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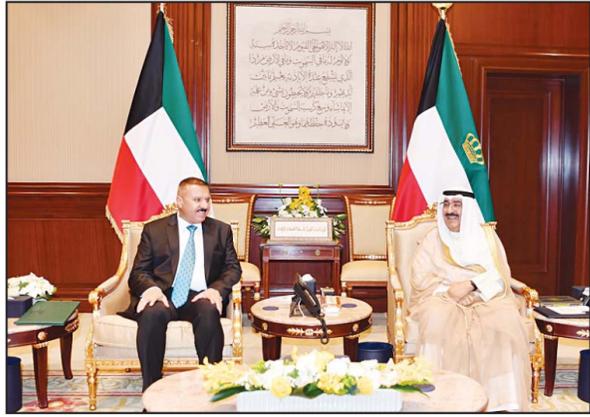
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16 PAGES

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Amir receives Crown Prince, PM, Iraq's Interior Minister



Amiri Diwan photo
His Highness the Amir receives Iraqi Minister of Interior Lieutenant General Abdulmir Al-Shammari.

KUWAIT CITY, July 8, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received on Monday at Bayan Palace His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, His Highness the Amir also received

First Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defense and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah and Iraqi Minister of Interior Lieutenant General Abdulmir Al-Shammari and the accompanying delegation on his official visit to the country. Senior state officials attended the meeting.

Opinion

National productivity hinges on guided laws and officials

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

REFERRING to the Minister of Finance's interview on Kuwait TV, and his talk about the expected deficit in the state budget, the minister had stated that the deficit is projected to reach approximately KD 26 billion in the next four years, and that KD 33 billion has already been used from the treasury to cover deficits over the past decade.

Undoubtedly, these figures clearly indicate mismanagement, lack of development planning, and failure to take advantage of opportunities to enhance revenue streams and alleviate the deficit.

It is common knowledge now that nation representatives used their authority unlawfully in the past three decades to impose laws that led to the closure of the country and the expulsion of investors. These MPs passed political Islamization laws intended to strangle the institutions. This is what prevented successive governments from issuing ministerial decisions and laws to encourage investment.

Both authorities will be held responsible if measures to prevent deficits are not implemented before proceeding further. However, the responsibility is more on the governments because they represent the executive authority, and have the necessary reports and studies to realize the risks and defects.

So what did the government do to remedy all this? Nothing ... It instead yielded to some influential people, and gave the "thread and needle" to parliamentary blocs so that they could implement their agendas.

On the other hand, other countries, especially those in the Gulf region, which are similar to Kuwait in culture, society, economy, and even weather,

have benefited from financial abundance. Over the last three decades, they worked to build a very advanced industrial, commercial, and service base, and thus diversify sources of income.

These countries got rid of their financial deficits and even boosted their investment capacities to levels Kuwait appears unable to attain without comprehensive efforts while racing against time. However, when reviewing the performance of some current ministers, it seems that this is almost impossible.

Undoubtedly, boosting the national output is fundamental, but it necessitates specific steps, such as developing laws, removing the obstacle of closing the country, dealing with inflation that eats up employees' salaries, and swiftly addressing the issue related to labor shortage.

Instead of flooding the country with new expatriates, the Ministry of Interior and the Public Authority for Manpower could offer residency permits to violators for a fee, thereby curbing visa trading. In doing so, it would kill two birds with one stone.

Why don't we learn from our neighbors? This question came to my mind when I read a few days ago that the Emirate of Dubai celebrated the most beautiful beach, which is an extension of the state-owned beaches that are rented according to the B. O. T. system, as well as some of its external roads. It increased its revenues from real estate investments, as well as industrial, which is what Saudi Arabia did. Saudi Arabia will soon begin manufacturing electric cars. It has also entered into partnerships to manufacture weapons and others.

As for the most painful part, Kuwait suffers from a large deficit due to unrestrained subsidies, which, according to estimates by the Minister of Finance, consume about KD 4.529 billion annually.

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KUWAIT'S REVISED EXPAT GUIDELINES TRIGGER VISIT VISA BOOM

Weekly entry visas reach 8,700

Stricter penalties for violating sponsors, visitors

KUWAIT CITY, July 8: With Kuwait opening its doors to expatriates under strict regulations and requirements set by the Ministry of Interior, the past four months have seen a noticeable influx of

visitors from various nationalities, reports Al-Rai daily.

This follows the facilitation of the visit visa application process, resulting in an average of 8,700 entry visas issued weekly across the three main categories -- family, tourist and commercial.

Warehouse rent surge hurts food and pharma industries

By Marwa Al-Bahrawi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 8: The Mangaf fire and subsequent stringent government oversight have shot up warehouse rental prices to exorbitant levels, severely impacting the industrial, food, and pharmaceutical sectors due to insufficient storage facilities.

The economic and real estate experts have cautioned about the implications on consumers, production disruptions, and threats to food and pharmaceutical security.

In the face of these challenges, the Al-Seyassah daily has praised the government initiative to establish a state-owned company for managing public storage spaces, but experts have warned against hasty reform laws, advocating for delayed implementation until alternative storage solutions are secured and industrial area rents are reduced.

Huda Al-Baqshi, Director General of the Kuwait Industries Union, emphasized the urgency to address "crisis traders" post-Mangaf.

She acknowledged positive steps taken by the Council of Ministers but stressed the need for immediate solutions. Despite promises of millions of square meters for storage post-pandemic, tangible progress remains elusive.

Al-Baqshi urged dual-track government action, combining short-term fixes with long-term infrastructure plans to resolve the crisis effectively.

While the state efforts are commendable, strategic and cautious steps are essential to mitigate adverse consequences and ensure sustainable solutions for Kuwait's storage challenges. Amidst the shift to secure storage sites, rental values for storage and worker housing have

surged.

Reports indicate that warehouses previously leased at 200 dinars are now fetching 400 dinars, revealing how the crisis has been exploited by 'crisis traders'.

These investors lease unused residential spaces as warehouses, charging exorbitant rates, creating a new problem instead of solving the original one.

Smart buildings are suggested to accommodate the storage surge in residential areas during this period. Some traders have converted vacant spaces in residential areas into storage facilities, renting them out at inflated prices.

Thus, the state must take charge, ensuring suitable site allocation and distribution according to national priorities, under strict governmental supervision.

The demand for warehouses has become a governmental responsibility while the chemical industries have cautioned that they are ticking time bombs. Therefore, designated sites are necessary for chemical, biological, pharmaceutical, and food sectors, away from residential areas.

The head of the Real Estate Union, Ibrahim Al-Awadi, agrees that Kuwait lacks major storage areas to meet local market needs. Existing storage facilities are inadequately equipped, lacking the necessary infrastructure to meet all storage requirements.

Business owners have resorted to renting residential units in accessible areas due to proximity and ease of access.

Al-Awadi believes the state should undertake projects to provide adequately equipped storage areas with clear safety regulations, separate from residential areas, meeting all market storage needs in the long term.

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Assistant Director General of the General Administration of Residence Affairs, Brigadier General Mazyad Al-Mutairi, provided detailed insights into these figures.

On average, he said, 2,000 commercial visit visas, 2,900 family visit visas and 3,800 tourist visit visas are issued each week.

Al-Mutairi said, "The decision to open entry visas of all types came under the instructions of the First Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defense, and Minister of Interior, Sheikh Fahad Yousef Al-Sabah. Visas are now available to all nationalities, but with specific controls and standards. Sponsors seeking tourist, commercial or family visas must adhere to the set conditions, and visitors must respect the country's laws."

He added, "During the recent period, there has been complete compliance from visa holders with the duration of their visits. Once the visit period expires, visitors leave, which is an excellent indicator of awareness among both visitors and sponsors about respecting the state's laws, knowing that both parties would be held accountable. Consequently, the percentage of violators has been very small."

Al-Mutairi outlined the steps taken by the Residence Affairs Investigation Department in case of non-compliance by a visitor.

Initially, a notification is sent via the "Sahel" application to the sponsor at the end of the sponsored person's visit period. This is followed by an SMS to the sponsor's phone and a direct contact after the fifth or seventh day of the violation, requesting the person to visit the Residence Affairs Investigation Department.

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Photo by Leah Qurtal
Abdullah Al-Mahri chairs the Municipal Council session on Monday, overseeing key discussions and decisions impacting local governance. — See Page 4

Law mandates consent for photos in health facilities

MoH urges respect for patient privacy

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

KUWAIT CITY, July 8: The Ministry of Health has reiterated the need to adhere to the laws and controls that govern health institutions and regulate their workflow.

These laws and controls include protecting the privacy of patients, maintaining the confidentiality of their data, and complying with strict controls set by the legislator on taking photos or videos inside the health facility by any means.

The ministry affirmed that protecting patients' privacy and maintaining the confidentiality of their medical data are on top of its priorities.

This is in line with Article 21 of Professional Practice Law No. 70/2020,

which prohibits third parties from taking the photo or video of a patient or a practitioner while they are inside the health facility for any reason, unless a written approval is obtained from the patient or practitioner on one hand, and from the health facility administration on the other hand.

The ministry added that the same article allows the professional to take photos or videos for purposes of education, documentation, research, scientific publishing or to exchange experience or information in the medical field or for health awareness, provided that a written and explicit consent is obtained from the patient, which must specify the purpose and limits of use and publication. This is in addition to

not disclosing the patient's identity and personality whenever there is no relevant interest in doing so. Performing any type of photography or videography that is not governed by the controls specified by the law could be considered a violation of the patient's privacy.

It emphasized that respecting the patients' privacy and dignity is an essential part of professional ethics and societal duties, which everyone must observe, in order to enhance community confidence in the health system, and to ensure that all patients receive health care in a safe environment, in which utmost comfort and privacy are observed.

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Newswatch

Kuwait to sizzle with 50°C heat

KUWAIT CITY, July 8, (KUNA): The Kuwait weather will be affected by a heat wave during the weekend, as it is expected to exceed 50 degrees Celsius in some areas, said the meteorological department on Monday.

Kuwait Meteorological Center Director General Abdulaziz Al-Qarawi said in a statement to KUNA that the weather would incline toward hotness on Thursday.

On Friday, the country would be affected by hot amid unsteady north westerly winds accompanied by dust that would affect vision in open areas.

□ □ □

KUWAIT CITY: The Amiri Diwan on Sunday mourned the demise of Sheikh Ali Abdullah Al-Salem Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah who passed away at the age of 78. He will be laid to rest after maghreb prayers on Monday.

□ □ □

KUWAIT CITY: Kuwait condemned the Israeli occupation forces attacks on UN's Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) School in Nuseirat camp, central Gaza Strip, which resulted in the death of many Palestinians. Ministry of Foreign Affairs expressed on Monday.

The ministry affirmed that the ongoing attacks on the UN affiliated buildings is considered a blatant evidence of the occupation disdaining the UN and the Security Council resolutions. (KUNA)



KUNA photo
Participants at the Green Development Forum of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). Kuwait Ambassador to China Jassem Al-Najem highlighted Kuwait's commitment to environmental protection through the Al-Shaqaya photovoltaic energy project, noted for its minimal ecological impact compared to traditional stations.

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Gold workshops 'oversight' eyed

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

KUWAIT CITY, July 8: The Ministry of Commerce and Industry is preparing to form a joint committee to monitor and inspect gold markets and workshops in Kuwait.

The sources further revealed that the Ministry has been receiving numerous complaints regarding commercial fraud in the gold sector, particularly concerning issues such as weight discrepancies and fraudulent mixing of copper with gold.

The newly proposed committee is expected to operate for a two-month period, during which

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Prayer Timings

Fajr 03:20 Asr 15:27
 Sunrise .. 04:55 Maghrib .. 18:51
 Zohr 11:53 Isha 20:22

Local

Expected weather for next 24 hrs:
By Day: Very hot with light variable wind to light to moderate northwesterly wind, with speeds of 06-24 km/h.
By Night: Hot to rather hot with

Weather
 light variable wind to light to moderate northwesterly wind, with speeds of 06-24 km/h.
Station **Max Exp** **Min Rec**
 Kuwait City 47 36

Kuwait Airport	48	31
Abdaly	48	28
Jahra	49	31
Salmiyah	44	34
Nuwaisib	48	32
Wafra	48	28

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

Transfer move to curb workers fleeing sponsors

Reduction in labor disputes seen: Al-Shammari

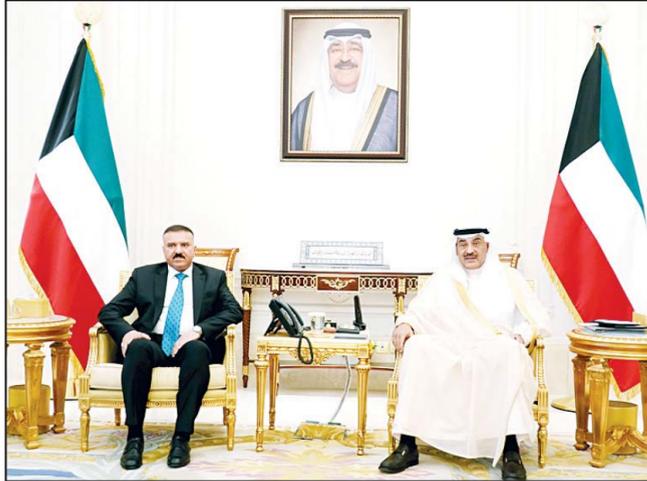


PM Diwan photo
 His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah receives the Iraqi Interior Minister Lieutenant Abdulmir Kamel Al-Shammari.

HH PM receives Iraqi minister

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah received at Bayan Palace Interior Minister of Iraq Lieutenant General Abdulmir Kamel Al-Shammari and the accompanying delegation.
 First Deputy Prime Minister, Min-

ister of Interior, Minister of Defense Sheikh Fahad Yusuf Saud Al-Sabah, head of the Prime Minister Diwan Abdulaziz Al-Dakheel, and Interior Undersecretary Sheikh Salem Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah attended the reception. (KUNA)



KUNA photo
 His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah receives Iraqi Minister of Interior Lieutenant General Abdulmir Kamel Al-Shammari.

HH CP receives govt dignitaries

His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah received on Monday at Bayan Palace, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.
 His Highness also received First Deputy Prime Minister, Defense Minister and Inte-

rior Minister Sheikh Fahad Yousef Al-Sabah and Iraqi Minister of Interior Lieutenant General Abdulmir Kamel Al-Shammari and his accompanying delegation on his official visit to the country.
 Senior state officials attended the meeting. (KUNA)

KUWAIT CITY, July 8: Domestic worker affairs specialist Bassam Al-Shammari said the decision by First Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defense, and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahd Al-Yousef to allow the transfer of domestic workers to the private sector from July 14 to Sept 12 will help curb the phenomenon of domestic workers moving illicitly into the private sector, reports Al-Jarida daily.

This trend arose due to shortages in skilled and professional labor following the departure of many workers affected by the 60-year-old worker policy.

According to statistics from the Public Authority for Manpower cited by Al-Shammari, around 30 percent of violations related to residency and domestic work laws involve workers fleeing from their sponsors.

Despite the short initial implementation period of two months, Al-Shammari expects hundreds of workers to benefit and calls on relevant government bodies to consider extending the time-frame. He notes that many workers who recently adjusted their status or left Kuwait could also benefit from this opportunity.

Another significant benefit highlighted by Al-Shammari is the potential reduction in labor disputes among domestic workers, which could alleviate pressure on shelters managed by the Manpower Authority.

He predicts that the Need Estimation Department will experience increased demand coinciding with the implementation of this transfer decision, especially with the recent policy allowing companies to recruit all their licensed workers directly from abroad without mandatory internal transfers.



Al-Shammari

'Disabled exempted'

MoH starts biometrics for all staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 8 : The Ministry of Health (MoH) on Monday started applying the fingerprint attendance system to all employees in its head office and central departments; including those practicing certain professions or a group of public sector jobs, reports Al-Anba daily.

The system will also be applied to all employees who work overtime, as per the decision that Health Minister Dr. Ahmad Al-Awadhi issued in June. The ministry took the fingerprints of employees who were not previously fingerprinted in order to apply

the system to all employees.

Regarding the mechanism for implementing the system for those who work overtime, the ministry specified three timings for the concerned employees to register their fingerprints - 2:00 pm, 4:00 pm and 6:00 pm according to the hours they wish to work overtime. Therefore, an employee can work overtime from 2:00 pm to 4:00 pm or from 2:00 pm to 6:00 pm.

This decision does not apply to employees exempted from fingerprinting like those with severe disabilities.

Other Voices

Socrates and Finance Minister

By Ahmad alsarraf

The TV interview with the Minister of Finance, Anwar Al-Mudhaf, reminded me of a quote by Socrates (paraphrased) when a person entered, proud of his position and clothes, and Socrates asked him, in order to see him speak, but he replied: There is no need to speak, as I work quietly!

The Minister of Finance, since his appointment 6 months ago, has been "silent." No one knew anything about his ideas, plans, and programs to correct our distorted financial situation. The opportunity came to answer questions that have long preoccupied thousands of families, but the interview increased our doubts and concerns about our future.

I do not wish to go into the many weak points in the performance of the Minister, who lacked fluency and charisma, because these are things that cannot be used to judge a person's performance, but His Excellency's failure was clearly evident when he read three dangerous numbers from a piece of paper; total revenues, total payments, and the size of the deficit!! If he was unable to remember those three numbers, then that means our situation is not good, and the rest of the interview demonstrated the validity of the fears of those who followed it!

We will focus, briefly, on the issues that concern everyone, and which His Excellency may not have wanted to address. One of the problems of any society is the desire of its members to obtain something, without sacrificing anything in return! For example, we want to increase revenues from tourism, but we are not willing to give up our customs and traditions! We want a generous salary, but we do not want to work far from home, etc.

It is absurd to repeat that salaries and wages will not be affected, and then add that the state will reconsider "the prices of its services and goods"!!

The point is not whether the salary remains the same, but rather the annual inflation rate. The government's decision to increase its income by raising the value and wages of services and lands and reducing subsidies will inevitably affect the actual value of the salary, not the numerical value!

Increasing non-oil revenues requires a comprehensive change in the behavior of society, accelerating the establishment of entertainment projects, exploiting the state's capabilities in a good way, and transforming Failaka into a

free zone, in the true sense of the word, and not another dry resort like Khairan.

The budget deficit over the next four years alone will reach 26 billion dinars, and this cannot be covered except by withdrawing from the Future Generations Fund, or borrowing, assuming the situation remains as it is. It also requires speed of action, and this is what we do not see yet from the owners of the established bish and ghutra, despite the leadership's directives to expedite the completion of vital projects, expand the revitalization of the private sector, and involve it in the production of alternative energy and the management of electricity facilities, ports, and others, to increase non-oil income, liquidate the supply company and cancel subsidies, stop waste in government administration, and most importantly, impose taxes!

Tax is a bogeyman that the poor fear and the rich hate, but it is necessary, materially, morally and spiritually. Imposing it serves multiple purposes that go beyond merely increasing state revenues. It is a tool for redistributing wealth, as through it those with higher incomes pay a larger percentage of their income than others.

Taxes are also used as tools to achieve economic stability, by calming the economy and preventing inflation. Conversely, tax cuts during recessions can stimulate demand and economic activity, and play a role in influencing consumer behavior by encouraging certain products or reducing the consumption of others such as tobacco and harmful products. The opposite is done through exemptions, which can encourage activities such as investment in agriculture, renewable energy, and others.

Taxes are part of the social contract, representing a collective contribution to the functioning and well-being of society. They embody the principle that citizens contribute to the public good in return for benefits and protection provided by the state. They help structure society, promote social justice, and help maintain a stable and efficient economy.

Logically, what we desperately need is not to increase salaries, or even to keep them as they are, but to raise the standard of living, not financially, but by raising the level of services! What is the use of a huge salary, if the roads are in ruins, the hospitals are bad, medicines are missing, schools are dilapidated, trees are dead, etc.

Until these matters are adjusted, and the standard of living rises, the nation has no choice but to hope, pray, and implore that our government will succeed in adjusting its balance of payments, reducing its expenses, and eliminating its "waste"!

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Photo by Mohammad Morsi
 Tight security at one of the Husseiniyas in Kuwait where the Shiite community get together to mourn the martyrdom of Imam Hussain (may Allah be pleased with him) on the first day of the Muslim month of Muharram which also coincides with being the first month of the Islamic calendar.

End illegal dumping of trash: expert

Hazardous waste: a serious threat, calls for expanding infrastructure

KUWAIT CITY, July 8: The Audit Bureau's report highlights significant shortcomings in the management of medical waste, which has led to increased violations and financial fines for cleaning service contractors. The report points out the accumulation of hazardous medical waste due to the insufficient capacity of the Ministry of Health's treatment plants. It also underscores the rising risks of hazardous industrial waste, particularly electronic waste, due to inadequate treatment, reuse, and recycling operations, reports Al-Rai daily.

The report criticizes the weak environmental management of hazardous waste in productive sectors, warning against the mixing of hazardous and non-hazardous waste in open containers, especially in homes, and the illegal dumping of waste in public places.

Major Findings:
 The Shuaiba station's inability to safely treat all types of hazardous industrial waste, with only 1% being recycled.

The need for the Ministry of Health to provide safe transportation paths for hazardous medical waste, designated parking spaces for transport containers, and an improved Radiation Protection Department.

A call for the Public Authority for Industry to establish treatment plants for hazardous industrial waste, expand recycling operations, and provide adequate human resources.

Expert Insights:

Environmental expert Dr. Mohammad Al-Sayegh emphasized the increasing global awareness about environmental issues and the need for Kuwait to scrutinize its hazardous waste management practices. He highlighted the major challenges identified in the Audit Bureau's report, including infrastructure deficiencies, lack of oversight, and the urgent need to update systems and legislation.

"Kuwait stands at a crossroads where it can adopt effective strategies to enhance its efficiency in managing hazardous waste," Al-Sayegh stated. He recommended critical steps such as improving infrastructure by establishing modern facilities to ensure the safe and effective disposal of various types of hazardous waste.

Legislation and Control:
 Al-Sayegh stressed the importance of strengthening regulatory and supervisory frameworks. Updating legislation to reflect global best practices and applying strict penalties to ensure compliance with environmental standards is crucial. He also called for increased inspection and monitoring of facilities handling hazardous waste.

The importance of awareness and training cannot be overlooked. Intensive training programs for workers in this field and public awareness campaigns are essential to highlight the importance of proper hazardous waste management and its impact on health and the environment.

These proposals require long-term commitment and cooperation between government agencies and the private sector. By implementing these improvements, Kuwait can ensure a safer and more sustainable future for all its residents.



Dr. Al-Sayegh

Plan to appoint 57 new inspectors

KUWAIT CITY, July 8: Director of the Commercial Control Department at the Ministry of Commerce and Industry Faisal Al-Ansari said the ministry intends to appoint 57 inspectors in September, reports Al-Anba daily.

In a statement to the daily, Al-Ansari revealed that the department uncovered 1,906 violations within three months - from March 20 to June 25. He said the number of inspection tours carried out within this period totaled 1,459; covering various establishments throughout the country. He added the violations include commercial fraud and others related to commercial licenses, prices, counterfeit goods, State-subsidized goods and car rental services. He disclosed that the ministry has laid

down a plan to increase the number of inspectors, in cooperation with the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training (PAAET). He also confirmed that 122 inspectors have undergone training in preparation for their appointment in the Commercial Control and Consumer Protection Sector soon. He said the ministry is currently coordinating with PAAET to hold training courses for assistant inspectors with a high school diploma, adding these courses will last for one year for the ministry to achieve its vision on developing the oversight sector and providing it with trained staff. It is expected that 57 inspectors will be appointed in the sector in September, he stated.

Capital is on 'top' with 17,248 citations issued

KUWAIT CITY, July 8: The General Department for Traffic Operations in the Ministry of Interior is continuing to carry out security campaigns in all areas under the supervision of the Assistant Undersecretary for Traffic Operations Major General Yousef Al-Khadda, reports Al-Jarida daily.

The campaigns held last week resulted in the issuance of 52 thousand traffic citations, the arrest of 44 careless drivers, the seizing of 61 vehicles and 101 motorcycles and the referral of 17 minors to Juvenile Prosecution for underage driving.

Head of Department of Public Relations and Guidance in the Traffic Operations Department Lieutenant Colonel Abdullah Buhassan explained that the patrol teams affiliated with the Traffic Operations Department dealt with 1,365 traffic accidents last week, 238 out of which resulted in casualties and 1,127 of them were collision accidents. It also received 2,375 calls for assistance. A total of 24 individuals, including those wanted for criminal cases, court verdicts, absconding and residency violations have been arrested and referred to the concerned institutions.

He revealed that Capital Traffic Department topped the list in terms of the number of traffic citations issued with a total of 17,248 citations, followed by Highway Traffic Department with 9,403 citations, then Farwaniya Traffic Department with 7,686 citations, Mubarak Al-Kabeer Traffic Department with 5,692 citations, Hawally Traffic Department with 5,631 citations, Jahra Traffic Department with 3,710 citations and Ahmadi Traffic Department with 2,571 citations.



Abdullah Al-Husseini

Kuwait's Al-Husseini wins Ghassan Kanafani Award

RAMALLAH, July 8, (KUNA): The Palestinian Ministry of Culture announced on Monday that Kuwaiti writer Abdullah Al-Husseini's book (baqi Al-Washim) "Tattoo Remains" published by Takween Publishing House, won the Ghassan Kanafani Prize for Arabic Fiction in its third edition.

The award represents Palestine's appreciation for novels by Palestinian as well as Arab novelists and it has been given despite the brutal ongoing genocide committed by Israeli aggression against Palestinians, said Minister of Culture Imad Hamdan during a press conference held at the Forum Hall of Hassan Arafat Museum in Ramallah.

He further explained that the Ministry established the award to honor creators who grasp the words that define the truth, reject forgery, and seek freedom and salvation.

The judging committee for the prize was chaired by the Moroccan critic and novelist Ahmad Al-Madani, with members including the Jordanian novelist Samiha Khrais, Egyptian critic and academic Mohammad Elshahat, the Palestinian writer Ziad Abu Laban and the critic Reyad Kamal.

The Ministry recently announced the novels that made it to the long list, including 14 novels by authors from 10 Arab countries. It then announced the novels that made it to the shortlist, selecting five novels from the initial 14, which are: '2067' by novelist Saad El-Qorshi from Egypt, 'A Necessary Pain' by novelist Abdullah Taieh from Palestine, 'The Tattoo Remains' by novelist Abdullah Al-Husseini from Kuwait, 'Imam's Spring' by novelist Mohammad Saif Al-Rahbi from Oman, and 'Berltras' by novelist Nasr Sami from Tunisia.

The Ghassan Kanafani Award for Arabic Novel this year marks the 50th anniversary of the writer Ghassan Kanafani martyrdom. This award is considered one of the highest honors granted by Palestine, symbolizing Ghassan Kanafani's significance in both the Arab and Palestinian consciousness, and recognizing his contributions to the Palestinian national movement and cultural resistance in support of Arab and Palestinian identity.

diwaniya ديوانية

A DIGEST OF PUBLIC OPINION

Jobs abundant ... Kuwaitis should replace expat imams & muezzins

"WE HAVE become wary of seeing government officials in the media, as it often results in scandal or ridicule. A former oil minister once boasted about creating a quarter of a million jobs and developing the islands, indulging in unrealistic fantasies," **Badr Khaled Al-Bahr** wrote for *Al-Jarida* daily.

"Then, we have a finance minister, raising concerns about how he will represent us in international forums. The head of the Civil Service Bureau made a self-incriminating statement, claiming that "the Bureau moved from the stage of no planning to the stage of planning." What has he been doing for the past two years since his appointment?"



Badr Al-Bahr

"Moreover, his assertion that "unemployment in Kuwait is zero" is unfounded. The more accurate statement would be that unemployment could become zero. Last June, unemployment was recorded at 5.75% among a Kuwaiti workforce of 490,000, meaning there were 28,000 unemployed individuals. How could it have reached zero now?"

"The Civil Service Commission is supposed to follow the clear directives of the political leadership to eliminate unemployment. However, this does not mean blindly placing university graduates into ministries without meaningful work, as is the case in many entities, including the Council of Ministers. Employees are instructed to "be silent and watch," often due to a lack of office space or actual work. It is common to see them in commercial complexes during official working hours, even wearing the Ministry's technical uniform!"

"It is unfortunate that the Civil Service Commission seems out of touch, promoting unwanted specializations without addressing their presence in Kuwait University's programs and external and internal missions. "We urge the Council of Ministers to take the political leadership's directives seriously. Ending unemployment does not mean aimless employment without actual job tasks. The Civil Service Commission (CSC) must coordinate with the Kuwait University and the ministries of Higher and Applied Education to identify needed specializations and discontinue the undesired ones to create real job opportunities. A genuine program should be developed for young people to join immediately after graduation, preventing the Commission from misleading the political leadership and citizens by creating "disguised unemployment."

"Furthermore, the head of the CSC claimed that Kuwaitis do not accept roles as imams and for the call to prayer as permanent jobs. In response, these positions should be reclassified as temporary jobs, in accordance with Article 12 of the Civil Service Law, to be filled by any citizen, such as retirees.

"Some retirees volunteered for these roles but were rejected by probation committees due to the control by current imams and muezzins, who fear losing their jobs and benefits, such as free housing, healthcare, and education. The Ministry provides 600 dinars for a disabled child and 300 for a healthy child, but restricts benefits to a maximum of six children to prevent waste. Meanwhile, citizens do not receive any financial support for private education for their children.

"The solution is to temporarily employ thousands of Sharia graduates and others. The call to prayer is not difficult task. We have more than one hundred thousand Quran memorizers who can be assigned, along with three retired pioneers per mosque, to call for prayer, lead prayers, and even deliver the Friday sermon, printed by Sharia graduates and retirees in Arabic and Islamic studies, after passing tests. "This approach would replace the current army of expatriate imams and muezzins and their families, who, according to last year's statistics, number over 2,800, impacting over fourteen thousand people and imposing a high cost on public funds.

"This also worsens the demographic composition, necessitating the termination of their services this summer before schools resume. Additionally, the Civil Service decision to exclude non-Kuwaiti imams and muezzins from the provisions of Resolution 11 of 2017, regarding the Kuwaitization of government jobs, should be canceled. It is shameful for us as Kuwaitis to have expatriate imams and muezzins running our mosques!"

Also:

"Certainly, we are all happy in Kuwait with the shift or trend towards implementing laws and pursuing anyone who deviates from them or violates them in many areas, and scrutinizing any violation according to the degree of the violation," columnist **Iqbal Al-Ahmad** wrote for *Al-Qabas* daily.

"I cite as evidence what the Ministry of Interior, Municipality and other ministries are doing, thankfully. However, there is a very important point that officials must realize, so that some of this care and scrutiny in implementing the law are not built on foundations that may not be 100% correct, and on laws that have become old and weak, and it is time to develop, amend or even cancel them.

"It is necessary and very necessary to re-read all labor laws in Kuwait in a modern and contemporary manner that is in line with the many changes that have affected the structure of society. "One of the conditions for running for the National Assembly is that the candidate must be able to read and write. We all know that the issuance of the Kuwaiti Constitution in the early sixties was to provide an opportunity for every

Kuwaiti at that time, and a high percentage of them could only read and write, and did not hold any university degrees.

"However, this condition continues to this day without any amendment. I know that there are those who will say that a degree is not everything, but I answer that it is a lot of this, in addition to other important qualities, of course.

"I believe that many laws, especially those issued 30 or 40 years ago, should be re-read differently from their reading in the past era, so that the possibility of applying them today can be compared to what it was many years ago.

"Continue to apply the law, and continue to pursue violators, but we must also begin to re-read some laws that relate to organizations with certain specifications that change from time to time, which confirms the need to amend, cancel, or replace them in a way that is compatible with any changes that affect society in all its aspects year after year, and in every field."

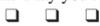


"Error means turning away from what is right. Human beings are fallible. We make mistakes and perfection belongs to Him alone. Error is possible, but the problem is in repeating the mistake. Some are mistaken and others are wrong, the former want to correct things and turn to something else, while the latter deliberately and carelessly make a mistake like someone who commits a sin intentionally. I am talking about an intentional mistake, so the Muslim should not be blamed for an unintentional mistake," **Mishal Al-Saeed** wrote for *Al-Anba* daily.

"The truth is that people make mistakes in word and deed. No human being has not made a mistake in his life -- whether against his Creator, himself or other people. "All of the children of Adam make mistakes and the best of the sinners are those who repent." This is an honorable Hadith. It has been the nature of humans since Allah Almighty created Adam, Peace be upon him. Adam disobeyed his Lord and went astray. The rational and sober person considers the mistakes of others. If he makes a mistake, he tries hard not to repeat it and asks Allah for forgiveness.

"The rational person benefits and learns from his mistakes and that of others. A person must evaluate his behavior with every experience he goes through. The worthy question in this context is: Why do some people repeat their mistakes? The answer is: The most important reasons for repeating a mistake are lack of clarity and awareness, lack of intelligence and courage, abnormal behavior, weak disposition and lack of determination. These factors control the action of such people. More important than what I mentioned is the weakness of religious motivation or its complete absence, such that every person repeats his mistake and does not benefit from the mistakes of others. His mind is 'injured'.

"Our Prophet, may Allah's prayers and peace be upon him, gave us a useful commandment in this regard. He said: 'The believer is not stung from the same hole twice.' Therefore, when our mistakes are repeated, we must quickly regret, repent and seek forgiveness. We have to avoid making the mistake again. When the Prophet, may Allah's prayers and peace be upon him, emerged victorious, he greeted Abu Izza Al-Qurashi Al-Jumahi, the poet, after the Battle of Uhud. Before that, he attacked him in the Battle of Badr when he was taken with the prisoners. He pledged not to fight the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, and not to incite a fight against him with his poetry. However, he broke his promise and participated once again in fighting the Muslims. May Allah grant him peace by killing him. May you remain safe."



"Firstly, we see on a daily basis in all areas the wastage of water in large quantities due to domestic workers washing cars every morning in front of homes. Sometimes, the water pipes are left open on the ground while the domestic worker is talking on the phone, or talking to his colleague who works for the neighbor. Imagine the amount of water being wasted! Every morning, homeowners must be alert and be firm about, as it is wasted wealth," columnist Major General **M. Faisal Al-Jazzaf** wrote for *Al-Seyassah* daily.

"Secondly, we all have seen the cleaning workers of the municipality roaming the streets with little to no work, except on rare occasions. They prey on citizens at their homes or in the parking lots, with the hope of receiving some money. We hence ask the question - What benefit does the state get from their work, while it loses millions in labor company tenders?"

"Technology has today become an alternative to cleaning by hand, and I think it is easy to replace them with cars to clean the streets in all areas.

"Thirdly, there has been widespread concern regarding the damage occurring to plants and palm trees in streets and various areas, notably the loss of palm trees that are crucial for preservation. Despite the state investing millions in their planting, there appears to be a lack of attention toward their care and maintenance.

"Fourthly, "Drakil" were deployed and abandoned in Al-Mutlaa and Al-Shamal areas, causing environmental devastation. Remedying this situation is straightforward - Planting trees in these areas will effectively combat desertification. There are Korean and Chinese companies with initiatives and have conducted successful experiments in many countries. We therefore hope that the government will seek help from them, especially since they have signed agreements with China."

— Compiled by PFX Fernandes and Mahmoud Attiye

Court acquits young Kuwaiti in drugs case

By Jaber Al-Hamoud

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 8: The Criminal Court acquitted a 20-year-old citizen of possessing psychotropic substances for personal consumption.

According to the case files, the incident officer confirmed that he saw the accused in front of a restaurant parking lot in Salmiya. The officer got suspicious, so he searched the citizen and found psychotropic substances in his possession.

The Public Prosecution charged the accused with possessing morphine and amphetamine with the intention of consuming these substances.

The defendant appeared in court with his lawyer, Attorney Jarrah Mubarak Al-Wawan, who argued that the arrest and search of his client were invalid, because these steps were taken without permission, which is allowed only in 'flagrante delicto' cases -- if the accused is caught red handed. He pointed out it was an erroneous arrest, considering that restriction on personal freedom is only permissible in flagrante delicto cases or witnessed crimes or with the permission of the prosecution or in any of the cases stipulated in the relevant law, which does not include merely seeing the accused in a state of imbalance or staggering condition.

Al-Wawan said: "The accused did not voluntarily put himself in a position of suspicion and doubt. The officer just claimed that he saw the accused standing in front of a restaurant in an abnormal state. He did not explain the behavior of the accused. Standing on the street in front of a park is not considered an act that could be the subject of accusation, doubt and suspicion."



Al-Wawan



KUNA photo

Kuwait's Interior and Defense Minister Sheikh Fahad Yusuf Al-Sabah during talks with his Iraqi counterpart Abdulamir Al-Shammari.

Kuwait, Iraq eye security boost

KUWAIT CITY, July 8: Kuwait's Interior and Defense Minister Sheikh Fahad Yusuf Al-Sabah held talks on Monday with his Iraqi counterpart Abdulamir Al-Shammari focusing on the expansion of security cooperation between the two neighbors.

Ahead of an international gathering later this year in the Iraqi capital focusing on the fight against narcotics, the

Kuwaiti interior minister said that his Iraqi counterpart had extended an invitation to him to participate in the event, said an interior ministry statement.

Greater security cooperation mainly entails the fight against human smuggling and efforts to prevent encroachment on the two countries' (KUNA) respective lands, added the statement. (KUNA)

Domestic worker hangs herself in sponsor home

By Munif Naif

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 8: A domestic worker ended her life by hanging herself in her sponsor's house in Sa'ad Al-Abdullah area.

According to a security source, the operations room received a report that an Asian worker had ended her life by hanging herself from the ceiling of her room in the Sa'ad Al-Abdullah area. Immediately, security personnel and ambulance personnel headed to the location of the report and began removing the body and referring it to the forensic medicine department. A case was registered.

'Projects in offing'

Jahra tent market to revive cultural vibes

By Mohammad Al Musleh

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 8: The Kuwait Municipality is gearing up to implement several major development projects, including the establishment and development of the Central Tent Market in the Jahra Governorate.

This initiative aims to revive the cultural heritage associated with Kuwaiti society and promote sustainable development.

According to a preliminary study prepared by the projects sector in the municipality, the Central Tent Market project, which spans a total area of 100,000 square meters, has received approval from the Municipal Council.

The municipality is currently preparing a feasibility study and proposed engineering designs for the project. These studies are considering all cultural, societal, recreational, developmental, and economic aspects associated with such a market.

Additionally, the designs will adhere to the global sustainability standards set by the Gulf Organization for Research and Development (GORD) and incorporate the latest smart systems, ensuring the market's attractiveness to citizens, residents, and tourists year-round.

Based on the Municipal Council's decision, an initial allocation of 50,000 square meters for selling tents within Jahra Governorate was made on a temporary basis.

However, upon the request of the Project Development Department, the council agreed to expand this site by an additional 50,000 square meters, making it a permanent area that the municipality can offer as a central market to the private sector.

The project aims to provide a diverse and sustainably prosperous economic environment. It will serve as an extension of Kuwaiti cultural and popular heritage and focus on maximizing human capital value by building a sustainable living environment.

Vision

The municipality's vision includes reviving cultural heritage associated with Kuwaiti society and Bedouin customs by focusing on tent sales and related activities within an educational, recreational, and economic framework.

The project will also emphasize sustainable development and environmental friendliness through green architecture, creating an environment attractive for strolling, shopping, culture, and entertainment throughout the year. This initiative is expected to stimulate economic activity by involving the private sector in managing project activities and creating new opportunities for owners of medium and small enterprises.

The consulting study being prepared will include environmental and social impact assessments, soil testing and surveying, traffic studies, and comprehensive technical and feasibility studies.

The municipality highlighted that Kuwait is renowned for producing the highest quality tents in the Gulf.

Therefore, focusing on this activity is crucial as it represents part of Kuwaiti heritage and culture, preserves Kuwait's status as a pioneer in this field, and eliminates previous slums to create an integrated market that serves as a destination for Gulf countries, the Middle East, and beyond.

The project is also envisioned as a tourist destination, offering a variety of cultural, educational, entertainment, and commercial activities and creating the appropriate infrastructure for such a project.

The project will support business activities such as shops selling tent accessories,

Shops and kiosks for small projects, falconry and accessories shops, spaces and yards for horses, camels, and related needs, popular cafes and restaurants, multipurpose event spaces, logistics warehouses for tent sellers, a cultural museum, covered playgrounds or children's playrooms, green spaces and educational workshops.

The municipality, after consulting with tent owners, has identified the market needs and is committed to addressing them to ensure the project's success.

Community service to replace jail time

Justice to hire more prosecutors

KUWAIT CITY, July 8: Minister of Justice and Minister of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs **Mohammad Al-Wasmi** has announced the drafting of a new law on alternative procedures and penalties, such as community service instead of imprisonment for certain misdemeanor crimes, reports *Al-Qabas* daily.

He explained that these alternative penalties will replace the penalty of imprisonment for less than two months for some misdemeanor cases such as traffic violations, violations of the municipality law, and violation of the printing and publishing law. The new law is aimed to use the convicts for the benefit of society.

Meanwhile, Minister Al-Wasmi revealed that the Public Prosecution is planning to recruit an additional number of public prosecutors to improve the judiciary and hasten the issuance of court rulings.

He clarified that the government is highly concerned about simplifying the procedures and facilitating the progress of court cases.

Minister Al-Wasmi affirmed that a number of regulations will be issued including those for online trials of some types of cases.

He indicated that it will first be enforced in some courts and if proven successful, it will be applied in the rest of courts that deal with such kinds of lawsuits.

In addition, Al-Wasmi highlighted the plan of the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs to build environmentally-friendly mosques with sustainable electricity and water.

He revealed that a committee of specialists in construction and design has been tasked to prepare the model to be adopted by the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs for the construction of environmentally-friendly mosques especially in the new residential areas.



Al-Wasmi

Kuwait, Egypt to up military ties

KUWAIT CITY, July 8: The Military Attaché of Egypt to Kuwait commended the results of the recent two-day meetings held by the Higher Kuwait-Egyptian Military Committee.

He highlighted Kuwait's significant influence, which extends beyond the regional level to a global scale, reports *Al-Qabas* daily.

During a press conference, he explained that Kuwait is among the top countries that Egypt is keen to coordinate with regarding various regional and global situations. The visions of both Kuwaiti and Egyptian armies are similar, and they show great concern about enhancing cooperation in all military fields including joint exercises and increasing the scholarships especially after the inauguration of the military academy in the new administrative capital city of Egypt.

The Egyptian military attaché affirmed that the recent 14th meeting of the joint military committee underlined the deep-rooted bonds between Kuwait and Egypt.

He highlighted the remarkable growth of cooperation and coordination in that regard in all levels.

He explained that the meetings coincided with ongoing regional developments, including the Gaza issue, military activities in the Red Sea, and the conflict in Sudan, as well as the marking of the commemoration of the Egyptian Revolution on July 23, 1952.

The military cooperation underscores mutual agreements, which were highlighted during the summit last April between His Highness the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and the President of Egypt Abdulfattah el-Sisi.



WEDDINGS, UPTO 140



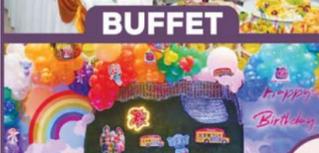
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Municipal Council nods key land reallocations

Zoo transfer, law firm adjustments, Entertainment City, and Shagaya modifications approved

By Inaas Awadh

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 8: The Municipal Council, during its regular session yesterday, approved a number of items included in the agenda for the session. These included -

1. Reallocation of the land of the Al-Shagaya Renewable Energy Complex from the Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research to the Ministry of Electricity, Water, and Renewable Energy.

2. The Ministry of Finance's request to transfer the allocation of the Entertainment City project site from the Amiri Diwan to the Kuwait Investment Authority.

3. The Ministry of Finance's request to reallocate the zoo site located in Omariya to the Public Institution for Social Security for further study in order to contribute in paying the actuarial deficit.

4. The Ministry of Communication's request to allocate a site for the major fiber optic network project's phase three in Subbiya on an area of approximately 2,016 square metres.

On June 25, the council's Technical Committee had approved this request during a meeting held under the chairmanship of Engineer Munira Al-Amir. The committee stressed adherence to the requirements contained in the responses of members of the Subcommittee on Public Facilities and Services and the necessity of providing parking within the boundaries of the



Photos during Municipal Council regular session. Photos by Ihab Qurtal

site. The Ministry of Communication has to pledge to coordinate with the Silk City and Boubyan Island Development Authority before concluding any contract or agreement related to the project.

5. Grant law firms a maximum grace

period until the end of June 2025 to leave private housing areas in a bid to adjust their status.

The Technical Committee agreed to extend the deadline set by the municipality in a previous decision, which ended on June 30.

Authority manages 66,732 active medical files

PADA introduces new strategic initiatives to enhance services

By Faris Al-Abdan

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 8: Dr. Mubarak Al-Badah, the Acting Deputy Director of Educational and Rehabilitation Services and official spokesperson for the Public Authority for the Affairs of Persons with Disabilities (PADA), revealed there are 66,732 active medical files registered with the authority.

In an interview with the Al-Seyassah, Dr. Al-Badah detailed the distribution of these files saying 11,639 pertain to physical health, 5,194 visual, 17,388 mental, 14,982 physically handicapped, 7,544 educational disability, 2,062 developmental, 5,247 hearing problems, and 2,676 psychological disorder.

He explained that the condition of a person requesting disability status is evaluated based on the nature of their disease and its impact on bodily systems. The medical committees at the Authority determine the degree of disability using specific criteria.

These criteria include the nature of the impairment (physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory), the severity of the impairment (simple, moderate, or severe), and the impact on daily activities such as walking, speaking, or self-care.

Dr. Al-Badah stated that the medical committees employ various tools and tests to assess disabilities, including personal interviews, medical evaluations, psychological assessments, and professional tests.

The time frame for appointments with the medical committees ranges from one to two months, depending on the type of committee. To expedite the process, the authority plans to increase the number of doctors working in these



Dr. Mubarak Al-Badah, the Acting Deputy Director of Educational and Rehabilitation Services.

medical committees.

He pointed out that the degree of disability is reduced based on recent medical reports indicating the development of the person's condition as a result of treatment.

Dr. Al-Badah said the person's disability request is evaluated according to the nature of the disease and the extent of its impact on the body's systems.

He said the Authority is in the process of increasing the number of doctors working in the medical committees to reduce the waiting period.

Dr. Al-Badah added, the authority provides educational support for people with disabilities through Arabic and bilingual schools, rehabilitation centers, and specialized nurseries. He added,

approximately 9,000 students with disabilities benefit from these services.

To apply for financial assistance, he said, individuals must submit a request to the authority or its branches across Kuwait, following specific terms and conditions.

The assistance is categorized based on the level of disability and age, he said.

For example, mild or educational disabilities for individuals under 21 years or those continuing education up to 28 years receive 185 dinars per month; people with moderate disabilities 225 dinars; severe 275 dinars; additionally, individuals with moderate or severe disabilities who are unable to work after the age of 21 receive 594 dinars.

There is also an allowance for drivers or domestic helpers: 100 dinars for moderate disabilities and 150 dinars for severe disabilities. Furthermore, a woman caring for a severely disabled individual who does not work receives 300 dinars.

He disclosed the Authority collaborates with the Humanitarian Building Association for Social Development to provide direct employment opportunities in both the public and private sectors according to their capabilities while at the same time emphasizing the importance of integrating people with disabilities into the Kuwaiti labor market.

In this regards a Memorandum of Understanding has been signed between the authority and the Humanitarian Building Association to continue the "Partners for Employment" campaign, which started in 2018. This campaign focuses on specialized training linked to employment and exploring new career paths for people with various disabilities.

Society embarks on 'Let's Go Green' campaign

KUWAIT CITY, July 8: The Kuwait Society for the Promotion of Values announced the launch of a community campaign to rationalize electricity consumption under the title "Let's Go Green," in collaboration with the Ministry of Electricity, Water, and Renewable Energy, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

This campaign aims to encourage all segments of society to optimize their use of electricity and raise awareness

among citizens and residents about the importance of energy conservation, especially during the summer when electrical loads increase.

Abdul Wahab Al-Sinin, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Association, stated in a press release that the campaign aligns with the Association's commitment to social responsibility and supporting government efforts to manage electricity supply and prevent potential crises.

Master weavers showcase tradition

Peruvian textile and workshop opens at Sadu House in Kuwait

KUWAIT CITY, July 8: The Peruvian Textile and Workshop opened at the Sadu House in Shaab, with the participation of two master weavers invited from Cuzco, Peru, in a collaborative effort and activity put together by the National Council of Cultures, Arts and Letters (NCCAL), the Embassy of Peru in Kuwait and Al-Sadu Society.

His Excellency, Ambassador of Peru Carlos Manuel Alfredo Velasco Mendiola, expressed his gratitude to the Kuwaiti authorities present at the event as well as the representatives of the Diplomatic Corp and highlighted that this intercultural activity -- the first of its kind -- in the framework of the Cultural Agreement between the Republic of Peru and the State of Kuwait signed in November 2023.

The Peruvian master weavers will share their ancestral knowledge, experiences and techniques with their Kuwaiti counterparts until July 11 in alpaca handwoven, spinning telar and vegetal dyeing, which promise to be an important cultural interchange that is part of "our rich immaterial heritage protected by UNESCO," Ambassador Velasco said.

Also, a small Peruvian Textile Exhibition of colourful woven items was opened during the event for the public.



Photo from the event.

These items were brought especially from Cuzco, the former Imperial City of the Incas, by Master Weavers Martina Quispe (Province of Paucartambo) y Guillermina Mamani (Province of Quispicanchi).

Introductory film to be released

PAAET launches media campaign to guide graduates in choosing majors

KUWAIT CITY, July 8: The Public Authority for Applied Education and Training, through its Deanship of Admission and Registration in collaboration with the Public Relations and Media Department, has initiated the 'My Beginning' -- a comprehensive media campaign to guide high school graduates to select suitable majors for enrollment in the Authority's colleges and institutes for the academic year 2024-2025, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

Suhaim Al-Anzi, Director of the Public Relations and Media Department and spokesperson for the Authority, announced in a recent press statement that the campaign reflects the vision of Dr. Hassan Al-Fajjam, Director General of the Authority, and the management's commitment to educating and guiding prospective students and their families.

The initiative aims to highlight the importance of making informed decisions when choosing specializations that align with career aspirations.

Al-Anzi outlined that the campaign will introduce students and parents to the diverse programs offered by the Authority's institutes and colleges.

Through awareness advertisements disseminated across the Authority's official channels and participation in educational exhibitions, the campaign intends to encourage candidates to select paths that resonate with their interests and future career goals.

In conjunction with the campaign launch, an introductory film titled "With Unity, We Make the Impossible" will be released.

This title symbolizes the collaborative efforts among societal entities -- both institutional and individual -- to strengthen mutual relationships, fostering comprehensive development and aligning with Kuwait's

Talks underway to solve local fish shortage crisis

KUWAIT CITY, July 8: The upcoming meeting between the Commercial Control Department, Coast Guard representatives and the Public Authority for Agriculture Affairs and Fish Resources will address challenges and obstacles encountered by imported fish offices following recommendations from the last meeting of the Commercial Control Department and union representatives, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

According to the sources, the Commercial Control Department is actively engaged in discussions to propose solutions and alternatives.

These efforts are focused on streamlining the process of docking ships and transporting imported fish to markets promptly.

The primary goals include preserving the quality and safety of fish while ensuring sufficient quantities are available in the markets.

vision for educational advancement tailored to meet labor market demands.

The film will be showcased on approved social, electronic, and visual media platforms as well as official channels within the country.

This initiative underscores the Authority's commitment to empowering students with the knowledge needed to embark on successful educational journeys aligned with national development goals.

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NOW	NOW
BHD 76.230 net	BHD 170.247 net

Promo period from 23rd June to 31st July 2024 Terms & conditions apply*

LOCAL

National

Continued from Page 1

Everyone knows that inflation is less than half of that; hence, if salaries are raised, subsidies are rationalized and allocated to the needy, this will save the budget a lot.

There is also the Failaka island and other islands. We have been hearing about their development for years, but nothing has been done to this day in that regard, so why not give the island to the Public Institution of Social Security? By doing so, it will work to invest in building entertainment facilities and free trade zones, and deal with its actuarial deficit. It will also be an outlet for Kuwaitis and residents, who spend about KD 4.5 billion abroad annually during holiday seasons.

Achieving all of this is feasible with a determined will and clear vision. Excusing inaction by claiming to work in "silence" or that "there is nothing but wellness" despite the country's challenges, is a dual failure. Maximizing the national output necessitates robust laws and competent leadership.

Weekly entry

Continued from Page 1

He emphasized that strict measures are in place for violating sponsors, starting with warnings, and potentially leading to the arrest of the visitor and other severe penalties for the sponsor.

Granting an entry visa is a smooth process, taking 15 to 30 minutes if the application meets all conditions.

Sponsors can visit the Department of Residence Affairs according to their residential address, with instructions to avoid creating complications for those seeking visit visas.

Regarding the nationalities receiving the most visit visas, Al-Mutairi noted that Americans top the list, followed by British citizens, Turks, Jordanians, Egyptians, Indians, and Syrians in seventh place.

Al-Mutairi concluded, "The country is open for visits according to established standards, but the measures against sponsors and visitors who violate laws are more stringent than before. While we have eased entry into Kuwait, strict accountability measures are in place for law violators, supported by a plan implemented by the police and the Residence Affairs Investigation Department," he said.

Gold workshops

Continued from Page 1

It will conduct extensive inspection tours based on filed complaints.

Its primary objective is to ensure compliance within gold workshops and uphold standards to maintain market stability.

Meanwhile, according to informed commercial sources, inspection teams from the Jahra and Farwaniya governorates organized inspection tours at the fruits and vegetables markets in the Sulabiya area and issued five citations for various reasons and referred the violators to the commercial prosecution for further action.

MoH urges

Continued from Page 1

It also called on all citizens, expatriates and media practitioners to cooperate and adhere to these rules.

It affirmed that it continues to exert tremendous efforts to ensure the provision of the best health services to citizens and expatriates in an environment that respects the rights of patients.

It expressed appreciation for everyone's cooperation and awareness of the importance of the articles of the law related to protecting the patients' privacy and maintaining confidentiality of their data. "We will always move forward to strengthen trust between the health sector and society," the ministry stressed.

Warehouse rent

Continued from Page 1

He likened this delayed government response to "better late than never", suggesting that allocating million-square-meter spaces for storage by the Cabinet is a positive step, albeit overdue. However, establishing these facilities will require time, making it a long-term solution.

Temporary solutions are also needed. During crises like COVID-19, many operational companies provided temporary storage solutions quickly. These solutions, similar to wedding halls in Kuwait, offer spaces up to 4,000 square meters, equipped with fire suppression systems, suitable for safe storage away from residential areas.

Warehouse migration is noted, with many property owners converting rented units into warehouses for tenants. Al-Awadi emphasized that today's local market situation signifies a warehouse exodus from the investment sector due to compliance

and safety concerns, which is commendable and necessary for state enforcement.

Price hikes have occurred, with significant rent increases of approximately 10% to 20% in permissible storage areas near investment properties such as Shuwaikh, Ardiya, and Rai.

These areas have witnessed notable rental increases, causing financial strain on residents and tenants alike.

The economic expert, Suleiman Al-Dulajjan, highlighted Kuwait's storage problem, attributing it to the lack of clear statistics and data on investment sector storage needs.

He pointed out two types of storage: food storage, available in some simple sectors like the Kuwait Industrial Area and Ardiya, and investment storage, which requires specific figures and statistics for understanding the extent of the problem and its resolution. He emphasized that providing warehouses is the solution, but detailed planning and timely execution are essential.

Addressing both the workers' housing and storage issues concurrently, he highlighted their dual impact, urging for suitable worker accommodations away from residential areas to prevent health and social issues, as evidenced during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Innovative solutions by Yersha's Public Relations Director, Ghaith Al-Yousef, involved utilizing ample spaces for controlled and efficient storage. The company pays 9 dinars per container for installing electricity within their storage zones, enforcing penalties for delayed goods, up to 80 dinars per container, depending on the duration, paid by the local agent until the container's release, with a monthly rate for Yersha ranging from 250 to 300 containers approximately. Additional storage spaces are necessary."

Al-Yousef expressed optimism about resolving these issues following the establishment of a closed government company dedicated to establishing, managing, and operating public storage areas for food and pharmaceutical products (the Kuwait Storage Company).

Real estate expert Suleiman Al-Dulajjan noted that 80 to 85% of investment buildings have basements ranging from 750 to 1000 meters in area. He suggested that the correct solution to the storage problem is to delay the implementation of decisions until safe storage areas are established within six months.

Additionally, if storage is permitted, it must comply with legal standards, emphasizing security and safety measures such as fire sprinklers and effective fire supervision to prevent incidents like the Al-Mangaf tragedy.

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Kuwait Investment Authority - Debts Purchased for the State's Account Settlement and Management Office



Summary of the report on the bankruptcy proceedings and the list of temporary debts for the bankruptcy of / Boursely & Al-Siddiq LLC

Submitted to the Bankruptcy Department in Case No. 1987/1996. T. K/16, dated 09/02/1999

First: Financial and accounting procedures:

(1) The indebtedness as on 01/08/1990 amounts to: KWD 8,078,400/181

(2) The indebtedness in accordance with Article 13 amounts to: KWD 15,213,185/097

(3) The amounts collected after the bankruptcy judgment: NONE

Second: Debts that the Authority, in its capacity, deems acceptable:

1) Burgan Bank: The debt purchased to the State's account amounts to: KWD 15,213,185/097 in accordance with Article 13 of Law 41 of 1993.

2) Gulf Bank: KWD 130,000/- according to the letter of guarantee no (25/5671641/32) issued by the bank for the benefit of the Public Authority for Housing Welfare.

3) Burgan Bank: KWD 1,061,435/767 according to two letters of guarantee Nos. (90003-016748) - (900032-017569) issued by the bank in favor of the Public Authority for Housing Welfare.

4) Five Oceans for Trading, Contracting and Air Conditioning Installation: KWD 13,650/- according to the letter of the former insolvency practitioner/Yacoub Al-Kout dated 18/08/2008 and according to Judgment No. (878/92) T.M.K.H/1 dated 21/12/1996, in addition to expenses.

5) International Engineering Company: KWD 89,386/131 according to the letter of the former insolvency practitioner/ Yacoub Al-Kout dated 18/08/2008 and pursuant to Judgment No. (88/2998) T.K./13 dated 28/10/1997 in addition to expenses.

6) Sami Nouri Al-Fadi: KWD 54,495/252 according to the letter of the former insolvency practitioner/ Yacoub Al-Kout dated 18/08/2008 and pursuant to Judgment No. (96/1987) T.K./16 of 09/02/1999 upheld by Judgment No. (6708/1987 T.K/6) dated 10/05/1998.

7) The Public Institution for Social Security: KWD 61,854/420 according to the letter of the former insolvency practitioner/ Yacoub Al-Kout dated 18/08/2008 and Resolution of the Public Institution for Social Security dated 22/8/2004.

8) Ahmed Taher Faeg Ahmed: KWD 5,577/920 according to the letter of the former insolvency practitioner/Yacoub Al-Kout dated 18/08/2008 and according to Judgment No. (101/88) labor, plenary, No. 12 of 25/12/1988 upheld by Appeal No. (43/1989)/ Labor, dated 15/06/1989.

Third: Debts that the Authority, in its capacity, deems appropriate to exclude:

1) Sameh Gad Mitri: KWD 8,571/155 according to the letter submitted by the creditor dated 12/11/2008, and the creditor did not take legal measures to claim the debt or submit official documents proving debt validity.

2) Kuwait Airways: KWD 20,192/737 according to the letter of the former insolvency practitioner/ Yacoub Al-Kout dated 18/08/2008 and the executive seizure report dated 10/12/2002, but it did not provide official documents proving debt validity.

3) The Public Authority for Housing Welfare: KWD 8,730,113/803 according to contracts Nos. (152-180/1981) - (222-82/1983) - (207-82/1983) - (1983/82-277) - (1985/84-289) - (1986/85-335), but the Public Authority for Housing Welfare didn't submit official documents proving debt validity.

4) Nardeen General Trading and Contracting: KWD 48,353/956 according to the report of the former insolvency practitioner/ Yacoub Al-Kout, but he did not provide the Authority with official documents proving debt validity.

Summary of the report on the bankruptcy proceedings and the list of temporary debts for the bankruptcy of / Khaled Siddiq Mustafa

Submitted to the Bankruptcy Department in Case No. 108/2004, General Debts Bankruptcy/1, dated 12/10/2004

First: Financial and accounting procedures:

(1) The bankrupt's share of the guaranteed debt as on 01/08/1990 amounts to KWD 4,039,200/091

(2) The bankrupt's share of the debt guaranteed to Boursely and Al-Siddiq LLC, according to Article 13, amounts to: KWD 7,606,592/549.

(3) Amounts collected after the bankruptcy judgment: none

Second: Debts that the Authority, in its capacity, deems acceptable:

1) Burgan Bank: The debt purchased by the state amounts to: KWD 7,606,592/549, the bankrupt's share of the debt guaranteed to Boursely and Al-Siddiq LLC in accordance with Article 13 of Law 41 of 1993.

Summary of the report on the bankruptcy proceedings and the list of temporary debts for the bankruptcy of / Saleh Rashid Nasser Boursely

Submitted to the Bankruptcy Department in Case No. 108/2004, General Debts Bankruptcy/1, dated 12/10/2004

First: Financial and accounting procedures:

(1) The bankrupt's share of the guaranteed debt as on 01/08/1990 amounts to KWD 4,039,200/090.

(2) The bankrupt's share of the debt guaranteed to Boursely and Al-Siddiq LLC, according to Article 13, amounts to: KWD 7,606,592/548.

(3) Amounts collected after the bankruptcy judgment: none

Second: Debts that the Authority, in its capacity, deems acceptable:

1) Burgan Bank: The debt purchased by the state amounts to: KWD 7,606,592/548, the bankrupt's share of the debt guaranteed to Boursely and Al-Siddiq LLC in accordance with Article 13 of Law 41 of 1993.

2) Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait: The debt purchased by the state (personal debt) amounting to: KWD 2,791,964/344 KD personal debt according to Article (13) of Law No. 41 of 1993.

Summary of the report on the bankruptcy proceedings and the list of temporary debts for the bankruptcy of / Jassim Mohamed Hassan Al-Baghli

Submitted to the Bankruptcy Department in Case No. 88/2003, General Debts Bankruptcy/1, dated 28/06/2005.

First: Financial and accounting procedures:

(1) The indebtedness as on 01/08/1990 amounts to: KWD 31,476,485/848

(2) The indebtedness in accordance with Article 13 amounts to: KWD 135,633,523/432

(3) The amounts collected after the bankruptcy judgment: KWD 8,010,029/822.

Second: Debts that the Authority, in its capacity, deems acceptable:

1) Kuwait International Bank: The debt purchased for the state's account amounts to KWD 135,633,523/432 in accordance with Article 13 of Law No. 41 of 1993.

2) Commercial Bank of Kuwait: The debt purchased for the state's account amounts to KWD 11,456,716/872, the bankrupt's share of the debt guaranteed to First Gulf Real Estate Company in accordance with Article 13 of Law No. 41 of 1993.

3) Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait: The debt purchased for the state's account amounts to KWD 11,102,737/177, the bankrupt's share of the debt guaranteed to Jarfan Trading and Contracting Company in accordance with Article 13 of Law No. 41 of 1993.

4) Commercial Bank of Kuwait: The debt purchased for the state's account amounts to KWD 11,497,211/573, the bankrupt's share of the debt guaranteed to the National Factory for Light Metals Company in accordance with Article 13 of Law No. 41 of 1993.

5) Burgan Bank: The debt purchased for the state's account amounts to KWD 141,652/511, the bankrupt's share of the debt guaranteed to the Kuwait Center for Office Equipment Company at 3.744% in accordance with Article 13 of Law No. 41 of 1993.

6) Bank of Bahrain Liquidation Committee (formerly: Bahrain Arab African Bank) KWD 2,800,000/000 pursuant to Judgment No. 7974/1985/ commercial/ plenary, No. 5 of 25/06/1986, which is upheld by an appeal by Judgment No. 1986/1080/ commercial, dated 9/11/1987, an intervened litigant in a bankruptcy lawsuit.

7) Mustafa Yaqoub Behbehani: KWD 50,016/ 837 according to the letter of Debt submission dated 12/07/2006 and Judgment No. 3754/2004/ commercial plenary/1, dated 17/12/2005.

8) Office of Deferred Stock Transactions Clearing: KWD 2,133,559/063 according to the letter dated 15/05/2017 and Judgment No. 9/1994, Bankruptcy and Share Dispute dated 26/11/1996, upheld by Appeal No. 1638/1996 T/4 of 13/10/1996.

Third: Debts that the Authority, in its capacity, deems appropriate to exclude:

1) National Metal Manufacturing Factory: KWD 2,771/400 according to the liquidator's report, but he did not provide the official documents proving debt validity.

2) Mas Equipment Company: KWD 402/000 according to the judicial liquidator's report for MAS Company, a bankrupt company, where the liquidator was addressed to provide us with documents confirming debt validity, but he stated in his letter dated 18/02/2018 that he did not have any official documents confirming debt validity.

Summary of the report on the bankruptcy proceedings and the list of temporary debts for the bankruptcy of / Al-Youha and Al-Ansari Company

(Ahmed Mohamed Al-Youha and Mohamed Rahma Reda Al-Ansari LLC)

Submitted to the Bankruptcy Department in Case No. 57/2012, General Debts Bankruptcy/1, dated 21/12/2012.

First: Financial and accounting procedures:

(1) The indebtedness as on 01/08/1990 amounts to: KWD 763,859/167

(2) The indebtedness in accordance with Article 13 amounts to: KWD 5,703,554/606

(3) The amounts collected: NONE

Second: Debts that the Authority, in its capacity, deems acceptable:

Commercial Bank of Kuwait: The debt purchased for the state's account amounts to KWD 5,703,554/606 in accordance with Article 13 of Law No. 41 of 1993 (Al-Aqeel LLC) in accordance with Article 13 of Law No. 41 of 1993.

Summary of the report on the bankruptcy proceedings and the list of temporary debts for the bankruptcy of / Mohamed Rahma Reda Al-Ansari Guarantor of Al-Youha and Al-Ansari Company

(Ahmed Mohamed Al-Youha and Mohamed Rahma Reda Al-Ansari LLC)

Submitted to the Bankruptcy Department in Case No. 57/2012, General Debts Bankruptcy/1, dated 21/12/2012.

First: Financial and accounting procedures:

(1) The guarantor's share of the debt as of 01/08/1990 amounts to: KWD 381,929/584.

(2) The guarantor's share of the debt in accordance with Article 13 amounts to: KWD 2,715,493/237.

(3) The amounts collected: none

Second: Debts that the Authority, in its capacity, deems acceptable:

Commercial Bank of Kuwait: The debt purchased by the state amounts to KWD 2,715,493/237, the bankrupt's share of the debt guaranteed for the bankruptcy of Al-Youha and Al-Ansari Company (Ahmed Mohamed Al-Youha and Mohamed Rahma Reda Al-Ansari LLC) in accordance with Article 13 of Law No. 41 of 1993.

Summary of the report on the bankruptcy proceedings and the list of temporary debts for the bankruptcy of / The Arab Computer Center Company

Submitted to the Bankruptcy Department in Case No. 60/2002, General Debts Bankruptcy/1, dated 22/04/2003.

First: Financial and accounting procedures:

(1) The indebtedness as on 01/08/1990 amounts to: KWD 2,953,979/413

(2) The indebtedness in accordance with Article 13 amounts to: KWD 10,364,710/998

(3) The amounts collected: KWD 349/761.

Second: Debts that the Authority, in its capacity, deems acceptable:

National Bank of Kuwait: The debt purchased for the state's account amounts to KWD 10,364,710/998 in accordance with Article 13 of Law 41 of 1993.

Summary of the report on the bankruptcy proceedings and the list of temporary debts for the bankruptcy of / White Angel General Trading and Contracting

Manahi Nazzal Ghafel Ghanem Al-Anzi and Sons "A Limited Partnership"

Submitted to the Bankruptcy Department in Case No. 18/2010, General Debts Bankruptcy/1, dated 09/06/2010.

First: Financial and accounting procedures:

(1) The indebtedness as on 01/08/1990 amounts to: KWD 32,077/867

(2) The indebtedness in accordance with Article 13 amounts to: KWD 32,077/867

(3) The amounts collected: none

Second: Debts that the Authority, in its capacity, deems acceptable:

Industrial Bank of Kuwait: The debt purchased for the state's account amounts to KWD 32,077/867 in accordance with Article 13 of Law 41 of 1993.

Summary of the report on the bankruptcy proceedings and the list of temporary debts for the bankruptcy of/ Abdul Redha Mohamed Ali Abdullah H

Submitted to the Bankruptcy Department in Case No. 251/2003, General Debts Bankruptcy/1, dated 06/04/2004.

First: Financial and accounting procedures:

(1) The indebtedness as on 01/08/1990 amounts to: KWD 105,200/774

(2) The indebtedness in accordance with Article 13 amounts to: KWD 411,573/869

(3) The amounts collected: KWD 19,252/863

Second: Debts that the Authority, in its capacity, deems acceptable:

1) National Bank of Kuwait: The debt purchased for the state's account amounts to KWD 411,573/869 in accordance with Article 13 of Law 41 of 1993.

2) Zahra Abdul Ghaffar Muhammad H: KWD 67,852/499 according to the debt submission letter dated 18/06/2014, in accordance with Judgment No. 271/1987/ Jaafari Personal Status, No. 1 dated 14/03/1987, and another letter attaching debt submission dated 17/04/2024, and copies of the two certificates of the General Directorate of implementation dated 03/06/2014 and 22/01/2024.

Third: Debts that the Authority, in its capacity, deems unacceptable:

1) Kuwait Finance House: KWD 8,011/175 KD according to the Finance House letter dated 24/12/2018, but he did not submit the official documents proving the debt validity.

2) Abdul Rahman Hamad Al-Hadlaq and Partners Company: KWD 101,770/000 according to the creditor's letter dated 31/07/2004, but he did not submit the official documents proving the debt validity.

Summary of the report on the bankruptcy proceedings and the list of temporary debts for the bankruptcy of the deceased/ Mubarak Abdul Rahman Mubarak Al Mayyal

Submitted to the Bankruptcy Department in Case No. 19/2005, General Debts Bankruptcy/1, dated 22/02/2005.

First: Financial and accounting procedures:

(1) The indebtedness as on 01/08/1990 amounts to: KWD 669,106/383

(2) The indebtedness in accordance with Article 13 amounts to: KWD 2,657,147/320

(3) The amounts collected: KWD 7,933/226

Second: Debts that the Authority, in its capacity, deems acceptable:

1) Kuwait Finance House (formerly Ahli United Bank): The debt purchased for the state's account amounts to KWD 2,657,147/320 in accordance with Article 13 of Law No. 41 of 1993.

2) Burgan Bank: The debt purchased for the state's account amounts to KWD 920,636/240, which is its share of the indebtedness guaranteed to Al-Bateel Trading and Contracting Company (the heirs of Mubarak Abdul Rahman Al-Mayyal and Aqeel Al-Sayed Hashem Al-Aqeel LLC) in accordance with Article 13 of Law No. 41 of 1993.

Summary of the report on the bankruptcy proceedings and the list of temporary debts for the bankruptcy of / Mohamed Suleiman Al-Bassam

Submitted to the Bankruptcy Department in Case No. 178/2005, General Debts Bankruptcy/1, dated 24/01/2006.

First: Financial and accounting procedures:

(1) The indebtedness as on 01/08/1990 amounts to: KWD 57,280/133

(2) The indebtedness in accordance with Article 13 amounts to: KWD 169,932/137.

(3) The amounts collected: KWD 124,933/315

Second: Debts that the Authority, in its capacity, deems acceptable:

World News Roundup

Europe

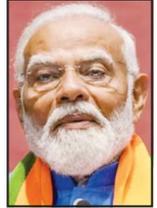
Macron keeps PM

India's Modi begins 2-day visit to Russia

MOSCOW, July 8, (AP) — India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi arrived in Moscow on Monday for a two-day visit, his first since Russia sent troops into Ukraine — an action that has complicated the relationship between the longtime partners and pushed Russia closer to India's rival, China.

Modi was set to have dinner with Russian President Vladimir Putin, to be followed by Kremlin talks Tuesday. Modi last traveled to Russia in 2019, when he attended a forum in the far eastern port of Vladivostok and met with Putin. The leaders also saw each other in September 2022 in Uzbekistan, at a summit of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization bloc.

Russia has had strong ties with India since the Cold War, and New Delhi's importance as a key trading partner has grown since the Kremlin sent troops into Ukraine in February 2022. China and India have become key buyers of Russian oil following sanctions imposed by the United States and its allies that shut most Western markets off to Russian exports. India now gets more than 40% of its oil imports from Russia, according to analysts.



Modi

Under Modi's leadership, India has avoided condemning Russia's military action in Ukraine while emphasizing the need for a peaceful settlement.

The partnership between Moscow and New Delhi has become fraught, however, as Russia has moved closer to China.

Modi notably stayed away from last week's summit in Kazakhstan of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, a security grouping founded by Moscow and Beijing.

Chietigj Bajpae, senior South Asia research fellow at the U.K.-based Chatham House, said India is increasingly estranged from forums in which Russia and China play a prominent role.

"This is evident in India's relatively low-key presidency of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization last year, and now the decision by Modi not to attend this year's summit," Bajpae said.

A confrontation in June 2020 along the disputed China-India border dramatically altered their already touchy relationship as rival troops fought with rocks, clubs and fists. At least 20 Indian soldiers and four Chinese soldiers were killed.

Macron refuses PM resignation: French President Emmanuel Macron refused the resignation of the country's prime minister, asking him on Monday to remain temporarily as the head of the government after chaotic election results left the government in limbo.

French voters split the legislature on the left, center and far right, leaving no faction even close to the majority needed to form a government. The results from Sunday's vote raised the risk of paralysis for the European Union's second-largest economy.

Macron gambled that his decision to call snap elections would give France a "moment of clarification," but the outcome showed the opposite, less than three weeks before the start of the Paris Olympics, when the country will be under an international spotlight.

France's main share index opened with a dip, but quickly recovered, possibly because markets had feared an outright victory for the far right or the leftist coalition.

Prime Minister Gabriel Attal had said he would remain in office if needed but offered his resignation Monday morning.

Fico takes 1st trip outside capital: Slovakia's populist Prime Minister Robert Fico took his first trip outside the capital on Monday since resuming his duties after an assassination attempt.

Fico visited a farm in Slovenska Nova Ves, northeast of the capital of Bratislava, along with agriculture minister Richard Takáč to check the grain harvest.

Fico said in a brief statement that Slovakia was not ready to lift a ban on imports of agricultural products from Ukraine and thanked farmers for their work.

He was using a walking stick and did not take any questions from the media.

It was his first official trip outside the capital since recovering from the May 15 attack in which he was shot in the abdomen as he greeted supporters in the town of Handlova, 140 kilometers (85 miles) northeast of the capital.

Fico made his first public appearance since the assassination attempt on Friday, when he gave a speech for a national holiday.

Russia missiles kill 28 in Ukraine: A major Russian missile attack across Ukraine killed at least 28 people and injured almost 100 on Monday, officials said, with one missile striking a large children's hospital in the capital, Kyiv, where emergency crews searched the rubble for casualties.

The daytime Russian barrage targeted five Ukrainian cities with more than 40 missiles of different types, hitting apartment buildings and public infrastructure, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said in a social media post.

Strikes in Kryvyi Rih, Zelenskyy's birthplace in central Ukraine, killed 10 people and injured 47 in what the head of city administration, Oleksandr Vilkul, said was a massive missile attack. Seven people were killed in Kyiv, authorities said.

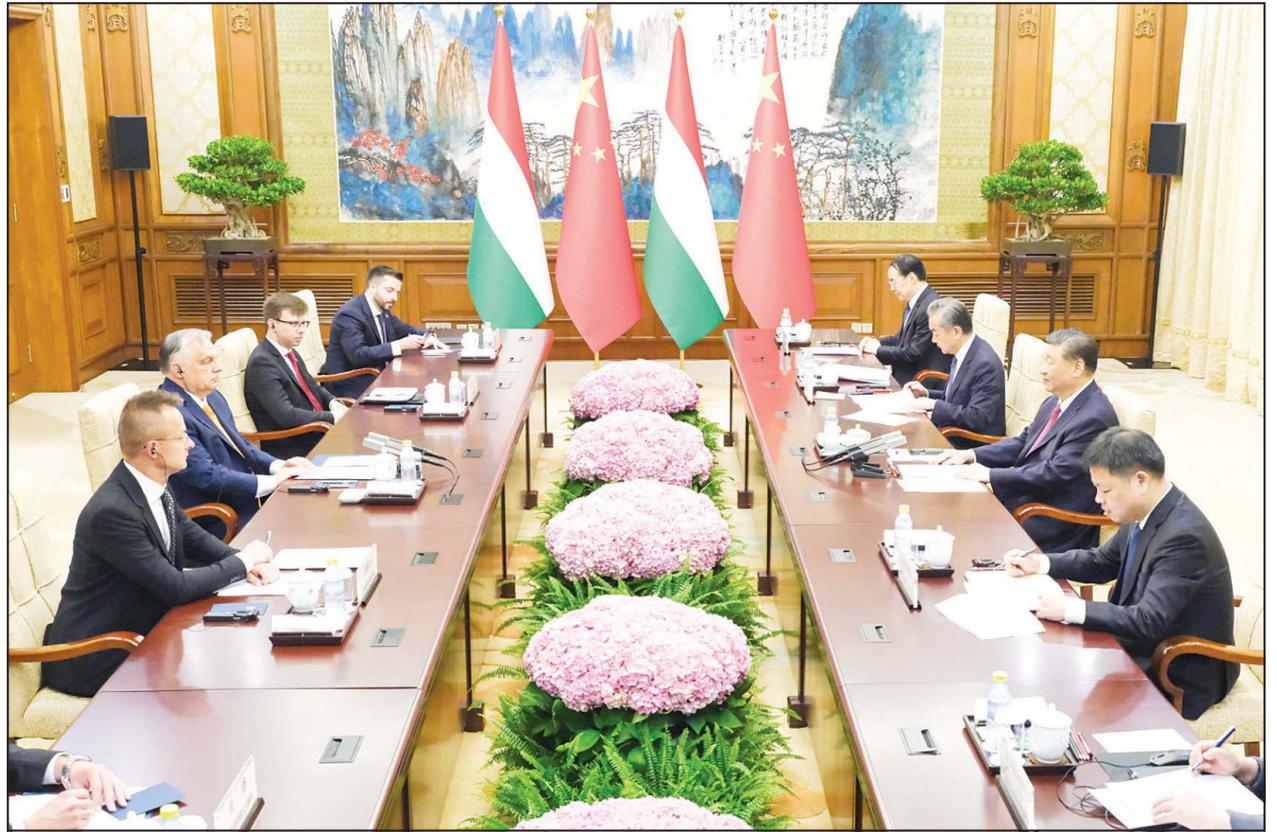
"It is very important that the world should not be silent about it now and that everyone should see what Russia is and what it is doing," Zelenskyy said on social media. (AP)

283 migrants safely reach island: A fishing boat carrying nearly 300 migrants to Europe has safely reached a southern Greek island after a large rescue operation in the Mediterranean Sea, Greek authorities said Monday.

There were no immediate reports of injury or ill health among the 283 migrants, the coast guard said.

A coast guard statement said a search was launched before dawn Monday after authorities were notified that a vessel carrying migrants was hit by high winds south of Crete.

Two coast guard vessels, four merchant ships and two smaller private boats took part in the operation, and the migrant vessel was located 18 nautical miles (20 miles) south of Gavdos, a small island off southern Crete. The fishing boat was finally able to reach the port of Gavdos with its own engines, and the migrants safely disembarked.



In this photo released by Xinhua News Agency, Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán, (second left), talks to Chinese President Xi Jinping during a bilateral meeting at the Diaoyutai State Guesthouse in Beijing on July 8. (AP)

Xi calls on world powers to help Russia, Ukraine resume direct dialogue

Chinese President Xi Jinping called on world powers to help Russia and Ukraine resume direct dialogue during a meeting Monday with Hungary's Prime Minister Viktor Orbán, state broadcaster CCTV reported.

Orbán made a surprise visit to China after similar trips last week to Russia and Ukraine to discuss prospects for a peaceful settlement of more than the two-year war. Hungary assumed the rotating presidency of the European Union this month and Orbán has

since embarked on a peace mission, which, however, lacks the endorsement of other European leaders.

"China is a key power in creating the conditions for peace in the Russia-Ukraine war," Orbán wrote on the social media platform X. "This is why I came to meet with President Xi in Beijing, just two months after his official visit to Budapest."

Orbán is widely seen as having the warmest relations with Xi and Russian President Vladimir Putin among European leaders. His visit to Moscow last

week drew condemnation from Kyiv and EU officials, who insisted Orbán was not acting on behalf of the whole European bloc.

Their rebuke failed to deter Orbán from extending a similar visit to Beijing, which he called "Peace mission 3.0" in a picture posted on X.

During his meeting with Xi, Orbán described China as a stabilizing force amid global turbulence and praised its "constructive and important" peace initiatives. (AP)

Politics

Whitmer shuts down presidential talk in book

Biden tells Dems he declines to step aside

WASHINGTON, July 8, (AP) — US President Joe Biden, in a letter to congressional Democrats, stood firm against calls for him to drop his candidacy and called for an "end" to the intraparty drama that has torn apart Democrats since his dismal public debate performance.

Biden's efforts to shore up a deeply anxious Democratic Party came Monday as lawmakers are returning to Washington and confronting a choice: decide whether to work to revive his campaign or edge out the party leader, a make-or-break time for his reelection and their own political futures.

Biden wrote in the two-page letter that "the question of how to move forward has been well-aired for over a week now. And it's time for it to end." He stressed that the party has "one job," which is to defeat presumptive Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump in November.

"We have 42 days to the Democratic Convention and 119 days to the general election," Biden said in the letter, distributed by his reelection campaign. "Any weakening of resolve or lack of clarity about the task ahead only helps Trump and hurts us. It's time to come together, move forward as a unified party, and defeat Donald Trump."

Anxiety is running high as top-ranking Democratic lawmakers are joining calls for Biden to step aside despite his defiance. At the same time, some of the president's most staunch supporters are redoubling the fight for Biden's presidency, insisting there's no one

better to beat Trump in what many see as among the most important elections of a lifetime.

As lawmakers weigh whether Biden should stay or go, there appear to be no easy answers.

It's a tenuous and highly volatile juncture for the president's party. Democrats who have worked alongside Biden for years — if not decades — and cherished his life's work on policy priorities are now entertaining uncomfortable questions about his political future. And it's unfolding as Biden hosts world leaders for the NATO summit this week in Washington.

Time is not on their side, almost a month from the Democratic National Convention and just a week before Republicans gather in Milwaukee to renominate Trump as their presidential pick. Many Democrats are arguing the attention needs to be focused instead on the former president's felony conviction in the hush money case and pending federal charges in his effort to overturn the 2020 election.

It's what Biden himself might call an inflection point.

In an effort to "get on the same page," House Democratic leader Hakeem Jeffries is convening lawmakers for private meetings before he shows his own preference, according to a person familiar with the situation and granted anonymity to discuss it.

Also:

LANSING, Michigan: Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer is releasing a new memoir at a particularly fraught moment, both for herself and for the

Democratic Party.

Set to release Tuesday amid the frenzy over President Joe Biden's recent debate performance, "True Gretch" won't do much to dispel questions about her national ambitions. But in a pre-launch interview with The Associated Press, Whitmer did what she could to shut down such speculation, saying bluntly that she would not step into the election if Biden were to step down.

"It's a distraction more than anything," said Whitmer. "I don't like seeing my name in articles like that because I'm totally focused on governing and campaigning for the ticket."

In the book, Whitmer recounts events that unfolded on the national stage throughout her career, including a clash with Donald Trump and a kidnapping plot targeting her and her family.

Though Whitmer may not welcome the attention, her swift ascent over two decades — from a law school graduate to Michigan's governor — has established her as a prominent figure within the Democratic Party.

Her status was solidified in 2022 with a decisive reelection and her party's success in flipping both chambers of the state legislature, granting Democrats full control for the first time in nearly four decades.

"I've spent the first quarter of this century watching as the arc of our politics has bent uncomfortably toward incivility and strife," Whitmer says in the first pages of her book, then adding: "That's why I decided to write this book: to put a little light out there in a damn dark time."



US President Joe Biden speaks to supporters at a campaign rally in Harrisburg, Pa., on July 7. (AP)



White



Duggan

America

3 men killed in Los Angeles: Three men were killed in a weekend shooting near a homeless encampment in Southern California, authorities said.

Officers responded shortly before 9 p.m. Saturday to reports of gunfire at a dry riverbed near Interstate 105 in Downey, police said in a statement.

They found three men suffering from gunshot wounds. All three men died at the scene, the statement said.

It's unclear what sparked the shooting but police said it "appeared to be an isolated incident."

The incident was under investigation. ABC 7 reported the shooting occurred near a homeless encampment in the city of about 14,000 residents some 25 miles (40 km) southeast of downtown Los Angeles. (AP)

Two boys shot in NYC: Two boys were shot in a McDonald's in the Bronx on Saturday night, police in New York City said.

The two victims, ages 12 and 13, were hospitalized and listed in stable condition, a New York Police Department spokesman said.

Authorities said they were searching for a male suspect who entered the fast food restaurant in the Allerton section of the Bronx around 10 pm Saturday and opened fire at the boys before running away.

The 12 year old was hit in the leg and back and the 13 year old was shot in the leg, police said. (AP)

Man charged with arson: A New York man was charged with arson after giving an 11-year-old child fireworks that set a shed and two homes on fire on Independence Day, police said.

The Nassau County Police Department on Long Island said Karamjit Singh, 33,

told the child to light the fireworks Thursday morning outside his home in Levittown, but they malfunctioned and set a shed on fire. The blaze then spread to Sin-

gh's home and a neighboring house in the suburban neighborhood, causing extensive damage.

Images captured by local media showed



Head of French left-wing party La France Insoumise (LFI) Jean-Luc Melenchon (center) attends an event after the second round of France's legislative election in Paris, France on July 7. French voters divided their legislature among left, center and far right, with no single political faction getting even close to the majority needed for form a government. The risk of paralysis loomed on July 8 for the European Union's second-largest economy. (Xinhua)

thick smoke billowing from the fire and the side of one of the homes burned away to expose its wooden studs. Charred debris was strewn across the yard.

No injuries were reported. Singh was arrested without incident and the child was released to a family member, police said. (AP)

Detroit shooting kills 2: A shooting early Sunday at a Detroit block party left two people dead and 19 others injured, according to authorities.

Michigan State Police said no one was in custody and they were assisting Detroit police with the investigation, according to a post on the social media platform X. The agency said their preliminary information showed two people died and 19 others had "various injuries."

Detroit police released few details, confirming the shooting on a residential block on Detroit's east side left two people dead. But a police statement Sunday afternoon did not specify the number of people injured or the circumstances of the shooting.

"At this time, investigators and forensic personnel are analyzing all available evidence and will be continuing their work through the weekend," police said in a Sunday statement.

Police said a Monday news conference with Police Chief James White and Mayor Mike Duggan would detail a "comprehensive new strategy regarding block parties." (AP)

Africa

28 detained in Tanzania

Tinubu reelected as ECOWAS Chairman

ABUJA, July 8, (Agencies): Nigerian leader **Bola Tinubu** on Sunday called on West African leaders to work together to establish and sustain a regional standby force in the face of the growing security threats in the region.

Speaking during the opening of the 65th ordinary session of the Authority of the Heads of State and Government of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in the Nigerian capital of Abuja, Tinubu, who was unanimously reelected as the chairman of the economic bloc Sunday, highlighted the practicality of a standby force, urging member states to commit more to providing the needed resources for securing the region.

"The Regional Action Plan against terrorism has enhanced cooperation on training, intelligence sharing, and humanitarian interventions. In addition, the Ministers of Finance and Defense met recently in Abuja to raise funds for activating the ECOWAS Standby Force (ESF) to boost counterterrorism efforts," he said. "Member countries are also displaying their commitment to combating insecurity by individually increasing their defense budgets to acquire necessary equipment and ensure preparedness."

The Nigerian president said a peaceful and secure society was essential for achieving ECOWAS potential, noting the move to operationalize the ESF in combating terrorism and its success required not only strong political will but also substantial financial resources.

Challenges

The challenges in the economic community remained "enormous," including terrorist activities and violent extremism threatening to spread from the Sahel region toward the coastal states, Tinubu warned.

"The political landscape remains fragile in some member states, especially those that witnessed unconstitutional changes of government," he added.

The ECOWAS Authority of Heads of State and Government rotates its chairmanship annually. Tinubu was first elected as the chairman of the ECOWAS Authority of Heads of State and Government at the 63rd ordinary session of the regional bloc held in July 2023 in Bissau, the capital of Guinea-Bissau. The one-year tenure was to end on July 9.

West Africa's divided regional bloc Sunday asked Senegal's President Basirou Diomaye Faye to have a dialogue with the three military junta-led member states to try to reunite the region whose stability has been under threat following their decision to leave the group in January.

At its summit in Nigeria's capital Abuja, the bloc - known as ECOWAS - appointed Faye as its envoy to meet with Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso, which formed their separate union after their respective coups fractured relations with neighbors.

Dialogue

It was not immediately clear what the terms of the dialogue would be. The Senegalese president, who became Africa's youngest leader after his election victory in March, "has all the credentials required to serve as a facilitator," Omar Aliou Touray, the president of the ECOWAS Commission, said at the summit.

The three coup-hit countries already said at their summit a day earlier that they have "irrevocably turned their back on ECOWAS." It is the first time in the bloc's nearly 50-year history that it has lost members in such a manner.

Analysts viewed Faye's assignment as important during an unprecedented regional crisis. Still, it will most likely "not be fruitful anytime soon" because of regional tensions that remain, said Karim Manuel, an analyst for the Middle East and Africa with the Economist Intelligence Unit.

Touray said it is the worst time for the bloc for years. "Our region is also faced with the risks of disintegration," he added.

"When you get out of an agreement, certainly you don't become part of that agreement. If it is about free trade, free movement of people, the risk of losing those concessions remains," Touray said.

In addition to economic projects that ECOWAS said it might have to suspend in the three countries if they do not return, their withdrawal could also affect their citizens.

Also:

CAPE TOWN, South Africa: Nearly 1,000 homes in informal settlements in Cape Town, South Africa, have been destroyed by gale-force winds, displacing around 4,000 people, authorities and an aid organization said as the city braces for a week of damaging storms.

South African weather authorities said Monday that Cape Town and surrounding areas are expected to be hit by multiple cold fronts until at least Friday, bringing torrential rain, strong winds and flooding.

Cape Town's disaster coordination team has been on alert since last Thursday, when the first front arrived.

The worst-hit areas are expected to be the poor, informal settlements on the edge of South Africa's second biggest city. Thousands have been displaced in the township of on the outskirts of Cape Town after strong winds destroyed homes and other structures. The Gift of the Givers local aid organization said it provided 10,000 meals and 3,000 blankets to displaced people in Khayelitsha over the weekend.

Other areas have been flooded and the weather has caused power outages in more than 30 suburbs, the City of Cape Town said. It said it is monitoring dam levels to ensure they don't overflow, and would consider a controlled release of some water with more heavy rain expected this week.

DAR ES SALAAM: At least 28 Ethiopian illegal immigrants were detained in the Arusha region, northern Tanzania after a truck they were traveling in was involved in a road accident, an official said Sunday.

The Arusha region immigration official **Dickson Mwandikile** said the illegal immigrants were arrested after they disembarked the truck after it collided with another car near Kisongo airstrip on the outskirts of Arusha city.

"None of the immigrants got injured after the accident," the immigration official told Xinhua over the telephone.

Mwandikile said preliminary investigations showed that the illegal immigrants entered Tanzania through the Kenyan border and were in transit to South Africa.



Japan Foreign Minister Yoko Kamikawa and Philippine Defense Secretary Gilberto Teodoro shake hands after signing the reciprocal access agreement, at the Malacanang Palace in Manila, Philippines on July 8. (AP)

Asia

'South Korea live-fire drills suicidal hysteria'

Japan & Philippines sign defense pact

MANILA, Philippines, July 8, (AP): Japan and the Philippines signed a key defense pact Monday allowing the deployment of Japanese forces for joint drills in the Southeast Asian nation that came under brutal Japanese occupation in World War II but is now building an alliance with Tokyo as both face an increasingly assertive China.

The Reciprocal Access Agreement, which similarly allows Filipino forces to enter Japan for joint combat training, was signed by Philippine Defense Secretary Gilberto Teodoro and Japanese Foreign Minister Yoko Kamikawa in a Manila ceremony witnessed by President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. It would take effect after ratification by the countries' legislatures, Philippine and Japanese officials said.

Kamikawa called the signing of the defense agreement "a groundbreaking achievement" that should further boost defense cooperation between the countries.

Concern

The Japanese and Philippine officials "expressed serious concern over the dangerous and escalatory actions by China" in Second Thomas Shoal, the scene of a recent confrontation between Chinese and Philippine forces in the South China Sea.

They underscored in a joint statement the need "for the international community to speak out on the importance of maintaining and strengthening the free and open international order based on the rule of law" in the disputed waters.

There was no immediate comment by Chinese officials.

The defense pact with the Philippines, which includes live-fire drills, is the first to be forged by Japan in Asia. Japan signed similar accords with Australia in 2022 and with Britain in 2023.

Under Prime Minister Fumio Kishida, Japan has taken steps to boost its security and defensive firepower, including a counterstrike capability that breaks from the country's postwar principle of focusing only on self-defense. It's doubling defense spending in a five-year period to 2027 in a move to bolster its military power and make Japan the world's third-biggest military spender after the United States and China.

Many of Japan's Asian neighbors, including the Philippines, came under Japanese aggression until its defeat in World War II, and Tokyo's efforts to strengthen its military role and spending could be a sensitive issue. Japan and the Philippines, however, have steadily

Landslide kills 11 at gold mine in Indonesia; dozens 'missing'

JAKARTA, Indonesia, July 8, (AP): A landslide triggered by torrential rains crashed onto an unauthorized gold mining operation on Indonesia's Sulawesi island, killing at least 11 people, officials said Monday. Dozens others were reported missing.

About 79 villagers were digging for grains of gold on Sunday in the remote Bone Bolango district in Gorontalo province when tons of mud plunged down the surrounding hills and buried their makeshift camps, said Heriyanto, head of the Search and Rescue Office.

He said rescuers pulled out alive 23 people, including six injured, and recovered 11 bodies, including two women and a 4-year-old boy. Some 45 others are missing, he said.

"Relief efforts for the dead and missing were hampered by heavy rain and blocked roads covered

with thick mud and debris," said rescue official Affuddin Ilahude.

National Disaster Management Agency spokesperson Abdul Muhari said torrential rains that have pounded the area since Saturday also broke an embankment, causing floods of up to 3 meters (10 feet) in five villages in Bone Bolango. Nearly 300 houses were affected and more than 1,000 people have fled for safety.

Informal mining operations are common in Indonesia, providing a tenuous livelihood to thousands who labor in conditions with a high risk of serious injury or death.

Landslides, flooding and collapses of tunnels are just some of the hazards facing miners. Much of gold ore processing involves highly toxic mercury and cyanide and workers frequently use little or no protection.

deepened defense and security ties.

Kishida's moves dovetail with Marcos' effort to forge security alliances to bolster the Philippine military's limited ability to defend its territorial interests in the South China Sea.

Also:

TOKYO: Tokyo Gov **Yuriko Koike** easily won a third four-year term as head of Japan's influential capital in a closely watched vote Sunday, the city's residents apparently happy with her governance that included providing childcare subsidies and holding the Olympics during the coronavirus pandemic.

The vote was also seen as a test for Prime Minister **Fumio Kishida's** governing party, which supports Koike, the first woman to lead the Tokyo city government.

Tokyo, a city of 13.5 million people with outsized political and cultural power and a budget equaling some nations, is one of Japan's most influential political posts. A record 55 candidates challenged Koike, and one of the top contenders was also a woman - a liberal-leaning former lawmaker who uses only her first name, Renho, and was backed by opposition parties.

Minutes after exit polls projecting her victory, Koike showed up at her campaign headquarters in Tokyo and celebrated by thanking the voters who chose her.

A win by Koike is a relief for Kishida's conservative governing party, which she has long been affiliated with. Kishida's Liberal Democratic Party and its junior coalition partner, Komeito, unofficially backed her campaign.

SEOUL, South Korea: The powerful sister of North Korean leader **Kim Jong Un** called South Korea's recent front-line live-fire drills "suicidal hysteria" as she threatened unspecified military steps Monday if further provoked.

The warning by **Kim Yo Jong** came after South Korea resumed firing exercises near its tense land and sea borders with North Korea in the past two weeks. The exercises were the first of their kind since South Korea suspended a 2018 agreement with the North aimed at easing front-line military tensions in June.

"The question is why the enemy kicked off such war drills near the border, suicidal hysteria, for which they will have to sustain terrible disaster," Kim Yo Jong said in a statement carried by state media.



In this photo released by the Indonesian National Search and Rescue Agency (BASARNAS), an injured victim of a landslide is attended to in Suwawa on Sulawesi Island, Indonesia on July 8. A landslide triggered by torrential rains crashed onto an unauthorized gold mining operation on Indonesia's Sulawesi island, killing at least 11 people, officials said on Monday. Dozens were reported missing. (AP)



Adityanath



Swain

Subcontinent

Afghanistan road accident kills 8: At least eight people lost their lives following a road accident in northern Afghanistan's Jawzjan province, a local official has reported.

The mishap happened late Sunday when a passenger car crashed with a fuel tanker in the province's Khawaja Dokoh district along the highway linking Jawzjan with neighboring Faryab province, said Shabir Ahmad Saedi, provincial manager of police traffic.

The deceased, which included four children, have been shifted to the provincial hospital, Saedi added.

Road accidents are prevalent in Afghanistan due to poor road conditions, reckless driving, challenging terrains, overloading, overtaking and speeding. (Xinhua)

CTD officer killed in Pak: An officer of the Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) was killed in a terrorist attack in Pakistan's southern port city of Karachi, police officials have said.

CTD Deputy Inspector General Asif Aijaz Shaikh told media on Sunday that unknown terrorists riding a motorcycle sprayed bullets at a senior CTD officer when he was visiting his friend in Karimabad area of Karachi, critically injuring him and a security guard.

The injured CTD officer succumbed to his injuries on the way to a nearby hospital, said the CTD official, adding that the attackers fled the scene after the attack.

Police said that it was a targeted attack on the CTD personnel, and the attackers opened fire after he came out of his bullet-proof vehicle. (Xinhua)

2 troopers, 6 militants killed: Two Indian army troopers and six militants were killed in two separate gunfights in restive Indian-controlled Kashmir, police said Sunday.

The gunfights broke out Saturday in two villages of Kulgam, about 70 km south of Srinagar city, the summer capital of Indian-controlled Kashmir.

"As per the confirmation of the bodies, six militants have been killed in the twin gunfights in Kulgam so far," the region's police chief **RR Swain** told reporters on Sunday.

Police said both operations were carried out on specific intelligence information suggesting the presence of the militants in these villages. (Xinhua)

13 hospitalized in Sri Lanka: Around

13 people were injured on Saturday night after an elephant went on a rampage during a religious event in southern Sri Lanka, the police said on Sunday.

The Ruhunu Kataragama Mahadevala procession is a major religious and cultural event held at Kataragama, in the Uva Province of Sri Lanka.



Senegal's President Basirou Diomaye Faye prior to the start of the ECOWAS meeting, in Abuja, Nigeria on July 7. West Africa's divided regional bloc has appointed Faye to dialogue with the three military junta-led member states that have left the association to try and get them back and reunite the region whose stability is under threat. (AP)

The injured are being treated at the local hospital, and no one was critically injured, the police said.

Elephants decorated with colorful garments are a major attraction and tradition in Sri Lanka's religious events, but elephant rampages during these events are also common. (Xinhua)

Victims families ponder future: The orange rising from flames shone a light on the twilight scene. Savitri Devi, 50, had just been cremated.

Devi was among more than 120 people who died in a stampede last week at a religious festival in northern India, as the faithful surged toward the preacher and chaos ensued among the attendees.

The event had been permitted to accommodate only 80,000 people. It's not clear how many made it inside the giant tent set up in a muddy field in a village in Hathras district in Uttar Pradesh state but they were reported to be about three times the permitted number.

"It was a matter of fate. What does Baba have to do with it?" Vir Pal Singh said about his wife Devi's passing.

It was not clear what sparked the stampede. The state's chief minister, **Yogi Adityanath**, told reporters that a crowd rushed toward the preacher to touch him as he was descending from the stage, and volunteers struggled to intervene. (AP)

	Change	Closing pts		Change	Closing pts
SAUDI - TASI	+29.56	11,718.17	JAPAN - Nikkei 225	-131.67	40,780.70
DUBAI - DFMGI	+11.72	4,081.96	EGYPT - EGX 30	-190.27	28,411.87
PHILIPPINES - PSEI	+36.68	6,529.43			
PAKISTAN - KSE 100	+380.69	80,666.56			

Business

Intensive 6-month boot camp for new grads

Kuwait Finance House concludes Forssah Business program for employees

KUWAIT CITY, July 8: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) has successfully concluded its Forssah Business program, designed to attract and develop high-achieving recent Kuwaiti graduates and hone their technical and practical skills.

KFH's Group Chief Human Resources and Transformation Officer, Zeyad Abdullah AlOmar attended the closing and honoring ceremony, along with other KFH officials.

This year's Forssah Business program qualified 19 KFH employees. The rigorous six-month program included a combination of theoretical and practical workshops and training which are designed to develop the employees' technical and business skills to make them well-rounded professionals.

KFH's Group Chief Human Resources and Transformation Officer, Zeyad Abdullah AlOmar, emphasized KFH's wealth of expertise across various fields and its commitment to supporting and developing its talented employees at all levels. He highlighted the Forssah program as a key initiative with significant potential to positively impact participants.

"We were committed to ensuring



Zeyad AlOmar and Human Resources officials at bank with a group of Forssah Business graduates.

the program incorporated the latest information technology and its applications in banking, reflecting KFH's position as a world-leading Islamic financial institution. This strengthens trainee capabilities while enhancing customer service and the bank's overall performance," AlOmar added.

AlOmar emphasized the significant contribution of the Forssah

program, launched by KFH in 2009. This program has fostered the development of a highly skilled generation of employees through advanced learning opportunities and comprehensive training programs. Furthermore, Forssah undergoes continuous development to keep pace with the latest industry requirements, solidifying its position as an exemplary training path.



He expressed his confidence that KFH's investment in these training programs will yield significant benefits in the future.

He pointed out that the initiatives of empowering employees are crucial for ensuring KFH's continued leadership, achieving the best performance indicators and enhancing customer experience with the highest quality standards.

KPC eyes expansion in European markets

Kuwait Petroleum Corporation to boost foreign investments in 2025

By Najeh Bilal

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 8: The Kuwait Petroleum Corporation is set to prioritize increasing Kuwaiti foreign investments in 2025.

According to oil industry insiders, this strategic move aims to diversify revenues to bolster the GDP.

This initiative follows the KPC's focus on boosting local oil investments in 2024 through a series of tenders aimed at revitalizing the domestic oil sector.

As part of its plan to strengthen foreign investments, the KPC has instructed its overseas subsidiaries to assess their respective markets.

This evaluation aims to identify opportunities for expansion or relocation to new markets through acquiring lucrative oil projects.

Currently, the KPC is concentrating efforts on expanding its presence in European markets by expanding fuel station networks and pursuing environmentally friendly oil projects.

Plans also include potential ventures in Asian markets, targeting upcoming project acquisitions within those regions.

Key Kuwaiti entities involved in foreign investments include Kuwait Foreign Petroleum Exploration Company, Kuwait Petroleum International Company "Q8", Petrochemical Industries Company, and Kuwait Gulf Oil Company.

Concurrently, the KPC is promoting greater participation from the local private sector in revitalizing the oil industry. Opportunities range from energy transformation initiatives to increasing drilling activities aimed at augmenting production capacities.

Kuwait's real estate market grows 7% in first half of '24

Real estate contracts total 1.619 bln dinars

By Marwa Al-Bahravi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 8: The real estate market in the country demonstrated a seven percent growth in the first half of this year compared to the second half of last year.

From January to June 2024, the total value of real estate contracts registered with the Ministry of Justice amounted to approximately 1.619 billion dinars, marking an increase of 112 million dinars from the 1.507 billion dinars registered in the second half of 2023.

Despite the overall growth in total contract value, there was a notable decline in various types of real estate transactions, except for exhibitions and warehouses.

The first half of the year saw the registration of 4 exhibition contracts totaling 10.8 million dinars, and warehouse contracts increased by 55.5 percent in number, with 9 contracts compared to 4 in the previous period. The total value of warehouse contracts amounted to 16.811 million dinars, up from 8.544 million dinars in the preceding period.

Private property contracts totaled 1496, with a value of 689.9 million dinars, marking a decrease of 54 contracts compared to the second half of last year. Investment contracts also declined by 8 percent, totaling 509 contracts valued at 451 million dinars, down from 554 contracts previously.

Commercial contracts numbered 69 with a total value of 406 million dinars, reflecting an 11.5

24 listed companies penalized

Boursa Kuwait issues forty disciplinary decisions in '24

KUWAIT CITY, July 8: The Boursa Kuwait Disciplinary Board has issued approximately 40 decisions against both listed and unlisted companies since the beginning of this year, with listed companies comprising the majority, reports Al-Jarida daily.

Specifically, 24 listed companies were penalized, accounting for 16 percent of all listed companies.

Among unlisted entities, around 8 companies, including investment firms, brokerages, and consulting companies, were also subject to disciplinary actions under Law No. 7 of 2010 and its amendments.

The violations primarily centered on breaches of disclosure and transparency regulations, constituting 50 percent of the infractions.

Other common violations included breaches of

listing rules, securities activities, capital adequacy instructions, collective investment systems, as well as issues related to client funds, asset valuation, market conduct, business ethics, and securities exchanges.

The Field Supervision Department of the Supervision Sector conducted various field inspections on entities under its supervision to ensure compliance with regulatory frameworks and issued circulars.

These inspections included analyzing financial statements, assessing financial indicators, and evaluating internal control systems to mitigate risks.

The inspections ranged from comprehensive assessments to targeted and surprise inspections, focusing on adherence to anti-money laundering and counter-terrorism financing laws.

percent decrease from the 78 contracts registered in the second half of last year. Craft contracts decreased by 41 percent, with only 9 contracts registered totaling 9.125 million dinars, compared to 22 contracts previously.

Coastal strip contracts notably decreased by a ratio of 1 to 4, with only one contract worth 32 million dinars registered in the first half of this year, down from 4 contracts in the second half of last year.

Political and security indicators affect Arab investment scores

Average Arab ranking falls to 104th globally in Dhaman's Composite Index for Investment Components for 2023

KUWAIT CITY, July 8: The Arab Investment & Export Credit Guarantee Corporation (Dhaman) announced a decline in the average Arab ranking in Dhaman's Composite Index for Investment Components in the Arab Countries for 2023 by two positions to 104th globally, 25 positions behind the global average.

The Director-General of Dhaman, Mr. Ahmed Al-Haroun said in his message in the 39th annual report for 2024, which was launched by the Corporation at its headquarters in Kuwait today, that the slight drop in the index, which covers 158 countries, including 21 Arab ones, and is based on 190 composite and sub-indicators issued by 33 international agencies, was due to a change in the Arab position in the four main groups related to the investment climate, as follows:

■ Economic Performance Indicators, which consist of 14 main indicators and sub-indicators, the average Arab ranking dropped by three positions to 92nd globally due to the decline in four internal performance assessment indicators and three external performance indicators. Still, the ranking advanced in six indicators and stabilized in the government debt indicator.

■ Political and Security Performance Indicators, which consist of 37 main and sub-indicators, the average Arab ranking fell by one place to 108th globally since it declined in sovereign rating and risk assessment indices by two to five places. But, it stabilized in the PRS Country

Risk Index and Sovereign Rating Indices, issued by Standard & Poor's, Moody's, Fitch and Capital Intelligence.

■ Legislative and Regulatory Environment Indicators, which consist of 55 main and sub-indicators, the average Arab ranking advanced by three places to 99th but remained below the global average. This is due to an improvement in economic freedom, prosperity, corruption perceptions, bribe risks, competitiveness and investment treaties, ranging between one and eight places. Still, the ranking stood in the governance index, while it fell by one place in the Global Startup Ecosystem Index (GSEI).

■ Indicators of Production Fac-

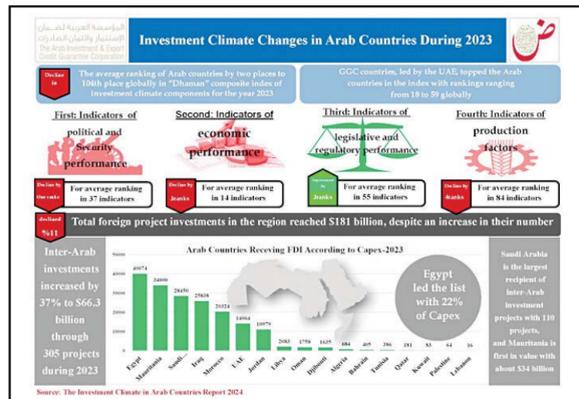
tors, which consist of 84 main and sub-indicators, the Arab ranking dropped by four places to 105th globally as a result of its decline in digital competitiveness, energy and government AI indices. But, it stood in sustainable development, knowledge and innovation indices, and advanced in logistic services and global talent competitiveness.

Regarding the Arab ranking in the composite index for 2023, the GCC countries, with the UAE ranked first in the Arab ranking and 18th globally though it lost one place compared with the 2022 index. Qatar came second in the Arab ranking and 34th globally in spite of a one-place fall, while Saudi Arabia came third in the

Arab ranking and 36th globally in spite of its two-place drop. Kuwait was ranked fourth in the Arab ranking and 41st globally by advancing by two places. Oman was ranked fifth in the Arab ranking and 51st globally by advance by one position. Bahrain came sixth among Arab countries and 59th globally by improving by five positions during 2023.

Morocco, Jordan, Algeria and Egypt were ranked in the middle of the Arab ranking and between 82nd and 103rd globally respectively, to be better than the Arab average in spite of their decline globally, except for Morocco that advanced by three positions. Other countries, including Tunisia, Iraq, Libya, Djibouti, Mauritania, Lebanon, Syria, Yemen, Palestine, Sudan and Somalia, they ranged between 114th and 158th globally respectively, to be below the Arab average and almost at the tail end of the global 158 level.

The report showed that the final outcome of the changes in the Arab position in international indicators reflected negatively on the Capex of foreign direct projects into the region, which dipped by 11% to \$181 billion in 2023, despite the hike in the number of projects by 20% to 2,001 projects. These projects were mainly concentrated in the UAE with a share of 60% of the total, and in Egypt with a share of 22% of the Capex. Their cumulative value in the region during the past 21 years hit \$1.7 trillion through more than 18.2 thousand projects that created 2.45 million jobs.



The cover of the Report of the Investment Climate in Arab Countries for 2024.

KOC signs nine contracts

Kuwait Oil Company 'plans' to align with national oil strategy

KUWAIT CITY, July 8: The Kuwait Oil Company (KOC) is preparing an implementation plan aimed at aligning with the country's strategic goals for the oil sector, focusing on increasing production, reports Al-Jarida daily quoting informed oil sources.

This plan includes the establishment of a committee and specialized work teams tasked with developing and analyzing positions, goals, and initiatives crucial to implementing the strategy.

The overarching goal is to create specific and comprehensive frameworks for optimizing the utilization of Kuwait's oil and gas reserves.

Given its role in production operations, KOC has initiated several key initiatives to support its strategy. These initiatives encompass defining the scope of gas and potential production projects, including phased production of Jurassic gas according

to a specific vision. Moreover, there are plans underway to explore, develop, and produce new conventional and heavy oil reserves. Specifically, KOC aims to increase heavy oil production to approximately 580,000 barrels per day by 2040.

Recently, KOC announced the signing of nine contracts with five local companies for providing drilling rigs for heavy oil production operations in northern Kuwait fields.

These contracts mark a significant step towards supporting the local economy, as they involve local companies collaborating with internationally qualified firms specializing in drilling and well repair operations.

The initiative is aimed not only at enhancing local capabilities but also at creating job opportunities for young Kuwaitis within the oil sector. The nine contracts are expected to generate approximately 126 job opportunities.



KUNA photo
Kuwait Ambassador to China Jassem Al-Najem and Environment Public Authority engineers Fadhila Al-Marzouq and Hajeer Al-Aiban.

Amb. highlights environmental efforts

Kuwait showcases Al-Shgaya Project at SCO Green Forum

KUWAIT CITY, July 8, (KUNA): Kuwait Ambassador to China Jassem Al-Najem said on Monday that his country was extremely keen on protecting the environment as it developed Al-Shgaya station project for photovoltaic energy that has less negative affect on the ecosystem in comparison to traditional stations.

This came in a statement for KUNA on the sidelines of the Green Development Forum of Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Countries held in the City of Qingdao, East of China's Shandong Province.

Ambassador Al-Najem said that the

forum aimed to exchange experiences and enhance cooperation among member states to confront the challenges of climate change and enhance sustainable development.

During their participation in the Forum, Kuwait Environment Public Authority engineers Fadhila Al-Marzouq and Hajeer Al-Aiban showcased Al-Shgaya station project.

The Green Development Forum aims to boost the sustainable economic and social development of all countries and promote harmonious coexistence between humans and nature.

BUSINESS

Philippines' unemployment rate up to 4.1 pct in May

The unemployment rate in the Philippines increased to 4.1 percent in May from 4 percent in April, the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) said on Monday.

PSA head Dennis Mapa said at a press conference that there were 2.11 million jobless Filipinos in May this year.

"This was lower than the number of unemployed per-

sons in May 2023 at 2.17 million but higher than in April 2024 at 2.04 million," Mapa added.

According to the PSA, the jobless rate in May 2023 was 4.3 percent.

As the country's unemployment rate continues to drop compared to last year, National Economic and Development Authority Secretary Arsenio

Balisacan said the government "remains committed to invigorating investments and implementing key reforms to sustain the positive momentum of the labor market and create more quality jobs for Filipinos."

Balisacan noted that about 1.6 million jobs were lost to natural disasters such as the El Nino drought and typhoon Ewiniar. (Xinhua)

Bangladesh's inflation cools in June

Bangladesh's inflation cooled slightly in June but still hovered around the double-digit mark as consumer prices persistently stayed high.

Bangladesh's inflation decreased to 9.72 percent in June from 9.89 percent in May, according to the latest data from the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS).

The Consumer Price Index

released by the BBS showed that food inflation eased slightly to 10.42 percent in June from 10.76 percent in the previous month.

Inflation for non-food items edged down to 9.15 percent in June from 9.19 percent in March, the data showed.

The country's average inflation, however, surged to 9.73 percent in the fiscal year 2023-

24 (July 2023-June 2024) much higher than the budgetary target of 7.5 percent for the fiscal. In the previous 2022-23 fiscal year, overall inflation was 9.02 percent.

The Bangladeshi parliament on June 30 passed a record 7.97-trillion-taka (68 billion U.S. dollars) national budget for the 2024-25 fiscal year. (Xinhua)

Company to plead guilty to criminal fraud

Boeing accepts a plea deal to avoid a criminal trial over 737 Max crashes

Boeing will plead guilty to a criminal fraud charge stemming from two crashes of 737 Max jetliners that killed 346 people after the government determined the company violated an agreement that had protected it from prosecution for more than three years, the Justice Department said Sunday night.

Federal prosecutors gave Boeing the choice last week of entering a guilty plea and paying a fine as part of its sentence or facing a trial on the felony criminal charge of conspiracy to defraud the United States.

Prosecutors accused the American aerospace giant of deceiving regulators who approved the airplane and pilot-training requirements for it.

The plea deal, which still must receive the approval of a federal judge to take effect, calls for Boeing to pay an additional \$243.6 million fine. That was the same amount it paid under the 2021 settlement that the Justice Department said the company breached. An independent monitor would be named to oversee Boeing's safety and quality procedures for three years. The deal also requires Boeing to invest at least \$455 million in its compliance and safety programs.

The plea deal covers only wrongdoing by Boeing before the crashes, which killed all 346 passengers and crew members aboard two new Max jets. It does not give Boeing immunity for other incidents, including a panel that blew off a Max jetliner during an Alaska Airlines flight in January, a Justice Department official said.

The deal also does not cover any current or former Boeing officials, only the corporation. In a statement, Boeing confirmed it had reached the deal with the Justice Department but had no further comment.

In a court filing Sunday night, the Justice Department said it expected to file the written plea agreement with the court by July 19. Lawyers for some of the relatives of those who died in the two crashes have said they will ask the judge to reject the agreement.

"This sweetheart deal fails to recognize that because of Boeing's conspiracy, 346 people died. Through crafty lawyering between Boeing and DOJ, the deadly consequences of Boeing's crime are being hidden," said Paul Cassell, a lawyer for some of the families.

Federal prosecutors alleged Boeing committed conspiracy to defraud the government by misleading regulators about a flight-control system that was implicated in the crashes, which took place in Indonesia in October 2018 and in Ethiopia less five months later.

As part of the January 2021 settlement, the Justice Department said it would not prosecute Boeing on the charge if the company complied with certain conditions for three years. Prosecutors last month alleged Boeing had breached the terms of that agreement.

The company's guilty plea will be entered in U.S. District Court in Texas. The judge overseeing the case, who has criticized what he called "Boeing's egregious criminal conduct," could accept the plea and the sentence that prosecutors offered with it or he could reject the agreement, likely leading to new negotiations between the Justice Department and Boeing.

The case goes back to the crashes in Indonesia and in Ethiopia. The Lion Air pilots in the first crash did not know about flight-control software that could push the nose of the plane down without their input. The pilots for Ethiopian Airlines knew about it but were unable to control the plane when the software activated based on information from a faulty sensor.

The Justice Department charged Boeing in 2021 with deceiving FAA regula-

Convenient mobile payments bring better travel experience

BEIJING, July 8, (Xinhua): For Jamie and Liliana, a couple who traveled to the southwest Chinese city of Chengdu from Australia, using Alipay for payment was an experience as unique as strolling through the historic Kuanzhai Alley.

"The payment went through so quickly. It's very convenient," said Liliana, who usually pays through cash or with credit cards when traveling.

Liliana is among many foreign visitors who have benefited from China's commitment to facilitating mobile payments for foreigners.

Years of rapid growth have made China a front-runner in mobile payment. The penetration rate for mobile payments in the country reached 86 percent, the highest in the world, by the end of 2023.

However, the widespread use of mobile payment also poses hurdles for first-time visitors to China. Foreign visitors relying on bank cards and cash may encounter difficulties during payment processes, as street vendors or small-scale service providers often prefer mobile payment to cash or international credit cards.

Taking note of this phenomenon, the Chinese government has rolled out multiple measures to help foreigners enjoy a hassle-free payment environment in China akin to that enjoyed by locals.

Thanks to simplified mobile payments for foreigners, visitors like Liliana can now easily bind overseas bank cards with Alipay or Tenpay, two major payment apps in China.

In the first half of the year, the number of foreign card transactions through mobile payment platforms increased 6.65 times from a year ago to nearly 37.4 million, and the total transaction volume increased 8.03 times to 5.42 billion yuan (about 760.29 million U.S. dollars), according to data from Chinese online payment clearing house NetsUnion Clearing Corporation.

tors about the software, which did not exist in older 737s, and about how much training pilots would need to fly the plane safely. The department agreed not to prosecute Boeing at the time, however, if the company paid a \$2.5 billion settlement, including the \$243.6 million fine, and took steps to comply with anti-fraud laws for three years.

Boeing, which blamed two low-level employees for misleading the regulators, tried to put the crashes behind it. After grounding Max jets for 20 months, regulators let them fly again after the Boeing reduced the power of the flight software. Max jets logged thousands of safe flights and orders from airlines picked up, increasing to about 750 in 2021, about 700 more in 2022 and nearly 1,000 in 2023.

The company based in Arlington, Virginia, has dozens of airline customers spanning the globe. The best customers for the 737 Max include Southwest, United, American, Alaska, Ryanair and flydubai.

That changed in January, when a panel covering an unused emergency exit blew off a Max during the Alaska Airlines flight over Oregon.

Pilots landed the 737 Max safely and no one was seriously injured, but the incident led to closer scrutiny of the company. The Justice Department opened

Major payment platforms have been guided by China's central bank to raise the single transaction limit for overseas travelers using mobile payments from 1,000 dollars to 5,000 dollars and increase the annual cumulative transaction limit from 10,000 dollars to 50,000 dollars.

Today, more and more foreign visitors are relishing the experience of navigating China on a mobile phone.

A recent survey conducted by Beijing Foreign Studies University on 714 foreign tourists from 103 countries found that 86 percent of the respondents who have visited China believe that the payment experience has become more convenient. Most of them have used mobile payment.

From the commercial district near the Jiefang Monument in the "mountain city" of Chongqing to the bustling Chunxi Road in Chengdu, Isaac used his phone to pay for everything he needed, such as food, drinks, accommodation and tickets.

The university student from Singapore said he was surprised to be able to use digital wallets from Singapore to pay for tickets for high-speed trains and subways in China.

Since the beginning of the year, CHAGEE, a famous China-chic tea beverage brand, has received many more foreign customers, said Chen Xiaoming, general manager of the brand's Sichuan subsidiary. Many foreign customers are happy to learn they can use digital wallets from their home countries.

NetsUnion Clearing Corporation's data showed that more than 28.75 million transactions were made using foreign digital wallets in the first half of the year, amounting to 5.32 billion yuan.

Alipay currently accepts 12 foreign digital wallets from nine countries and regions, including Singapore, Thailand and the Republic of Korea.

a new investigation, the FBI told passengers on the Alaska plane that they might be victims of a crime and the FAA said it was stepping up oversight of Boeing.

A criminal conviction could jeopardize Boeing's status as a federal contractor, according to some legal experts. The plea announced Sunday does not address that question, leaving it to each government agency whether to bar Boeing.

The Air Force cited "compelling national interest" in letting Boeing continue competing for contracts after the company paid a \$615 million fine in 2006 to settle criminal and civil charges, including that it used information stolen from a rival to win a space-launch contract.

The company has 170,000 employees and 37% of its revenue last year came from U.S. government contracts. Most of it was defense work, including military sales that Washington arranged for other countries.

Boeing also makes a capsule for NASA. Two astronauts will remain at the International Space Station longer than expected while Boeing and NASA engineers troubleshoot problems with the propulsion system used to maneuver the capsule.

Even some Boeing critics have worried about crippling a key defense contractor. (AP)

Foreign institutions raising growth expectations amid China's recovery

BEIJING, July 8, (Xinhua): As China maintains its steady economic growth momentum, foreign-invested institutions have increasingly raised growth expectations for the country's economy, with Chinese assets attracting growing attention.

Multiple institutes, including Barclays and Goldman Sachs, have raised their forecast for China's GDP growth rate in 2024 to 5 percent from the previous 4.4 percent and 4.8 percent respectively, and Fitch adjusted its estimates from 4.5 percent to 4.8 percent.

The World Bank also recently revised its forecast for China's economic growth, predicting a GDP growth rate of 4.8 percent in 2024, an increase of 0.3 percentage points from its December 2023 forecast.

The macroeconomic fundamentals of the Chinese economy remain sound with signs including falling unemployment, rising per capita disposable income and booming strategic emerging industries in multiple provinces nationwide, and the factors provide a solid foundation for steady recovery, a report from the ASEAN+3 Macroeconomic Research Office (AMRO) stated.

The AMRO's estimation of China's 2024 GDP growth came in at 5.3 percent, according to this report.

Industry insiders believe that the collective upward revision of China's economic growth forecasts by international institutions reflects strong confidence in China's economic prospects and trust in the resilience and potential of the country's economy.

Hu Yifan, chief investment officer and macroeconomic director of Asia Pacific at UBS Wealth Management, said that UBS projected China's consumption for the whole year to register a 6-percent growth.

"Service sector consumption is expected to show resilience first, particularly in industries such as travel, transportation, hotels, restaurants and box offices, which have shown relatively evident growth surpassing 2019 levels," Hu said.

In the context of macroeconomic stabilization and recovery, foreign institutions have also shown interest

in Chinese assets at low valuations.

"Since the end of October 2023, J.P. Morgan has been fully bullish on Chinese equities," said Wendy Liu, chief Asia and China equity strategist at J.P. Morgan, noting that China has shown significant economic recovery, which is conducive to the performance of A-shares and Hong Kong stocks, further supporting stock valuations.

Valuations in consumer sectors such as catering and social services are at historically low levels, and low valuations are a good way to weather the current global uncertainty, according to Japanese financial services group Nomura.

With the continuous deepening of comprehensive reforms in China's capital market and institutional opening up, global capital investment in the Chinese market has also become easier.

Earlier in April, China's State Council released a guideline on strengthening regulation, forestalling risks and promoting the high-quality development of the capital market, calling for efforts to optimize the cross-border interconnection mechanism of the capital market and broadening the financing channels for overseas listing of enterprises while enhancing international securities cooperation.

In the meantime, China will simplify and improve fund management for the dollar-denominated Qualified Foreign Institutional Investor scheme (QFII) and its yuan-denominated sibling, RQFII, Zhu Hexin, deputy governor of the People's Bank of China, said earlier at the Lujiazui Forum held in Shanghai.

"We are revising relevant fund management regulations," said Zhu, who is also the head of the State Administration of Foreign Exchange, calling for efforts to facilitate foreign investors' participation in domestic securities investment and promote financial market connectivity.

The QFII and RQFII programs are designed to allow overseas investors to invest in China's domestic capital markets.

Since 2020, more than 300 qualified foreign institutional investors have completed foreign exchange registration.

Singaporean police work with banks to block scam

SINGAPORE, July 8, (Xinhua): The Singapore Police Force's Anti-Scam Center worked with six banks to disrupt over 2,800 scams from May 1 to June 30, according to a statement from the police.

The police and commercial banks notified victims to cease monetary transfers after detecting jobs, invest-

ments, fake friends, or e-commerce scams with robotic process automation technology.

They sent nearly 14,000 short messages to over 9,800 scam victims and averted potential financial losses of more than 47 million Singapore dollars (35 million U.S. dollars), the police added.

Britain's 'new' Labour govt faces economic challenges

GDP for Q1 of this year increased by 0.6

LONDON, July 8, (Xinhua): The ascension of the Labour government injected rare impetus into Britain's capital market, accompanied by many positive economic signs.

On Friday, the first day of the newly-elected Labour government, the domestically-focused FTSE 250 index rose by 0.86 percent and the country's 10-year bond yield dipped by 0.8 percentage points.

The GDP for the first quarter this year increased by 0.6 percent, and the annual Consumer Prices Index rose by 2 percent in May, aligning with the anticipated interest rate cut by the Bank of England.

The Labour government inherited a comparatively strong economy. However, it also faced an economy with significant inertia. There remains a large gap between the current productivity rate and pre-pandemic levels, and investment rates are low compared to other developed countries. The Labour government faces substantial challenges in revitalizing the economy.

Low investment
Data from the Economics Observatory showed that the overall investment rate in Britain fell from a high of around 23 percent of the GDP in the late 1980s, to around 17 percent from 2000 onwards. In contrast, investment rates among its peers in G7 countries remained largely between 20 and 25 percent.

The primary focus for the new Labour government should be on investment, Tim Besley, school professor of economics and political science at the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE), told Xinhua.

"When you talk with economic heavyweights or entrepreneurs, they will tell you that it's very hard to see the strategic direction of the UK economy and the institutional framework that will deliver economic targets," said Besley.

However, it may take time for Labour to form a coherent industrial strategy and plan.

Steve Nolan, senior lecturer in economics at Liverpool John Moores University, said that the Labour Party fought a cautious campaign and their future economic plans are fairly slim.

Infrastructure could be a key area for attracting investments. The Labour government is set to establish a National Infrastructure and Service Transformation Authority, which will focus on infrastructure delivery and



In this file photo, a man walks past a shop in Manchester, Britain, May 11, 2023. The Bank of England (BoE) on Thursday raised its benchmark interest rate by 0.25 percentage points to 4.5 percent, the highest since 2008. (Xinhua)

Argentine leader skips Mercosur

Future of the trade alliance looks doubtful

ASUNCIÓN, Paraguay, July 8, (AP): The most notable thing about the Mercosur trade bloc's meetings on Sunday in Paraguay was an absence - that of Argentine President Javier Milei.

With the Argentine populist skipping the summit to star at a right-wing rally in Brazil, South America's biggest trade bloc - politically divided, notoriously slow-moving and beset by backsliding - faces an uncertain future. Milei has advocated for pulling Argentina, a leader of the alliance, out of the agreement altogether.

Overseeing preparations for the presidential summit kicking off Mon-

day after initial meetings, President Santiago Peña of Paraguay - the bloc's rotating chair - set low expectations for what would be accomplished.

"I hope that this summit we are going to hold on Monday will be an opportunity to reflect, at a time when Mercosur is clearly not going through its best moment," Peña told journalists from Paraguay's capital of Asunción, where 33 years ago the presidents of Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay signed the revolutionary free-trade treaty that soon became Mercosur.

In 1991, as countries across Latin

America were shaking off military dictatorships and opening up to free-market ideas, the formation of Mercosur, a customs union of once-enstranged neighbors, signaled a regional breakthrough that sent capital surging across borders.

But over recent decades, experts say, protectionism and political volatility have scuppered high hopes. The bloc has put up more barriers than it has broken down. The group's common external tariff is riddled with exceptions. Outside South America, the bloc has struck just two free trade deals, with Egypt and Israel.

Labour has "tied their own hands by restraining from raising taxes." "If you don't raise taxes, then the debt level will become a constraint," said Begg.

Begg noted that the public debt level in Britain is nearly 100 percent of the GDP, in addition to a significant fiscal deficit.

Rishi Sunak repeatedly pressing then-Labour leader Keir Starmer to clarify his stance.

In response, the Labour Party pledged not to increase income tax, national insurance, and value-added taxes.

Jain Begg, a professorial research fellow at the LSE, told Xinhua that

What's On



Group photo with first place winners.



Crowning the second place winners.

'Commitment to strong relationships beyond financial services'

ABK hosts annual staff bowling tournament to foster teamwork

KUWAIT CITY, July 8: As part of its efforts to foster a positive work culture, Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) recently held its much-anticipated annual staff bowling tournament. This event has become a popular employee engagement initiative, creating a dynamic platform for staff interaction and cooperation.



Al Arbash

The tournament stands as a testament to ABK's unwavering dedication to promoting teamwork and camaraderie among its employees. This fun-filled event not only served as a platform for friendly competition but also reinforced the sense of unity and collaboration within the organization.

It is a great way for our staff to bond outside of the workplace, fostering a sense of community that transcends office walls."

Al Arbash further emphasized the significance of the tournament in shaping the Bank's public image, stating, "These types of events showcase our commitment to our employees. By engaging in such activities, we demonstrate our dedication to establishing strong relationships and making a positive impact beyond the financial services we provide."

In line with its mission to create a vibrant workplace culture, ABK invests considerable effort in organizing several events. These initiatives play a pivotal role in enhancing employee engagement, fostering team spirit, and reinforcing the Bank's core values of collaboration and inclusivity.

This relentless focus on promoting a positive work environment has garnered recognition on various fronts. ABK was recently honored with the Best Workplace in the Banking Sector award by International Finance, acknowledging its outstanding efforts in creating a conducive and rewarding work atmosphere for its employees.

Company held 'Tech for All' workshop on smartphone accessibility tools

Zain fosters disability inclusion in community

KUWAIT CITY, July 8: Zain organized a workshop titled Tech for All at its headquarters in Shuwaikh to introduce people with disabilities to smartphone accessibility features and tools. This initiative aligns with the company's efforts to promote disability inclusion in the community.

The initiative came under the umbrella of WE ABLE, Zain's disability inclusion program that aims to present highly impactful Diversity and Inclusion initiatives, increase the employment of people with disabilities in its workforce, and identify and implement assistive technologies that enable employees with disabilities to independently complete their tasks.

Zain coordinated with the Public Authority for Disability Affairs, Al Kharafi Special Needs Activity Center, and Al Tomooh Sports Club to invite members of the disability community to the workshop. Participants were welcomed at the Zain Innovation Campus (ZINC), where the workshop was supervised by the Customer Care Division's training team.

Workshop

During the workshop, participants were introduced to various accessibility features and tools available on iOS and Android devices, focusing on those designed for people with visual, hearing, and motor impairments. Each feature was explained in detail, followed by a hands-on session to customize and activate the tools on each participant's smartphone based on their unique needs.

At the end of the session, Zain listened to feedback and suggestions from participants to further enhance the service experience for customers with special needs. This effort reflects the company's commitment to including people with disabilities in the community, helping them achieve their aspirations, and providing them with the best tailored services.

As a leading digital service provider, Zain believes it has a



Group photo of the participants.



Initiative aimed at fostering disability inclusion.

significant role in sharing technology experiences and knowledge with everyone, especially

people with disabilities. The company seeks to add value by enhancing the customer experi-

ence for people with disabilities, helping them make the most of their smart devices.



التجاري
Al-Tijari

Be more than a
Millionaire with
Al-Najma

1,500,000 KD

Al-Najma Account draw poster

Weekly, monthly & annual prizes offered

Al-Tijari announces winner of Al Najma account draw

KUWAIT CITY, July 8: Commercial Bank of Kuwait conducted the weekly draw for Al Najma Account on Monday July 8, 2024. The draw was conducted in the presence of Ministry of Commerce and Industry representative Mr. Mansour Al-Dhafiri.

The result of the draw as follows:

1. Al Najma weekly draw – the prize of 5,000/- Kuwaiti Dinars went to the winner Mr. Tarek Ahmed El-Sayed El-Adl

The Bank stated that Al Najma Account prizes are distinguished by the diversity of prizes throughout the year clarifying that the account offers weekly prize of KD 5,000/-, monthly prize of KD 20,000/- and a semi-annual prize of KD 500,000 in addition to the mega annual prize of KD 1,500,000.

Al-Najma Account can be opened by depositing KD 200, and customer should maintain a minimum amount of KD 200 to be eligible to enter all draws on Al-Najma Account prizes. As for the chances of winning, the more balance a customer maintains in Al Najma Account, the more chances the account holder will get to win, the account also offers additional benefits like the ATM card, a credit card against customer's account and all CBK banking services that customer can enjoy.

The Bank revealed that Al Najma account is available to everyone, and anyone can open Al Najma account through CBK mobile application in simple steps from anywhere and at any time.

Americans are increasingly skeptical about the value and cost of college, with most saying they feel the U.S. higher education system is headed in the "wrong direction," according to a new poll.

Overall, only 36% of adults say they have a "great deal" or "quite a lot" of confidence in higher education, according to the report released Monday by Gallup and the Lumina Foundation. That confidence level has declined steadily from 57% in 2015.

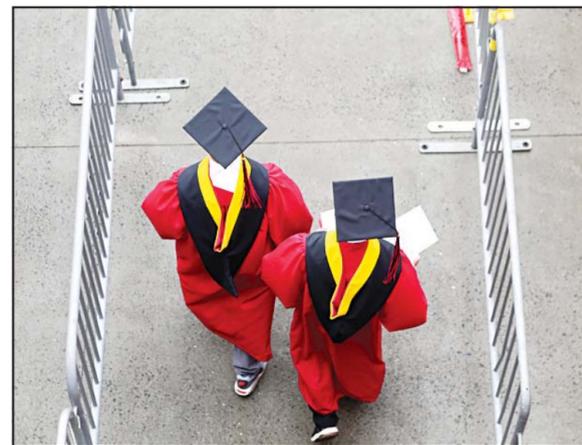
Some of the same opinions have been reflected in declining enrollment as colleges contend with the effects of the student debt crisis, concerns about the high cost of tuition and political debates over how they teach about race and other topics.

The dimming view of whether college is worth the time and money cuts across all demographics - including gender, age, political affiliation. Among Republicans, the number of respondents with high confidence in higher education has dropped 36 percentage points over the last decade - far more than it dropped for Democrats or independents.

"It's so expensive, and I don't think colleges are teaching people what they need to get a job," says Randy Hill, 59, a registered Republican in Connecticut and a driver for a car service. His nephew plans to do a welding apprenticeship after

Fewer college graduates could exacerbate labor shortages.

Americans' confidence in higher education hits new low, poll shows



New graduates walk into the High Point Solutions Stadium before the start of the Rutgers University graduation ceremony in Piscataway Township, N.J. Americans are increasingly skeptical about the value and cost of college, with most saying they feel the U.S. higher education system is headed in the "wrong direction," according to a new poll. (AP)

graduating high school. "You graduate out of college, you're up to eyeballs in debt, you can't get a job, then you can't pay it off. What's the point?"

The June 2024 survey's overall finding - that 36% of adults feel strong confidence in higher education - is unchanged from the year before. But what concerns researchers is shifting opinion on the bottom

end, with fewer Americans saying they have "some" confidence and more reporting "very little" and "none." This year's findings show almost as many people have little or no confidence, 32%, as those with high confidence.

Experts say that fewer college graduates could worsen labor shortages in fields from health care to information technology. For those

who forgo college, it often means lower lifetime earnings - 75% less compared with those who get bachelor's degrees, according to Georgetown University's Center on Education and the Workforce. And during an economic downturn, those without degrees are more likely to lose jobs.

"It is sad to see that confidence hasn't grown at all," says Courtney Brown, vice president at Lumina, an education nonprofit focused on increasing the numbers of students who seek education beyond high school. "What's shocking to me is that the people who have low or no confidence is actually increasing."

This year's survey added new, detailed questions in an effort to understand why confidence is shrinking.

Almost one-third of respondents say college is "too expensive," while 24% feel students are not being properly educated or taught what they need to succeed.

The survey did not specifically touch on the protests this year against the war in Gaza that divided many college campuses, but political views weighed heavily on the findings. Respondents voiced concerns about indoctrination, political bias and that colleges today are too liberal. Among the respondents who lack confidence, 41% cite political agendas as a reason.

Among other findings:

More than two-thirds, or 67%, of respondents say college is headed in the "wrong direction," compared with just 31% who feel it's going in the right direction.

Generally when people express confidence in higher education, they are thinking of four-year institutions, according to Gallup. But the survey found that more people have confidence in two-year institutions. Forty-nine percent of adults say they have "a great deal" or "quite a lot" of confidence in two-year programs, compared with 33% of Americans who feel that way about four-year colleges.

California college student Kristen Freeman understands why.

"It's about saving money. That's why I went to a two-year. It's more bang for your buck," says Freeman, 22, a sociology major at Diablo Valley Community College with plans to transfer to San Jose State University for the final two years of college.

Freeman understands the concerns about indoctrination and whether college prepares students for life and work but also feels the only way to change structural problems is from the inside. "I am learning about the world around me and developing useful skills in critical thinking," Freeman says. "I think higher education can give students the spark to want to change the system." (AP)

Film

Family movies powering the box office

'Despicable Me 4' tops in debut as box office rebounds

NEW YORK, July 8, (AP) — After a historically bad first half of the year, the box office is suddenly booming.

"Despicable Me 4," the Illumination Animation sequel, led the way over the holiday weekend with \$75 million in ticket sales Friday through Sunday and \$122.6 million since opening on Wednesday, according to studio estimates Sunday.

The Independence Day holiday weekend haul for the Universal Pictures release further extends the considerable box-office reign of the Minions, arguably the most bankable force in movies today. And it also kept a summer streak going for Hollywood.

Though overall ticket sales were down more than 40% from levels prior to the COVID 19 pandemic, heading into the summer moviegoing season, theaters have lately seen a succession of hits. After Sony's "Bad Boys: Ride or Die" outperformed expectations, Pixar's "Inside Out 2" rapidly cleared \$1 billion in ticket sales worldwide, making it the first release since "Barbie" to reach that mark. Last weekend, the Paramount prequel "A Quiet Place: Day One" also came in above expectations.

With "Deadpool & Wolverine" tracking for a \$160 million launch later this month, Hollywood's summer is looking up.

"If you look at the mood of the industry about eight weeks ago, very different than today," says Paul Dergarabedian, senior media analyst for Comscore. "The song says what a difference a day makes. What a difference a month has made."

It helps to have the Minions at your disposal. Since first debuting in the 2010 original "Despicable Me," each entry of the franchise - including two sequels and two "Minions" spinoffs - has been seemingly

guaranteed to gross around \$1 billion. The four previous movies all made between \$939 million (2022's "Minions: Rise of Gru") and \$1.26 billion (2015's "Minions") globally.

That run has helped give Illumination founder and chief executive Chris Meledandri one of the most enviable track records in Hollywood. "Despicable Me 4," directed by Chris Renaud and Patrick Delage, returns the voice cast led by Steve Carell and Kristen Wiig and doubles down on more Minion mayhem. Reviews (54% fresh on Rotten Tomatoes) weren't particularly good for the latest installment, which includes a witness protection plot and a group of Minions transformed into a superhero squadron. But in their 12-year run, little has slowed down the Minions.

Franchises

"This is one of the most beloved franchises, quite frankly, in the history of film, and certainly animation," said Jim Orr, distribution chief for Universal. "Chris Meledandri and Illumination have their finger on the pulse of what families and audiences around the world want to see."

Family movies are powering the box office. "Despicable Me 4" performed strongly despite the still considerable drawing power of "Inside Out 2." In its fourth weekend of release, the Pixar sequel added another \$30 million domestically and \$78.3 million overseas.

"Inside Out 2," with \$1.22 billion in ticket sales thus far, is easily the year's biggest hit and fast climbing up the all-time ranks for animated releases. It currently ranks as the No. 5 animated release worldwide.

Instead of cannibalizing the opening weekend for "Despicable Me

4," "Inside Out 2" may have helped get families back in the habit of heading to theaters.

"What happened, I think, is the release calendar finally settled into a nice rhythm," said Dergarabedian, referencing the jumbled movie schedule from last year's strikes. "It's all about momentum."

The continued strong sales for "Inside Out 2" were enough to put the film in second place for the domestic weekend. Last week's top new film, "A Quiet Place: Day One," slid to third with \$21 million in its second weekend, with another \$21.1 million from overseas theaters. That was a steep decrease of 60%, though the Paramount prequel has amassed \$178.2 million worldwide in two weeks.

The run of hits has caused some studios to boost their forecasts for the summer movie season. Heading into the most lucrative season at theaters, analysts were predicting a \$3 billion summer, down from the more typical \$4 billion mark. Now, closer to \$3.4 billion appears likely.

The weekend's other top new release was Ti West's "MaXXXine," the third in a string of slasher films from A24 starring Mia Goth. In 2,450 locations, "MaXXXine" collected \$6.7 million in ticket sales, a franchise best. The film, which follows "X" and "Pearl" (both released in 2022), stars Goth as a 1980s Hollywood starlet being hunted by a killer known as the Night Stalker.

Kevin Costner's big-budget gamble, "Horizon: An American Saga," didn't do much to turn around its fortunes in its second weekend. The first chapter in what Costner hopes will be a four-part franchise - including a chapter two Warner Bros. will release in August - earned \$5.5 million in its second weekend. The film, which cost more than \$100 million to make, has grossed \$22.2 million in two weeks.

Variety



This image released by Searchlight Pictures shows Jesse Plemons in a scene from 'Kinds of Kindness.' (AP)

Film

Actor on challenges, rewards of 'Kinds of Kindness' role

Jesse Plemons is ready for the ride

By Jake Coyle

Jesse Plemons was flattered to be approached by Yorgos Lanthimos about starring in "Kinds of Kindness," but he wasn't sure which version of himself the director wanted.

Plemons, the protean 36-year-old character actor, has sometimes put on weight for roles. "Those first weeks are glorious," he says. "And then it gets depressing very quickly."

Over the years, Plemons has lost weight for some parts and gained it back for others. It became easy to lose track, and directors kept preferring him on the larger side.

"I kind of kept getting parts for that size," Plemons said in an interview recently at the Cannes Film Festival. "Eventually it was: I gotta get a handle on this. I've got two young kids and I want to be able to run around with them."

"And I was nervous that (Yorgos) was only interested in the bigger version of me," he adds. "I was like: I hope he's still OK with the fact that I don't look like the guy he thought I looked like."

Who, exactly, Jesse Plemons is can seem elusive. Since his breakthrough on the series "Friday Night Lights," Plemons has evolved into one of film's most talented shape-shifters. He's proven an uncommonly malleable actor, appearing as everything from the lethal creep of "Breaking Bad" to the federal detective of "Killers of the Flower Moon." He slides into gripping contemporary films ("I'm Thinking of Ending Things," "Civil War") as smoothly as he does period pieces ("The Irishman,"

"The Power of the Dog"). He's less a chameleon than a singular presence that can be dialed to disturbing or sweet. Whether good or bad, Plemons' characters tend to be sincerely themselves - a product, maybe, of the sensitivity with which he approaches each part.

"I try not to make too many judgments too quickly and try to circle the script and the part until I find some way in," Plemons says. "Something that resonates and makes sense to me and that's going to drag me along and not make it feel like work, make it feel like I'm just following some trail."

The darkly comic "Kinds of Kindness," which opens in theaters Friday, is a supreme, fittingly disquieting showcase of Plemons' wide-ranging abilities. After its premiere at the Cannes Film Festival last month, Plemons won best actor - the most significant individual award of his career. It won't be the last.

The film, a Searchlight Pictures release, is composed of three stories penned by Lanthimos and his oft-collaborator Efthimis Filippou. The triptych isn't narratively connected, but each is performed with the same company of actors, including Emma Stone, Willem Dafoe and Margaret Qualley. And each story takes unpredictable, parable-like paths to exploring themes of social conformity and control in relationships.

Relationship

Plemons is central in the film's first two sections. In the first, he plays a man named Robert who lives in utter devotion to his boss (Dafoe), but their relationship is severed when the boss asks Robert drive his car into that of a stranger's. Cut loose, Robert is sent into a desperate tail spin.

In the second, Plemons plays a police officer named Daniel whose marine biologist wife (Stone) returns home after being stranded on desert island for months. He believes that she isn't his real wife but a doppelgänger and tests her in increasingly sinister ways.

Those two characters - one a disquieting paranoid, the other a humble puppy dog - encapsulate something about Plemons as an actor. When he read the script, Plemons says, "I thought it was brilliant but I couldn't tell you why."

"It's like: When will anything like this come along again?" he asks. "Probably never, so sign me up. Let's see what happens."

Lanthimos, the filmmaker of "Poor Things" and "The Favourite," likes an extensive and playful rehearsal period. But that didn't help Plemons' initial befuddlement.

"Throughout the majority of the rehearsal process, I just felt completely lost and clueless, which in hindsight was like, 'Yeah, I guess that's a part of it, too,'" he says. "There's some submitting and giving in to the process."

Lanthimos has been a longtime admirer of Plemons. "We talked about Jesse forever. I think we thought about it for a couple things but he wasn't available,"

Lanthimos says, speaking alongside Stone. "But I always had him in mind because I think he's just basically one of the greatest of his generation. There's no question for me."

"He's also a really nice and interesting person, which is always a bonus - when someone's that talented but they're also just lovely to be around," Stone adds.

Shortly after the premiere of "Kinds of Kindness," the filmmaker announced that his next project, titled "Bugonia," will also star Plemons alongside Stone. "He's now part of the troop," says Lanthimos, proudly.

"Kinds of Kindness" adds to what's been a memorable year for Plemons. Earlier this year, his scene in Alex Garland's "Civil War" - in which he plays a jingoistic militant who chillingly asks "What kind of American are you?" - was the most memorable (and much-memed) moment from the movie.

"I just find people fascinating," he says. "I guess I'm trying to operate from a place of being curious and trying to figure out why. Because there is always some trail leading back to why. It's never some mystery - rarely, maybe occasionally. But there's always something. That's what I find interesting and then you finish it and it hits you, all of that. That was definitely the case for 'Civil War.'"

Plemons, who grew up in Mart, Texas, has often been called on to play such menacing figures. But he's found ways to cleverly play with and invert that reputation. In "Game Night," Plemons played the foreboding neighbor next door whose deadpan interactions ("How can that be profitable for Frito Lay?") were the movie's comic high point.

But asked if Plemons sometimes feels resistant to playing darker, demented characters, an interviewer hasn't finished the question when he eagerly responds, "Yes!"

"But also, like anyone I would think, you don't want to be redundant," Plemons explains. "It's not like dark characters are all the same. But that's what to me is eternally interesting and a gift about an actor. Yeah, I feel incredibly fortunate to be at a place where I'm able to be more selective. There's a choose-your-own-adventure element. But there are times when, yeah, you just don't really want to walk around in those shoes at this moment." (AP)

LOS ANGELES: John Cena announced Saturday night that he will retire from professional wrestling next year after two decades in the ring.

The wrestler-turned-actor delivered a heartfelt speech to a stadium of World Wrestling Entertainment fans in Toronto, who boomed in disappointment as Cena said the 2025 season would be his last. He promised a farewell tour with dozens of dates and an epic final fight, and he assured fans he would remain involved with the wrestling franchise that launched his career.

"Thank you so much for letting me play in the house that you built for so many years," Cena told the crowd.

In a news conference after the event, Cena told reporters that he feels physically "at my end," but that doesn't mean he needs to distance himself from the sport he loves.

Cena is a 16-time WWE champion who burst onto the scene in the early 2000s as the fan-favorite "Doctor of Thuganomics," a rapper character decked in gold chains and a backwards hat who challenged his wrestling opponents to rap battles. He went on to portray other popular characters, both in the ring and on the big screen.

Cena played starring roles in the films "Blockers" and "The Suicide Squad." He has made multiple appearances in the "Fast & Furious" franchise and appeared most recently in the comedy thriller "Argyle" and the box office hit "Barbie." (AP)

NEW ORLEANS: For 30 years, the Essence Festival of Culture has brought together people from all walks of life and from around the world to connect through conversation, shared experiences and, of course, music.

The nation's largest annual celebration of Black culture ended Sunday with musical performances by Janet Jackson and a special tribute to Frankie Beverly & Maze, the soul band that closed the event for the festival's first 15 years. Beverly, now 77, has said he is stepping away from performing live, and the group has been on a farewell tour.

Others performing included Victoria Monét, Teedra Moses, Tank and the Bangas, Dawn Richard, SWV, Jagged Edge, Bilal and Anthony Hamilton. Barkue Tubman-Zawolo,

chief of staff, talent and diasporic engagement for Essence Ventures, told The Associated Press the festival helps connect the global Black community.

"Historically, as Black people, sometimes we're not sure where our heritage comes from," Tubman-Zawolo said. "America is just one place. But within



Cena



Jackson

America there's a melting pot of different Black cultures: Africa, Latin, Europe, the Caribbean. Understanding that allows our power to be even greater."

Tubman-Zawolo said those connections could be seen throughout this year's Film Festival, held at the city's convention center, where fans heard from storytellers from

Nigeria, Ghana and the Caribbean "who are targeting our stories about us, for us, globally."

She noted similar connections through the Food and Wine stage, where discussions highlighted Caribbean and African cuisine; the Soko Market Place, where vendors from all over the world shared their craft; and on the Caesars Superdome

stage, which spotlighted Caribbean and African artists including Machel Montano of Trinidad.

"All of that occurred over four days," Tubman-Zawolo said. "But the beauty of it is, it doesn't stay here. (Fans) take it with them." New Orleans Mayor Latoya Cantrell said this year's "We Love Us" theme was appropriate. (AP)

People & Places

People

Key players at trial

Baldwin pretrial sets stage for legal battle

NEW MEXICO, July 8, (AP) — A New Mexico judge is setting the table for the involuntary manslaughter trial of actor Alec Baldwin in the fatal shooting of a cinematographer on the set of a Western movie.

Judge Mary Marlowe Sommer will consider an array of requests from prosecutors and defense attorneys that could restrict what evidence, testimony and court arguments are heard by a jury. The pretrial hearing Monday in Santa Fe is expected to last much of the day. Baldwin's attorneys have waived his appearance at all hearings before the trial.

Baldwin's trial starts July 9 with jury selection and is scheduled to last 10 days.

Last week, the judge cleared the way for crucial firearms experts for the prosecution to testify about Baldwin's handling of the revolver and whether the gun was functioning properly prior to the fatal shooting.

Defense attorneys have asked the judge to exclude consideration of Baldwin's secondary role as a co-producer on "Rust," arguing it's irrelevant to allegations of negligence, and might confuse jurors. Prosecutors disagree and say it was likely Baldwin's imposing role as a producer that emboldened him to act recklessly and disregard the safety of others in allegedly flouting gun-safety protocols.

The defense team and prosecutors disagree about Baldwin's contractual authority as producer over crew members who dealt with weapons and safety.

Prosecutors argue that a state workplace safety investigation, which found serious violations on set, was incomplete, untrustworthy and should be prohibited from the trial.

Baldwin is charged with a single felony count of involuntary manslaughter punishable by up to 18 months in prison if he's convicted.

Hannah Gutierrez-Reed, the armorer on set, was convicted of involuntary manslaughter in cinematographer Halyna Hutchins' death and sentenced to 18 months in prison. She is appealing the conviction.

Accident

In October 2021, Baldwin was rehearsing a cross-draw maneuver with the revolver when the gun went off, killing Hutchins and wounding director Joel Souza.

Baldwin has pleaded not guilty and claims the gun fired accidentally after he followed instructions to point it toward Hutchins, who was behind the camera. Unaware the gun contained a live round, Baldwin said he pulled back the hammer - not the trigger - and it fired.

Baldwin's attorneys also want to bar discussion at trial of actor Brandon Lee's death from a fatal shot to the abdomen while filming a scene from "The Crow" in 1993. In that instance, a makeshift bullet was mistakenly left in a gun from a previous scene and struck Lee while filming a scene that called for using blank rounds.

Prosecutors have agreed not to illicit testimony about "The Crow," but also contend that Baldwin knew about safety risks posed by guns - even when live rounds are not present. Attorneys for Baldwin argue that it was inconceivable that live rounds would wind up on set.

Prosecutors want to exclude a letter signed by crew members that disputes the characterizations of the "Rust" set as chaotic or dangerous prior to the fatal shooting. Prosecutors also want to exclude from trial the conclusions of the safety investigation into the fatal shooting that places much of the blame on assistant director Dave Halls. Halls has pleaded no contest to negligent use of a firearm and may be called to testify at Baldwin's trial.

Rust Movie Productions paid a \$100,000 fine to resolve violations of state safety regulations that were characterized as "serious" but not willful, under a 2023 settlement agreement. Prosecutors say conclusions of the investigation are easily contradicted by more reliable information.

Baldwin's attorneys say the report can't be ruled out as evidence and that state occupational safety officer Lorenzo Montoya should be allowed to testify at trial.

Another pretrial motion might defuse sniping between the prosecution and defense teams. Prosecutors want the judge to preclude accusations of "prosecutorial misconduct" and "personal attacks." Here's a look at the key players in the criminal trial of an actor who has been a TV and movie mainstay for decades:

Alec Baldwin: Known for his roles in the early blockbuster "The Hunt for Red October," Martin Scorsese's "The Departed" and the sitcom "30 Rock," Baldwin's career has spanned more than four decades and has included other gun-toting roles. Baldwin has twice been charged in Hutchins' death. Prosecutors dismissed an earlier charge, then revived it through a grand jury after receiving a new analysis of the revolver he pointed at Hutchins.

Negligent

David Halls: With credits including "The Matrix Reloaded," Halls had worked on dozens of films over a 30-year career. The assistant director and safety coordinator pleaded no contest to a misdemeanor charge of negligent use of a deadly weapon and received a suspended sentence of six months of probation. It was learned after "Rust" producers halted work on the film in 2021 that Halls had been fired from a previous job after a gun went off on a set and wounded a member of the film crew.

Joel Souza: A director and writer, Souza wrote the screenplay for "Rust." Although he had worked on smaller projects over the years, he made his feature debut in 2019 with "Crown Vic." Baldwin was among the producers on that project, too, and had said he was looking forward to working with Souza on the western. Souza was wounded by the same bullet that killed Hutchins. Souza testified previously he moved in behind Hutchins for a closer look at the camera angle and never saw the gun that shot him.

Ross Addiego: He was hired by Rust Productions as a front-line crew member who built and operated systems for guiding the film's camera.

He was among those in the church the day Hutchins was killed. He and other crew members are suing the producers, claiming their failure to follow industry safety rules induced emotional distress.

Zac Sneesby: A sound engineer and boom operator, Sneesby has worked on numerous projects, with "Stranger Things" being among his most recent work. He also has mixed sound for the art collaborative Meow Wolf in Santa Fe. He said in a recent pretrial interview that he was standing very close to Baldwin when the actor shot and killed Hutchins. He told prosecutors he saw Baldwin pull the trigger.



Baldwin



Gracie Abrams performs as the opening act for Taylor Swift's 'The Eras Tour' in Nashville, Tenn., on May 5, 2023. Abrams recently released her new album 'The Secret of Us' by Interscope Records. (AP)

Music

Charli XCX explores hedonism, anxiety on 'Brat'

Abrams thrives in chaos on 'Secret'

LOS ANGELES, July 8, (AP) — Singer-songwriter Gracie Abrams succumbs to a crush on "Risk," the lead single of her frantic and melancholic sophomore album, "The Secret of Us."

"Heard the risk is drowning/But I'm gonna take it," she sings atop fast acoustic guitar, her vocals growing more frenetic as the production thickens. "Watch this be the wrong thing," she exclaims in the chorus.

The track reveals an evolved, but familiar, Abrams. The 24-year-old singer-songwriter has let us into her diary before, but "The Secret of Us" is more intimate and less reserved than her previous work. This time, her songs aren't recollections of waning heartbreak, long held insecurity or lingering guilt. They're happening in real time, developing and dissipating on record.

That immersion is achieved through the album's production, a collaboration between Abrams, her longtime collaborator Aaron Dessner and co-writer Audrey Hobert, with cameos from Taylor Swift and producer Jack Antonoff.

The great "Blowing Smoke" sets a biting critique of a lost flame to acoustic guitar and hums that are traded for electric instruments and shouts, as Abrams' quips lean into frustration. She belts on "Let it Happen," where "Tough Love" starts with whispers on a train to Boston and ends with a euphoric drum beat and declaration of self-love: "I know now what I'm leaving for."

Bonus track "Close to You," produced by Sam de Jong and reworked after a clip of it went viral, lives more in the magnetic world of Lorde and Ellie Goulding's 2010s hits than it does in Abrams' own - but showcases a pop persona that peeks through on "The Secret of Us."

The urgent melodies and breathless bridges on this confident album are progressed from Abrams' past work - when her wistfully, soft-sung, "sad girl" pop music was much more wistful and anxious.

The tracks that exemplify her new personality most clearly - "Risk," "Blowing Smoke," "us. (feat. Taylor Swift)" - are the album's most interesting. It's a shift that Abrams has linked to the period of growth between her last project and this one. That year

and a half included a Grammy nomination and extensive touring on her own and opening for Swift.

The album's sparkling centerpiece is "us. (feat. Taylor Swift)." Their voices weave together, harmonizing the album's title atop a dreamy acoustic track produced by the duo, Dessner and Antonoff. "I felt it, you held it, do you miss us, us? / Wonder if you regret the secret of us," they sing, with Abrams leading.

The feature from Swift feels like a stamp of approval for Abrams. And while references to annotated sonnets and Robert Bly could place this track within Swift's "The Tortured Poets Department," it is recognizably Abrams in its youthful and thoughtful angst - as well as those private reflections on unrequited love.

"The Secret of Us," paints a picture of an artist in motion, one who is discovering what excites her creatively as she navigates young adulthood. And by taking listeners along for that ride - the frustrations, vanities, chaotic crushes and all - she opens an exciting door for her future as an assured and energetic performer.

English pop singer-songwriter Charli XCX's sixth album, "Brat," oscillates between hedonism and anxiety - the euphoria of a late night on the dancefloor and the creeping disquietude of the morning after - as much as it does her in-between status as pop queen of the underground and sometimes mainstream success story.

The latter has arrived a few times in her career, like in her contribution to the blockbuster "Barbie" soundtrack, her feature on Iggy Azalea's once-inescapable "Fancy," and ditto for Ikon Pop's 2012 hit "I Love It," which she also co-wrote. Something started to shift in 2016, around her "Vroom Vroom" EP, when Charli XCX perhaps realized pop superstardom wasn't for her - she's long-suffered from being a bit too cult-cool, too forthright for the A-list like her soon-to-be tourmate Troye Sivan - and began collaborating with the future-seeking, hyperpop PC Music collective, including the late, innovative Sophie (the subject of the thoughtful tribute "So I") and A.G. Cook, who

executive produced "Brat."

This album builds from the foundation of her previous work, of course, with its brash, bombastic synth-pop - but returns to her UK rave roots. Recent single "360" is the intersection of both, an ode to the internet's outsider It-girls - a quality mirrored in the paparazzi-pop and Y2K bravado of "Von Dutch" and the hyper-referentiality of "Club Classics." There, she name drops a cool-girl canon of musicians she'd like to dance to and with: Sophie, Cook, the DJ Hudson Mohawke and her fiancé George Daniel of English pop-rock band The 1975.

"Everything is Romantic" opens with gorgeous strings and woodwinds as Charli XCX's talk-sings about falling in love before the song detours into UK garage. It's a peculiarly lavish combination, a one-song case for subwoofers reaching the same kind of emotional ascendancy associated with orchestral music.

But interwoven in addictive songs about seeking pleasure and status is also a kind of insecurity: "Rewind" is a club banger about poor body image, not feeling successful enough, concerning yourself with things like chart position. ("Boom Clap" fans may want to start here, but prepare themselves for a particularly confessional Charli.) "Apple" considers familial legacy; "Girl, So Confusing" teases a rivalry with another pop performer.

It's all effortlessly danceable, both the moments of metaphysical frustration and chemical elation.

But the tension at the heart of "Brat" is best illustrated in the final two tracks, arguably the most gorgeous and soul-spilling of the 15-song collection. On the penultimate "I Think About It All the Time," after 13 songs of pulsating rhythms tackling love, loss, life and career, she leaves the club to consider motherhood.

Would having a child give her a new sense of purpose? Would she become a different person?

"And a baby might be mine/Cause maybe one day I might/If I don't run out of time/Would it make me miss all my freedom?," she sings, her phrasing unraveling into a sweet hum. "Should I stop my birth control?/Cause my career feels so small/In the existential scheme of it all."



Lead singer and guitarist Billy Corgan of American alternative rock band The Smashing Pumpkins performs on the Lake stage during the 58th Montreux Jazz Festival (MJF), in Montreux, Switzerland, Sunday, July 7. (AP)



Liao



Sam

Variety

BEIJING: Sam Quah's latest crime thriller, "A Place Called Silence," maintains its lead at the Chinese mainland box office, earning over 111.5 million yuan (about 15.64 million US dollars) on Sunday, according to the China Movie Data Information Network.

The movie explores the topic of campus bullying and its total gross revenue is now projected to reach 1.5 billion yuan, according to the film data platform Beacon. By the fifth day of its screening, the movie has raked in a cumulative total of 375 million yuan. Since its release on July 3, the crime thriller has dominated the box office chart, maintaining a significant lead over other titles.

Disney's "Inside Out 2" and the domestic drama "Moments We Shared" secured the second and third spots, earning approximately 20 million yuan and 12 million yuan, respectively, on Sunday, marking their 17th and 16th day in theaters. (Xinhua)

DAR ES SALAAM: Tanzania on Sunday marked the 3rd World Kiswahili Language Day as the Minister for Culture, Arts and Sports Damas Ndumbaro called for the use of the language in other crucial areas, including artificial intelligence (AI).

"Tanzania and the globe at large should get prepared to innovate AI and social media that specifically use Kiswahili as the language was spreading very fast," said Ndumbaro when he officiated celebrations marking the 3rd World Kiswahili Day in the port city of Dar es Salaam.

He said the government was planning to dispatch television and radio broadcasters in Kiswahili worldwide to promote the use of the language.

Ndumbaro also directed the state-run Tanzania National Kiswahili Council and the Zanzibar Kiswahili Council to translate all critical English publications, including books and poems, into Kiswahili so people could read and understand them. (Xinhua)

CAIRO: The shared heritage of the Chinese and Egyptian civilizations fostered through trade via the ancient Silk Road was highlighted in an international cultural exchange event held here in Egypt's capital late on Wednesday.

Under the theme of "Shared Heritage, Shared Future," the event gathered cultural

officials, scholars, and diplomats from China and Egypt, as well as UNESCO representatives. During the event, scholars delivered keynote speeches to promote bilateral cooperation in preserving cultural heritage and to exchange experiences in the conservation of heritage sites.

Chinese Ambassador to Egypt Liao Liqiang said in his address to the event that "as two ancient civilizations, China and Egypt have a common heritage that we both are proud of."

China is willing to work with Egypt to implement the strategic consensus reached

by the two heads of state on building a community with a shared future and promoting common development and prosperity for the two nations, Liao noted. (Xinhua)

ANKARA: Once entering Türkiye, Arabic-speaking visitors would be greeted with words that sound very familiar "Merhaba, hoşgeldiniz" meaning "hello, welcome" with every interaction with the locals, the words seem familiar yet pronounced differently.

This sparks the question: are these words Arabic or not? With each passing day in this country, the familiar words such as "mescit" for mosque and "Kahve" for coffee as well as the Muslim greeting As-salamu alaykum but pronounced slightly differently, with more interaction with Turkish people, the visitor would discover many words shared between the two languages.

The protocol procedure of the country when receiving an official or leader must greet the soldiers by saying "Merhaba Asker" (Salute Soldier) the same greeting Mustafa Kemal Atatürk the founding father of the Republic of Türkiye used when addressing Turkish soldiers. This might awaken a curiosity to look up common words between these two languages, as there are linguistic and historical ties as well as cultural influences between them. (KUNA)



Dexter Holland, (left), and Noodles of The Offspring perform during Festival d'été de Québec on Sunday, July 7 in Québec City. (AP)

Hope for wet AMD, DME and RVO

FDA approves Vabysmo for treating leading causes of vision loss

SOUTH SAN FRANCISCO, Calif., July 8, (AP): Genentech, a member of the Roche Group has announced that the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has approved the Vabysmo (faricimab-svoa) 6.0 mg single-dose pre-filled syringe (PFS) for use in the treatment of wet, or neovascular, age-related macular degeneration (AMD), diabetic macular edema (DME) and macular edema following retinal vein occlusion (RVO). Together, these three conditions affect close to three million people in the US. The Vabysmo PFS will become available to US retina specialists and their patients in the coming months.

"We are pleased that the US FDA has approved the Vabysmo PFS for people living with wet AMD, DME and RVO, which are some of the leading causes of vision loss," said Levi Garraway, M.D., Ph.D., Genentech's chief medical officer and head of Global Product Development. "While many retina specialists are already using Vabysmo as a first-line treatment, this new offering should make it even simpler to administer, thereby enhancing the treatment experience for both physicians and patients."

5-year-old girl in Cambodia contracts bird flu, 7th case so far

PHNOM PENH, July 8, (Agencies): Another human case of H5N1 bird flu has been confirmed on a 5-year-old girl from southern Cambodia's Takeo province, bringing the number of the cases to seven since the start of 2024, the Ministry of Health said in a statement on Monday.

"The patient has a fever and is the cousin of a 3-year-old boy, who tested positive for the virus on July 5," the

statement said, adding that the two victims live in the same house in Kiri Vong district's Pou village.

"About 10 days before the girl fell ill, chickens and ducks in the village had died and the patient's family cooked them for food, and the patient had direct contact with the dead chickens," the statement said.

Among the seven human cases of H5N1 bird flu so far this year were six

children, one of whom died, and an adult. All patients reportedly had a history of recent exposure to sick or dead poultry prior to their illness.

H5N1 influenza is a flu that normally spreads between sick poultry, but it can sometimes spread from poultry to humans, and its symptoms include fever, cough, runny nose, and severe respiratory illness.

Also:

WASHINGTON: Second Gentleman Doug Emhoff has tested positive for COVID-19 after experiencing mild symptoms, his office announced Sunday, but his wife, Vice President Kamala Harris, has tested negative and remains asymptomatic.

Emhoff spokesperson Liza Acevedo said in a statement that the second

gentleman "is fully vaccinated and three times boosted" and that he is "currently asymptomatic, continuing to work remotely, and remaining away from others at home."

Acevedo said Harris was tested for COVID on Saturday "out of an abundance of caution" and the result was negative. She is scheduled to campaign in Las Vegas for President Joe Biden's reelection on Tuesday.

Heat-related illnesses on the rise

Extreme summer weather impacts over half of world population: study

BEIJING, July 8, (Xinhua): As global climate change intensifies, extreme weather events have grown increasingly frequent and severe worldwide. In June and early July of this year, various extreme weather phenomena were observed across the globe, impacting natural ecosystems and over half of the world's population.

Multiple regions experienced unprecedented heatwaves in June and early July. The southwestern United States, Mexico, southern Europe, most of South Asia and northern Africa were engulfed by sustained heat, with some areas recording temperatures exceeding 45 degrees Celsius. Concerns about wildfires, drought and disruptions to power and water supplies, which could lead to significant economic losses and environmental damage, are prevalent.

Climate Central, an independent nonprofit organization focusing on weather research, said that between June 16 and 24, 4.97 billion people -- over 60 percent of the world's population -- experienced extreme heat.

This extreme heat not only disrupted daily life but also led to a surge in heat-related illnesses such as thermoplegia, heat cramps and heat exhaustion, severely affecting public health, particularly the elderly and those with chronic diseases, and underscoring the personal impact of extreme weather.

Authorities in some countries urged residents, especially elderly people and children, to use air conditioners appropriately, stay hydrated even when not thirsty, and avoid unnecessary outings and exercise.

Floods

In Sudan, the production of maize has more than halved due to the sweltering heat, with temperatures surpassing 50 degrees Celsius.

Normally, one feddan of maize (about 0.4 hectares) in northern Sudan produces about 15 100-kilogram sacks; this year, the number dropped to merely six sacks.

Concurrently, heavy rainfall and floods ravaged several areas globally. In India, the ongoing floods in the northeastern state of Assam have affected over 2.1 million people and killed at least 52, officials said last Friday.

The situation continues to be grim in 29 districts of the state.

According to the Assam State Dis-

Vabysmo PFS delivers the same medicine as the currently available Vabysmo vials in an alternative, ready-to-use format. Vabysmo will continue to be available in a 6.0 mg vial. Vabysmo is the first and only bispecific antibody approved for the eye and has demonstrated rapid and robust vision improvements and retinal drying in wet AMD, DME and RVO.

Retinal drying is an important clinical measure, as swelling from excess fluid in the back of the eye is associated with distorted and blurred vision.

To date, Vabysmo is approved in more than 95 countries for wet AMD and DME, and in several countries, including the US and Japan, for RVO. Review by other health authorities

across the globe is ongoing. More than four million doses of Vabysmo have been distributed globally since its initial US approval in 2022.

Genentech is committed to helping people access the medicines they are prescribed and offers comprehensive services for people prescribed Vabysmo to help minimize barriers to access

and reimbursement.

Vabysmo is the first bispecific antibody approved for the eye. It targets and inhibits two signaling pathways linked to a number of vision-threatening retinal conditions by neutralizing angiotensin-2 (Ang-2) and vascular endothelial growth factor-A (VEGF-A). While research is underway to bet-

ter understand the role of the Ang-2 pathway in retinal disease, Ang-2 and VEGF-A are thought to contribute to vision loss by destabilizing blood vessels, which may cause new leaky blood vessels to form and increase inflammation. By blocking pathways involving Ang-2 and VEGF-A, Vabysmo is designed to stabilize blood vessels.

Cut energy use

China designs new building cooling material to cut CO2

CHENGDU, July 8, (Xinhua): In a world experiencing rapid warming, effectively cooling our homes during sweltering summer months with reduced energy consumption and lower greenhouse gas emissions is crucial for meeting carbon reduction targets.

A team of Chinese researchers has crafted an innovative biomass-derived material using DNA, the genetic blueprint of life. This aerogel demonstrates a remarkable ability to reduce ambient temperatures by 16 degrees Celsius on sunny days, even under intense solar radiation.

The researchers combined DNA and gelatin into an ordered layered aerogel structure that converts absorbed ultraviolet light into visible light to surpass 100 percent solar reflectance, yielding exceptional radiative cooling.

The adoption of biopolymer-based radiative cooling material helps mitigate environmental pollution, according to the study published on Friday in the journal Science.

Moreover, these aerogels, efficiently fabricated on a large scale through water welding, demonstrate remarkable reparability, recyclability and biodegradability.

This aerogel material is poised to revolutionize the energy efficiency of urban architecture as an outer protective layer, said the paper's corresponding author Zhao Haibo from Sichuan University.

The simulation outcomes of the study have demonstrated a substantial reduction in annual energy expenditure in cooling for buildings across all modeled cities.

The novel aerogel holds promise for significantly reducing carbon emissions and energy consumption and paves the way for innovative and sustainable radiative cooling materials in the future, Zhao said.

China has committed to the dual carbon goals of peaking carbon emissions by 2030 and achieving carbon neutrality by 2060.

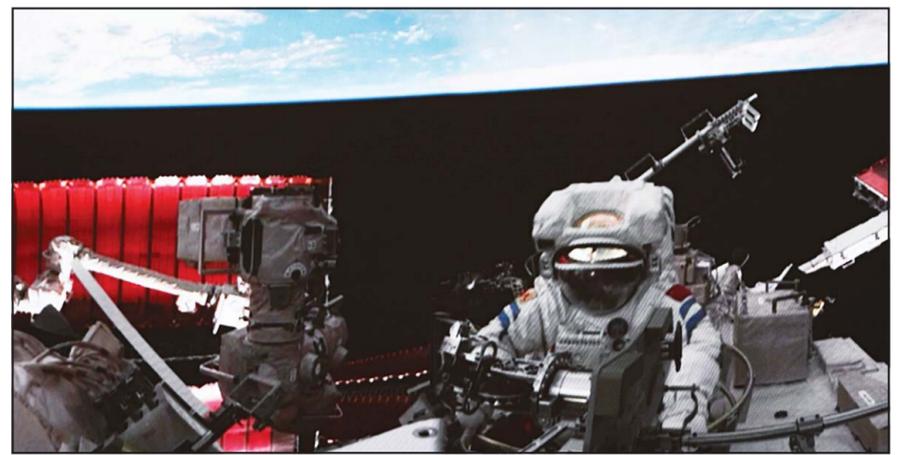
Bay of Bengal burst their banks.

Last month, flash floods displaced more than 2 million people during two rounds of flooding in the region, affecting hundreds of areas and causing untold suffering to the dwellers.

Sheikh Russel Hasan, deputy commissioner and district magistrate in Sylhet, told Xinhua that prolonged torrential rains and runoff from upstream hilly regions on the Indian border caused the main rivers in the region to swell beyond danger levels.

Hurricanes and storms Hurricane Beryl, a long-lived tropical cyclone active in the Gulf of Mexico, significantly impacted Jamaica, Mexico and other countries in late June and early July.

The hurricane brought heavy rainfall accompanied by strong winds, which led to flash floods, storm surges and other secondary disasters.



This screen image captured at Beijing Aerospace Control Center on July 3, shows Shenzhou-18 astronaut Li Cong going out for extravehicular activities. (Xinhua)

SpaceX sets July 31 launch date

Shenzhou-18 crew makes history with longest Chinese spacewalk

BEIJING, July 8, (Xinhua): Photos of Shenzhou-18 crew member Li Cong wearing a white spacesuit while performing a spacewalk on Wednesday have attracted wide media coverage. Although extravehicular activities (EVAs) have become routine for Chinese space station taikonauts over the past three years, it is still an exhilarating experience for readers to see the young space flyer against the magnificent backdrop of Earth.

The recent spacewalk is Li's first, and it also marks the 16th at the Chinese space station since the first crew entered the enormous orbiting spacecraft Tiangong in 2021.

According to data released by the China Manned Space Agency on Thursday, a total of 17 space station taikonauts have conducted spacewalks so far.

Here's a look at some records about the spacewalks during the seven crew missions in the past three years.

The first space station spacewalk, which lasted about seven hours, was conducted by the Shenzhou-12 taikonauts Liu Boming and Tang Hongbo on July 4, 2021. Before constructing the Tiangong space station, China had conducted only one spacewalk during the three-day Shenzhou-7 spaceflight

in 2008.

The Shenzhou-13 crew, like its predecessors, also conducted two spacewalks during its six-month journey in orbit. But it made history by including the first female Chinese spacewalker Wang Yaping. The taikonaut with a ponytail and soft-spoken voice is also known as the "space teacher" after giving a live video lecture to students during her first space mission in 2013.

Dubbed "the busiest space crew" by Chinese netizens, the Shenzhou-14 completed three spacewalks. Their first one was particularly remarkable as they became the first crew to exit from the Wentian lab module instead of the core module, as previous crews did. Additionally, just 16 days later, they made their second spacewalk, setting a record for the shortest duration between two EVAs.

The Shenzhou-15 crew performed four spacewalks in their six-month mission since the all-men trio was launched into space in November 2022, setting a domestic record for the most spacewalks by a single crew.

Compared to previous crews, the Shenzhou-16 comprised a diverse trio of male taikonauts from different career backgrounds, including an aircraft pilot, a flight engineer and a payload

specialist. During its five-month stay in space, the crew only performed one EVA, during which the crew commander, Jing Haipeng, also a four-time space flyer, finally realized his dream of conducting a spacewalk.

Also:

NEW YORK: SpaceX is set to launch Polaris Dawn, the first commercial spaceflight mission with an all-civilian spacewalk plan, no earlier than July 31, according to an announcement from the project on Wednesday.

Funded by US billionaire Jared Isaacman, the mission is also the second all-civilian mission after the Inspiration 4 mission launched in September 2021.

The mission's plans include the first-ever private spacewalk, research on human health in space and tests to equip the spacecraft with Starlink WiFi. Polaris Dawn also aims to reach a high orbit about 435 miles (about 700 km) above Earth -- the highest-altitude crewed flight since the Apollo moon missions.

The mission will use the SpaceX Crew Dragon capsule to carry four team members to space, including Isaacman. The crew is set to spend around five days in orbit around Earth.

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Brazil, Spain, Puerto Rico join them in Games field

Antetokounmpo and Greece head to Paris Olympics

PIRAEUS, Greece, July 8, (AP): Giannis Antetokounmpo is now an Olympian.

Antetokounmpo is heading to the Olympics for the first time, after he scored 23 points and Greece held off Croatia 80-69 in one of the four men's basketball qualifying tournament finals being held to determine the final spots in the 12-team field for the Paris Games.

"The best athletes in the world compete in the Olympic Games," Antetokounmpo said. "We have nothing to lose. ... I really believe we have an incredible team and we can accomplish something special."

Georgios Papagiannis scored 19 points for Greece, which got 14 from Nick Calathes and earned an Olympic berth for the first time since 2008.

"It's very nice to qualify because that's the first step," Papagiannis said. "At the Olympics, we're looking to do something really good there."

Ivica Zubac had 19 points and 13 rebounds for Croatia, which got 15 points apiece from Mateo Dreznjak

and Mario Hezonja and 14 from Dario Saric.

Greece will be placed in Group A for the Paris Games, with its opening-stage games against Australia, Canada and Spain - which also qualified on Sunday by beating the Bahamas.

Already having qualified for the Paris field: the four-time defending gold medalist U.S., France, Germany, Japan, Serbia, South Sudan, Canada

OLYMPICS

and Australia. France qualified as the host nation; the other seven teams on that list qualified based on their finishes at the World Cup last summer.

And on Sunday, Brazil, Greece, Spain and Puerto Rico grabbed the last spots after prevailing in winner-take-all qualifiers that started last week.

For the first time since 2004, Puerto Rico is headed to the Olympics.

At San Juan, the hosts got 23 points from Jose Alvarado, 18 points from Tremont Waters and topped Lithuania

79-68 to claim the 12th and final spot in the field for the Paris Games.

"Obviously, this game was very important for us and the island," Alvarado said. "But we knew it was more than just basketball. We knew how great we had to be to represent this island and the love they gave us was amazing. We just wanted to do as best we can for them."

Puerto Rico will be slotted into group play in France with Serbia, South Sudan and the U.S. The Americans and Puerto Rico also played in 2004 Olympics, with Puerto Rico winning 92-73.

Rokas Jokubaitis scored 16 points and Domantas Sabonis scored 10 for Lithuania.

"We had to come together to make history," Puerto Rico coach Nelson Colon said.

Rudy Fernandez is going to the Olympics for the sixth time, a first for any men's basketball player. And Spain had to dig deep to get him there.

Spain earned its seventh consecutive Olympic berth after holding off

the Bahamas 86-78 at Valencia, Spain.

Lorenzo Brown had 18 points for Spain, which got 14 from Willy Hernangomez, 12 from Santiago Aldama and 10 from Usman Garuba.

Buddy Hield led the Bahamas with 19 points. Deandre Ayton scored 17, Eric Gordon had 15 and Valdez Edgcombe Jr. finished with 12.

Like Greece, Spain is in Group A for the opening stage of games in Paris alongside Australia and Canada.

At Riga, Latvia, Brazil used a 19-0 run over the final 3:21 of the first quarter to set the tone in what became a surprisingly easy 94-69 victory over Latvia.

Bruno Caboclo led Brazil with 21 points and Leo Meindl added 20. Caboclo made a 65-foot 3-pointer to end the first quarter - one in which Brazil was 8 for 8 from beyond the arc to take a 34-11 lead and stun the home crowd.

"My dad was a basketball player and his dream was to play in the Olympic Games," Meindl said. "I'm making this for me, for him and for my family. I'm feeling on the clouds."



Greece's Giannis Antetokounmpo, (right), is challenged by Croatia's Ivica Zubac, during a FIBA Olympic Qualifying basketball final, at the Peace and Friendship stadium, at Athens' port city of Piraeus. (AP)

Rihards Lomazs scored 15 for Latvia, which got 14 points apiece from Rolands Smits and Arturs Zagars.

"It just seemed like it was going their way from the first quarter," Zagars said.

Bowman wraps up a spot in NASCAR Cup Series playoffs

Alex wins on a rainy Chicago street course

CHICAGO, July 8, (AP): At long last, Alex Bowman got a win. And a spot in the NASCAR Cup Series playoffs.

So yeah, he was ready to party. "We're going to drink so much damn bourbon tonight, it's going to be a bad deal," a jubilant Bowman said. "I'm probably going to wake up naked on the bathroom floor again. That's just part of this deal sometimes."

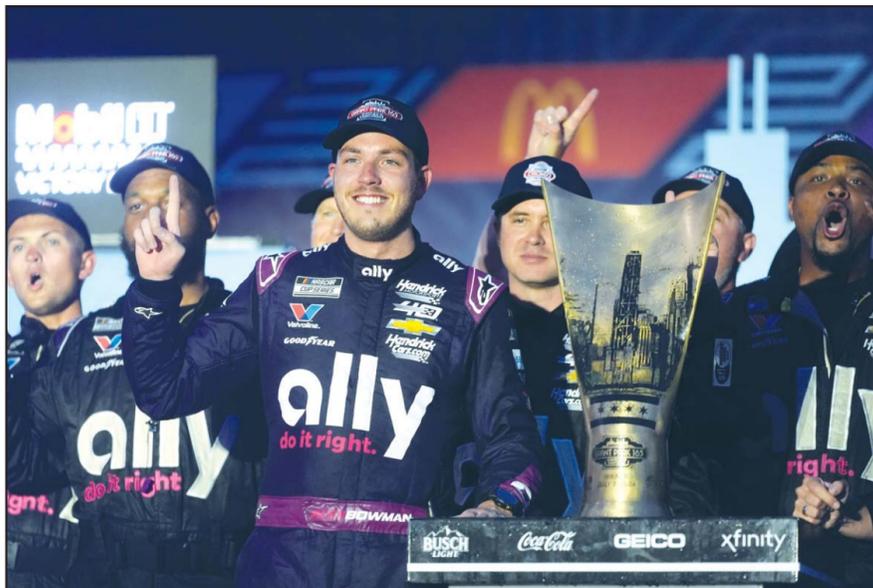
Bowman held off Tyler Reddick on a rainy street course in downtown Chicago on Sunday, stopping an 80-race winless drought.

It was his first victory since Las Vegas in March 2022 and No. 8 for his career. He is the 12th Cup Series driver to win this year, leaving four remaining spots in the playoffs with six races left in the regular season.

After his Vegas victory two years ago, Bowman, 31, was sidelined by a concussion. He injured his back in a short-track accident in April 2023.

"You start to second-guess if you're ever going to get a chance to win a race again," he said.

CAR RACING



Alex Bowman stands with his team and his trophy after winning a NASCAR Cup Series auto race in Chicago. (AP)

Not anymore.

The Cup Series' second street race in Chicago was stopped for more than 100 minutes because of rain, and NASCAR set a cutoff time of 8:20 p.m. CDT because of the fading sunlight. When Bowman crossed the start-finish line after that time, the white flag came out, followed by the checkered.

Reddick made a late charge, but he got into a wall while trying to run down Bowman. Ty Gibbs was third, followed by Joey Hand and Michael McDowell.

"I got the opportunity to run him down," Reddick said. "Just obviously couldn't get the job done. A clean lap was all I had to do and couldn't even do that."

Bowman closed it out on wet weather tires in his Hendrick Motorsports Chevrolet after pole-sitter Kyle Larson and Shane van Gisbergen were knocked out.

During the cool-down lap, Bowman was bumped into the wall by Bubba Wallace. Bowman spun out Wallace early in the race.

"I have to apologize again to the 23 guys," Bowman said. "Just messed up, trying to get my windshield wiper on, missed a corner and ruined their day. I hate that. I'm still embarrassed about it."

Larson slammed into the tire barrier in Turn 6 on Lap 34, bringing out a caution. He was trying for his fourth win of the season in his 350th career

Palou's pit stop woes cost him victory

O'Ward wins Indy 200 at Mid-Ohio

LEXINGTON, Ohio, July 8, (AP): Pato O'Ward bounced back on multiple levels with an IndyCar victory Sunday he was confident of achieving with a new hybrid engine he found to his liking.

The combination helped him reduce a big time deficit to Alex Palou and ultimately pounce on the slimmest window of opportunity.

O'Ward seized the lead with 24 laps remaining as Palou stalled in the pits and held on to win the Indy 200 at Mid-Ohio Sports Car Course in the

IndyCar series' official debut of its hybrid engine.

The victory provided huge redemption for O'Ward, who was leading the final lap of the Indianapolis 500 in

CAR RACING

May before Josef Newgarden overtook him on the final half-mile for the victory. It was O'Ward's second win this season but the first on-track after he

was awarded the victory in the season-opening race at St. Petersburg, Florida, when Newgarden was disqualified for manipulating the push-to-pass system on his Chevy.

That made the win even more rewarding, especially after the heart-breaking loss at Indy.

"We really pushed today," said O'Ward, whose initial pit stop for softer, red-shoulder alternate tires helped him gain speed before switching back to primary rubber on the next.

Cup Series start.

"As soon as I hit the brakes, I knew I was in trouble," said Larson, who has an 11-point lead over Chase Elliott in the driver standings.

Van Gisbergen was clipped by Chase Briscoe going into Turn 6 on Lap 25. Briscoe slid into a tire barrier, but van Gisbergen crashed into the temporary wall - causing heavy damage to the right side of his Kaulig Racing Chevrolet.

"I just sort of turned in. It looked pretty good and then just got smacked by someone," van Gisbergen said. "It's

gutting."

Shortly after the wreck, the race was stopped to give NASCAR time to clear standing water from the makeshift track. The drivers returned to their cars about an hour later, but the delay continued when another cell passed over the course.

Gibbs was in front when the race resumed, followed by Christopher Bell and Larson.

"It's really fun. I feel like it's kind of like a dirt track, honestly," Gibbs said about the wet conditions. "Pick and choose your lines, see what lane

is drying up and is faster. You have to look around, which makes it fun as we don't get to do that a lot."

Van Gisbergen raced to a career-altering victory last year in Chicago when he became the first driver to win his Cup Series debut since Johnny Rutherford in the second qualifying race at Daytona in 1963. The 35-year-old New Zealand native also won Saturday's Xfinity Series race on the tricky 12-turn, 2.2-mile course.

Van Gisbergen won the first stage Sunday shortly before he was knocked out.

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Australia finalizes largest-ever athletics team for overseas Olympics

SYDNEY, July 8, (Xinhua): The Australian Olympic Committee (AOC) announced on Monday the addition of 55 track and field athletes to represent Australia in Paris 2024, bringing the total athletics squad to 75 members.

According to the AOC, this full squad is Australia's second-largest ever athletics team, only behind the one that competed in Sydney 2000, and it is the largest team sent to an overseas Games.

The 75 selected athletes include veterans Genevieve Gregson and Kathryn Mitchell, who will be competing in their fourth Games, 13 athletes in their third, 26 returning for a second Olympics, and 34 athletes poised for their Olympic debut.

"I am thrilled to announce the final 55 athletes for the Athletics team for Paris," said Australian Olympic team Chef de Mission Anna Meares. "This is a talented squad, with the total 75-strong team being the second-biggest Australian Olympic Athletics squad in our history."

"Today's announcement finalizes our Australian Olympic Team at 460 athletes - I am so excited for Australians to see this Team represent them with pride and determination in under three weeks' time," she added.

For the upcoming Paris Olympics, Australians will participate in 39 of the 48 athletics events.

Among the team are Tokyo Olympic bronze medalists Ash Moloney and Kelsey Barber, pole vault world champion Nina Kennedy, and world championship medalists Kurtis Marschall and Mackenzie Little.

The AOC confirmed that Australia will appear in the heptathlon for the first time since Beijing 2008, featuring Olympic debutants Camryn Newton-Smith and Tori West.

The nation also boasts both a men's and a women's 4x100m relay squad, marking the first time that both have been part of an Australian Olympic team since Sydney 2000.

After a stellar year, which included winning a Diamond League title and helping the women's 4x100m qualify for Paris, Australia's national 100m record holder Torrie Lewis is gearing up for her Olympic debut in the 200m and 4x100m relay events.

"After having such an amazing year, getting the official selection is just a relief," the 19-year-old sprinter said. "I've always thought I could make an individual event, but actually getting the call is so exciting." "Ever since watching the London 2012 Games, it's been something I've wanted to do, originally for gymnastics but now for running," Lewis said.

During the Paris Olympics, the Athletics competition will run from August 1 to 11, with Stade de France and other landmarks serving as the hosting venues.

Also:

MADRID: Spain will be represented at the forthcoming Paris Olympic Games

by more women than men for the first time in history, according to the Spanish Olympic Committee.

Spain's men's basketball team were the country's final qualifiers for the Games after their triumph over the Bahamas on Sunday.

Spain will take a total of 382 athletes to the Olympics - 192 women and 190 men.

The country's athletics squad features 31 women and 25 men in the 56-strong team, among whom triple-jumper **Ana Peleteiro** and 20km walker **Alvaro Martin** both have excellent medal chances.

Spain's delegation stands in stark contrast to that of the 1992 Olympic Games in Barcelona, when the country had 297 male athletes but only 125 females.

Spain will compete in 31 sports at Paris Olympics, with the women's football team perhaps the country's best hope of a gold medal, while Spain also has competitive teams in handball, hockey, canoeing and tennis.

He's aiming for taekwondo gold

Nickolas has overcome so many obstacles to reach the Olympics

PARIS, July 8, (AP): A malformed vertebra couldn't stop him. Neither could heart surgery, or a change of weight category that everyone thought was a big mistake.

Breaking his arm in the buildup to the Paris Games was just a minor distraction, too.

It seems there's almost nothing that could derail CJ Nickolas' quest for an Olympic medal.

At 22, Nickolas is the highest-ranked U.S. athlete in taekwondo, No. 2 in the world in the men's 80-kilogram (176-pound) class. A silver medalist at last year's world championships, he will be leading the four-member U.S. taekwondo team in Paris.

His silver at the worlds was the first for the U.S. men's team since 2009,

OLYMPICS

and the Californian now hopes he'll become the first American man in the sport to stand on the Olympic podium in 12 years.

"Going in there and just forcing it and forcing and forcing, imposing yourself on the other person for the entire day," Nickolas told The Associated Press of his competitive approach. "If I can do that, I don't think that there's anyone that can beat me."

Nickolas' Olympic journey started when he was just three. His mother Denise - a nurse whom he cites as his main inspiration alongside his adoptive father - took him to a taekwondo club.

"She didn't like combat sports and she just wanted to make sure that what I was doing was making me a better person - and not just teaching me how to fight," Nickolas said.

Denise fell in love with Edward Givans, who was the owner of the taekwondo school. They didn't stay married for long, but Givans carried on coaching Nickolas, who still calls him his dad. They both instilled in him a taste for hard work and dedication.

"Everybody around me has taught me how to work hard every which way I turn," Nickolas said. "It's just a bunch of hard workers and people who embrace the struggle rather than shy away from it or fall into it. And it's a lot of success that we see come from it."

Denise said her son is "one of the most, if not the most, driven people I know."

"I just supported his dream and let him lead the way," she told the AP.

Nickolas' career really took off after he decided four years ago to move up in weight categories. Nickolas stands 6-foot-2 (1.88 meters) but many thought he was too small for the move.

Continuing at the 68-kilogram (150-pound) category would've been the more conventional route to an Olympic medal.

"Everyone was like, 'What are you doing?' You're too small. You were fine in 68 kilos, just buckle down and make the weight," he said. "I didn't really care about what everybody was saying because the place that I was in, with the sport, I had fallen out of love."

Nickolas had plateaued and had lost the joy of competing, mainly because of what he had to go through mentally and physically to cut weight.

Supported by his coach, Nickolas made the career-changing decision to move up to the heavier division.

"I was a little bit nervous but at that point, it was like, 'I don't have to focus on making weight. I don't have to focus on anything but getting better as an athlete and fighting,'" Nickolas recalled. "It was super freeing, and I found my love for the sport again. It absolutely was the best decision that I probably made in my adult life."

Then there were other problems to solve.

A bone defect in his neck is a condition that, from a doctor's perspective, should prevent Nickolas from being a professional fighter.

"But there's muscle in that place now. So it's strong," Nickolas said. "It's not like it's an Achilles' heel, or something like that. If I was to take a really bad hit in that area then it, it wouldn't be pretty at all. But any hit in this back area is not great."

There was also the complication of a heart condition, discovered in 2020. "That was a big year," he said. "I moved up weight divisions, got heart surgery."

Nickolas had terrible migraines and struggled to breathe before medical tests revealed a hole in his heart, a condition dating from his birth that had aggravated. It wasn't life-threatening, but certainly required quick action.

Rather than hinder his athletic development, it has helped.

"I don't really wheeze anymore ... and I can last longer in the ring. I don't get migraines like that anymore," he said. "It worked out for me very, very well."

The list of setbacks didn't end there, though.

In May, as he prepared for the Olympics at the Pan American championships in Brazil, Nickolas fractured his left forearm during the final. With adrenaline masking the pain, he kept on fighting. And won.

A couple of days later, he was back on the mat at a tournament he needed to attend to ensure a good ranking at the Olympics. The pain was worse, and his arm was sore and throbbing.

"I couldn't make a fist so we had to tape my hand closed so that I could hold a fist and tighten my arm - I had to do that for four fights," he said. "And I got the job done. A little checkpoint going into the Games."

Now comes the final hurdle, in the person of Simone Alessio, the reigning world champion who beat him the final at the worlds. Alessio is Nickolas' nemesis, an Italian athlete standing at 6-foot-6 (1.98-meters).

"When I'm in a short distance with him, my face is on his chest," Nickolas said. "The hardest fight that I have in the division is the guys that are taller than me, you know, the David and Goliath situation," he said. "The last time I fought him, it was tight. So it was essentially down to some technical stuff that he beat me, that's how close we are at this point."

Earthquakes end long skids with victory over Fire

Pec scores twice, Galaxy hand Minnesota United sixth straight loss

CARSON, July 8, (AP): Rookie Gabriel Pec scored two goals, the second in the final minute of regulation play, and the Los Angeles Galaxy handed Minnesota United its sixth loss in a row with a 2-1 victory.

The Galaxy (12-4-7) grabbed a 1-0 lead in the 25th minute when Pec used assists from Riqui Puig and rookie defender Miki Yamane to score. It was the sixth assist for Yamane, who has recorded one in three straight matches.

Minnesota United (8-9-5) didn't pull even until Teemu Pukki took passes from Hassani Dotson and defender Michael Boxall in the 73rd minute and scored his third goal this season. It was the first assist of the season for both players.

Pec's winner in the 90th minute was his ninth netter of the season and came with assists from defender Mauricio Cuevas and Puig. It was the first career assist for Cuevas, who has made five starts and 19 appearances in his two seasons with the Galaxy. Puig's assist was his

10th of the season.

John McCarthy totaled six saves in goal for the Galaxy. Rookie Alec Smir saved two shots in his second straight start for Minnesota United. He allowed three goals in a loss to the Vancouver Whitecaps in his debut on Wednesday.

Kévin Cabral and Cole Bassett both had a goal and an assist in the first half to spark the Colorado Rapids to a 4-1 victory over St. Louis City.

Rookie Hernán López scored early in the second half and William Yarbrough made it stand up for his first clean sheet of the season as the San Jose Earthquakes snapped a six-match losing streak and a nine-match winless run with a 1-0 victory over the Chicago Fire.

The Earthquakes (4-16-2) won for the first time in their third match under interim manager Ian Russell, who took over on June 24 when the club fired Luchi Gonzalez. Russell made 131 appearances for San Jose from 2000-05, winning champi-

onships with the club in 2001 and 2003 and capturing San Jose's first Supporters' Shield in 2005.

The only goal of the match came when López took a pass from Cristian Espinoza four minutes into the second half and scored for the fourth time this season. It was Espinoza's 11th assist of the campaign. López made his 10th start and 12th appearance.

SOCCER

Willy Agada scored twice in the first half, Memo Rodríguez had an early assist and scored the winner late, and Sporting Kansas City survived an own goal by keeper Tim Melia in a 3-2 victory over FC Dallas.

Agada gave Sporting KC (5-13-5) the lead in the 11th minute when he used Rodríguez's sixth assist of the season - off a corner kick - to score with a header from the center of the box.

Agada found the net again in the 23rd minute, taking passes from rookie Alenis Vargas and defender Tim Leibold to score his seventh goal this season. Vargas' assist was the first of his career in his fourth start and 14th appearance. Leibold's helper was his third this season and the sixth in his two years in the league.

Dallas (6-11-5) pulled within 2-1 at halftime when the ball caromed off Melia's foot during a scramble in front of the net in the 30th minute.

Jonathan Rodríguez scored two goals and the Portland Timbers built an early lead on the way to a 4-1 victory over Nashville.

Felipe Mora and Eryk Williamson also scored for the Timbers (9-8-6), who led 4-0 at the half as temperatures in Portland hovered in the 90s.

Mora scored his 10th goal of the season in the 18th minute. Rodríguez then scored two quick goals in the 21st and 24th. Williamson added a fourth in the 29th off a pass from Santi Moreno, prompting Nashville



Sporting Kansas City attacker Johnny Russell, (left), and FC Dallas midfielder Sebastian Lletget battle for the ball during the second half of an MLS soccer match in Kansas City, Kan. Sporting Kansas City won 3-2. (AP)

goalkeeper Joe Willis to yell at his team to step up on defense.

Nashville's Brian Anunga was handed a red card in the 35th minute for a dangerous tackle on David

Agala, and Nashville played down a man the rest of the way. Nashville got on the scoreboard when Sam Surridge scored in the 82nd minute. It was Surridge's team-leading eighth goal of the season.

Thompson wins John Deere Classic



Scotland's Ewen Ferguson poses with the trophy after winning the BMW International Open Golf tournament in Munich/Eichenried, Germany. (AP)

Ferguson triumphs in Germany

SILVIS, July 8, (AP): Davis Thompson won his first PGA Tour title Sunday with a 7-under 64 to set the 72-hole scoring record at the John Deere Classic and leave all the drama to second place.

Staked to a two-shot lead, Thompson made a 45-foot birdie putt on the opening hole and no one got any closer to him the rest of the way. He opened with five birdies in six holes, stretched his lead to six shots and ended up winning by four strokes.

Thompson finished at 28-under 256 to break by one the John Deere Classic record set by Mi-

chael Kim in 2018. The victory gets him into the next three majors, starting with the British Open in two weeks at Royal Troon. He also will make his Masters debut next April.

C.T. Pan birdied the 16th and 17th holes and shot 64 to tie for second with Florida State sopho-

GOLF

more Luke Clanton and Michael Thorbjornsen, the No. 1 player in the PGA Tour University ranking. Each shot 63. Pan got the British Open spot based on his better world ranking.

Clanton became the first amateur since Billy Joe Patton in 1958 to finish in the top 10 in consecutive PGA Tour starts.

Ewen Ferguson closed with a

4-under 68 and won the BMW International Open by two shots for his third European tour title. He also earned a spot in the British Open taking place in his native Scotland this month.

Ferguson chose not to go through British Open qualifying at the start of the week. The victory moved him from No. 61 to No. 16 in the Race to Dubai, and he narrowly became the last player to get one of five spots available to those in the top 20 in the standings not already exempt.

The other players who get Open spots were Jesper Svensson, Laurie Canter, Nacho Elvira and Matteo Manassero.

Ferguson, whose two other European tour victories came in 2022, was tied with Jordan Smith going into the final round. Smith shot 70 and tied for second with David

Micheluzzi (68).

Ben Campbell of New Zealand made up a three-shot deficit against John Catlin with two holes to play with an eagle-birdie finish for a 2-under 71, and then he won the playoff with a birdie to capture the International Series Morocco on the Asian Tour.

Yuta Sugiura held on with an even-par 72 for a one-shot victory over Taiga Semikawa (71) and Yuki Inamori (67) in the Japan PGA Championship on the Japan Golf Tour. The 22-year-old Sugiura, who won the Dunlop Phoenix last year as an amateur, picked up his first title as a pro.

Leona Maguire tuned up for next major by closing with an even-par 73 for a one-shot victory in the Aramco Team Series-London. The Ladies European Tour event ended Friday.

Kuwait Football Association opens 'registration' for coaching courses

KUWAIT CITY, July 8: The Kuwait Football Association has announced the schedule and details for coaching courses for the upcoming 2024-2025 sports season. The courses will begin on August 31 with the first stage of the Level B coaching diploma for Level C coaches, running until September 12. The second stage will take place from September 28 to October 3, and the third stage will be held from October 26 to November 7.

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The Professional Training (PRO) Diploma course for Level A trainers will be conducted in eight stages from September 14 to November 18.

The Level C training diploma course for new trainees will be held in three stages from September 21 to November 18.

The courses will conclude with the Level A training diploma course for Level B trainers, which will be held in six stages from September 14, 2024, to February 21, 2025.

The association emphasizes the importance of registering at least 30 days before the course to complete the necessary procedures. Those interested in applying must submit their applications on the official website of the Kuwait Football Association according to the specified dates and standards.



Kuwait Football Association logo.

KFA reviews coaching candidates for Al-Azraq 'ahead' of WCup qualifiers

By Hassan Musa

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 8: The official account of the 2027 Asian Cup finals recently highlighted Kuwait's qualification for the tournament. Kuwait secured its spot by finishing second in Group A with 7 points, behind Qatar, who topped the group with 13 points, and ahead of Afghanistan and India, both with 5 points.

Kuwait returned to the finals after missing the last two tournaments in 2019 (UAE) and 2023 (Qatar).

Meanwhile, the Kuwait Football Association is meticulously reviewing numerous coaching candidates to find the

SOCCER

best successor to Portuguese coach Rui Pinto, who departed last June. Pinto struggled to achieve the desired results, barely advancing Al-Azraq past the first intermediate level group. The Kuwait Football Association aims to make a careful decision regarding the new coaching staff, especially with Kuwait's World Cup qualifying campaign starting on September 5. Its first match will be against Jordan in Amman.

Kuwait's group includes South Korea, Oman, Iraq, Palestine, and Jordan.

In other news, the South Korean Football Association has announced the appointment of Hong Myung-bo as the head coach for the second time, ending a five-month search following the dismissal of German coach Jurgen Klinsmann in February. Hong, a former player with 136 international caps,



Ulsan Hyundai's head coach Hong Myung-bo waits ahead of the second leg of the AFC Champions League semifinal soccer match against Yokohama F. Marinos in Yokohama, south of Tokyo. (AP)

led South Korea to the semi-finals of the 2002 World Cup and has signed a contract lasting until the 2027 Asian Championship.

Hong, 55, previously coached South Korea from 2013 to 2014 and led Ulsan Hyundai to back-to-back Korean League titles in the past two seasons. His primary task will be to guide South Korea to its 11th consecutive World Cup appearance, following its qualification to the third stage of the Asian qualifiers for the 2026 World Cup. Hong replaces Klinsmann, who left after an unexpected defeat to Jordan in the semi-finals of the last Asian Cup in Qatar.

Montenegrin coach expected to join Al-Abyad in Turkey

Jovic takes helm at Kuwait Club for upcoming season

By Hassan Musa

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 8: The Kuwait Club Board of Directors has reached an agreement with Montenegrin coach Nebojsa Jovic to lead the team in the upcoming 2024-2025 season, succeeding Tunisian Nabil Maaloul.

Jovic brings a distinguished career, having extensive experi-

SOCCER

ence in the Arab region. He has served on the technical staff of Saudi and Jordanian clubs and has held coaching positions with Iraqi Police, Egyptian Zamalek, Tunisian Sfaxien, Qatari Al-Ahly, and UAE's Khor Fakkan. Previously, he also worked as an assistant coach at Kuwait's Kazma Club during the 2012-2013 season.

Starting his career as a player in Montenegro and Yugoslavia, Jovic

played professionally in Turkish, Russian, Swedish, Chinese, and Polish clubs.

The 50-year-old Montenegrin coach is expected to join the Kuwait Club delegation at its training camp in Turkey either today or tomorrow, coinciding with the official announcement of his contract and an explanation regarding the departure of Nabil

Maaloul.

The team has been in Turkey since last Sunday for a training camp, scheduled to continue until July 29, during which it will participate in several friendly matches.

"Al-Abyad" aims to dominate domestically, particularly in the Zain Premier League, after clinching the title last season but missing out on Amir Cup and Crown

Prince's Cup.

Its league title defense begins on August 8 against Al-Qadisiya. Additionally, Kuwait Club seeks success in international competitions, particularly in the Asian Championship and the qualifying play-off for the AFC Champions League 2. It faces a tough challenge against Al-Ahly of Bahrain on August 14 in Manama, with the loser continuing in the Asian Cup competitions.

With the technical staff finalized, Kuwait Club has completed its foreign player contracts, nearing an agreement with Moroccan Yahya Gibran alongside Tunisian Yassine Al-Khanisi, Bahraini Mohamed Marhoun, Argentine Sergio Vitor, and Congolese Arsene Zola.

Meanwhile, Maaloul remained in Tunisia due to personal commitments, missing the team's camp in Turkey. Reports suggest serious negotiations between Maaloul and Moroccan Wydad Club for his potential appointment.



The new Kuwait Club head coach Nebojsa Jovic.

Al-Nasr begin preseason training



Al-Nasr players arrive in Portugal for the preseason training.

ALGARVE, July 8: The Al-Nasr Saudi Club delegation arrived in Algarve, Portugal, two days ago to commence their preseason training camp. During their stay in Algarve, Al-Alamy is set to play six matches before heading to Marbella, Spain, on August 1 to continue their preparations with two additional friendly

matches. Al-Nasr's season opener is scheduled for August 13, where it will face Al-Taawoun in the semi-finals of the 2024 Saudi Super Cup in Abha. Last season, Al-Nasr secured second place in the Saudi Roshan League and were runners-up in the King's Cup, losing to Al-Hilal.



In this file photo, United States' Walker Zimmerman reaches for the ball on a cross during the first half of an international friendly soccer match against Colombia in Carson, Calif. Miles Robinson and Walker Zimmerman along with forward Djordje Mihailovic will be the three coverage on the roster. (AP)

Sports

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Kuwait's preparations for Gulf Cup reach 90% completion, says Sports Authority

KUWAIT CITY, July 8: Acting Director General of the General Sports Authority, Bashar Abdullah Al-Salem, confirmed significant progress in addressing the observations of the Arabian Gulf Cup Federation inspection committee, achieving a 90% completion rate. Remaining tasks will be tackled in the upcoming period.

This update followed the conclusion of the Supreme Committee for hosting Gulf 26's meeting at the authority's headquarters, chaired by Dr. Amthal Al-Huwaila, Minister of Social Affairs, Family and Child Affairs, and Minister of State for Youth Affairs. Government bodies, institutions, and the Kuwait Football Association were also present.

During the meeting, the Supreme Committee members were assigned their responsibilities and agreed to adhere to the specified timetable. The Executive Office of the Supreme Committee was formed, led by Dr. Al-Huwaila as Chair, and Bashar Abdullah as Vice Chair. Turki Al-Mutairi, Assistant Undersecretary of the Ministry of Information

for Television Affairs, and Hayef Al-Daihani, Vice Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Kuwait Football Association, were appointed as members.

Abdullah highlighted the committee's unanimous recognition of Kuwait's hosting of the 26th Arabian Gulf Cup in late December as not only a significant sporting event

SOCCER

but also a gathering of Gulf youth. The tournament will garner attention from GCC leaders, Gulf Football Federation heads, national officials, and regional stakeholders, emphasizing its importance.

Preparations are underway to ensure all construction and organizational tasks are completed before the September inspection committee visit, a final check before the tournament commences. Kuwait is poised to host Gulf 26 with readiness in both structural and organizational aspects, according to Acting Director General Bashar Abdullah.



Supreme Committee for Gulf Cup meeting chaired by Dr. Amthal Al-Huwaila.

Kuwaitis shine at Arab Youth Championship



Winners celebrate on the podium as officials look on after the awarding ceremony.

CAIRO, July 8: Hussein Dashti, Secretary General of the Athletics Federation, commended the exceptional performance and spirited efforts of Kuwaiti athletes at the Arab

ATHLETICS

Youth Championship (under 23) currently underway in Egypt, concluding on July 9.

Kuwait's athletes have excelled, with Hussein Al-Tamimi clinching a gold medal in shot put, Abdullah

Al-Azmi securing a bronze in long jump, and Abdullah Al-Manayes achieving bronze in the 110-meter hurdles.

Dashti remarked, "The tournament features fierce competition among Arab champions vying for top honors. Kuwait's victories represent a notable achievement, showcasing the strength of competition among athletes from across the Arab world." He expressed optimism for additional medal successes as the tournament draws to a close.

As head of the delegation, Dashti dedicated these achievements by Kuwaiti heroes to the political leadership and the people of Kuwait.

Navas likely to be tasked with marking Mbappé

Spain face France with a spot in final on the line

MUNICH, July 8, (AP): Spain and France meet in the semifinals of the European Championship on Tuesday. The match pits one of the highest-scoring teams at the tournament against one of the lowest as France's star forward Kylian Mbappé has struggled to get to grips with his mask. Kickoff is at 9 p.m. local time (1900 GMT) in Munich. Here's what to know about the match:

The winner will play England or the Netherlands in the final on Sunday in Berlin. Their semifinal is on Wednesday.

Spain and France's quarterfinals both went to extra time. Substitute Mikel Merino's game-winning goal in the last minute of extra time handed Spain a 2-1 victory over host nation Germany, while France needed penalties to see off Portugal after the match ended goalless.

No France player has scored from open play at Euro 2024. The French have only scored through two own goals and a penalty from Mbappé. Spain has netted 11 times.

Mbappé, who will be facing several of his new Real Madrid teammates, will again be wearing a protective mask after sustaining a broken nose in France's group opener against Austria.

Spain, which is chasing a record fourth European Championship title, has been perfect in Germany. It was the only team to win all its group stage matches, while France could only muster draws against Poland and the Netherlands after a narrow win over Austria.

Spain paid the price for its dramatic win over Germany and a number of players will miss the semifinal -

and in some cases the final should La Roja get there - because of suspension or injury.

Midfielder Pedri had to come off in the eighth minute against Germany with a knee injury following a hefty challenge from Toni Kroos and has been ruled out of the rest of Euro 2024. He will again be replaced by Dani Olmo - who came on for the 21-year-old and went on to score the opener as well as set up Merino's winner.

Dani Carvajal was sent off late in extra time for a second yellow card and will be suspended against France, as will fellow defender Robin le Nor-



Spain's Nico Williams, (left), and his teammate Spain's Lamine Yamal take part in a training session ahead of Tuesday's Euro 2024, semifinal soccer match against France in Donaueschingen, Germany. (AP)

mand after picking up another booking. Veteran Jesús Navas is likely to be tasked with marking Mbappé.

France coach Didier Deschamps has no injury problems as Marcus Thuram returned to training on Sunday, alleviating concerns he could miss the semifinal after taking a blow to his thigh at the end of the match against Portugal.

Spain and France have only conceded three goals between them. The only time France goalkeeper Mike Maignan had to pick the ball out of his net was Poland's retaken penalty in the group stage, while Spain conceded against Georgia and Germany. The teams have met 36 times, with Spain winning 16 to France's 13 - including five of the past eight.

This is Spain's sixth European Championship semifinal. It has only

SOCCER

once failed to advance to the trophy match, losing on penalties to eventual champion Italy at Euro 2020.

France has reached the semifinals on five previous occasions, winning three.

France has reached the final in three of last four major tournaments, losing 1-0 after extra time to Portugal at Euro 2016 and to Argentina on penalties in the 2022 World Cup, but beating Croatia to claim its second world title in 2018.

"We're in the semifinals and it's something we shouldn't take for granted, even if we may be used to it recently. Now we go to win it." - France coach Didier Deschamps.

"Very few people gave us a chance

Musetti makes it 3 Italians in quarters

Rybakina, Svitolina advance

LONDON, July 8, (AP): Lorenzo Musetti just needed a little time to adjust.

To life and to 6-foot-8 Giovanni Mpetshi Perricard's serve.

Musetti advanced to the first Grand Slam quarterfinals of his career on Monday at Wimbledon by beating the 21-year-old Frenchman 4-6, 6-3, 6-3, 6-2.

Musetti joins No. 1 Jannik Sinner and women's No. 7 Jasmine Paolini in collectively making Italian history: it's the first time three Italians have reached the quarterfinals at the same Grand Slam.

The No. 25-seeded Musetti dropped to the grass when Mpetshi Perricard sent a forehand long to end a 30-stroke rally and the match. His back to the ground, the 22-year-old Italian's chest heaved.

After an up-and-down season, Musetti is on quite a roll at the All England Club. He became a father in March.



Lorenzo Musetti of Italy plays a backhand return to Giovanni Mpetshi Perricard of France during their fourth round match at the Wimbledon tennis championships in London. (AP)

"It's been almost a year, really challenging with a lot of new experiences with the pregnancy of my

girlfriend, and becoming a father. A lot of things happened and changed," Musetti said in an on-court interview.

"I needed more time to find a balance on everything."

He needed a set to find a balance on the hard-serving Mpetshi Perricard, who amassed 105 aces in three victories to reach the fourth round. Monday was his birthday.

Musetti converted five of 15 break point opportunities.

TENNIS

"Such a big day for me. I'm really happy and proud of this win against a really tough opponent. I struggled a little bit at the beginning - huge serve," he said. "You can imagine how tough it is to return on that. I'm a little bit shaking still."

Musetti will next face either No. 4 Alexander Zverev or No. 13 Taylor Fritz.

No. 9 Alex de Minaur reached his first Wimbledon quarterfinal by eliminating 20-year-old Arthur Fils of France 6-2, 6-4, 4-6, 6-3. The 25-year-old Australian will next face either seven-time Wimbledon champion Novak Djokovic or No. 15 Holger Rune.

De Minaur was walking gingerly after closing out the match with a forehand volley winner.

"I'll be alright. I'll find a way," he said in an on-court interview.

On the women's side, No. 21 Elena Svitolina of Ukraine beat Wang Xinyu 6-2, 6-1 on a "very difficult day" for her home country. A major Russian missile attack across Ukraine killed dozens and injured more than 150 people, officials said.

Svitolina will play 2022 Wimbledon champion Elena Rybakina in the quarterfinals.

Rybakina, the No. 4 seed, advanced earlier Monday when Anna Kalinskaya retired in the second set because of an injury. Rybakina was leading 6-3, 3-0 when the 17th-seeded Kalinskaya stopped playing. Kalinskaya had taken a medical timeout in the first set, with attention paid to her neck and right forearm.

Rybakina has now won 18 of 20 matches in her career at the All England Club to join Ann Jones and Steffi Graf as the only players in the Open Era to have a 90% win rate in women's singles at Wimbledon.

The 25-year-old Rybakina is the highest-seeded woman remaining in the draw.

"My serve helps me a lot and especially when the roof is closed there is no wind, no conditions, so it's perfect for my game," she said after hitting seven aces. "I'm really happy the way I played my last two matches, so really enjoying my time here."

The All England Club isn't worried about fans skipping Wimbledon because of England's run in soccer's European Championship.

Canada not afraid of Argentina in Copa America, says Marsch

NEW JERSEY, July 8, (Xinhua): Canada head coach Jesse Marsch said on Sunday that his players have self belief in their ability to beat world champions Argentina in their Copa America semifinal.

Canada ranks the 48th and Argentina first in FIFA's current world rankings, but that means little as they prepare for Tuesday's match in New Jersey.

"We know how good Argentina is because we played against them," Marsch said of his team's 2-0 loss to the Albiceleste in the group stage.

"But we also had success in certain moments. I said after the match that we probably had to play a perfect game and even then it might not have been enough. But we're certainly not afraid," Marsch said. "They've only lost twice in five years. [Lionel] Messi is the best player to have ever played the

game. But we believe we have a chance and that's the way we're preparing ourselves." Both sides advanced to the competition's last four by winning their respective quarterfinals on penalties. Argentina overcame Ecuador 4-2 in their shootout after the scores were locked at 1-1, while Canada prevailed 4-3 against Venezuela, also following a 1-1 scoreline at the end of 90 minutes.

Marsch said he expects the South American giants to raise their game to another level as the stakes increase in the continental tournament.

"It's helpful that we've already played against Argentina, so it's less of an unknown," he said. "But the closer good teams get to titles, the more they're able to kick themselves into another gear. So, I expect Argentina to deliver their best performance yet on Tuesday."

and staying under the radar helped us start the tournament with confidence. Spain is a team to respect. I knew we had a great team and that's how it turned out." - Spain defender Marc Cucurella.

"It's natural for him. He has this gift of carrying the team, the group. He gives ideas, advice to the players.

He was born for that. He was born to pull the group up." - France striker Randal Kolo Muani on Mbappé's captaincy.

"My players are insatiable. There's always room for improvement, of course, but we can't question their pride, quality and commitment." - Spain coach Luis de la Fuente.