneurship sectors, talabat, the leading technology company in the region, hosted a group of female students from Academy X for an exclusive visit to its headquarters in Kuwait.

talabat continues to strengthen its partnership with Coded through the Academy X initiative, which began last March. This commitment is demonstrated by organizing this field trip, offering students valuable hands-on training in the technology sector.

This initiative is also part of talabat's ongoing efforts to mentor and support the next generation of leaders in technology and entrepreneurship. Academy X, a non-profit initiative, focuses on empowering Kuwaiti girls aged 14-18 to become future leaders in these fields. The program seeks to address the gender gap in the tech industry by equipping young women with essential digital skills and fostering an entrepreneurial mindset.

During the visit, the Talabat team conducted an educational session offering a comprehensive insight into the technology industry. The session highlighted the dynamic nature of the sector, drawing on talabat's own pioneering experiences to illustrate the challenges and opportunities technology professionals face. The students were introduced to the professional realities of working in this rapidly evolving field and learned how they can contribute to its future development.

Ms. Amal Bukhamseen, Director of Communications, Public Affairs, and Corporate Responsibility at talabat

Kuwait, commented on the initiative: "This effort is a reflection of talabat's broader commitment to supporting technology education and enhancing women's participation in this critical sector."

"We hope that this visit has inspired the students to pursue their ambitions in technology and entrepreneurship, providing them with the knowledge and tools needed to embark on their professional journeys successfully", added Ms. Bukhamseen.

Beyond the lecture, the students engaged in hands-on activities designed to develop their leadership skills. These exercises were aimed at enhancing their strategic thinking and decision-making abilities within a business context.

The significance of leadership in the success of technology projects was emphasized, alongside practical advice on how to start and grow a successful business in the tech industry. The talabat team also provided valuable guidance on the fundamental steps for launching a project in this sector, common pitfalls to avoid, and strategies to overcome challenges that entrepreneurs may face.

Concluding the visit, Mr. Omar Al Ibrahim, General Manager of Coded Academy, lauded the initiative, saying: "We are delighted to collaborate with our strategic partner, talabat, through the Academy X initiative, which is designed to empower young girls to become leaders in technology and entrepreneurship. talabat's leadership in the tech industry and its commitment to empowering women serve as a powerful inspiration to future female leaders."

Offering luxurious trips aboard Belmond Train in Europe & Asia

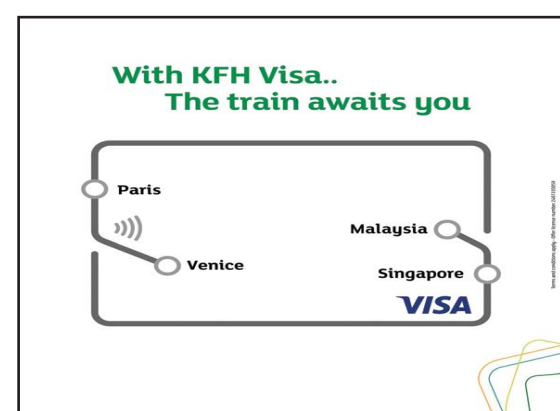
Kuwait Finance House extends Visa campaign until September

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 21: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) is continuing its recently launched campaign, titled "With KFH Visa... Your Train is Waiting" until the end of September, offering holders of VISA debit, credit, and prepaid cards an extended opportunity to benefit from the campaign draws and win a luxurious 7-star trip aboard the Belmond Train. Winners will have the opportunity to choose between an Asia Trip encompassing Singapore and Malaysia, or a Europe trip exploring France and Italy.

Two consecutive draws will be held throughout the campaign period, allowing 12 winners to enjoy several privileges as part of a package that includes: one companion for each winner, round-trip business-class tickets, a suite stay on the Belmond Train, accommodation in a 5-star hotel during the trip, and KD 2,000 pocket money deposited into the winning card's balance.

Each customer will have one chance to enter the draw for each one (1) Kuwaiti Dinar spent of the total local purchasing transactions (including the purchasing made through online websites in Kuwaiti Dinar). The customer will have 10 chances to enter the draw for each one (1) Kuwaiti Dinar of the total purchasing transactions spent overseas (including purchasing made online in foreign currencies). Withdrawal transactions, whether conducted within or outside Kuwait, as well as cards issued after the campaign's launch, will not be eligible for the draw.

The campaign underscores KFH's commitment to providing customers with the best benefits and demonstrates the Bank's ongoing dedication to rewarding card usage while prioritizing customer security and convenience. It also coincides with the summer holiday and travel season, leading to a high demand for round-the-clock credit card use. The campaign involves using KFH Visa cards



KHF VISA campaign

within Kuwait to encourage online transactions, which stimulates sales while enhancing customer satisfaction through security and convenience in their banking experience.

It is worth noting that KFH has implemented comprehensive measures to optimize the card usage experience for customers by developing automated banking card systems and software, enhancing service devices, and improving card quality. These initiatives prioritize the needs of both cardholders and merchants, with the goal of delivering an exceptional banking experience to customers, positively impacting customers' satisfaction, usage rates, as well as expanding market share and strengthening KFH leadership in the banking cards market.

Al Darmi highlights bank's commitment to employee growth

KIB sponsors 4 employees for dual MBA program with AUM

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 21: Kuwait International Bank (KIB) announced that its KIB Life Academy, in collaboration with the American University of the Middle East (AUM), will sponsor four distinguished employees intending to pursue their dual master's degree in business administration as part of the AUM-MBA Program with Joint Graduate Degree. This program, fully funded by KIB for its employees, is a testament to the Bank's latest efforts to enhance their academic growth, reaffirming its commitment to investing in the development of its human resources and enhancing their capabilities.

Commenting on the initiative, Feras Al Darmi, General Manager - Human Resources at KIB, said: "At KIB, we adopt a comprehensive development strategy that places employee development at its core. Today, we're proud to witness this exceptional initiative under the umbrella of KIB Life Academy, which aims to support the academic development of our bank employees to help them achieve growth in their careers."

He added: "The AUM-MBA Program with Joint Graduate Degree will enable us to enhance the academic and professional growth of four dedicated employees. This program is designed to provide access to world-class education, empowering employees to face all challenges and seize future opportunities in the banking sector."

Al Darmi pointed out that KIB continuously strives to encourage its employees to enhance their performance, opening new horizons for them to excel. He said: "We are proud to be an



KIB's Feras Al Darmi

integral part of our employees' journey, both professionally and personally. We constantly strive to provide all means of support to help them excel in all fields, enabling them to achieve more successes and accomplishments, in line with KIB's slogan, 'Bank for Life'."

It is worth noting that KIB spares no effort in investing in its human capital through KIB Life Academy, the Bank's dedicated learning and human capital development arm. The Academy supports the Bank in developing various programs, such as Waed, that allow employees to grow and excel in their line of work. Additionally, KIB continuously strives to build strong relationships with educational institutions and universities to offer

more development opportunities for its employees, making them a top priority in its comprehensive strategy. This commitment reinforces its leadership role among banking institutions in this field.

About KIB

Kuwait International Bank (KIB) is a bank that operates according to the Islamic Shari'ah, based in the State of Kuwait. Incorporated in 1973, and originally known as Kuwait Real Estate Bank, KIB made the transition to its current Islamic operating model in 2007. In 2018, KIB embarked on a new phase of its journey full of innovation and development. As part of its new strategic direction, the Bank focuses on offering a next-level customer experience under the slogan: "Bank for Life".

Through a network of branches spread across the State of Kuwait, KIB offers a broad range of banking products and services, as well as innovative digital banking solutions in line with international best standards. As part of its duty towards the community, the Bank also encompasses a leading social responsibility program that aims at positively impacting all members of the community through a wide range of impactful initiatives and activities.

Today, KIB has taken concrete steps in implementing its new strategic objectives. The Bank has cemented its role as a key player in the local banking industry and has continued to maintain its strong financial performance; enabling it to be globally recognized for its strong credit rating and financial position.

Wego announces popular summer destinations for Kuwaiti travelers

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 21: Wego, the number 1 travel app and the largest online travel marketplace in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), reveals the most popular summer destinations for Kuwaiti travelers.

According to Wego's data, this year, Kuwaiti travelers are most interested in summer flights to Egypt, India, Turkey, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Thailand, Philippines, United Arab Emirates, Pakistan, and the United Kingdom.

The lineup of countries remains largely unchanged compared to last year, highlighting the steady travel preferences of Kuwaiti travelers.

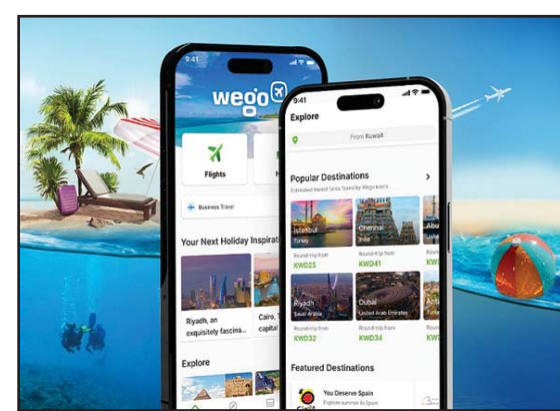
Seven out of ten of the countries listed above saw YoY spike in searches on Wego. Searches for flights to India, for example, are up 73% compared to summer last year, while searches for flights to the UK and Thailand are up 2.60% and 10.51%, respectively.

The sizable Egyptian and Indian expat communities in Kuwait planning homecoming trips may explain the two countries' top positions in the list, but Wego experts suggest that logistical convenience also contribute to the persistent popularity of the other destinations. Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates are lose by and easy to access for Kuwaitis. Meanwhile, Thailand and the UK are favorite destinations that allow Kuwait citizens to enter their countries without visa.

As summer 2024 is still underway, Wego experts expect these search numbers to continue to climb.

Price trend

The increase in searches may also be attributed to cheaper



Wego travel app

summer airfares from Kuwait this year.

Kuwaiti travelers planning to travel to those countries can expect airfare savings up to 61.16% compared to last year. Only flights to India and Egypt saw a small price increase of 0.56% and 2.05%, respectively.

Wego data showed that Kuwait travelers' appetite for summer travel has seen healthy growth annually. Wego experts believe that favorable pricing this year will serve as further encouragement for Kuwaitis to take advantage of the prime travel period.

For the first time in Kuwait, offering quick and secure OTP-less verification

NBK unveils payment verification service on its mobile banking app

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 21: In keeping with its constant dedication to providing cutting-edge services to its customers, National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) announced introducing a new service that allows customers to confirm payment transactions online through the NBK Mobile Banking App, making itself as the first provider of this service in Kuwait.

The bank mentioned that the new service provides a hassle-free, quick, and secure way to make online payments, explaining that with NBK Secure Shopping service, customers can now confirm all online payments directly and easily through the NBK Mobile Banking App without the need to enter OTP.

The service is available for the holders of NBK Debit Cards (Only on international spends), NBK Foreign Currency Prepaid Card, and NBK Multi-Currency Prepaid Card.



Bader Al-Janah

To availit, customers need to enable NBK Push Notifications.

After enabling NBK Push Notifications, customer can initiate purchases through the NBK Mobile Banking App, as he will receive a push notification to click to be redirected to the

App to confirm the payment in easy steps. If Push Notifications service is not enabled, customer will need to enter the App and follow the steps to confirm the payment.

Commenting on unveiling the new service, Bader Al-Janah, Head of Card Products, Consumer Banking Group at National Bank of Kuwait said: "At NBK, we are committed to offering all new services to our customers, as we always strive to provide premier, highly secure and cutting-edge products and services that suit their needs and different lifestyles."

"NBK continues to strengthen its digital excellence through the services provided on its Mobile Banking App, which customers largely rely on for their banking transactions. This aligns with our unwavering dedication to providing a market-leading digital banking experience that not

only meets customers' needs, but also exceeds their expectations," he remarked.

Through the NBK Mobile Banking App, NBK aims to offer customers a secure platform to conveniently manage their finances at any given moment. This service facilitates a wide range of banking activities, including opening new accounts, monitoring transactions on accounts and credit cards, accessing accumulated NBK Miles and NBK Rewards Program points, settling credit card dues, making payments for electronic bills, locating the nearest NBK Branches, ATMs, and CDMs across Kuwait, updating personal information, and many other services.

Customers can easily download the NBK Mobile Banking App, which is currently available on various platforms including the App Store, Google Play, and Huawei AppGallery.



NBK application

Online

NEW YORK, Aug 21, (AP): It's not just you. The word "demure" is being used to describe just about everything online these days.

It all started earlier this month, when TikTok creator Jools Lebron posted a video that would soon take social media by storm. The hair and makeup she's wearing? Very demure. And paired with a vanilla perfume fragrance? How mindful.

In just weeks, Lebron's words have become the latest vocabulary defining the internet this summer. In addition to her own viral content that continues to describe various day-to-day, arguably reserved or modest activities with adjectives like "demure," "mindful" and "cutesy," several big names have also hopped on the trend across social media platforms. Celebrities like Jennifer Lopez and Penn Badgley have shared their own playful takes, and even the White House used the words to boast the Biden-Harris administration's recent student debt relief efforts.

The skyrocketing fame of Lebron's "very mindful, very demure" influence also holds significance for the TikToker herself. Lebron said in a post last week that she's now able to finance the rest of her transition.

"One day, I was playing cashier and making videos on my break. And now, I'm flying across country to host events," Lebron said in the video, noting that her experience on the platform has changed her life.

She's not alone. Over recent years, a handful of online creators have found meaningful income after gaining social media fame - but it's still incredibly rare, and no easy feat.

How social media fame changing lives

Here's what some experts say. There is no one recipe.

Finding resources to work as a creator full-time "is not as rare as it would have been years ago," notes Erin Kristyniak, VP of global partnerships at marketing collaboration company Partnerize. But you still have to make content that meets the moment - and there's a lot to juggle if you want to monetize.

On TikTok, most users who are making money pursue a combination of hustles. Brooke Erin Duffy, an associate professor of communication at Cornell University, explains that those granted admission into TikTok's Creator Marketplace - the platform's space for brand and creator collaborations - can "earn a kickback from views from TikTok expressly," although that doesn't typically pay very well.

Monetization

Other avenues for monetization include more direct brand sponsorships, creating merchandise to sell, fundraising during livestreams and collecting "tips" or "gifts" through features available to users who reach a certain following threshold. A lot of it also boils down to work outside of the platform.

And creators are increasingly working to build their social media presence across multiple platforms - particularly amid a potential ban of the ByteDance-owned app in the U.S., which is currently in a legal

battle. Duffy notes adding that many are working on developing this wider online presence so they can "still have a financial lifeline" in case any revenue stream goes away.

Gaining traction in the macrocosm that is the internet is difficult as is - and while some have both tapped into trends that resonate and found sources of compensation that allow them to quit their nine-to-five, it still takes a lot of work to keep it going.

"These viral bursts of fame don't necessarily translate into a stable, long-term career," Duffy said. "On the surface, it's kind of widely hyped as a dream job ... But I see this as a very superficial understanding of how the career works."

Duffy, who has been studying social media content creation for a decade, says that she's heard from creators who have months where they're reaping tremendous sums of money from various sources of income - but then also months with nothing. "It's akin to a gig economy job, because of the lack of stability," she explained.

"The majority of creators aren't full-time," Eric Dahan, the CEO and founder of influencer marketing agency Mighty Joy, added.

Burnout is also very common. It can take a lot of emotional labor to pull content from your life, Duffy said, and the pressure of maintaining brand relationships or the potential of losing viewers if you take a break can be a lot. Ongoing risks of potential exposure to hate or online harassment also persist.

Variety



This image released by 20th Century Studios/Marvel Studios shows Ryan Reynolds as Deadpool/Wade Wilson and Hugh Jackman as Wolverine/Logan in a scene from 'Deadpool & Wolverine' which is currently showing in Kuwait cinemas. (AP)

Music

'Paradise State of Mind' delights and frightens

A sonic love story in 'Romance'

LOS ANGELES, Aug 21, (AP): Listening to Irish post-punk band Fontaines D.C.'s latest album feels a lot like watching a movie about a complicated, sometimes painful, love story - albeit one with an edgy flair à la "Sid and Nancy."

That feeling has as much to do with the record's sonic journey as it does with the lyrics of "Romance," the fourth album by the Grammy-nominated group.

They enlisted a new collaborator in producer James Ford, known for his work with pop-infused rock groups like the Gorillaz, Arctic Monkeys and, more recently, the critically acclaimed, up-and-coming rock band The Last Dinner Party.

Ford's influence is evident in what is arguably the band's most pop-sounding record yet.

"Romance" begins with its titular and maybe most compelling song, a sonic journey that offers glimmers of hope clouded by unnerving fear. A hauntingly atmospheric melody is interrupted by a heavily distorted, almost menacing guitar that captures the frightening sensation of falling in love.

"Starburst," the album's lead single, takes a hip-hop-infused turn in which lead singer Grian Chatten lusts for "momentary blissness" in the chorus while gasping for air. The song was inspired by Chatten having a panic attack in London, where the group is now based.

A tonal shift hits with the third track, "Here's The Thing." It's almost as if whatever afflictions plague the album's protagonist are finally starting to melt away - or at least be shared and understood - as this newfound lover brings hope and order to chaos. "I feel your pain / It's mine as well," Chatten longingly croons.

From then on, the album would make a great soundtrack to a moody romantic film, thanks in part to its poignant lyrics and sound, which is evocative of mid-90s alternative Britpop. (Ford coincidentally also produced Blur's most recent album). Perhaps London is rubbing off on them.

That sound makes "Romance" relatively accessi-

ble, especially when compared to the band's challengingly complex previous album, "Skinty Fia." It serves as a reflection of the band's growing popularity.

The remaining tracks vacillate between joy and longing or sadness - not unlike the feeling of being in a volatile relationship with an uncertain future.

The lovers introduced on "Romance" get a happy, if still melancholy, ending with the album's final song, "Favourite." Think of it as a slow zoom out as a montage plays of a couples' embrace to Chatten singing, accompanied by a bright, jangly guitar: "You been my favourite for a long time."

And the credits roll.

When you put on Foster the People's new album and you're happily bopping along to the infectious funk-disco beat of the first track, you might hardly notice the growing sense of dread in the lyrics, as dark as the music is silly-light. Welcome back, Mark Foster.

"My friends were going out last night and I still haven't heard from them," he sings in "See You in the Afterlife," a tune that has scary newspaper headlines, an empty Colosseum and even a reference to the war in Ukraine. "It's like we've all been hypnotized."

It's been seven years since 2017's album "Sacred Hearts Club" and Foster and his bandmates haven't lost a step, making thoughtful, first-rate pop for a jangled, insecure era with the 11-track "Paradise State of Mind," the majority written with Isom Innis and with Foster producing the lion's share for the first time.

Like the last collection, Foster the People has glistening pop beside complex tuners, with many of the songs eventually dipping into experimental territory or heavy distortion, like the unconventional flute solo on "Sometimes I Wanna Be Bad" and the hard-to-love "Glitchzig," which goes through a half-dozen time signatures, shrieking trumpet and elements of antiseptic Kraftwerk.

Highlights include "Lost in Space," filled with a

false chorus and hand-claps, which sounds like it was designed for a roller rink in the '70s - with unsteady lyrics like "I let the darkness in to teach me" - and "Let Go," which starts out like a dreamy blast of positive vibes until the last third, when what can only be described as heavenly robots hijack the song, singing, "To be broken is to be set free."

The heavily distorted, synthetic-sounding "Feed Me" is like a sexy come-on in the digital era - "I want to hack your code and be your anti-hero/Turn you on and let my one activate your zero" - while Foster reveals perhaps his motivation for all this wonderful, creepy weirdness on the last song, "A Diamond to Be Born."

"I look at myself through a broken lens," he sings in the song, so spacey that it's almost a prayer. "Try my best to keep from unravelling." You and us both, brother. Along the way, he's given us another diamond.

Also

LOS ANGELES: Lainey Wilson began her career, more or less, in high school, working as a Hannah Montana impersonator. Then came a few rough years trying to make it in Nashville - in fact, she released her debut album exactly 10 years ago. The bumpy ride has paid off, and on Friday, Aug. 23, she'll release her fifth studio album, "Whirlwind." Let it be a lesson that there's a real reward for talented people who don't give up. These days, she's a Grammy winner, the first woman to win entertainer of the year at the CMAs since Taylor Swift in 2011, and in June, she was inducted into the Grand Ole Opry. Talk about a "Whirlwind." Her new album deals with the wild ride of love, and heartbreak, taking Wilson's specific experiences and making them universal. And there's a lot to connect with here: From the cultural commentary of "Country's Cool Again" to the record's sole collaboration, with Miranda Lambert, "Good Horses."

BUCHAREST, Romania:

Masked police officers in Romania carried out fresh raids early Wednesday at the home of divisive internet influencer Andrew Tate, who is awaiting trial on charges of human trafficking, rape and forming a criminal gang to sexually exploit women.

Romania's anti-organized crime agency, DIICOT, said it was searching four homes in Bucharest and nearby Ilfov county, investigating allegations of human trafficking, the trafficking of minors, sexual intercourse with a minor, influencing statements and money laundering. The agency added that hearings will later be held at its headquarters.

Tate's spokesperson, Mateea Petrescu, said in response to the raids that "although the charges in the search warrant are not yet fully clarified, they include suspicions of human trafficking and money laundering" and added that his legal team is present. Petrescu did not address the allegations involving minors.

Dozens of police officers and forensic personnel were scouring Tate's large property on the edge of the capital Bucharest. "During the entire criminal process, the investigated persons benefit from the procedural rights and guarantees provided by the Code of Criminal Procedure, as well as the presumption of innocence," DIICOT noted in its statement.

The 37-year-old Andrew Tate and his brother Tristan, 36, both former kickboxers and dual British-U.S. citizens who have amassed millions of social media followers, were arrested in 2022 near Bucharest along with two Romanian women. Romanian prosecutors formally indicted all four last year. They have denied the allegations.

In April, the Bucharest Tribunal ruled that the prosecutors' case file against the four met the legal criteria and that a trial could start but did not set a date for it to begin. That ruling came after the legal case had been discussed for months in the preliminary chamber stages, a process in which the defendants can challenge prosecutors' evidence and case file.

After the Tate brothers' arrest in 2022, they were held for three months in police detention before being moved to house arrest. They were later restricted to the Bucha-

rest and Ilfov counties, and later to all of Romania.

Last month, a court overturned an earlier decision that allowed the Tate brothers to leave Romania as they await trial. The earlier court ruled on July 5 that they could leave the country as long as they remained within the 27-member European Union. The decision



Anitta



Tate

was final. (AP)

SAO PAULO: Brazilian pop star Anitta will perform at halftime of the first NFL game in the South American country on Sept. 6.

The NFL announced Tuesday that the 31-year-old will perform when the Green Bay Packers play

the Philadelphia Eagles in Sao Paulo.

A fan favorite in Brazil for about a decade, Anitta released her most recent album, "Funk Generation," in April. She is the first Brazilian artist with 35 million monthly listeners on Spotify and has the most Hot 100 charting songs of any Brazilian female

artist. "It means everything to be able to perform in Sao Paulo at the NFL's first game in Brazil, where I can bring fans around the world the excitement and joy of our amazing culture," Anitta said in a statement. "It's really a dream come true to be a part of this moment." (AP)

People & Places

Television

Culinary face-off

Lee returns to TV with a new life, fresh ideas

LOS ANGELES, Aug 21, (AP): Corn dogs, funnel cakes and fried Oreos may come to mind when you think of state fair food, but fairgrounds are also the place where bakers test out their creations by entering competitions.

The sense of community and creativity found at state and county fairs is especially meaningful to **Sandra Lee**, a cookbook author and TV personality known for the Food Network shows "Semi-Homemade Cooking" and "Sandra's Money Saving Meals." Lee won



Lee

a blue ribbon at the Los Angeles County Fair in 1992 for display and design. Next, she's taking state fairs to a global streaming audience with "Blue Ribbon Baking Championship," out on Netflix.

On the show, 10 talented pastry chefs compete in bake offs for a blue ribbon prize and a shot at \$100,000. Lee co-hosts with "American Pie" actor Jason Biggs, who she says is a talented baker: "He's got a banana bread recipe that is unbelievable." She's also a judge alongside former White House pastry chef, Bill Yosses, and award-winning baker, Bryan Ford.

The venture is a part of Lee's new chapter both professionally and personally. She battled breast cancer in 2015 and ended a 14-year relationship with former New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo in 2019. Lee's beloved uncle Bill was battling cancer himself at that time and she moved from New York to California during COVID-19 to help him.

"I really cleaned house of my life over the last decade, which was extremely painful and very hard to do," said Lee over Zoom from her Malibu home. "I'm finding peace now with my decisions and with my new life. Part of my new life is coming back to television, hopefully wiser, and back to business hopefully even better than ever."

In a Q&A, Lee tells The Associated Press about starting over, her new show and Christmas trees. Answers are shortened for length and clarity.

AP: You seem to be at a really great place where you have ideas and you're ready for what's ahead.

Lee: I took enough time off to really replenish myself and to really think about what I wanted to do. When I was coming out of being sick in 2015, it really made me focus on what I want to accomplish. And, for me, work has always been extremely important. There's things on my career bucket list to get done. One of them is "Blue Ribbon Baking Championship."

AP: What are the others?

Lee: I have an idea for a show that

will change daytime television. That's my heartstring and it's a big deal. The other one is with a character that I launched on "Today" with Jenna Bush. Her name is Aunt Sandy Clause, which is what my niece and nephews call me. During COVID, I wrote a ton of content, so I have a lot of TV show (ideas.) I would love to do a reality show based on real estate and home staging. My sister has a huge real estate and staging business in Seattle. I want to go up there and do a family reality show.

AP: Besides its premise, what makes "Blue Ribbon Baking Championship" different than other cooking competition shows?

Lee: The comradery and sense of family among the contestants. They lifted each other up. Many of the bakers would actually leave their station and go help the other one. I don't think the world sees who we really are as Americans. They hear the politics and they hear the kerfuffle in the news. I think that it's going to be kind of amazing for viewers from other countries to get to watch us and to get to see what our bakers look like and our lifestyle and how kind people are. And — unlike other competitive shows — we shoot in real time. There was no stop and pick up the next day. We were shooting an 18-hour day. There was no cool off time or swap outs.

AP: What's your first love? Cooking? Baking? Entrepreneurship?

Lee: My first love is cake decorating. When kids were playing with dolls, I was playing with powdered sugar and Wilton icing tips. When most kids were looking at Teen Beat, I was getting cake decorating books.

AP: What do you do in your spare time?

Lee: I antique a lot. I'm a huge antique collector. I also go to stores to see how others shop. I can see things differently than most people walking up an aisle. I can stand back and scan a room and I can see where the voids are. I can see what's needed. I can calculate what's missing and how to fix it.

AP: That must help in business.

Lee: It's very helpful. There's always the challenge of people saying no, like with "Semi-Homemade," everybody said, "No, it won't work." I go, "I'm telling you it's going to work." Finally, I had to write two books to even get the show. And the show was No. 1 for like five years. I went to them and I said, "We've got to do a show called 'Money Saving Meals.'" They said, "No one wants to save money on food." So I called my publisher. I go, "I want to do a new book and I want to call it 'Money Saving Meals.'" And they go, "Great." We had it on the shelf within a couple months. The Food Network saw it, and called me back. They're like, "Oh my gosh, we need a show called 'Money Saving Meals.'"



Actor Ben Affleck, (left), and actor-singer Jennifer Lopez attend the premiere of 'The Last Duel' on Oct. 9, 2021, in New York. (AP)

People

'Not all love stories have a happy ending'

JLo and Ben Affleck to finally split

LOS ANGELES, Aug 21, (AP): After a relationship that spanned two decades, two engagements, two weddings and headlines too numerous to count, Jennifer Lopez has filed for divorce from Ben Affleck.

The filing Tuesday in Los Angeles brought to an apparent end a celebrity coupling - or at least the second installment of it - that dazzled from the very heights of the pop culture firmament and emblazoned countless tabloid covers. The pair became known, even before such power-couple portmanteaus were ubiquitous, as "Bennifer."

Court records showed Lopez filed the petition Tuesday in Los Angeles Superior Court. The news was first reported by the TMZ website. TMZ reported further that Lopez listed the date of separation as April 26, 2024. It added that she did not mention any prenuptial agreement.

After meeting, falling in love and getting engaged in the early 2000s - and starring together in 2003's infamous "Gigli" and 2004's "Jersey Girl" - the couple parted ways, blaming in part the pressure of the public eye.

But to the delight of many and perhaps the skepticism of others, they reunited two decades later and married - twice - in 2022.

"Love is beautiful. Love is kind. And it turns out love is patient. Twenty years patient," wrote Lopez, announcing their first, quickie Las Vegas wedding that July, and signing off as Jennifer Lynn Affleck.

"Stick around long enough and maybe you'll find the best moment of your life in a drive through in Las Vegas at 12:30 in the morning in the tunnel of love drive through with your kids and the one you'll spend forever with," she wrote in her newsletter.

The couple had flown to Las Vegas, lined up with their license with four other couples and were wed just after midnight

at A Little White Wedding Chapel, where Lopez said a Bluetooth speaker played their brief march down the aisle. She called it the best night of the couple's lives.

A month later, they had a much grander wedding at Affleck's house in Georgia, in front of friends and family.

Both of them had been previously married. Affleck, 52, married Jennifer Garner, with whom he shares three children, in 2005. They divorced in 2018.

Lopez, 55, had been married three times before. She was briefly married to Ojani Noa from 1997-1998 and to Cris Judd from 2001-2003. She and singer Marc Anthony were married for a decade, having wed in 2004, and share 14-year-old twins. She started dating former baseball player Alex Rodriguez in 2017, but the couple called off their engagement in 2021.

Relationship

All along, it had been Lopez who was more vocal in describing her and Affleck's journey. When asked earlier this year whether she was harder on herself because her relationships had been so high-profile, Lopez agreed.

"Oh yeah. 100%. It's made me doubt myself and really feel bad about myself at times. Made me feel like I wanted to quit at times. But at the end of the day, I feel like you kind of have to do this thing where you learn how to navigate it," she told The Associated Press. "You take the things that could be constructive about that and use it, and the rest you kind of just throw away as kind of like haterations or, you know, other things like that and just be like, 'Whatever. I know who I am, I know what I want to do.'"

Affleck himself expressed admiration for her self-possession, telling the AP last year that he agreed with the idea that Hollywood was unsure how to capitalize on

her wide-ranging talent.

"I think she's in her prime," Affleck said then. "She's doing extraordinary work in large measure because she's taking that step to take responsibility for what she's doing rather than say, 'This is what I'm being offered.'"

Lopez is starring in the upcoming "Unstoppable," under Affleck and Matt Damon's Artists Equity banner.

In May, she starred in the Netflix movie "Atlas." At the end of the month, she suddenly canceled her 2024 North American tour, saying she was "heart-sick and devastated" to be letting fans down but the move was necessary. "Jennifer is taking time off to be with her children, family and close friends," organizers said in a statement.

The tour was to be her first in five years, in support of her first solo album in a decade, "This Is Me... Now" and its companion film, a fictionalized look at her long love life, and a documentary.

"When I was a girl they'd ask me what I'd be. A woman in love is what I grew up wanting to be," Lopez sang on the title track.

The album, she said, was inspired by her rekindled relationship with Affleck. But the film was more "about your journey as a person, it's about one person's journey and what it takes to get from heartbreak back to love. Or a hopeless romantic's journey in their search for love." In the movie, she played a character called The Artist who, similarly, had decided as a child what she wanted to be when she grew up: "in love."

But the road was rocky. In an early scene, The Artist is on the back of a motorcycle, riding across a beach, with a hunky man, face shielded. Then the motorcycle crashes.

"Not all love stories have a happy ending," she says.

Variety

LOS ANGELES: One of Angelina Jolie and Brad Pitt's six children has officially dropped "Pitt" from her name.

A Los Angeles court granted a petition from the third-eldest child of the former couple to legally change her name from **Shiloh Nouvel Jolie-Pitt** to **Shiloh Nouvel Jolie** on Monday.

She initially filed the petition to make the name change official on May 27, the day she turned 18.

Several outlets have reported that other Jolie-Pitt children have informally excluded Pitt from their names but Shiloh is the first to take legal steps to formalize the name change. (AP)

BATON ROUGE, La.: Rapper NBA YoungBoy has agreed to plead guilty to a federal weapons charge once the case is transferred from Louisiana to Utah, where he faces unrelated charges accusing him of running a prescription drug fraud ring.

In court documents filed last week, the rapper, whose real name is **Kentrell Gaulden**, waived his right to a trial in Baton Rouge, news outlets reported. U.S. District Judge **Shelly Dick** then closed the Louisiana case and moved jurisdiction to the federal court in **Salt Lake City**.

Gaulden also signed notice of his intent to enter his guilty plea once the case is transferred to Utah.

Prosecutors allege Gaulden, a convicted felon, had a handgun while shooting a music video in Baton Rouge in 2020. He was among 15 people arrested after more than a dozen guns were seized from the video set.

Gaulden, 24, of Baton Rouge, faces up to 10 years in prison in the weapons' case, federal prosecutors have said. (AP)

NEW YORK: Disney is no longer asking a Florida court to dismiss a wrongful death lawsuit on the grounds that the victim's family had signed up for its streaming

service Disney+.

The company filed a notice in **Orange County** court on Tuesday to withdraw the motion, which had drawn swift backlash when it became public.

Josh D'Amaro, chairperson of Disney's theme park division, said in a statement emailed earlier to The Associated Press that the entertainment giant will waive its arbitration rights and allow the suit, brought by the husband of a New York doctor who suffered a fatal allergic reaction after eating



Pitt



Shiloh

at a restaurant in **Disney Springs**, to proceed in court. (AP)

BEIJING: 20th Century Studios' sci-fi thriller "Alien: Romulus" continued to lead the Chinese mainland's daily box office on Tuesday, according to the China Movie Data Information Network.

The seventh installment of the successful "Alien" franchise, the movie grossed over 53.09 million yuan (about 7.45 million U.S. dollars) on its fifth screening day.

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.

Domestic crime film "Go for Broke," raking in 20.88 million yuan on Tuesday, ranked second on the daily chart.

It was followed by the Japanese animation "Detective Conan: The Million-Dollar Pentagram" with 13.69 million yuan in revenue on the day. (Xinhua)

MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY



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COVID-19 cases on the rise in US

US weight-loss drug sharply reduces diabetes progression

NEW YORK, Aug 21, (Xinhua): Eli Lilly on Tuesday said preliminary data from a three-year study showed that its weight-loss drug significantly reduced the risk of progression to type 2 diabetes among adults with prediabetes and obesity or overweight.

According to the pharmaceutical company, top-line data from the three-year treatment evaluating the efficacy and safety of a weekly dose of tirzepatide, the ingredient of the company's injection Zepbound, and diabetes drug Mounjaro, showed a reduced risk of progression to type 2 diabetes by 94 percent.

The drug also led to significant weight reduction at an average of be-

tween 15 percent and nearly 23 percent, depending on the dosage, compared with the 2.1 percent reduction in patients who received a placebo.

However, noted The Wall Street Journal in its report about the finding, "the company also warned that during the 17-week off-treatment follow-up period, those patients who had discontinued the treatment began to regain weight and had some increase in the progression to type 2 diabetes, resulting in an 88 percent reduction in the risk of progression to type 2 diabetes compared with the placebo."

COVID-19: The KP.3.1.1 COVID-19

variant, now the predominant SARS-CoV-2 variant circulating in the United States, has been causing increasing infections in the country, the latest data from the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) showed.

KP.3.1.1, of the Omicron family, is among many currently co-circulating JN.1-derived variants in the United States.

For the two-week period ending Aug. 17, KP.3.1.1 is predicted to account for between 31 percent and 43 percent of COVID-19 clinical specimens, compared to between 20 percent and 26 percent for the two-week period ending Aug. 3, according to the CDC data released on Monday.

The rise in prevalence of KP.3.1.1 comes as markers of COVID-19 activity, including test positivity, emergency department visits, and hospitalizations, remain elevated, particularly among adults ages 65 years and older and children younger than 2 years.

West Nile virus: Two cases of West Nile virus infection have occurred in the area of Sisak and Petrinja in central Croatia and it is suspected that there are dozens more infected, local media reported on Wednesday.

"Our patients, two of them, had severe symptoms: a severe headache, high fever, pain in muscles and joints.

It was difficult for them to move, and for the first two or three days they had a disordered state of consciousness," Tonka Jozic Novinc, head of the Department of Infectious Diseases at the Sisak General Hospital, was quoted by the local N1 news channel as saying.

"The disease is transmitted by mosquitoes, it is not transmitted from person to person. The greater the number of mosquitoes, the greater the probability that someone will get infected. It can be expected that we will have more cases," she said.

While the two patients have fully recovered, Jozic Novinc said the disease can be prevented with various mosqui-

to repellents and a healthy lifestyle, in addition to mowing grass and dusting to prevent more mosquitoes.

H5N1 flu: A 15-year-old girl from southeast Cambodia's Prey Veng province died of H5N1 avian influenza on Tuesday, the Ministry of Health said in a press statement.

The patient lived in Kanhchriech district's Por Marinh village.

Health experts were looking into the source of the infection and examining any suspected cases or people who have been in contact with the victim in order to prevent an outbreak in the community, said the statement.

Smarter homes

AI eases electric grid load without 'energy use cuts'

By Zoltan Nagy

The University of Texas at Austin

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

My colleagues and I have developed an artificial intelligence system that helps buildings shift their energy use to times when the electric grid is cleaner.

I'm an engineer who studies and develops smart buildings. My lab created Merlin, which learns how people use energy in their homes and adjust energy controls like thermostats to meet their needs while at the same time minimizing the impact on the grid. The system can learn on one set of buildings and occupants and be used in buildings with different controls and energy use patterns.

We dubbed it Merlin after King Arthur's legendary magician to reflect the magical nature of the system: It automatically collects data on how people use energy in their homes and identifies opportunities to charge and discharge home battery storage. And it does so in a way that you always have power for whatever you need. So your air conditioning is always available, but at the same time it reduces the strain on the grid - for example, during afternoon peaks.

If demand outstrips the available generation, utilities typically ask customers to adjust their thermostats and otherwise reduce their loads. If that's not sufficient, blackouts are possible. This is where Merlin comes in. By managing energy use in homes more intelligently, Merlin helps balance the energy supply, making electric grids more stable and reliable. Merlin manages the grid's use of the home's battery while maintaining the home's normal consumption of energy.

Climate

To address climate change, society needs to transition to generating electrical power exclusively using nonfossil fuel sources like solar, wind and nuclear. Also, all household appliances, or end uses - heating, cooking, clothes-drying - must be electrified. A similar transition is happening with cars, moving from internal combustion engine vehicles to battery electric vehicles. However, most renewable energy sources are non-dispatchable, meaning power companies can't just turn them on when needed.

This requires a fundamental shift

from a centralized energy system where a power plant generates all needed electricity, to a more decentralized or distributed one. In centralized systems, power is generated at the edges of the grid - for example, in homes with solar panels - and homes and office buildings can store energy in batteries.

Wastage

Homes and office buildings also actively try to reduce or shift their loads to reduce their demands on the grid. This means fewer blackouts and less wasted energy. Plus, using energy more efficiently helps reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Researchers are working on various ways to make buildings smarter and better at shifting their energy use. In fact, the US Energy Department has created a national road map to develop such grid-interactive efficient buildings to triple the energy efficiency and energy demand flexibility of buildings by 2030. In 2021, the department funded 10 projects of public-private partnerships with its Connected Communities program to develop and test technologies for grid-interactive buildings.

The International Energy Agency has supported a variety of programs in which researchers are working on software applications to enable smarter building operation, energy-flexible buildings and, more recently, grid-integrated control of buildings.

All these programs and developments focus on advanced control systems and promoting the adoption of smart technologies to optimize energy use, similar to Merlin.

The next step is to test systems like Merlin in more communities under realistic conditions, and understand how well they work in different places and conditions. It is important that we gather feedback about users' experiences and integrate them into our next prototypes to ensure the acceptability of AI systems managing people's home energy. We are aiming to make these systems user-friendly and affordable so that everyone can benefit from smarter, greener homes.

The goal is for every neighborhood to have homes that share energy like a team, always making sure there's enough power for everyone and using as little of it as possible from the grid. (AP)

Thailand announces 1st suspected case of new mpox strain

Congo reports more than 1,000 latest mpox cases in a week, seeks vaccines

CAPE TOWN, South Africa, Aug 21, (AP): Congo reported more than 1,000 new mpox cases in the last week up to Tuesday as African health authorities asked for desperately needed vaccines to help fight its "growing" threat on the continent. The World Health Organization has declared the outbreaks in Africa a global emergency.

Mpox belongs to the same family of viruses as smallpox but causes milder symptoms like fever, chills and body aches, and mostly spreads through close skin-to-skin contact, including sexual intercourse. People with more serious cases can develop lesions on the face, hands, chest and genitals.

While mpox has been reported in 12 of Africa's 54 countries during these outbreaks, the vast central African nation of Congo has recorded by far the most cases this year. Out of a total of 18,910 cases in 2024, 94% - or 17,794 - were in Congo, the Africa Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said, with 535 of the 541 deaths reported.

Surveillance

The figures are likely an underestimate, as only about one in five suspected cases in Congo are being tested for mpox. Africa CDC director-general Dr. Jean Kaseya said many affected African countries had limited testing and surveillance capabilities.

Over the last seven days, Congo recorded 1,030 of the 1,405 new cases in Africa according to statistics provided late Tuesday by the Africa CDC. Only 16% of the cases have been confirmed by virus tests, but the infections meet the agency's definition of the disease.

The rising mpox case count in Africa and a new form of the virus identified in Congo that might be more easily transmitted led the WHO to declare it a global health emergency last week. Some hope this will encourage donors to share vaccines and other help to curtail the outbreaks in Africa before



A health worker walks past a mpox treatment centre in Munigi, eastern Congo, Monday, Aug. 19, 2024. Congo will receive the first vaccine doses to address its mpox outbreak next week from the United States, the country's health minister said Monday, days after the World Health Organization declared mpox outbreaks in Africa a global emergency. (AP)

cases spread internationally as Sweden recorded a case of the new mpox variant first seen in eastern Congo.

The WHO has previously said its past efforts to raise donations for mpox failed to elicit even a single donor dollar.

Africa CDC's Kaseya said that his organization had received a pledge of 215,000 mpox vaccines from the European Union and the vaccine maker, Bavarian Nordic, which were due to arrive in the next few days. The United States' aid agency said it had donated 50,000 other doses of the same vaccine to Congo. Japan has also donated some doses to Congo.

But Africa likely needs much more. Congo's health minister said his country alone needed 3 million vaccine doses to end the outbreaks there, which have spilled into at least four nearby African countries.

A 2022 global mpox outbreak in more than 70 countries was shut down in the space of months with vaccines and treat-

ments made available in rich nations, but hardly any doses reached Africa. It had been spreading largely unnoticed for years in Nigeria and elsewhere before it sparked international concern. Since then, the virus has continued to steadily sicken people in Congo, with few effective containment efforts.

South African President Cyril Ramaphosa criticized the global response to the 2022 outbreak, calling it unfair as treatments and vaccines were made available to rich Western nations while Africa was given little support. In a statement, he urged the international community to guarantee "equitable access" to mpox diagnostics and vaccines this time.

Ramaphosa's comments evoked memories of Africa's anger at largely being shut out of vaccines during the COVID-19 pandemic. Then, Africa received doses much later than richer countries and had to pay more in some cases.

The European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control recommended

last week that travelers to mpox-affected areas see if they might be eligible to get vaccinated, in a move that could increase pressure to secure mpox shots.

Also:

THAILAND: Health authorities in Thailand announced on Wednesday the first suspected case of the new Mpox (Clade 1b).

Head of Thailand's Department of Disease Control Thongchai Keerattayakorn said, "We have done a test and they definitely have Mpox and it's definitely not Clade 2."

"We are convinced the person has the Clade 1 variant, but we have to wait to see the final result in the lab for two more days," he added.

The suspected case was of European who came from Africa and arrived to Thailand on August 14, according to the Channel News of Asia, a Singaporean multinational news channel.

Thailand had witnessed 827 cases of the Mpox Clade 2 variant between January 2022 and August of 2024.

The discovery of the Clade 1b strain in the Democratic Republic of Congo led the World Health Organization (WHO) declared Mpox a public health emergency of international concern on August 14.

BUJUMBURA: Burundi has recorded 153 positive cases of mpox since its outbreak in the East African nation on July 25. Lydwine Baradahana, minister of public health and the fight against AIDS, said,

"Until Sunday, Aug. 18, we had recorded 153 mpox cases nationwide," she told Xinhua over the phone Tuesday. "The virus spreads quickly."

The minister said that 24 out of Burundi's 49 health districts have been affected by the mpox virus, with the health district of northern Bujumbura being the most affected.

NZ schools to launch new mental health pilot plan

WELLINGTON, Aug 21, (Xinhua): A new mental-health pilot program with early intervention technology, designed to help students access immediate support, will be piloted in some schools of New Zealand's largest city Auckland.

The technology provides an early warning system to identify students who may require immediate support with a wide range of personal issues and crises, the community organization West Auckland Trusts said on Wednesday.

More than 20,000 students at 30 West Auckland primary and secondary schools will be provided with software that tracks their mental, social and physical well-being for change and allows them to request help from teachers under the 71,000 NZ dollar (43,709 U.S. dollar) initiative, it said, adding the program is hoped to be expanded to include students at all New Zealand schools.

By regularly checking in with students and gathering data on their emotional well-being, the platform enables schools to proactively address any

concerns and provide immediate assistance, it said, adding teachers will receive real-time insights from the platform, which can be accessed by students on their devices.

In 2021 and 2022, about 23.6 percent of young people aged 15-24 years experienced high or very high levels of psychological distress, up from 11 percent in 2020, with Maori and Pacific-origin youth groups often more vulnerable, according to New Zealand's Mental Health Foundation.

For children, speaking out can be as-

sociated with stigma, and they may be taught to suppress their emotions, said Donna Nee, principal of Henderson North Primary.

Children are growing up in the digital world, so they are very used to this kind of technology, and they use it well, Nee said.

The principal said the technology also helps maintain privacy, so children are going to be able to talk to a teacher without their peers seeing them, because they choose who they want to connect with in the platform.

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Best ever performance at an overseas Olympic Games

China hails historic Oly performance, emerging stars & breakthroughs

BEIJING, Aug 21, (Xinhua): China's top sports official hailed the country's athletes' historic performance at the 2024 Olympics in Paris.

China secured 40 gold, 27 silver, and 24 bronze medals at the Paris Olympics, marking the country's best ever performance at an overseas Olympic Games. Chinese athletes also set one world record and nine Olympic records.

"The Chinese sports delegation achieved breakthroughs across multi-

ple dimensions, including the number of gold medals, the variety of events in which gold was won, and the number of gold medalists, showcasing a

OLYMPICS

further enhancement in the overall strength of our competitive sports," Gao Zhidan, president of the Chinese Olympic Committee (COC), said at a review meeting held in Beijing.

Gao, also head of the General Administration of Sport of China, noted that, while Chinese athletes continued to shine in traditionally strong sports, such as table tennis, diving, shooting, and weightlifting, major breakthroughs were also made in tennis, swimming and boxing. Additionally, Chinese athletes showcased great potential in emerging sports, such as climbing, skateboarding, surfing, and breaking.

Gao highlighted several stand-out performances, including Pan

Zhanle's world record in the men's 100m freestyle and Zhang Yufei's remarkable achievement of winning medals in all six of her events. Zheng Qinwen became the first Asian to win an Olympic tennis singles title, while skateboarder Zheng Haohao, the youngest member of the Chinese delegation, also made a mark.

Gao emphasized that Chinese athletes fully embodied the spirit of both Chinese sports and the Olympic movement at the Paris Games.

"Our athletes demonstrated grace in victory and resilience in defeat," Gao said. "Even when they didn't win gold medals, they maintained their confidence and positivity. Many athletes also courageously spoke out against unfair treatment, showcasing the strength and confidence of Chinese youth." According to Gao, a total of 154 Chinese athletes across 35 different disciplines underwent 220 doping tests, all of which returned negative results.

Gao also sounded a warning concerning a decline in the performances of China's teams in "three big ball games", namely football, basketball and volleyball, and some events where results fell short of expectations.

"Looking ahead to the Los Angeles Olympics, we need to strengthen our sense of urgency, plan proactively, and systematically prepare for the new Olympic cycle. Once we step off the podium, everything starts from zero," he said.

Fluminense beat Gremio to reach Copa last eight



Junior Alonso of Brazil's Atletico Mineiro, right, and Santiago Sosa of Argentina's San Lorenzo head the ball during a Copa Libertadores round of 16 second leg soccer match at Arena MRV in Belo Horizonte, Brazil. (AP)

Acuna completes River move

RIO DE JANEIRO, Aug 21, (Xinhua): Veteran goalkeeper Fabio Maciel saved two spot kicks as Fluminense reached the Copa Libertadores quarterfinals by beating Brazilian rivals Gremio on penalties.

Fluminense took the initiative from the outset at the Maracana stadium after Gremio's 2-1 victory in the first leg.

SOCCER

Former Brazil national team captain Thiago Silva gave the Rio outfit the lead in the 14th minute by combining with Colombian Jhon Arias and slotting his shot into the bottom-right corner.

Arias went from provider to scorer as he converted a penalty attempt just before the half hour following Dodi's hand ball.



Carlos Palacios, right, of Chile's Colo Colo carries the ball with Victor Cantillo of Colombia's Junior alongside during a Copa Libertadores round of sixteen first leg soccer match at the Metropolitan Roberto Melendez stadium in Barranquilla, Colombia. (AP)

Gustavo Nunes reduced the deficit with a 76th-minute goal as the game was forced into a penalty

shootout. Nathan Souza and Franco Cristaldo saw their respective penalty

attempts saved by 43-year-old Maciel before Arias converted the vital spot-kick.

Meanwhile, Argentina international left-back Marcos Acuna has completed a free transfer to River Plate after parting ways with Sevilla, the Argentine top-flight side said.

Acuna passed a medical before signing a deal that reportedly ties him to the Buenos Aires giants until December 2027.

"Welcome, world champion," River said in a brief statement on its social media accounts alongside an image of the 32-year-old.

Acuna, who had been tied to Sevilla until June next year, made 149 appearances across all competitions for the Spanish outfit following his 2020 move from Sporting Lisbon.

He has been capped 59 times for Argentina and was a part of the Albiceleste squad that won the 2022 FIFA World Cup in Qatar.

Hug and Schär headline wheelchair fields

Tola, Obiri look to defend titles in NYC Marathon

NEW YORK, Aug 21, (AP): Tamirat Tola and Hellen Obiri will look to defend their New York City Marathon titles this November.

The pair headline strong fields in the annual race around New York's five boroughs.

Tola is coming off a win at the Paris Games where he set an Olympic record in the race. The Ethiopian broke the New York course record last year.

ATHLETICS

"I'm excited to defend my title in New York, especially coming off an Olympic-record marathon performance," said Tola. "The hilly course and crowds in Paris definitely prepared me well for the bridges and spectators in New York, where maybe I can go even faster this year."

Other top runners in the men's field include past winners Geoffrey Kamworor (2017, 2019), Albert Korir (2021) and Evans Chebet (2022), who all are from Kenya. Belgium's Bashir Abdi won the silver medal in Paris and is also in the race. Conner Mantz and Clayton Young, who finished eighth and ninth in Paris, are the top American men.



Left: Gold medalist Ethiopia's Tamirat Tola lifts up his arms during the medal ceremony at the end of the men's marathon competition at the 2024 Summer Olympics in Paris, France. Right: Hellen Obiri, of Kenya, looks at her bronze medal on the podium for the women's marathon during the 2024 Summer Olympics closing ceremony at the Stade de France in Saint-Denis, France. (AP)



The women's field features past champions Sharon Lokedi (2022) and Edna Kiplagat (2010) of Kenya. American standouts Des Linden, Aliphine Tuliamuk and Jenny Simpson also are competing.

Swiss Marcel Hug and Manuela Schär, who have won nine New York City marathons, headline the wheelchair fields.

The last man to repeat as New York City Marathon champion was Kenyan Geoffrey Mutai in 2011 and 2013. The 2012 race was canceled due to Hurricane Sandy. Obiri will look to be the first repeat champion since Mary Keitany won three in a row from 2014-16.

Tola will look to join Kenyan Peres Jepchirchir as the only runners to win an Olympic gold and NYC marathon in the same year. Jepchirchir did so in 2021 during an eight-month stretch when she became the first person to win the Olympics, New York City and Boston marathons over a career.

Stephen Kiprotich and Tiki Gelana both would have had the chance in 2012, but the race was canceled because of Superstorm Sandy.

The New York City Marathon has been held since 1970 and had over 50,000 runners finish the race last year.

WNBA players make appeal

Call for more time off after Games are over

WASHINGTON, Aug 21, (AP): The WNBA didn't waste anytime returning to the hardwood after the Olympics and the quick turnaround following the Paris Games is something players may look to change in the next collective bargaining agreement.

Teams started playing games four days after the Paris Games ended, including Breanna Stewart and the New York Liberty, who opened up in Los Angeles - a nine-hour time difference after her time in France.

BASKETBALL

"I think that even in a non-Olympic year, you think about All-Star, it's like, everybody needs some time after All-Star break, or it's not a break. So trying to kind of push that into the CBA, I think would be really important," she told The Associated Press. "Especially following the Olympics, because we've never had an Olympics in a 40-game season, except this season."

Players or the league could opt out of the current CBA at the end of this season.

The quick turnaround didn't seem to hurt New York, which had four players and its head coach competing in the Paris Games. The Liberty swept a pair of games from Los Angeles and Las Vegas to remain solidly atop the standings and clinch a playoff spot.

Stewart understands the league, which has all this momentum behind it, doesn't want to go longer without having games after taking the break.

"From the W's perspective, I'm sure they're like, well, we don't want to be not showing games for an entire month or a month plus. But at the same time, understanding the players' perspective I think is really important," she said. "It's wild, from Paris to the West Coast, so it's just like, not an ideal situation."

The Liberty forward said "unfortunately" players are put in situations like these a lot.

"It's like, onto the next, onto the next, onto the next, where we kind of even really celebrate what we did, of winning a gold medal, as much as you would want to."

The Aces split their first two games and A'ja Wilson would have loved a few more days to recover after helping the U.S. win its eighth consecutive gold medal. Las Vegas was one of the lucky teams that didn't start play until Saturday.

"I definitely needed some time to decompress. Playing USAB (is) a whole other thought and mind process that you might not necessarily have to exert that much energy when you play with your respective team," Wilson said. "So definitely needed just a couple of days just to kind of decompress, whether that's just get back into the flow of things, or just get my feet underneath me, because that was a long time away with a lot of just back and forth."

Wilson said she'd be in favor of the players discussing getting more time off.

"I think if it is a chance for us to go to the table and say, 'Hey, we



In this photo, Washington Mystics forward Aaliyah Edwards (24) blocks a shot by Minnesota Lynx forward Napheesa Collier (24) in the second quarter of a WNBA basketball game at Target Center in Minneapolis. (AP)

should get more rest time,' even if it's ... just a couple of days. It's crazy to see players play fresh off of a plane in a sense. So yeah, I don't mind asking for that."

Phoenix, Chicago and Los Angeles all played three games in a four-day span to tipoff the second half of their seasons.

Fortunately from the Olympics standpoint, the next one is in Los Angeles, so travel will be less of an issue for USAB players.

New York remains in the top spot in this week's AP WNBA power poll followed by Minnesota, Las Vegas and Connecticut. Indiana, Seattle and Phoenix were next with Atlanta and Chicago eighth and ninth. Dallas, Washington and Los Angeles rounded out the poll.

Clark finally had some time to rest during the break after going non-stop for nearly a year between college and her rookie season. She had a solid first two games back, helping the Indiana Fever beat Phoenix and Seattle.

She broke the previous WNBA rookie record for assists of 224 by Ticha Penicheiro in 1998 and now has 232 on the season. The No. 1 overall pick in the 2024 draft has scored at least 20 points in five of her last six games. She is averaging 23.7 points on 47% shooting from the field, and 11.7 assists over that span. Indiana has one game this week at Minnesota on Saturday as the team looks to continue to solidify a playoff spot.

The Washington Mystics traded forward Myisha Hines-Allen to Minnesota for a 2026 second round pick, forward Sika Koné and guard Olivia Époupa. The Mystics then waived Époupa and guard DiDi Richards.

Clark earned AP Player of the Week honors as she averaged 25.3 points, 5 rebounds and 9.5 assists to help Indiana go 2-0. Sabrina Ionescu of New York, Wilson and Napheesa Collier of Minnesota also received votes.

Connecticut at New York, Saturday. The Liberty look to further distance themselves from the second-place Sun in the standings. New York has swept the first three meetings between the two teams this year.

French interior minister says 25,000 police will guard Paralympic Games

PARIS, Aug 21, (Agencies): France's interior minister said Tuesday that about 25,000 police officers will be deployed every day in Paris and beyond to watch over the Paralympic Games, in line with the security implemented during the Olympics.

The Paralympics are to be held from Aug. 28 to Sept. 8 in the French capital and nearby sites.

Speaking in a news conference, Interior Minister Gerald Darmanin reiterated that authorities have detected no "tangible" terror threat to the Paralympics.

He said Israel's delegation of 27 athletes will be protected 24 hours a day by elite police officers, like during the Olympics, amid tensions over Palestinian deaths during the war in Gaza and the threat of a wider regional conflict in the Middle East.

The opening ceremony next week is expected to draw about 30,000 spectators at the Concorde venue, and some 15,000 other people who will be able to attend the ceremony

for free on the Champs-Élysées avenue, Darmanin said.

Police forces also will ensure the security of the torch relay as the flame that is to arrive Sunday in France from Stoke Mandeville, a village northwest of London that is widely considered the birthplace of the Paralympic Games.

In addition, about 10,000 private security agents will help ensuring security of athletes and spectators at venues, Darmanin said.

The Paralympics will involve 4,400 athletes in 19 venues, as compared with 10,500 athletes and 41 venues during the Olympics, said Tony Estanguet, president of the Paris 2024 Organizing Committee.

Estanguet said 1.7 million of the available 2.8 million tickets available have been sold to date. Events include wheelchair tennis at Roland Garros - the home of the French Open, track and field at the Stade de France, basketball at the Bercy Arena and swimming at La Défense Arena.

Liberty extend win streak to 7

Sun secure victory in historic WNBA game at TD Garden

NEW YORK, Aug 21, (AP): Breanna Stewart had 26 points and 12 rebounds, Jonquel Jones and Courtney Vandersloot also had a double-doubles, and the New York Liberty handed coach Sandy Brondello a 94-74 birthday victory over the Dallas Wings on Tuesday night.

Jones had 23 points and 12 rebounds and Vandersloot 15 points and 11 assists for the Liberty (24-4), who gave Brondello four red velvet cupcakes before the game.

Kennedy Burke added 13 points off the bench in New York's seventh-straight win, helping offset the absence of Sabrina Ionescu, who sat out with a sore neck.

Satou Sabally had 24 points for the Wings (6-21), giving her 44 in two games after missing the first 25 games of the season, before she played in the Olympics. Arike Ogunbowale had 17 points, including 13 in the second quarter, and Natasha Howard had 13. Maddy Siegrist had six points in her

return from a broken finger.

Sun 69, Sparks 61

In Boston, DiJonai Carrington scored 19 points, and Connecticut used a late 14-0 run to defeat Los Angeles

BASKETBALL

in the first WNBA game to played at the Boston Celtics' TD Garden. A franchise record sellout crowd of

19,125 saw the Sun storm back after they trailed 59-55 with less than four minutes to play.

Carrington scored twice in the lane sandwiched around a three-point play by Alyssa Thomas and in less than a minute Connecticut was up 62-59 with the crowd roaring.

Tyasha Harris converted a three-point play that made it 69-56 with 1:40 to go. In just over two minutes the Storm had missed two shots and two free throws and had four turnovers.

Storm 83, Mystics 77

In Washington, Nneka Ogwumike scored 24 points, Ezi Magbegor had 13 points and 14 rebounds and Seattle held off Washington, capping a day when both teams made news off the court.

The Storm announced the return of free agent Gabby Williams, who starred for France in their near upset of Team USA in the Olympic final in Paris.

Meanwhile, the Mystics made two deals before the games. The picked up

Shug Sutton and a third-round draft pick next year from Phoenix for the rights to Klara Lundquist. Earlier they got Sika Kone and Olivia Epoupa and a 2026 second-round pick from Minnesota for Myisha Hines-Allen. Washington then waived Epoupa and DiDi Richards.

Seattle led by as many as 14 points but a 3-pointer by Brittney Sykes had the Mystics within three points with 11 seconds left. Three free throws sealed it for the Storm.

Bundesliga 'starts' with Bayern in unaccustomed role of challengers

Little sign of Leverkusen easing off

BERLIN, Aug 21, (AP): For the first time in 12 years, Bayern Munich are not the defending champions going into a new Bundesliga season.

Bayer Leverkusen stayed undefeated last season to snap Bayern's 11-year reign as German champions and completed a domestic double by winning the German Cup to underscore their credentials as the country's best team.

SOCCER

The question is how long Xabi Alonso's team can keep its remarkable run going - Leverkusen defeated Stuttgart on penalties to win the German Supercup on Saturday, when there was little sign of any easing off or drop in intensity.

How will a wounded Bayern team react and can they reassert their status as Germany's No. 1?

And what about the other contenders who will hope to build on their achievements last season?

Runners-up Stuttgart finished ahead of Bayern on 73 points - their best-ever total - and saw a host of their players graduate to the German national team for the European Championship.

Leipzig finished fourth thanks in part to Dutch forward Xavi Si-



Dortmund's Julien Dienda Duranville, left, scores during the German Cup soccer match between Dortmund and Phoenix Lubeck in Hamburg, Germany. (AP)

mons - who's staying another year after rebutting interest from Bayern - and Borussia Dortmund hit the reset button after a disappointing fifth place finish in the Bundesliga. Edin Terzic's team reached the Champions League final, showing they can compete at the highest levels. His successor, Nuri Sahin, is tasked with improving Dortmund's domestic standing.

Leverkusen starts their title defense at Borussia Mönchengladbach on Friday.

Repeating their success is the biggest challenge for Leverkusen.

Xabi Alonso's team played 53 competitive games last season and only lost one - 3-0 to Atalanta in the Europa League final. The Champions League will provide a tougher challenge this season, potentially with knock-on effects in the Bundesliga. Summer transfer activity has been relatively quiet with much of the focus on defender Jonathan Tah's transfer to Bayern. The player wants to go with just a year left on his contract, but Bayern and Leverkusen are yet to reach final agreement on a fee.

Vincent Kompany was eventually appointed Bayern coach in the sum-

mer to replace Thomas Tuchel, who had a fraught season after taking over from Julian Nagelsmann the season before. Continuity is an issue at the Bavarian powerhouse, which has endured upheaval at boardroom level in recent years. Powerbroker Uli Hoeneß still maintains considerable influence, part of the reason Tuchel's tenure did not go to plan. A summer shakeup of the squad was expected, but so far only Portugal midfielder João Palhinha, French winger Michael Olise and Japanese defender Hiroki Ito have arrived. Defenders Matthijs de Ligt and Noussair Mazraoui have rejoined Erik ten Hag at Manchester United. Bayern were chasing Rennes attacker Desiré Doué but the 19-year-old has reportedly opted to join Paris Saint-Germain instead.

Like Leverkusen, Stuttgart exceeded expectations last season under coach Sebastian Hoeneß, the nephew of the Bayern powerbroker. Stuttgart, which survived a relegation playoff the season before, finished second, a point ahead of Bayern in the Bundesliga. But top-scorer Serhou Guirassy and defender Waldmar Anton have left for Dortmund, and defender Hiroki Ito has joined Bayern. Stuttgart were able to sign Germany forward Deniz Undav on a permanent basis from Brighton and Hove after his outstanding season on loan. Undav scored 18 goals in 30 Bundesliga appearances. The question is how he will do without Guirassy at his side.



Abdel Rahman Khaled

Egyptian FA denies issuing any statement on 'transfer dispute'

CAIRO, Aug 21: The Egyptian Football Association clarified that it did not release any statements regarding the status of Abdel Rahman Khaled, whose contract was terminated by Al-Arabi.

Al-Arabi announced that they decided to terminate the player's contract because he had signed with another club. However, Khaled claimed that the contract was canceled due to a notification from the Egyptian Football Association approving his registration with a fourth-division club in Egypt.

In a statement, the association explained, "After thoroughly reviewing all the documents, it was found that the player was registered in the association's records as part of Al-Mokawloon Al-Arab's squad, and he was released from that team."

The statement continued, "On August 11, the player's international

transfer certificate was sent to Al-Arabi, which is the standard procedure for any player moving from one association to another. The association has not issued any statements to the contrary."

SOCCER

The association also urged all Egyptian players to adhere to legal and proper methods when working with player agents approved by the International or Egyptian Association to safeguard their careers and avoid falling prey to unscrupulous agents.

In conclusion, the association warned that it would take strong action against agents found guilty of misconduct or fraud if complaints from players are received, in an effort to curb such practices.

China unveil roster for WC qualifiers

BEIJING, Aug 21, (Xinhua): China men's national team announced a 27-player roster on Wednesday for the upcoming 2026 FIFA World Cup Asian qualifiers against Japan and Saudi Arabia.

The Chinese team head coach Branko Ivankovic has called up a full-strength squad, including star forward Wu Lei as well as three naturalized players Jiang Guangtai, A Lan and Fei Nanduo.

SOCCER

24-year-old Shanghai Shenhua midfielder Wang Haijian was the only newcomer on the team, while Wei Shihao hasn't been included in the list due to his four-game suspension after committing a violent foul in the league.

In the final stage of World Cup Asian qualifiers, China has been drawn into Group C along with Ja-

pan, Australia, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and Indonesia. The top two teams of the group will directly qualify for the World Cup, while the third and fourth-placed teams can enter a play-off tournament.

China is set to play its opening match against Japan away on September 5, and then meet with Saudi Arabia on September 10 at home in Dalian, northeast China's Liaoning Province.

The 27-man roster is as follows:

Goalkeepers: Bao Yaxiong, Liu Dianzuo, Wang Dalei, Yan Junling;

Defenders: Gao Zhunyi, Han Pengfei, Jiang Guangtai, Jiang Shenglong, Li Lei, Liu Yang, Wei Zhen, Yang Zexiang, Zhu Chenjie;

Midfielders: Cheng Jin, Huang Zhengyu, Li Yuanyi, Wang Haijian, Wang Shangyuan, Xie Pengfei, Xie Weneng, Xu Haoyang;

Forwards: A Lan, Behram Abduli, Fei Nanduo, Lin Liangming, Wu Lei, Zhang Yuning.

Best of the Rest

Top-seeded Collins beaten: Top-seeded Danielle Collins is out of the WTA 500 event in Monterrey, beaten 1-6, 6-3, 6-3 by Erika Andreeva in a match that finished about 1 a.m. Wednesday at the hardcourt tournament in Mexico.

Andreeva beat a top 20 player for the first time to advance to the quarterfinals of a top-level WTA tournament, also for the first time.

Earlier, sixth-seeded Linda Noskova dropped just one game in a 49-minute, 6-0, 6-1 win Tuesday over Anna Danilina of Kazakhstan to reach the round of 16.

The 19-year-old Czech player will next meet either Wang Xiyu of China or Germany's Tatjana Maria.

Defending champion Donna Vekic withdrew from the Monterrey tournament after winning the Olympic silver medal in Paris. (AP)

Yang to represent Zhejiang: Sun Yang has been confirmed Tuesday to represent Zhejiang in the 2024 National Summer Swimming Championships, which to be held in Hefei, capital city of east China's Anhui Province on August 25-28.

The three-time Olympic champion's four-year and three-month suspension ended on May 28, when Sun's studio posted on social media: "Exceed yourself. Be a fearless swimmer." Wang Wei, director of the Zhejiang

Provincial Swimming Sports Management Center, stated that Sun Yang will compete in the men's 400-meter freestyle event. The National Summer Swim-

ming Championships is a Class B national swimming event in China, second only to the National Swimming Championships in terms of level and prestige.

According to Wang, Zhejiang will send a youngster-packed 59-member squad to the competition, excluding the Paris 2024 Olympians Wang Shun and Pan Zhanle. (Xinhua)

Chinese withdraw from event: Chinese paddlers Fan Zhendong, Ma Long and Chen Meng, who won gold medals at the recently concluded Paris Olympic Games, have withdrawn from next month's World Table Tennis (WTT) Championships tournament in Macao, WTT announced on Wednesday.

Consequently, their spots will be filled by their compatriots Lin Gaoyuan, Lin Shidong and Chen Xingtong, respectively, based on world rankings.

At the Paris Olympics, Fan clinched the men's singles title to become the 11th player overall to have achieved a career Grand Slam of the Olympic Games, World Championships and World Cup, before teaming up with Ma, another Grand Slam winner, and Wang Chuqin to pocket the team gold.

Chen Meng defended her title in the women's singles event and won the team gold along with Sun Yingsha and Wang Manyu.

The WTT Champions tournament in Macao will run from September 9 to 15, with men's and women's winners garnering 1,000 world ranking points. (Xinhua)



In this file photo, Leverkusen's head coach Xabi Alonso celebrates with the trophy as his team won the German Bundesliga, after the German Bundesliga soccer match between Bayer Leverkusen and FC Augsburg at the BayArena in Leverkusen, Germany. (AP)

Gundogan on the verge of shock return to City

Man City's Foden voted PFA's player of the year

MANCHESTER, England, Aug 21, (Agencies): Manchester City duo Phil Foden and Khadija Shaw were voted the men's and women's player of the year in English soccer for last season at the Professional Footballers' Association awards.

The 24-year-old Foden helped Man City win a fourth consecutive Premier League title, scoring 19 times and providing eight assists. Shaw was the top scorer in the Women's Super League as the Jamaican forward netted 21 goals, although City lost the title on goal difference to Chelsea.

Foden and Shaw also won the equivalent award from the Football Writers' Association, which is voted on by journalists. The PFA winners are selected by professional players.

Chelsea attacking midfielder Cole Palmer was voted the men's PFA young player of the year, with Manchester United midfielder Grace Clinton winning the women's prize after her performances on loan at Tottenham last season.

Palmer was second only to City's Erling Haaland in the Premier League scoring charts with 22 goals and also had more assists than any other Chelsea player, with 11. Haaland won the men's player of the year award in 2023.

Clinton contributed four goals and four assists in 20 WSL appearances.

Meanwhile, Ilkay Gundogan is on the verge of completing a return to Manchester City just a year after leaving the club on a free transfer to join FC Barcelona.

Barcelona's financial problems, with debts of over 1,000 million euros, mean the 33-year-old has now been allowed to return on another free transfer

to reduce their wage bill, so they can finally inscribe new signing Dani Olmo into their first team squad.

The midfielder is reported to have spoken to Manchester City coach Pep Guardiola in the past days, with Guardiola happy to welcome him back, and Gundogan agreeing a one-year-deal with the option of a second season.

He has also reportedly renounced any money from the two years outstanding on his contract with Barca.

Gundogan will help City gain in squad depth after selling Julian Alvarez to Atletico Madrid and losing Norwegian winger Oscar Bobb with a broken leg.

He originally joined Manchester City from Borussia Dortmund in 2016 and in his seven seasons at the club, he made 304 first team appearances, scoring 60 goals.

SOCCER

He helped the club win the treble (Premier League, FA Cup and Champions League) and in total won five league titles, two FA Cups and four League Cups.

He was one of Barcelona's best players last season, scoring five goals in 51 appearances, and slotting into the passing game favored by former coach Xavi Hernandez, although he was critical of errors made by team-mates after Barca were knocked out of the Champions League by Paris Saint Germain.

Barcelona are also close to completing a deal to see Brazilian Vitor Roque join Betis on loan for a season. The 19-year-old cost Barca around 30 million euros at the start of the year, but has so far made only 16 brief appearances for the club.



Phil Foden poses after winning the PFA Players' Player of the Year award during the 2024 PFA Awards at the Opera House Manchester, England. (AP)



Chelsea's Cole Palmer, center left, and Kiernan Dewsbury-Hall, second right, attend a training session at Cobham Training Ground, London. (AP)

Sports

Latest sports scores at — <http://sports.arabtimesonline.com>

Ahmed elected new president of BCB

Women's T20 World Cup switched to UAE from Bangladesh after turmoil



Maximiliano Falcon of Chile's Colo Colo controls the ball while Luis Gonzalez of Colombia's Junior defends during a Copa Libertadores round of sixteen first leg soccer match at the Metropolitan Roberto Melendez stadium in Barranquilla, Colombia. Colo Colo won 3-1 on aggregate. (AP)

Ronaldo aiming to help Al-Nassr end Al-Hilal dominance in league

'Neymar's return is highly anticipated'

RIYADH, Aug 21, (AP): Cristiano Ronaldo is lining up for another Saudi Pro League season with the main aim of helping Al-Nassr end the dominance of Riyadh rival Al-Hilal.

Ronaldo signed for Al-Nassr in December 2022 and has yet to win a domestic trophy with the club. In a social media post this week, he wrote: New season, same goal.

Al-Hilal won the title last season with 31 wins and three draws, finishing 14 points clear of second-place Al-Nassr.

Hilal beat Ronaldo's team 4-1 in the final of the Saudi Super Cup last weekend. The 18-team league kicks off its season on Thursday.

SOCCER

"I'm feeling a lot of apprehension because this season is going to be very difficult," Al-Hilal defender Kalidou Koulibaly, who signed from Chelsea last year, told The Associated Press. "Last year, it was a tough championship, but we managed to come out on top. This year, all the teams will be gunning to beat Al Hilal."

Last summer, a string of big-name stars arrived from Europe's top leagues to join Ronaldo in Saudi Arabia. According to Deloitte's Sports Business Group, a total of \$957 million was spent. This summer has been comparatively quiet, although the transfer window remains open until Sept. 2.

For Al-Hilal, the return of Neymar will be like a new signing. The Brazilian superstar made only five appearances for the Riyadh club before sustaining a serious left knee injury while playing in a World Cup qualifier in October.

"Neymar's return is highly anticipated by our players," Koulibaly said. "We know that there is still a little bit of waiting due to his injury but people will see a great Neymar. He still has this motivation when we see him in training."

Neymar returned to training last month and, according to local media, could start playing again in September.

In Neymar's absence, Serbian striker Aleksandar Mitrovic scored 28 league goals last season, second only to Ronaldo's record 35. Al-Hilal also has Portuguese international Ruben Neves and Morocco's Yass-

Felix moves in opposite direction

Gallagher completes move to Atletico from Chelsea

MADRID, Aug 21, (AP): England midfielder Conor Gallagher finally completed his move to Atletico Madrid on Wednesday, ending a weeks-long saga that required a move by Joao Felix in the opposite direction to facilitate the deal.

Gallagher joined Atletico for a reported 36 million pounds (\$47 million) on a five-year deal. Hours later, Chelsea announced the signing of Felix, the Portugal forward, for a reported 45 million pounds (\$59 million).

Chelsea wanted to sell Gallagher, an academy product and the team's vice-captain last season, to help the club meet the Premier League's financial requirements that are being more strictly applied in recent seasons.

Chelsea and Atletico reached an agreement on his transfer but it was in jeopardy last week, reportedly because of the collapse of a deal that would have seen Atletico striker Samu Omorodion move in the opposite direction.

That meant Gallagher had to return to Chelsea and train alone but a solution was reached, with Felix instead making the switch from Atletico to

ine Bounou in goal.

Al-Nassr's major new signing so far has been Brazilian goalkeeper Bento, who replaces Colombian international David Ospina. As well as Ronaldo, the Yellows have Sen-



In this file photo, Cristiano Ronaldo celebrates after scoring his side's second goal playing for a combined XI of Saudi Arabian teams Al Nassr and PSG during a friendly soccer match at the King Saud University Stadium in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. (AP)



In this file photo, Chelsea's Conor Gallagher reacts during the English Premier League soccer match between Arsenal and Chelsea at Emirates Stadium in London. (AP)

Chelsea.

Felix spent the second half of the 2022-23 season on loan at Chelsea, having previously become the third most expensive player of all time when Atletico triggered the 126 million euro (around \$140 million) buyout clause in his contract in 2019 to sign him from

egalese star Sadio Mane, Croatian midfielder Marcelo Brozovic and defender Aymeric Laporte, who helped Spain to the European championship in July.

Other challenges are expected to

Benfica.

"I'm really happy to be back at Chelsea and I can't wait to get started," he said. "I can see some familiar faces from the last time I was here, which is always nice."

"I loved my time here before and I told my friends and family that I'd love to return to the Premier League one day. To do that with Chelsea is a great feeling and I'm excited to be back."

Felix was on loan at Barcelona last season.

Gallagher played for England at the recent European Championship and was one of Chelsea's best players last season. He has played 95 times for a club he joined as a 6-year-old, scoring 10 goals in total.

It continues a frenzied summer of transfer activity for Chelsea, which continues to overhaul its squad under its American owners.

Ten players have been signed in this transfer window at a cost of more than \$250 million. Before that, Chelsea spent \$280 million in the summer of 2022, \$350 million in January 2023 and more than \$400 million in the off-season of that year.

come from Jeddah clubs Al-Ahli, led by Riyad Mahrez, and Karim Benzema's Al-Ittihad, which has made the biggest signing this summer so far, paying over \$60 million to Aston Villa for French winger Moussa Diaby.

All four clubs, which were taken over in 2023 by Saudi Arabia's Public Investment Fund, are by far the country's best-supported teams.

League officials will likely be hoping a more competitive title race will help improve the average attendance, which was just over 8,000 per game last season.

Al-Hilal has international as well as domestic ambitions. The club will represent Asia in the expanded FIFA Club World Cup which kicks off June 15 in the United States.

Al-Hilal reached the final of the 2022 tournament before losing to Real Madrid.

"What will be expected going into that competition is that it's going to be Neymar's team," the 33-year-old Koulibaly said. "So we're going to do everything in training so that he's out there and in his best conditions to help us win trophies."

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates, Aug 21, (Agencies): The United Arab Emirates will host the women's Twenty20 World Cup in October after the International Cricket Council moved the tournament from Bangladesh.

More than 300 people were killed in an uprising in Bangladesh that started in July.

Games will now take place in Dubai and Sharjah for the 10-team tournament from Oct. 3-20, the sport's governing body said.

CRICKET

"I would like to thank the team at the BCB (Bangladesh Cricket Board) for exploring all avenues to try and enable the event to be hosted in Bangladesh, but travel advisories from the governments of a number of the participating teams meant that wasn't feasible," ICC chief executive Geoff Allardice said.

He said it was "a shame not to be hosting the Women's T20 World Cup in Bangladesh," adding "We look forward to taking an ICC global event to Bangladesh in the near future." Allardice thanked "the Emirates Cricket Board for stepping in to host on behalf of the BCB." Sri Lanka and Zimbabwe were also thanked for "their generous offers of support." India had already turned down an offer from the ICC to replace Bangladesh as host.

Meanwhile, former Bangladesh captain and chief selector Faruk Ahmed has been elected as the president of the Bangladesh Cricket



Pakistan's Saud Shakeel, front, and Saim Ayub run between the wicket during the first day of first cricket test match between Pakistan and Bangladesh, in Rawalpindi, Pakistan. (AP)

Board (BCB).

BCB directors elected the new president during an emergency meeting of the board at the Ministry of Youth and Sports in Dhaka.

Ahmed was nominated as a BCB director by the National Sports Council (NSC) and was then elected as the president.

At the beginning of the meeting, Nazmul Hassan Papon resigned from his position as BCB president after serving the board for over a decade. His resignation was accepted during the meeting.

Subsequently, Ahmed was appointed as the new BCB president.

Transdermal contamination cited

Sinner avoids suspension after 2 failed doping tests

LONDON, Aug 21, (Xinhua): Italian tennis star and current men's world No. 1, Jannik Sinner, has avoided suspension after testing positive twice for the banned substance clostebol in March 2024, citing transdermal contamination.

The International Tennis Integrity Agency (ITIA) released a statement Tuesday, confirming the player "bears No Fault or Negligence" after it accepted the player's explanation that the substance entered Sinner's system through inadvertent contact with a physiotherapist who used an over-the-counter spray containing clostebol to treat a wound.

Sinner tested positive for metabolite clostebol in an in-competition sample at the ATP Masters 1000 event in Indian Wells, United States, on March 10 and a further sample, conducted out of competition eight days later, also tested positive for the same metabolite.

He explained that the substance had entered their system as a result of contamination from a support team member, who had been applying an over-the-counter spray (available in Italy) containing clostebol to their own skin to treat a small wound. That support team member applied the spray between March 5 and 13, during which time they also provided daily massages and sports therapy to Sinner, resulting in unknowing transdermal contamination.

Sinner was twice provisionally suspended but the player successfully appealed and had the suspensions lifted.

The ITIA referred the case to an independent tribunal to "consider the specific facts, review any comparable anti-doping decisions, and determine what, if any, fault the player bore and therefore the appropriate outcome." "Following that investigation, the ITIA accepted the player's explanation as to the source of the clostebol and that the presence of the substance was not intentional. This was also accepted by the tribunal," said ITIA CEO Karen Moorhouse.

TENNIS

Although Sinner will not be banned, his results, prize money and ranking points from the ATP Masters 1000 event at Indian Wells, where the player tested positive in competition for clostebol, are disqualified.

The decision has sparked significant debate within the tennis community. While the ATP expressed relief that Sinner was cleared of intentional wrongdoing, some players, including Nick Kyrgios and Denis Shapovalov, criticized the leniency of the ruling, arguing that testing positive twice for a banned substance should result in a more severe penalty.

This controversy comes at a crucial time for Sinner, who withdrew from the Paris Olympics in July and recently won the Cincinnati Open and is preparing for the upcoming U.S. Open.



In this file photo, Italy's Jannik Sinner lunges for a shot from Croatia's Borna Coric during their second-round match at the National Bank Open tennis tournament in Montreal. (AP)