



SEPARATE SUPPLY SYSTEM SOUGHT TO MEET GROWING DEMAND

MEW report highlights June power usage

Mercury to hit 50°C in rising dust over weekend

'Awareness must'

Follow rules to avert fires: KFF

KUWAIT CITY, July 18, (KUNA): The Kuwaiti Fire Force (KFF) on Thursday called on citizens and residents to follow the safety guidelines and instructions in a bid to prevent fires, said a senior KFF official.

In his interview with Kuwait News Agency (KUNA), KFF Director Brig. Mohammad Al-Ghareeb asserted that everyone must possess fire prevention equipment and must know how to use them, including fire blankets, smoke and gas detectors, and fire extinguishers.

He also emphasized the importance of teaching security personnel, tenants, and everyone living in residential and commercial buildings how to use such tools in order to prevent and deal with emergencies.

Al-Ghareeb cited many causes of fires in residential buildings, with electricity being the most prominent, explaining that overloading electrical circuits often lead to electrical faults.

He also pointed to the need to shut off unnecessary devices and gadgets, especially when leaving the building, so as to reduce energy consumption and prevent electrical faults that might lead to fire.

He added that gas stoves are also hazardous, and it is crucial to maintain them and ensure all gas cylinders are safe and not leaking, underscoring that turning off the gas lever when not in use significantly contributes to stove safety.

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NewsWatch

ANKARA: Kuwaiti First Deputy Prime Minister, Defense Minister and Interior Minister **Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah** on Thursday visited Kuwait's Minister of Oil **Imad Al-Atiqi in Turkiye**, where he is receiving medical treatment, representing His Highness the Amir **Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah**. (KUNA)

KUWAIT CITY: Undersecretary of the Kuwaiti Ministry of Defense **Sheikh Dr. Abdullah Mishal Al-Sabah** discussed issues of common interest and boosting bilateral cooperation with Spanish State Secretary for Foreign and Global Affairs **Diego Martinez** on Thursday.

In a press statement, the Ministry of Defense said that **Sheikh Abdullah Al-Sabah** received the Spanish secretary, accompanied by Ambassador of Spain to Kuwait **Miguel Aguilar**, where they discussed bilateral relations in the military defense field. (KUNA)

JEDDAH: Saudi Crown Prince and Prime Minister **Mohammad bin Salman** spoke to Russian President **Vladimir Putin** on a range of bilateral issues.

In a phone conversation, initiated by the Crown Prince on Wednesday, they reviewed the friendly relations and ways to promote cooperation between the Kingdom of **Saudi Arabia** and the Russian Federation in various areas, the Saudi Press Agency (SPA) reported. (KUNA)



KUNA photo
Deputy Foreign Minister Ambassador Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah receives Pakistani Ambassador to Kuwait Malik Muhammad Farouq.

Amir, PM receive letters from Pakistan PM

KUWAIT CITY, July 18, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received a letter from Prime Minister of Pakistan Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday.

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah also received a similar letter from Sharif.

The letters were received by Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Ambassador Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, while receiving the outgoing Pakistani Ambassador to Kuwait Malik Farouq.



Wind and dust accompany the hot weather prevailing in the country.

Photo by Samer Shaqair



KUNA photo
Chief of the General Staff of the Kuwaiti Army, Lieutenant General Pilot Bandar Al-Muzain and the accompanying delegation at the headquarters of the Islamic Military Alliance in Riyadh.

Kuwait, Saudi Arabia eye boost in military ties

Chief of General Staff of Kuwait's Armed Forces Lt. Gen. Bandar Al-Muzain and his Saudi counterpart Lt. Gen. Fayyad al-Ruwaili dealt with means of boosting mutual collaboration on Wednesday.

Al-Ruwaili met with Al-Muzain who is paying an official visit to Saudi Arabia, Saudi Ministry of Defense said in a statement.

The meeting also covered bilateral ties between the two countries, and means of enhancing and developing defensive and military fields, it added. Lieutenant General Bandar Al-Muzain praised the "professional" techniques employed by a Saudi-led Islamic alliance to fight terrorism, saying such methods are instru-

mental in keeping at bay the threats of extremist groups.

Amid his visit to the headquarters of the Islamic Military Counter Terrorism Coalition, the Kuwaiti army chief was briefed on the latest endeavors the military body has taken, which include researches and studies that aim to push forward the fight against terrorism.

Acknowledging Kuwait's contributions towards counter-terrorism efforts, the pan-Islamic coalition's secretary general Major General Mohammad Al-Moghedi said these Kuwaiti initiatives have given impetus to global anti-terrorism operations. (KUNA)

Kuwait nat'l panel for preventing human trafficking signs protocol with UN office

KUWAIT CITY, July 18, (KUNA): Acting Undersecretary of the Ministry of Justice Tariq Al-Asfour signed Wednesday a protocol of cooperation with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime in the GCC member states.

Following signing the protocol, Al-Asfour, also Deputy Chairman of Permanent National Committee for Implementing the National Strategy for the Prevention of Trafficking in Persons and Smuggling of Migrants, said

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Israeli military operations aim to destroy & terrorize Palestinians

NEW YORK, July 18, (Agencies): Kuwait's Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Al-Yahya said Wednesday that Israeli occupation military operations seek to destroy and terrorize Palestinians.

Delivering Kuwait's speech before a UN Security Council session on the situation in the Middle East, Al-Yahya said Gaza has turned into a bleak landscape of destruction, with 40,000 deaths, mostly women and children.

The total number of victims under the rubble is unknown, he added.

Leading Kuwait's delegation to the meeting, Al-Yahya said: "Israel has turned schools into battlefields and hospitals into landscapes of pain and powerlessness".

Despite the efforts to bring an end to these attacks, Israel continues to cut lives short without any distinction, he noted. He went to say that the Israeli authorities are committing war



Al-Yahya

crimes, crimes against humanity and ethnic cleansing. Calling for unhindered delivery of humanitarian assistance across Gaza, Kuwait's top diplomat underlined the essential role of UNRWA in supporting the Palestinian people in their darkest hour.

Al-Yahya further warned against double standards and expressed support for all initiatives to reach a just and lasting solution to the Palestinian question.

He highlighted Israeli's continued criminal practices and violations of international law, referring to its unilateral decisions aiming to change the current legal and historic status of the occupied territories amid the failure of the UN Security Council to assume its responsibilities.

Al-Yahya renewed Kuwait's firm solidarity with the brotherly Palestinian people who have been struggling to obtain their legitimate rights, topped with establishing their independent state based on June 4 1967, achieving a comprehensive and fair peace, in line with the relevant international resolutions and references, to reach a fair and lasting solution to the Palestinian cause.

Continued on Page 5

Kuwait hospital in first-ever ME vascular surgery

KUWAIT CITY, July 18, (KUNA): Mubarak Al-Kabeer Hospital's vascular surgery and catheterization team conducted a surgery for the Aortic Thoracic Aneurysm Arch, the first of its kind in the Middle East.

In a statement on Thursday, the hospital said the surgery involves fixing a stent to fit the size of arteries of the patient, and later implanting it through catheterization, adding that the surgery was led by Dr. Abdullah Al-Fawwaz.

This technique is a safer substitute for traditional stents, which is designed according to the case and have a high cost, it noted.

Studies showed that this technique also reduces the risk of stroke that sometimes follow traditional stent



Dr Al-Fawwaz

implanting, said the hospital. The surgery is done through one large incision for perfusion in the Brachiocephalic artery and the left common carotid artery, as well as a small incision for the left subclavian artery.

The surgery was done through local anesthesia, and the patient was discharged from the hospital the next day without any side effects, the

statement said.

By Mohammad Ghanem

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff and Agencies

KUWAIT CITY, July 18: The Ministry of Electricity and Water's monthly statistical report for June revealed significant electrical extension activities across various sectors. A total of 536 properties received electrical extensions, with a combined production capacity of 68,164 kilowatts.

Private housing led the extensions, with 499 plots receiving electricity. This sector accounted for a substantial 71 percent of the total extensions, amounting to 48,397 kilowatts.

The industrial sector ranked second, with electricity extended to 8 industrial plots. This sector's total load was 14,475 kilowatts, representing 21 percent of the total electrical loads.

The government sector followed, with 8 government plots receiving electrical extensions totaling 2,009 kilowatts, accounting for 2.9 percent of the total loads for June.

The commercial sector saw extensions to 5 plots, with a total load of 1,279 kilowatts, making up 1.9 percent of the total electrical extensions.

The investment sector received electrical extensions for 3 plots, totaling 1,033 kilowatts and representing 1.5 percent of the total.

The agricultural sector, with 13 plots, had a total load of 969 kilowatts, accounting for 1.4 percent of the total electrical extensions.

These figures highlight the Ministry's efforts to enhance electrical infrastructure across various sectors, reflecting the ongoing development and expansion within the country.

Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy said the independent supplier system has become the most accepted option for producing electricity, reports Al-Anba daily quoting MEW sources.

The final report prepared by the Ministry's advisors strongly recommends this system as it is cost-effective, time-efficient, and reduces bureaucracy. The move towards its approval is imminent, especially since the Council of Ministers has repeatedly tasked the Ministry of Electricity to coordinate with the "Fatwa and Legislation" department on this matter.

Partnership

Establishing electricity and water production stations through direct offering or partnership systems can take up to five years or more. This lengthy process poses a significant obstacle in meeting the increasing demand for electricity and water.

The government spends over 2.5 billion dinars annually on these services, a cost that continues to rise. The cost of producing electricity from the Ministry's generating stations is 23 fils per kilowatt, whereas production from a private sector station is around 12 fils.

Annual electricity consumption increases by 5-6%, raising the risk of shortages during peak summer times. This risk is exacerbated by the lack of new generating stations ready for operation until 2028.

The independent supplier system, where investors build, operate, and maintain generation stations at their own expense and sell electricity at reduced prices to the state, has proven successful in Gulf countries and globally. This system allows for faster and easier project implementation compared to partnership contracts.

MEW aims to meet the growing demand for electrical energy through contributions from international developers who will finance, construct, manage, and operate power production and water desalination plants under the independent supplier system.

This approach has become the only viable solution for financing the construction and operation of these facilities, with the government purchasing electricity or water at an agreed tariff through an energy purchase agreement with the developer.

The government will not participate in the capital, and the investor will bear all costs for implementing, operating, and maintaining the project for up to 25 years. This arrangement eliminates risks for the government and fosters competition among companies to supply electricity at the lowest cost, resulting in financial savings for the state.

Implementing the independent supplier system guarantees the provision of electricity and water. Decree No. 207 of 2023 allows the Ministry of Electricity to purchase electricity and water from external sources.

The Ministry is encouraged to initiate the offering of solar energy plants under this system at no cost to the state and to announce its need to purchase electrical energy or water. International developers can then submit initiatives through the Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority, with the Ministry selecting the best proposals based on price and timetable.

Continued on Page 5

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Seven facilities revitalized

Collaborative initiative ensures a smooth start to new school year

KUWAIT CITY, July 18: In a collaborative effort to ensure a smooth start to the new school year, Jahra Governor Hamad Al-Habashi, along with Fahd Al-Haran, Chairman of the Board of Directors of Jaber Al-Ahmad Cooperative Society, have directed the preparation, maintenance, and cleaning of seven schools in Al-Mutlaa City, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The initiative aims to ready these educational institutions to welcome students effectively. Al-Habashi commended the productive partnership between the Ministry of Social Affairs,

represented by Ahmed Al-Anzi, Acting Assistant Undersecretary for the Cooperation Sector, and the Ministry of Education, represented by Jassim Bu Hamad, Director of the Jahra Educational District.

He acknowledged their efforts in addressing the challenges facing the residents of Al-Mutlaa.

This coordinated effort underscores the commitment of local authorities and cooperative societies to support educational infrastructure, ensuring a conducive learning environment for students in Jahra.



Jahra Governor Hamad Al-Habashi, with Fahd Al-Haran, Chairman of the Board of Directors of Jaber Al-Ahmad Cooperative Society.

Awqaf sees record participation rate in Hajj campaign evaluation

KUWAIT CITY, July 18: The Ministry of Awqaf announced a significant milestone in its Hajj administration, achieving the highest participation rate by pilgrims in evaluating Hajj campaigns this year, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

According to the Studies and Follow-up Department, approximately 60 percent of the total number of pilgrims participated in this evaluation.

This record participation is seen as a testament to the great confidence that pilgrims place in the Hajj and Umrah Affairs Department.

It also highlights the Ministry's commitment to providing exceptional services and facilities to the guests of God. The Ministry expressed its gratitude to all pilgrims who took part in the evaluation, recognizing their contribution to achieving this notable participation rate.

The Ministry emphasized its ongoing efforts to improve and develop services to ensure the comfort and satisfaction of pilgrims. It aims to build on this success and achieve even greater milestones in the coming years.

Municipality grants final approval for Qibla plot expansion, reorganization

Jahra Council nods dairy, sports and power projects

By Inaas Awadh
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 18: The Director of the Municipality, Saud Al-Dubous, has issued a final approval for the reorganization of part of Plot No. (1) in the Qibla area. This approval aligns with the provisions of Decree-Law No. (4) of 1978 concerning the organization of regulatory plots and Ministerial Resolution No. (325/2023) related to the rules and procedures for the organization of such plots.

The reorganization includes amending the shape and area of Plot No. 5 of Survey Plan No. M/39527 for commercial use and adjusting the location of surface parking lots.

The area of the plot after reorganization is 1,239 square meters, up from its previous area of 826 square meters. This reorganization has added 413 square meters to the plot, which is approximately 50% of the original plot's area, fulfilling the owner's request to purchase this additional land from the state.

According to the technical opinion for the transaction, a copy of which was obtained by Al-Seyassah, several conditions must be met.

The responses from the Sub-Committee for Public Facilities and Services must be adhered to, with coordination before implementation.

A key condition from the General Traffic Department, represented by the Ministry of Interior, specifies that no building permits for commercial and investment projects will be issued



Dr. Amthal Al-Huwaila, Minister of Social Affairs with board members.

Al-Huwaila empowers women in co-op sector

Dr. Amthal Al-Huwaila, Minister of Social Affairs, Family and Childhood Affairs, and Minister of State for Youth Affairs, recently appointed a temporary board of directors for the Hadiya Cooperative Society, comprising female supervisors from the ministry. This initiative aims to bolster the participation of Kuwaiti women in the cooperative sector, reports Al-Jarida daily.

During the council's session, Dr. Al-Huwaila empha-

sized the importance of safeguarding shareholders' rights and public funds. She reiterated the Ministry's commitment to supporting and promoting cooperative endeavors to achieve their objectives.

Dr. Al-Huwaila also underscored the Ministry's resolve to enforce legal measures against any violations that jeopardize shareholders' rights or misuse public funds.

for the reorganized plot until a traffic study has been submitted.

This approval marks a significant step in the development and commercial use of the Al-Qibla area, reflecting ongoing efforts to enhance urban infrastructure and regulatory compliance.

Meanwhile, the Jahra Governorate Committee in the Municipal Council, headed by council member Abdullah Al-Enezi, held its second meeting for

the third round on Wednesday, during which it approved the following:

- Request of Kuwaiti Dairy Company on licensing a canteen to serve the company and its employees within the plot allocated to it in Sulaibiya Agricultural Area;

- Request of the Public Sports Authority to allocate surface parking lots for the Equestrian Club in Jahra;

- Request of the Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy

to allocate a secondary power transmission station in Block 9, Sulaibiya Agricultural Area.

The committee referred to the executive branch the request of Jahra Governorate regarding the removal of waste landfills and old bicycles for study.

It retained on its agenda the request of the Public Authority for Industry to set back the eastern side of Plot No. 2A, Block 1, Sulaibiya.

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Co-op societies 'empower' Kuwaiti youth with summer employment opportunities

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

KUWAIT CITY, July 18: Several cooperative societies have initiated plans to engage youth during the summer vacation.

Reliable sources told the Al-Seyassah daily that the Cooperative Societies Union, following directives from the Ministry of Social Affairs, has issued a circular to all societies emphasizing the necessity of employing Kuwaiti students during the summer.

According to the circular, those eligible for employment include shareholders, their children, and grandchildren residing within the association's operational area, regardless of gender.

The target group comprises high school students in the tenth and eleventh grades. Employment will require a commitment of four hours per day, with attendance and departure recorded via fingerprint.

The students will receive a reward ranging between 100 and 200 dinars, as determined by each association. Payment will be based on the principle of "pay for work" within the association's general expenses.

Disbursement of payments will occur only after approval by the administrative supervisor and verification of each student's attendance and departure. The total payouts will range from 10,000 to 15,000 dinars, based on the association's discretion.

If the number of applicants exceeds the required positions, selection will be conducted by lottery, either electronically or manually, under the supervision of the administrative supervisor and a member of the board of directors.

The students will be divided into two groups, one for July and another for August. The number of participating students will depend on the salary budgeted by each association and the amount allocated from public expenses.

Two companies excluded

CAPT opens 3 bids for railway project

By Mohammed Ghanem
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 18: According to informed sources at the Public Authority for Roads and Transportation (PART), the Central Agency for Public Tenders (CAPT), during its ninth meeting, approved the authority's request to open the envelopes of three companies that meet the conditions and requirements for the tender for the study and detailed design work project and the preparation of documents for the first phase of the railway project.

They revealed the exclusion of two companies, one of which did not specify the primary insurance.

The sources explained that the acceptance and exclusion of companies was carried out based on a study conducted by the technical committee that specializes in studying the bids.

It will take into account the directive of the Council of Ministers issued the day before yesterday to expedite the project procedures in terms of studying the bids and preparing technical reports on the scheduled dates.

After that, a decision will be made to award the company qualified to carry out the study, which will be immediately followed by putting the project forward for implementation. The first phase of the railway project involves a length of 111 kilometers, which will be followed by the second phase with a length of 154 kilometers, reaching a total of 265 kilometers.

The sources affirmed PART's keenness to overcome all obstacles in the implementation of the project.



Social care homes complex in Sulaibikhat.

MoSA plans major upgrade for Sulaibikhat social care homes

KUWAIT CITY, July 18: The Ministry of Social Affairs is finalizing plans to undertake a comprehensive renovation and development project for the Social Care Homes complex in Sulaibikhat, reports Al-Jarida daily.

The initiative, spearheaded by Dr. Badr Al-Adwani, Assistant Undersecretary for the Financial and Administrative Affairs Sector, has the approval of Amthal Al-Huwaila, the Minister of Social Affairs, and other ministry leaders. This project is deemed crucial due to the aging infrastructure of the complex, which was originally constructed decades ago and is now in urgent need of modernization.

Sources close to the matter disclosed that the ministry has engaged prominent Kuwaiti companies renowned for their expertise in designing and constructing large-scale projects such as the Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Cultural Center (Opera House) and Al-Shaddadiya University.

These companies have been tasked with executing a modernization plan that aligns with contemporary international standards while preserving Kuwait's rich cultural heritage. The initial phase of the project is budgeted at 300 thousand Kuwaiti dinars and is expected to span one year. During this period, comprehensive data collection will be conducted, necessary permits will be secured from relevant governmental bodies, and initial infrastructure designs will be finalized. Subsequent phases will encompass the structural design and construction of new facilities.

Regarding the current residents of the Social Care Homes, including juveniles, family foster children, and the elderly, discussions are ongoing regarding the provision of temporary alternative accommodations during the renovation period.

Initiative aims to boost entrepreneurship and streamline regulatory processes

Minister Al-Omar introduces new rules for free business activities

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

KUWAIT CITY, July 18: The Minister of Commerce and Industry and Minister of State for Communications Affairs, Omar Saud Al-Omar, has issued Ministerial Resolution No. 168 of 2024. This resolution aims to regulate free business activities and reintegrate and regulate micro-activities and activities of a special nature.

The new decision outlines the conditions for obtaining commercial licenses through the government application (Sahel Business) or the Ministry of Commerce and Industry's website.

To facilitate the licensing process for entrepreneurs and business owners, the resolution introduces the option to use an email approved by the Public Authority for Civil Information instead of a post office box.

Additionally, the resolution extends the licensing period from three to four years and permits the inclusion

of multiple activities under a single license, provided these activities are similar or complementary to the existing commercial license.

License holders are now required to disclose their license number on their company's websites and social media accounts. All commercial transactions must be conducted through electronic payment methods only.

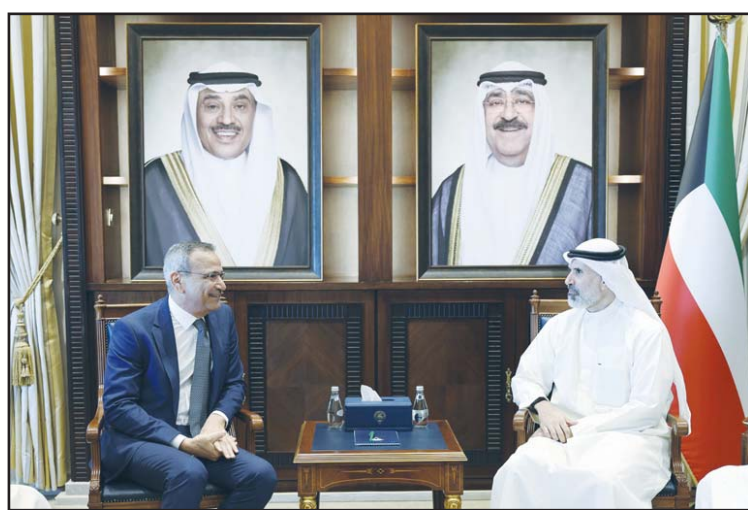
The decision also establishes several controls for disbursing national labor support. These include submitting a bank statement for the licensed company, an annual budget, and listing the accounts of the company's electronic and social media platforms.

Any other documents specified by the Minister or his delegate must also be provided. The first year will be calculated from the date of license issuance.

This resolution represents a significant step towards facilitating and modernizing business operations in Kuwait, ensuring smoother processes for entrepreneurs and business owners.



Minister Omar Saud Al-Omar



KUNA photo
Kuwaiti Deputy Foreign Minister Ambassador Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah Wednesday received outgoing World Food Programme (WFP) Representative to the GCC Abdel-Mageed Yahia.

New source for humanitarian gains

Proposal to harvest mosque 'dates' for charity and profit

By Najeh Bilal

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 18: Islamic preacher Sheikh Saleh Al-Ghanim has called on Kuwait's Ministry of Awaqaf and Islamic Affairs to implement a new initiative: harvesting the date crops from palm trees located in mosques across the country.

His proposal suggests that these dates be sold or donated to disaster-stricken countries, providing a dual benefit of resource management and humanitarian aid.

Sheikh Al-Ghanim emphasized that this initiative would prevent the wastage of the Ministry's resources and create a new source of financial returns.

He highlighted the potential economic benefits, noting that each

mosque in Kuwait typically has at least thirty palm trees, which collectively produce approximately 250 kilograms of dates annually.

Addressing the issue of waste and theft, Sheikh Al-Ghanim pointed out that allowing the dates to remain on the trees until they dry up and fall or are stolen by marginal workers is unacceptable. He stressed that it is forbidden to let such valuable resources go to waste.

By harvesting and utilizing these date crops, the Ministry can ensure that the fruits of the palm trees are put to good use, either by generating income or by aiding those in need.

Sheikh Al-Ghanim's proposal underscores the importance of resource conservation and the potential for community contributions to broader humanitarian efforts.

Eco-friendly solution

Vertical boat docks unveiled

KUWAIT CITY, July 18: A group of graduating female students at the Department of Mechanical Engineering in Kuwait University consisting of Manar Manahi, Aisha Al-Amiri, Noura Al-Subaie, Lulwah Al-Subat and Wasita Al-Shammari presented their thesis entitled, 'Vertical Docks for Boats,' which aims to solve the problem of the scarcity of docks in the country, reports Al-Jarida daily.

The engineering student told the daily that around 20,000 boats are officially registered in the concerned authorities; but there are only 3,000 docks in the country. They pointed that the lack of docks is a major problem.

They explained that the overcrowding of boats contributed to the illegal and random parking of boats in residential areas. They said boat owners are being fined for doing so, considering the exorbitant cost of renting marinas -- around KD20,000 or more annually.

They added "the project was designed based on a system for docking boats vertically and in a circular motion. This system is sufficient for eight boats to dock on an area measuring 150 cubic meters only. It is completely covered, runs on solar energy and cooling devices are provided. It protects the boats from hot or humid climatic conditions."

Calls for action against plastic pollution

Kuwait Diving Team urges protection of endangered sea turtles in Az Zour

KUWAIT CITY, July 18, (KUNA): Kuwait Diving Team called Thursday for protecting the rare and nearly extinct sea turtles, especially the ones situated in Az Zour, South of the country.

Team leader, Waleed Al-Fadhel spoke to KUNA of the new phenomenon taking place in Az Zour, saying they have identified a couple of turtles residing on the sands.

Al-Fadhel called on sea-goers to refrain from approaching the sea turtles, poaching them or compromising their nests.

He explained that discarded plastic nets could potentially suffocate the turtles, adding that clear plastic bags are also a suffocation hazard as turtles consume them believing them to be jellyfish. The plastic bags could also obstruct their congestion

tracks, prohibiting them from consuming sufficient food.

Currently, sea turtle nests in Kuwait are limited to Qaruh Island, where they are being monitored and observed by researchers.

Since its establishment in 1986, Kuwait Diving Team has conducted a variety of activities to protect the turtles and rescue them, Al-Fadhel elucidated.

Cutting of the cake ceremony during the Asian Cooperation Dialogue (ACD) Forum.

Students urged to follow personal interests

PAAET adapts to labor market needs

KUWAIT CITY, July 18: Dean of the College of Basic Education at the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training (PAAET) Dr. Mubarak Al-Thorwah confirmed

that the college has a broad and solid plan to meet the needs of the labor market; stressing that the college is doing its best to match the preferences and interests of students, reports

Al-Jarida daily.

In a press statement when the Public Relations Department at PAAET launched the 'My Beginnings Are Right' campaign recently, Al-Thorwah stated that the College of Basic Education is considered one of the largest colleges at PAAET. He said the college offers diverse courses and it has various departments like Islamic Studies, Arabic Language, Educational Technology, English Language, Physical Education, Music Education, Art Education and Interior Design. He added these departments branch out to many specializations.

He advised students to choose courses according to their preferences, interests and capabilities, instead of succumbing to peer pressure.

functional maternity wards, while it has seen an influx of critical patients as of late, he cited, saying the hospital has the capacity and critical supplies needed to treat them.

He went on to express his appreciation of Kuwait's support, singling out the "exceptional" efforts of Kuwait's Red Crescent Society and the charity's cooperation with its Palestinian counterparts, he underlined.

Meanwhile, Arab League Secretary General Ahmad Abul-Gheit strongly condemned the Israeli occupation's Knesset vote to reject a Palestinian statehood.

In a statement on Thursday, Abul-Gheit said this is an attempt by the Israeli occupation forces to "legalize" its occupation of Palestine and deny the rights of Palestinians.

The move, which came at a time when Israeli occupation Minister of National Security Itamar Ben-Gvir broke into Al-Aqsa Mosque, is a new violation of previously-signed agreements and the international law, he added.

Secretary-General of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Jassem Al-Budaiwi Thursday emphatically condemned the Israeli occupation Knesset's resolution that rejected the establishment of a Palestinian statehood.

In a press statement, Al-Budaiwi billed the move as an obvious breach of relevant international resolutions and proof of the occupation's insistence on fueling tensions and jeopardizing regional and world security and stability.

He called on the international community to necessarily decry and condemn this unjust resolution, which reflects the Israeli occupation forces' intention to widen the conflict.

persons. Kuwait has spared no efforts to boost cooperation between the two sides, and its goals regarding the prevention of trafficking in persons as well as the protection of victims in line with deals, standards and rules, he affirmed.

The committee was set up upon the cabinet's decree on February 5, 2018, and is chaired by the Minister of Justice, Awaqaf and Islamic Affairs Dr. Mohammad Al-Wasmi. The committee's main objective is to prevent trafficking in persons and migrant smuggling, and create societal awareness about relevant risks.

In addition, it seeks to disseminate awareness among all segments of society, employers and workers based on religious values.

The committee had urged citizens and residents to call hot line: 25589696 or send an email at: MOI.GOV.KU.WAIT, in case of any crimes of trafficking in persons.

Follow rules

Continued from Page 1

Vehicle owners must ensure regular car maintenance, including oil and water changes, and avoid leaving flammable materials in the car, especially during peak heat times in the afternoon, Al-Ghareeb warned.

Another main cause of fires is children playing with hazardous electrical plugs, he said, emphasizing the necessity of carefully having an eye on children as they are playing in a bid to avoid emergencies and ensure their safety.

Regarding general safety, Al-Ghareeb advised private swimming pool owners to install handrails and anti-slip tiles in and around the pools and ensure

an adult is always present when children are swimming to avoid incidents.

Shifting his focus to elevators, Al-Ghareeb stated that nowadays, elevators are found in most residential buildings and almost all other buildings. He asserted that following safety guidelines and instructions is mandatory for all users and owners.

He stressed that when installing a new elevator, it is imperative to ensure the company is certified by the Kuwait Fire Force (KFF), conduct periodic maintenance, and install a backup battery in case of power outage.

The KFF's instructions in the event of power outage while someone is inside an elevator are to remain calm, not attempt to open the doors to exit, press the emergency button, and dial 112 emergency hotline to request help.

On another note, Al-Ghareeb advised seagoers, both swimmers and fishermen, to be cautious of flammable materials in boats, swim in designated and safe areas, check the weather before sailing, carry safety equipment at all times, and notify friends and family of departure and arrival times.

Israeli military

Continued from Page 1

This will lead to achieving security, stability and development in the region, Al-Yahya concluded.

A displaced Palestinian mother has given birth at a hospital run by Kuwait's Red Crescent Society in the southern Gaza Strip city of Khan Younis, the medical facility's manager Dr. Anwar Al-Ghara said on Thursday.

Stretching across 750 square meters, the facility is equipped with fully

MEW report

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The challenge of finding new energy sources or building new power plants is significant due to high costs and long timelines. Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and the UAE have successfully established companies to build, manage, operate, and maintain power plants using the independent supplier system, particularly excelling in renewable energy.

With the increasing annual demand for electricity, establishing new generation stations remains a critical necessity to meet Kuwait's needs in the coming years. The independent supplier system offers the best and most appropriate solution to shorten timelines and fulfill the country's requirements promptly.

The Kuwait Meteorological Department has forecasted a heat wave over the weekend, with maximum temperatures expected to exceed 50 degrees Celsius in some areas. The weather will be extremely hot during the day and warm at night, accompanied by active northwesterly winds that will raise dust and reduce visibility, particularly in open areas.

Director of the Department, Abdulaziz Al-Qarawi, informed KUNA that Thursday's weather will be very hot, with moderate to active northwesterly winds blowing at speeds between 20 and 50 kilometers per hour, raising dust. Maximum temperatures are anticipated to range between 49 and 51 degrees Celsius, and the sea will have moderate to high waves ranging from 3 to 6 feet.

Al-Qarawi added that Thursday night will be warm, with light to moderate northwesterly winds, occasionally active along the coast, blowing at speeds between 12 and 42 kilometers per hour. The minimum temperature is expected to be

between 35 and 37 degrees Celsius, and the sea will have light to moderate waves, sometimes rising between 2 and 6 feet.

Friday's weather is forecasted to be very hot, with light to moderate northwesterly winds, occasionally active, between 12 and 45 kilometers per hour, causing dust. Maximum temperatures will range between 48 and 50 degrees Celsius, and the sea will have light to moderate waves, occasionally rising between 2 and 6 feet.

On Friday night, the weather will remain warm, with light to moderate northwesterly winds blowing at speeds between 10 and 38 kilometers per hour. The minimum temperature will be between 33 and 35 degrees Celsius, and the sea will have light to moderate waves, ranging between 2 and 5 feet.

Saturday's weather is expected to be very hot, with light to moderate northwesterly winds, occasionally active, between 12 and 40 kilometers per hour. Maximum temperatures will range between 48 and 50 degrees Celsius, and the sea will have light to moderate waves, occasionally rising between 2 and 6 feet.

Saturday night will be warm, with light to moderate northwesterly winds blowing at speeds between 10 and 32 kilometers per hour. The minimum temperature will be between 34 and 36 degrees Celsius, and the sea will have light to moderate waves, ranging between 1 and 3 feet.

Kuwait nat'l

Continued from Page 1

the step aims to share consultative and technical views regarding international experiments on implementing systems and strategies to combat trafficking in

World News Roundup

Europe

Spain heats up

EU's Von der Leyen 'wins' second term

STRASBOURG, France, July 18, (AP): Lawmakers at the European Parliament on Thursday re-elected Ursula von der Leyen to a second 5-year term as president of the European Union's executive commission, giving her a comfortable majority and heading off a possible leadership vacuum.

Von der Leyen raised both fists in victory as the Parliament President Roberta Metsola read out the result at the legislature.

The re-election ensures leadership continuity for the 27-nation bloc as it wrestles with crises ranging from the war in Ukraine to climate change, migration and housing shortages.



Von der Leyen

A majority in the 720-seat legislature voted for the German Christian Democrat after a speech in which she pledged to be a strong leader for Europe in a time of crisis and polarization.

Von der Leyen gained 401 of the 707 votes cast. There were 284 votes against her candidacy, 15 abstentions and seven void ballots.

The secret ballot came hot on the heels of strong gains by the far right in last month's election for the European Parliament.

"I will never let the extreme polarization of our societies become accepted. I will never accept that demagogues and extremists destroy our European way of life. And I stand here today ready to lead the fight with all the Democratic forces in this house," von der Leyen said in her final pitch.

□ □ □

Leaders discuss migration: Leaders from across Europe expressed support for Ukraine and concern about the direction of the United States on Thursday at a security-focused summit clouded by worries about whether the US will remain a reliable ally if Donald Trump wins a second presidency.

Newly elected UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer welcomed some 45 heads of government to a grandiose English country mansion to discuss migration, energy security and the threat from Russia as he seeks to restore relations between the UK and its European Union neighbors four years after their acrimonious divorce.

The venue for the European Political Community gathering, Blenheim Palace, was the birthplace of Britain's World War II Prime Minister Winston Churchill, and Starmer said the leaders were gathering "as a new storm gathers over our continent."

□ □ □

Spain heats up under 1st heatwave: Spain sweated under its first official heatwave of the year with temperatures expected to reach 40 degrees Celsius (104 Fahrenheit) in a large swathe of the country on Thursday, while Italy, Greece and other areas of southern Europe also struggled to stay cool.

After a relatively bearable spring compared to record heat in 2023 and 2022, millions of Spaniards will be sweltering at least through Saturday before feeling any relief. The nation's weather authority said the only areas to be spared will be the northwest and northern Atlantic coasts.

Weather forecasters said a large mass of hot air travelling across the Mediterranean from northern Africa will settle over central and southern Spain.

□ □ □

Serbia police searches for assailant: An assailant stopped by a patrol in a Serbian border town opened fire on police officers early Thursday, killing one and wounding another, the interior minister said.

The incident happened just before 1 a.m. in the western town of Loznica, near the border with Bosnia, the minister, Ivica Dacic said. The patrol stopped a car with two people inside and one of them opened fire while stepping out of the vehicle, he added.

The assailant shot one officer in the chest and the other in the shoulder. Both were transferred to the local hospital but one of them died there, Dacic said.

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US journo attends Russia hearing: Wall Street Journal reporter Evan Gershkovich attended a hearing behind closed doors on Thursday in his trial in Russia on espionage charges that he, his employer and the U.S. government vehemently deny. Closing arguments are set for Friday.

Authorities arrested the 3200-year-old journalist on March 29, 2023, while he was on a reporting trip and claimed without offering any evidence that he was gathering secret information for the U.S. The American-born son of immigrants from the USSR, Gershkovich is the first Western journalist arrested on espionage charges in post-Soviet Russia.

The US State Department has declared him "wrongfully detained," thereby committing the government to assertively seek his release.

□ □ □

'Ukraine will find a way': Ukraine will find a way to deal with whatever comes if former president Donald Trump wins a second term, throwing into doubt vital US support for its defense against Russia's invading forces, Ukraine's defense minister said Wednesday.

In carefully framed comments to an audience of US policymakers and journalists, Defense Minister Rustem Umerov reflected the diplomatic and military difficulty facing Ukraine as Trump and running mate JD Vance gain momentum in the US presidential race.

Vance, an Ohio senator, has battled in Congress to block US military and financial aid to Ukraine as it fights Russian forces and cross-border attacks, while Trump has said he will bring the war to an immediate end if he wins in November.

□ □ □

'France in a political quagmire': With nine days to the opening ceremony of the Paris Olympics, France's far-right leader Marine Le Pen said Wednesday that the deeply divided country is "in a quagmire" after chaotic legislative elections produced a fragmented parliament.

France has been on the brink of government paralysis since elections for the National Assembly earlier this month resulted in a split among three major political groupings: the New Popular Front leftist coalition, President Emmanuel Macron's centrist allies and Le Pen's far-right National Rally party.

The New Popular Front won the most seats but fell well short of the majority needed to govern on its own.



US President Joe Biden speaks at a 2024 Prosperity Summit on July 16 in North Las Vegas, Nev. Biden tested positive for COVID-19 while traveling on July 17 in Las Vegas and is experiencing 'mild symptoms' including 'general malaise' from the infection, the White House said. (AP)

Politics

Vance talks Appalachian ties in speech

Biden contracts COVID-19, to self-isolate

LAS VEGAS, July 18, (AP): US President Joe Biden tested positive for COVID-19 while traveling Wednesday in Las Vegas and is experiencing "mild symptoms" including "general malaise" from the infection, the White House said.

Press secretary Karine Jean-Pierre said Biden will fly to his home in Delaware, where he will "self-isolate and will continue to carry out all of his duties fully during that time." The news had first been shared by UnidosUS President and CEO Janet Murguía, who told guests at the group's convention in Las Vegas that president had sent his regrets and could not appear because he tested positive for the virus.

Dr. Kevin O'Connor, the president's physician, said in a note that Biden, 81, "presented this afternoon with upper respiratory symptoms, to include rhinorrhea (runny nose) and non-productive cough, with general malaise." After the positive COVID-19 test, Biden was prescribed the antiviral drug Paxlovid and has taken his first dose, O'Connor said.

Biden was slated to speak at the UnidosUS event in Las Vegas Wednesday afternoon as part of an effort to rally Hispanic voters ahead of the November election. Instead, he departed for the airport to fly to Delaware, where he had already been planning to spend a long weekend at his home in Rehoboth Beach.

Debate

The president's diagnosis comes amid intense scrutiny of his health and stamina after a disastrous debate with former president Donald Trump that sparked a flurry of concern among Democrats that Biden is not up to the rigors of winning another presidential term.

Biden gingerly boarded Air Force One and told reporters traveling with him, "I feel good." The president was not wearing a mask as he walked onto Air Force One.

The president had previously been at the Original Lindo Michoacan restaurant in Las Vegas, where he was

greeting diners and sat for an interview with Univision.

Biden has been vaccinated and is current on his recommended annual booster dose for COVID-19. The vaccines have proven highly effective at limiting serious illness and death from the virus, which killed more than 1 million people in the US since the pandemic began in 2020. Paxlovid has been proven to curtail the chances of serious illness and death from COVID-19 when prescribed in the early days of an infection, but has also been associated with rebound infections, where the virus comes back a few days after clearing up.

Biden last tested positive for COVID-19 twice in the summer of 2022, when he had a primary case and a rebound case of the virus.

Health officials have reported recent upticks in emergency room visits and hospitalizations from COVID-19. There has also been a pronounced increase in positive test results in much of the country - particularly the southwestern US.

Also:

CHARLESTON, W.Va: Newly minted vice presidential nominee JD Vance built his Wednesday night speech to the Republican National Convention around his own Appalachian roots, but it wasn't the first time he had shared his personal story.

Long before he was a US senator from Ohio, Vance rose to prominence on the wings of "Hillbilly Elegy," a bestselling memoir that many thought captured the essence of Donald Trump's political resonance in a rural white America ravaged by joblessness, opioid addiction and poverty.

The 2016 book set off a fierce debate in the region. Many Appalachian scholars thought it trafficked in stereotypes and blamed working-class people for their own struggles, without giving enough weight to the decades of exploitation by coal and pharmaceutical companies that figure prominently in Appalachia's story.

Some of the resentment sparked by

the book crossed party lines.

"A lot of us born and raised natives of Appalachia are just highly sensitive to the fact that knocking hillbillies is the final frontier of accepted prejudice in America," said TJ Litafik, an eastern Kentucky Republican political consultant and Trump supporter.

Litafik said he would vote for Trump no matter whom he chose as vice president, but Vance was not anywhere near the top of his list.

Litafik, who read "Hillbilly Elegy," subtitled "A Memoir of a Family and Culture in Crisis," and saw the 2020 film adaptation, said Vance might come off as condescending to some voters. But he called the senator "dynamic and intelligent" and said Vance's accomplishments are undeniably impressive.

"I think to me and to a lot of my friends, JD Vance is something of an enigma," Litafik said. "We appreciate some of his recent convictions, but based on past history, there's a hesitancy there."

He said he's open to giving Vance a chance if he's willing to show his commitment to rural and blue-collar Americans by protecting them from policy proposals like those that would roll back expanded Medicaid, especially for drug treatment.

Vance was raised by his grandparents in Middletown, in southwestern Ohio, while his mother, whom he introduced during his speech Wednesday, battled an addiction he said she put behind her 10 years ago. He spent a significant amount of time traveling to Kentucky with his grandparents to visit family and said he hoped to be buried in a small mountain cemetery there.

He vowed in the speech to be "a vice president who never forgets where he came from."

Many conservatives loved the book. Among them were some who lobbied for Vance to be Trump's vice presidential pick. They include Donald Trump Jr.; Kevin Roberts, who leads the Heritage Foundation; and Turning Point USA's Charlie Kirk.



President of Ukraine Volodymyr Zelenskyy, (left), is welcomed by Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer, (right), to the European Political Community Summit at Blenheim Palace in Woodstock, Oxfordshire, England on July 18. Leaders from across Europe gathered at a grandiose English country mansion on Thursday for a summit clouded by worries about whether the United States would remain a reliable ally if Donald Trump wins a second presidency. (AP)



Zhuang



Navarro

America

Rural Nevada judge indicted: A Nevada justice of the peace who ran unsuccessfully for state treasurer in 2022 has been indicted on federal charges alleging she used money donated for a memorial to slain police officers for political campaign costs, rent and her daughter's wedding.

The five-count indictment against Michele Fiore, 53, a justice of the peace in rural Pahrump and a state Republican National Committee member, was filed Tuesday in U.S. District Court in Las Vegas.

In a statement Wednesday, the former Nevada state Assembly and Las Vegas City Council member said she knew for years that the FBI was investigating but learned of her indictment through media reports. Fiore said the process "profoundly" affected her and her family, friends and constituents. (AP)

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Storms flood Ozarks: Another wave of severe storms pummeled a wide swath of the United States and Canada, leading to flash floods and water rescues Wednesday in the Ozark Mountains, dropping a tornado that ravaged a community in upstate New York and stranding drivers in high water around Toronto.

The relentless series of storms has caused deaths or damage from the Plains to New England this week. Hundreds of thousands of people have lost power and air conditioning during days of sweltering heat.

As much as 11 inches (nearly 28 centimeters) of rain fell overnight into Wednesday on parts of the Ozarks in Arkansas and Missouri, the National Weather Service said.

Buses and ambulances evacuated 86 people from a nursing home in Yellville, Arkansas, where water rose to about 4 feet (1.2 meters) during flash flooding, Marion County Sheriff Gregg Alexander said. A section of a bridge washed out and a historic courthouse flooded. (AP)

□ □ □

NY Council member arrested: A New York City Council member was charged Wednesday with biting a police officer during a chaotic protest over the construction of

a new homeless shelter in her district.

Brooklyn Democrat Susan Zhuang was released without bond after being arraigned on a felony assault charge and various mis-

demeanors and violations.

Her office had no immediate comment, and it was not immediately clear who represented her in court.



Vehicles run on a road during a heavy rain in Toronto, Canada, on July 16. Toronto received more than a month's worth of rain over a few hours amid a rainfall warning from Environment Canada that called for "extremely heavy rain" with the potential for 125 millimeters in some areas on Tuesday, according to local media. (Xinhua)

Images and video posted to social media showed police clashing with protesters at the planned site for a homeless shelter. In one video, a woman who appears to be Zhuang can be seen alongside other protesters trying to wrestle a barricade away from police as an officer tries to handcuff her. Another video appears to show Zhuang being led away by police in handcuffs. (AP)

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Ex-Trump adviser released: Former Trump White House official Peter Navarro, released from prison Wednesday, condemned the Biden administration for what he called the "weaponization" of the justice system, even as he pledged to offer a message of national unity when he speaks to the Republican National Convention in Milwaukee.

In his first interview since his release from a Florida prison for contempt of Congress, Navarro told The Associated Press he was just one example of what many on the right say is the Biden administration's use of the judiciary to punish its political enemies.

"I'm a small part of the bigger issue," Navarro said, referring to the oft-repeated claim by conservatives that, during President Joe Biden's administration, the justice system has been used to hobble former President Donald Trump and those close to him. "If we don't control the government, the government will control us," Navarro said. (AP)

Lat/Am

Security chief arrested

Haiti premier orders gangs to drop arms

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti, July 18, (AP): Haitian Prime Minister **Garry Conille** ordered gangs to surrender their weapons during a televised speech late Wednesday in which he acknowledged how dangerous life in Haiti's capital and beyond has become and pledged to crack down on the rampant violence.

Conille spoke a day after a second group of 200 Kenyan police officers arrived in Haiti to help quell widespread gang violence as part of a U.N.-backed mission led by the East African country.

"Life every day in Port-au-Prince has turned into a battle for survival," he said. "Many innocent people have lost their lives."

Gangs control 80% of Port-au-Prince, and they have been blamed for killing or injuring more than 1,500 people in the first three months of the year alone.

Earlier Wednesday, Associated Press journalists observed a line of armored vehicles roll down the main boulevard in downtown Port-au-Prince, one of the capital's more dangerous areas, as a crowd of Haitians gathered quietly to observe, arms on their hips.

The vehicles carried Kenyan and Haitian police as they fanned out across the downtown area. Several shots rang out, but it wasn't clear who fired and if anyone was injured or killed.

"Drop your weapons and recognize the authority of the state," Conille said in a message to gangs.

In late February, gangs launched coordinated attacks targeting key state infrastructure. They seized control of more than two dozen police stations; opened fire on the main international airport, forcing it to close for nearly three months; and stormed Haiti's two biggest prisons, releasing more than 4,000 inmates.

Violence

The violence led to the resignation of former prime minister Ariel Henry in late April and the installation of a transitional presidential council and Conille as the new prime minister.

Diego Da Rin, with the International Crisis Group, noted that gang violence began diminishing in late May, with the first contingent of Kenyans arriving in late June.

He noted that so far, Kenyans appeared to have limited their patrols to neighborhoods in Port-au-Prince that have not been seized by gangs.

"There really hasn't been any offensive operations," he said.

In upcoming months, the Kenyans will be joined by police and soldiers from the Bahamas, Bangladesh, Barbados, Benin, Chad and Jamaica for a total of 2,500 personnel.

Conille said restoring security is a top priority for him but warned it would take time. He said the objective is to recapture all gang-controlled territory "house by house, neighborhood by neighborhood, community by community."

"We need to free Haiti from all sorts of gangs that are killing and raping the population," Conille said.

Gang violence also has left more than half a million people homeless in recent years as rival gangs fight for control of more territory. More than half of those displaced are women and girls, with many living in crowded and unsanitary makeshift camps and shelters.

Also:

CARACAS, Venezuela: Officials in Venezuela arrested the head of security for the country's top opposition leader on Wednesday, a little more than a week before President **Nicolás Maduro** faces a tough reelection.

Former lawmaker and opposition powerhouse **María Corina Machado** said that **Milciades Avila** was arrested on what she said were trumped up charges of violence against women. The accusation stems from a heated incident over the weekend when, according to videos posted on social media, a group of Maduro supporters began trading insults with Machado's aides at a roadside restaurant on their way home from a campaign event outside Caracas.

Machado was banned from running against Maduro after winning an opposition-organized primary last year. She is instead crisscrossing the country with a hand selected stand-in candidate, **Edmundo González**, a retired diplomat previously unknown to Venezuelans.

"Avila has traveled with me around the country and risked his life to defend me," Machado wrote on X. "I'm sending an alert to the entire world about the increasing repression by Maduro against our campaign workers."

There was no immediate comment from Maduro's government about the arrest.

Machado said that at least eight people connected to the opposition campaign have been detained in recent days in four states across the country, including the owner of a sound truck Machado and González hired during a recent rally in the central city of **Valencia**.

PANAMA CITY: Migration through the Darien Gap dividing Colombia and Panama has declined significantly this month since Panamanian President **José Raúl Mulino** took office and ordered authorities to get control of the dense jungle frontier, the country's border police said Wednesday.

Still, migration through the Darien remains close to what it was in a record-breaking 2023, when more than 500,000 migrants - more than half Venezuelans - made the treacherous journey.

The National Border Service reported Wednesday that 11,363 migrants had crossed the border since July 1, about 9,000 fewer than the same period last year.

The agency's director general, **Jorge Goba**, attributed the reduction to the installation of about 3 miles (5 kilometers) of barbed wire on five trails in an effort to funnel migrants to a "humanitarian corridor."

He also said the government's announcement of its more aggressive efforts and plan to deport migrants back to their countries, as well as heavy rains, could have affected the number of border crossers.

Mulino took office promising to stop illegal migration through the Darien Gap. The US government agreed to pay for deportation flights for those migrants deemed inadmissible, but those flights have not started.

So far this year, more than 212,000 migrants have entered Panama through the Darien. Besides Venezuelans, others crossing include migrants from Ecuador, Colombia and China.

Panama's active efforts to stop and deport migrants would be a massive shift.



Conille



This photo taken with a mobile phone shows rescue vehicles parking near the site of a department store fire in Zigong City, southwest China's Sichuan Province on July 18. (Xinhua)

Fire kills 16 people at shopping mall in southwestern China

A fire at a shopping mall killed 16 people Wednesday in the southwestern Chinese city of Zigong, state media reported. Firefighters and rescuers responded to a fire call shortly after 6 p.m. at the 14-story commercial building, and pulled 75 people to safety, according to the official news agency Xinhua.

Rescue efforts were ongoing. It was not immediately known what caused the fire or how many people were in the building when the fire broke out. The

building houses a department store, offices, restaurants and a movie theater.

Social media video posts showed clouds of thick black smoke coming out of windows from the building's lower levels and engulfing the entire 14-story structure as they rose into the sky. Huge flames were visible, and firefighters fought the fire with water sprays. Local media said firefighters also used several drones.

Fire hazards remain a problem in China, which reported 947 fire fatalities in this year's first several months ending on May 20, up 19% from the same period of the previous year, said Li Wanfeng, a spokesperson for the National Fire and Rescue Administration.

Li said the number of fires in public places such as hotels and restaurants rose 40% and that the most common causes were malfunctioning in electrical or gas lines and carelessness. (AP)

Asia

Taiwan should pay more for defense: Trump

'NKorea launches balloons toward South'

SEOUL, South Korea, July 18, (AP): North Korea resumed flying balloons likely carrying trash toward South Korea on Thursday, the South's military said, days after it vowed to respond to what it called repeated South Korean civilian leafletting campaigns in the North.

South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff said in a statement that the balloons were flying north of Seoul, which is about an hour's drive from the border, on Thursday afternoon. It warned the South Korea public to be cautious of falling objects and report to authorities if they spot balloons on the ground.

Beginning in late May, North Korea has floated numerous balloons carrying wastepaper, scraps of cloth, cigarette butts and even manure toward South Korea, saying they were in response to South Korean activists sending political leaflets to the North via their own balloons. No hazardous materials were found.

In response, South Korea suspended a 2018 tension-reduction deal with North Korea, resuming propaganda broadcasts briefly and front-line live-fire military drills at border areas.

Earlier this week, the powerful sister of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un vowed to respond to what she called new South Korean civilian leafletting activities. She said South Korean balloons have been found frequently at the North Korean border and other areas.

In her statement Tuesday, Kim Yo Jong threatened new retaliatory steps, saying South Korean "scum" must be ready to pay "a gruesome and dear price." That raised concerns that North Korea could stage physical provocations, rather than balloon launches.

Also:

SEOUL, South Korea: South Korea's president on Thursday appointed a former North Korean diplomat as a vice minister, the highest-level government job for any of the thousands of North Koreans who have resettled in South Korea.

Tae Yongho was a minister of the North Korean Embassy in London when he defected to South Korea in 2016. Tae is the highest-ranking North

Wellington, New Zealand, July 18, (AP): Two buses carrying Chinese tourists veered off the same stretch of road in perilous weather conditions on New Zealand's South Island on Thursday, with 15 passengers taken to hospital, two of them seriously hurt.

The buses were traveling in the same direction on a stretch of highway popular with tourists when they slid from the road and overturned, at about the same time and only 100 meters (yards) apart, New Zealand's police said in an emailed statement. Temperatures in the area were freezing and others driving on the highway reported heavy fog and black ice on the road at the time.

Their cause was not known, New Zealand officials said. A spokesperson would not confirm the nationality of those on board, but a post by the Chinese consulate in

Christchurch on the social media platform WeChat said the buses were carrying Chinese tourists.

The local ambulance service said 15 people were taken to hospital, two by helicopter in a serious condition. Eight of those hospitalized were moderately hurt and five had minor injuries. Officials did not say how many others were treated at the scene or how many people were on the buses.

Grace Duggin, an Australian tourist, was traveling in a car behind one of the vehicles and saw it veer off the road, rolling multiple times before landing in a field. Conditions before the crash were made treacherous by slippery black ice, she said, which regularly closes the South Island's tourist highways in winter.

A passenger pulled bloodied passengers out through a hatch in the roof of the bus, Duggin said.

WASHINGTON: Former US president **Donald Trump** demanded the self-governed island of **Taiwan** pay for U.S. protection, dodged the question of whether he would defend the island from **Beijing's** military action and accused the island of taking the computer chip industry away from the **United States**.

"Taiwan should pay us for defense," the Republican presidential candidate said in an interview with **Bloomberg Businessweek**. "You know, we're no different than an insurance company."

Trump's remarks, made public Tuesday, add uncertainty to Trump's approach to Taiwan at a time his running mate, **JD Vance**, has called **China** the "biggest threat" to the United States. President **Joe Biden** has said he would send troops to defend the island.

UN condemns civilians killing: The United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) on Wednesday expressed concern about widespread attacks against civilians, driven primarily by sub-national armed violence involving community-based militia groups in the country.

The UN mission said between January and March 2024, it documented 240 incidents of violence affecting 913 civilians nationwide, of whom 468 were killed, 328 injured, 70 abducted, and 47 were subjected to conflict-related sexual violence, which represents a 24 percent increase in the number of violent incidents compared to the same period last year. (Xinhua)

'Gag orders chilling poll efforts': Leading opposition parties in Tunisia asserted Wednesday that politically motivated arrests and gag orders are creating impossible conditions for holding democratic elections later this year.

Members of the National Salvation Front, a coalition of secular and Islamist opponents to President **Kais Saied**, said a government crackdown on opponents had created a climate of fear, making campaign requirements like signature-gathering nearly impossible.

"There is a clear message behind all these targeted arrests," Riadh Chaibi, a leading member of the Islamist party Ennahda, told a press conference in the capital of the North African nation. (AP)



Police mechanics attempt to repair an armored vehicle that was carrying Kenyan police officers part of a UN-backed multinational force as well as Haitian officers in Port-au-Prince, Haiti on July 17. Haitian Prime Minister **Garry Conille** ordered gangs to surrender their weapons during a televised speech on Wednesday in which he acknowledged how dangerous life in Haiti's capital and beyond has become and pledged to crack down on the rampant violence.



Oginni



Saied

Africa

Aid worker on hunger strike: A European aid worker who was arrested two months ago in Central African Republic over spying allegations has begun a hunger strike to protest the conditions of his detention, his family and the Portuguese honorary consul told The Associated Press.

Martin Joseph Figueira, a consultant for the American nongovernmental organization FHI 360, was arrested in May, according to the Central African Republic prosecutor's office. He is accused of being in communication with armed groups to plot a coup, jeopardizing national security, the office added, but is yet to face official charges.

Figueira initially was detained in "relatively good conditions," **Victor Manuel Alves da Rocha**, the Portuguese honorary consul in Bangui, said in a phone call. But around a week ago, Figueira was transferred to a political prison called Camp de Roux, located at army headquarters in Bangui, where conditions are "very difficult," da Rocha said. (AP)

Interpol arrests 300: In a global operation targeting West African organized crime groups across five continents, police arrested 300 people, seized \$3 million and blocked 720 bank accounts, Interpol said Tuesday.

Operation Jackal III, which ran from 10 April to 3 July in 21 countries, aimed to fight online financial fraud and the West African syndicates behind it, the agency said in a statement.

"The volume of financial fraud stemming from West Africa is alarming and increasing," said **Isaac Oginni**, director of Interpol's Financial Crime and Anti-Corruption Centre. "This operation's results underscore the critical need for international law enforcement collaboration to combat these extensive criminal networks."

One of the targeted groups was **Black Axe**, one of the most prominent criminal networks in West Africa. Black Axe operates in cyber fraud, human trafficking, drug smuggling, and is responsible for violent crimes both within Africa and globally, the

agency added.

Black Axe used money mules to open bank accounts worldwide and is now under investigation in over 40 countries for related

money laundering activities, the agency said. (AP)



Lawyer **Saida Al-Akrami**, wife of **Noureddine El-Behiri**, a leader of Ennahda party and former Minister of Justice, speaks during a press conference by the National Salvation Front opposition group, ahead of the upcoming presidential elections, in Tunis, Tunisia on July 17. Leading opposition parties in Tunisia asserted Wednesday that politically motivated arrests and gag orders are creating impossible conditions for holding democratic elections later this year. (AP)

Coppola's All-Movie Hotel opens doors for business

PEACHTREE CITY, Ga., July 18. (AP) — Two years ago, Francis Ford Coppola stopped at Georgia Film Academy on the hunt for apprentices for his upcoming film, "Megalopolis."

Jordan Holifield, then a 23-year-old student, did a double-take when he saw one of the application questions - did he know how to disassemble IKEA furniture?

Months later, Holifield, one of four selected apprentices, pulled up to Coppola's hotel - which was originally a Days Inn motel. But gone was the IKEA furniture from the old motel.

Now the All-Movie Hotel is outfitted with post-production facilities, editing suites, recording rooms and screening spaces. The hybrid property will soon host film nerds and production companies alike.

The "Godfather" director originally bought the hotel in 2022 for \$4.35 million to host the production of "Megalopolis" - a self-funded, \$120 million film starring Adam Driver as an architect in a futuristic New York City. Amid rumors of production drama, the movie garnered harsh reviews after its debut in Cannes, and The Associated Press reported some critics called it a "disaster."

Coppola's hotel collection, The Family Coppola Hideaways, has properties in Belize, Guatemala, Argentina, and Italy. The All-Movie Hotel is Coppola's first property in the United States, opening July 25, in Peachtree City, just under an hour south of Atlanta's downtown.

There are 27 rooms with prices ranging from \$170 to \$470 per night.

From the outside, the hotel's architecture mirrors its former days as a motel. But props from Coppola's movies scattered throughout the property add flair, such as old school "Godfather" pinball machines in the lobby. An imposing golden hawk figurine, which can be seen in the "Megalopolis" trailer, is perched outside the pool-area fence.

Coppola himself, along with Driver, stayed in rooms that will soon be available to book. In Coppola's room, a round gray couch with spheric pillows sits in front of a king sized bed and among leather director-style chairs. The "his and hers" bathrooms are joined by a shower, inspired by a lodge Coppola stayed at in Guatemala.

Inspire

"I envisioned The All-Movie Hotel to be a space where filmmakers could truly immerse themselves in the creative process, fostering a collaborative environment that inspires innovation," Coppola said.

Potted succulents imported from Italy line the outdoor walkway and textured walls. Beyond the colorful doors, each room has its own quirks. One has bunk beds, designed for interns and children of production staff. Another is Japan-themed and decorated with photographs of notable Japanese filmmakers. Most of the rooms connect, which Driver appreciated, since he stayed in a room adjacent to his assistant.

Georgia has emerged as a top production hub since 2005, when the state enacted tax breaks for the industry. Tax credits for filmmakers

increased dramatically in 2008 and are expected to reach \$1.35 billion this year. The tax incentive supported \$5.54 billion in economic activity in 2022, according to the Georgia Screen Entertainment Coalition.

Filmmakers work closely with an already well-developed network of rental properties, hotels and house crews, said Kelsey Moore, executive director of Georgia Screen Entertainment Coalition. But she said the All-Movie Hotel is "a really interesting addition that meets a niche filmmaker need" for an all-in-one communal facility for post-production.

The industry's growth in the state has slowed, with an estimated 40% fewer productions this year compared to last year, according to WSB-TV. But Moore is confident that Coppola's choice to use Georgia's infrastructure shows that its location is still a creative hub.

The hotel "really indicates there's a desire to do a full ecosystem of production in Georgia," Moore said.

On the final day of filming "Megalopolis," the crew gathered for their last meal in the farmhouse-style kitchen. Coppola had the placement of a series of bookshelves altered to fit a horizontal poster from "Apocalypse Now," one of his signature films.

The crew, actors, interns and Coppola himself dined on a spread of shrimp, pasta, pizza, sausage, steak, sandwiches, and whatever else was left in the refrigerator, Holifield said. Now, when production companies haven't rented out the entire space, tourists can venture to suburban Atlanta and cook from Coppola's own stove.

Film

Variety



This image released by Universal Pictures shows Glen Powell, (right), and Daisy Edgar-Jones in a scene from 'Twisters.' (AP)

Film

New disaster movie offers wild premise

Youth drives into the storm in 'Twisters'

By Lindsey Bahr

We have a complex relationship with disaster movies. Just look at the discussion about a "Twisters" poster, which became a perfect encapsulation of our love-hate tendencies.

In the promo for the film, in theaters Thursday, actors Daisy Edgar-Jones, Glen Powell and Anthony Ramos are standing in front a massive, menacing cyclone. It not only contains various objects swirling in mid-air, from houses to trucks, but also appears to be on fire. Some people wondered why the stars weren't looking at said tornado. Others said if you're asking questions like why the tornado is on fire, this movie isn't for you.

Both lines of thought can be true though. Maybe their coexistence is essential. This makes no sense! Also, sign me up immediately! Disaster movies are almost required to be graded on a curve. And filmmaker Lee Isaac Chung's entry into the canon is perfectly paradoxical.

It might not be fair, or rational, but there is something about the genre that inspires otherwise reasonable moviegoers to giddily give themselves over to a wild premise - the more ridiculous and illogical the better. There is something to be said about the joy of collective laughter where there wasn't an intentional joke, or a spirited post-movie debate about the flawed logistics of a plan and exactly how many people have died from being sucked into a tornado. These are the movies that are hard to see clearly the first time but tend to become sneaky favorites over the years.

Such is the case with "Twister," Jan de Bont's film about storm chasing and remarriage. The modern collective love for it would probably surprise even the critics who reviewed it favorably in 1996. Part of that is certainly the fact that in the 28 years since it was released we lost both Philip Seymour Hoffman and Bill Paxton. But it's also just fun to watch with fresh eyes, to see the

internet remember (or realize for the first time) that one of the storm chasers was played by Todd Field, the man who would go on to write and direct "Tár." I re-watched it recently on plane and had a blast. I'd forgotten the insane opening but remembered Dusty's impassioned foot chant.

There's been a lot of cautious optimism surrounding "Twisters" that's felt different from a lot of the reboots and "new chapters" (anything to avoid calling it a sequel) that have come and gone in recent years. Audiences are craving something big and fun, but worried that it won't live up to their idea of what it should be. This is inherently flawed because "Twister" has earned its reputation, its quotability, across many viewings and many years. "Twisters" we're just meeting. It's hard to get too excited about a first date.

Action

But Chung, a filmmaker best known for the comparatively small "Minari," has made a solid film with escalating action sequences that look great on the big screen. There is once again a crazy opening that gives Edgar-Jones' tornado-obsessed Kate a trauma origin story. Her hubris in thinking she could "tame" a tornado with science backfired and people died; But five years later her old friend Javi (Ramos) convinces her to come back to Oklahoma's Tornado Alley to attempt a different kind of study.

The story is credited to Joseph Kosinski (who was once going to direct) and the screenplay to Mark L. Smith ("The Revenant") and none of them can get the original out of their heads. Yes, these are all new characters (including Powell's YouTube star storm wrangler Tyler) and the only real connection to the first movie is that the Dorothy technology exists. But it is so referential as to be distracting: Literal lines of dialogue ("I'm not back"); An attempt to make Tyler's crew a gang of Dustys (which underserves actors like Sasha Lane and Katy O'Brien); Making David Corenswet wear what's essentially a recreation

of Carey Elwes' baseball cap and earpiece. Don't they want us to think of "Twisters" on its own terms?

But Chung clearly also had a vision, attempting to ground the insanity in a real place with regionally appropriate styles and music, and deeper characterization. The supporting players were thoughtfully cast. Its leads, Powell and Edgar-Jones, are endlessly watchable with palpable chemistry, even as they're monologuing about sodium polyacrylate.

I wish I had the ability to know how "Twisters" will play 28 years from now, in 2052. Will the 12-year-olds seeing it this weekend go back to it as a comfort watch? Will it feel like it was part of the good old days of big studio movie making? Right now, it doesn't necessarily feel like it's destined for that kind of longevity. And I'd love nothing more than to be wrong about that.

"Twisters," a Universal Pictures release, is rated PG-13 by the Motion Picture Association for "intense action and peril, injury images, some language." Running time: 122 minutes. Two and a half stars out of four.

Also:

LOS ANGELES: MAX has a few good new offerings, too, with the streaming premiere of "Love Lies Bleeding" (one of the AP's favorites of the year so far) on Friday and "The Commandant's Shadow" on Thursday. The former is the sophomore feature of filmmaker **Rose Glass**, who directs **Kristen Stewart** in a wildly compelling performance as a gym manager who has fallen for a bodybuilder (**Katy O'Brien**) drifter. Associated Press Film Writer **Jake Coyle** wrote in his review that it "gives Stewart a vivid noir sandbox where all of her talent for obsession, desire and rage finds its gnarliest expression yet." The latter is a documentary in which the son of Nazi commandant **Rudolf Höss** (also the subject of the Oscar-winning "The Zone of Interest") reckons with his family's past. (AP)

SANTA FE, N.M.: A movie armorer has asked a judge to dismiss her involuntary manslaughter conviction or convene a new trial in the shooting death of a cinematographer by actor **Alec Baldwin**, alleging suppression of evidence and misconduct by the prosecution.

In a court filing Tuesday, defense counsel for armorer **Hannah Gutierrez-Reed** argued her case should be reconsidered because prosecutors failed to share evidence that might have been exculpatory.

Judge **Mary Marlowe Sommer** last week brought Baldwin's trial to a sudden and stunning end based on misconduct of police and prosecutors over the withholding of evidence from the defense in the 2021 shooting of cinematographer **Halyna Hutchins** on the set of the film "Rust."

"This court stated on July 12 that the integrity of the judicial system demanded that the court dismiss Mr. Baldwin's case with prejudice," said defense attorney Jason Bowles in the new court filing. "How can it be any different with Ms. Gutierrez-Reed's case, with this proven litany of serious discovery abuses?"

Kari Morrissey - lead prosecutor in both the Baldwin and Gutierrez-Reed cases - said her written response would be filed in court next week, declining further comment.

The case-ending evidence at Baldwin's trial was ammunition that was brought into the sheriff's office in March by a man who said it could be related to Hutchins' killing. Prosecutors said they deemed the ammo unrelated and unimportant, while Baldwin's lawyers alleged they "buried" it and filed a motion to dismiss the case.

Gutierrez-Reed was convicted by a jury in March in a trial overseen by Judge Marlowe Sommer, who later assigned the maximum 18-month penalty. Gutierrez-Reed already has an appeal pending in a higher court on the involuntary manslaughter conviction.

Prosecutors blamed Gutierrez-Reed for unwittingly bringing live ammunition onto the set of "Rust," where it was expressly prohibited, and for failing to follow basic gun safety protocols.

She was acquitted at trial of allegations she tampered with evidence in the "Rust" investigation. She also has pleaded not guilty to

a separate felony charge that she allegedly carried a gun into a bar in **Santa Fe, New Mexico**, where firearms are prohibited.

Baldwin, the lead actor and co-producer for "Rust," was pointing a gun at Hutchins during a rehearsal on a movie set outside Santa Fe in October 2021 when the revolver went off, killing



Baldwin



Hannah

Hutchins and wounding director **Joel Souza**. (AP)

BEIJING: Chinese comedy "Successor" continued to top the daily box office chart on the Chinese mainland on its second day of release, with a daily earning of 141.37 million yuan (about

19.83 million U.S. dollars) on Wednesday, data from the **China Movie Data Information Network** showed.

Starring comedy stars **Shen Teng** and **Ma Li** and directed by **Yan Fei** and **Peng Damo**, the film tells the story of a wealthy couple who deliberately fakes a challenging environment for their son in

order to foster his personal growth. Crime thriller "A Place Called Silence" stood second, raking in over 30 million yuan on its 15th day of public screening.

Universal and Illumination's animated comedy "Despicable Me 4" came up third with more than 12 million yuan of box office sales. (Xinhua)

First rear-wheel-drive Macan delivers high efficiency

Porsche doubles size of the model range for all-electric Macan



Macan 4S Interior



The new Macan

KUWAIT CITY, July 18: The new Porsche Macan with rear-wheel drive is available immediately as the new point of entry to the all-electric SUV model series. It is exceptionally efficient, offering a combined WLTP range of up to 641 kilometres. The new Macan 4S features up to 380 kW (516 PS) and is positioned at the higher-powered end of the model programme. A new off-road design package is also available for all Macan models. Additionally, the Porsche Driver Experience has been comprehensively updated.

Stuttgart/Dubai. Porsche has doubled the size of the model range for its first all-electric SUV. While the focus for the rear-wheel-drive Macan was primarily on high efficiency and range, the new Macan 4S will fill the gap between the Macan 4 and the Macan Turbo.

Like the models introduced at the start of 2024, the 4S is equipped with the electronically controlled Porsche Traction Management (ePTM) system, which distributes the drive power between the front and rear axles around five times faster than a conventional all-wheel-drive system.

Macan: 100 kWh battery and highly efficient power electronics

The new Macan entry model to the all-electric SUV world of Porsche also

gets its energy from a high-voltage battery with a gross energy content of 100 kWh. Propulsion is provided exclusively by the rear-axle motor that is used in the Macan 4, with a diameter of 210 millimetres, an active length of 200 mm and output of 250 kW (340 PS). The electric motor has a 480-amp pulse inverter (PWR) in which the highly efficient semiconductor material silicon carbide (SiC) is used to provide higher efficiency. It significantly reduces switching losses in the PWR and enables higher switching frequencies.

In combination with Launch Control, the Macan produces up to 265 kW (360 PS) of overboost power, and the maximum torque is 563 Nm. From a standing start, the car reaches the 100 km/h mark in 5.7 seconds and has a top speed of 220 km/h. By forgoing all-wheel drive, the Macan is 110 kilograms lighter than the Macan 4 and therefore requires less electricity for propulsion. This results in a combined WLTP range of up to 641 km.

Macan 4S: powerful electric motors and PASM as standard

The Macan 4S has a new rear-axle motor and a powerful 600-amp SiC pulse inverter. The electric motor has a diameter of 230 millimetres and an active length of 150 millimetres. To-

gether with the front-axle motor also used in the Macan 4 and the Turbo, this results in a system output of 330 kW (448 PS) with a short power overboost to up to 380 kW (516 PS). With Launch Control, the maximum torque is 820 Nm.

The performance figures are correspondingly impressive: with Launch Control, the Macan 4S makes the standard sprint from 0 – 100 km/h in 4.1 seconds and has a top speed of 240 km/h. It has a combined WLTP range of up to 606 km. The Macan 4S is equipped with Porsche Active Suspension Management (PASM) electronic

damping control as standard. The adaptive air suspension with leveling system and height adjustment, the Porsche Torque Vectoring Plus (PTV Plus) and the rear-axle steering allow the chassis to be further optimised for increased performance and comfort.

The two new models have all the qualities of the second generation of the Macan, including the progressive, timeless design with range-optimised aerodynamics (cw = 0.25). The 800-volt architecture of the Premium Platform Electric (PPE) enables a DC charging capacity of up to 270 kW. The high-voltage battery can be

charged from 10 to 80 per cent within around 21 minutes at a suitable fast-charging station.

New colour, new wheels, new off-road design package

A new exterior colour, Slate Grey Neo, is now available for all Macan models. A 20-inch Macan S wheel has been added to the wheel portfolio.

A new off-road design package is also optionally available for all models, further improving the everyday usability of the Macan. Rough dirt roads and particularly steep climbs and descents can be mastered even more easily than before. The altered geometry of the front bumper has increased the approach angle to up to 17.4 degrees, depending on the model (with the air suspension at a specifically raised level). In combination with the adaptive air suspension, the off-road design package also increases the ground clearance by 10 mm to 195 mm at the normal setting.

Porsche offers the package in two colours: in Vesuvius Grey and in the exterior colour. The front bumper, side skirts, diffuser panels and roof railings are then painted accordingly. Matching 21-inch off-road design wheels in Vesuvius Grey are also offered. For customers who pick the off-road design package variant in the car's ex-

terior colour, the side blades are also painted in the same colour. The roof railings can be ordered in Black, Silver or Turbonite (Turbo only).

For the Macan, Macan 4 and Macan 4S, the off-road front bumper with an inlay in Vesuvius Grey is also available separately. The approach angle increases as with the off-road design package.

Porsche Driver Experience with new design and new function

With the electrification of the Macan, Porsche has introduced a completely new display and control system into its successful SUV model. The Porsche Driver Experience offers a mix of digital and analogue elements. These include an instrument cluster with a 12.6-inch curved display, a 10.9-inch passenger display, a head-up display with augmented reality technology, and ambient lighting with a communication light.

Porsche has once again completely upgraded the design of the screens for all Macan models. It now comprises an emotional welcoming animation, an updated state-of-the-art look, and the new Themes app which can be used to adjust the background colour of the displays and the ambient lighting to match the exterior colour, with twelve colours to choose from.



The new Macan 4S

Kuwait Club to host Arab Handball Championship



A file photo of a winning team celebrating.

Al-Arabi withdraw as hosts

By Khaled El Anzi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff
KUWAIT CITY: The Arab Handball Federation has announced that the 39th Arab Championship for champion clubs, a qualifier for the "Saudi Super Globe 2024," will now be hosted by Kuwait Club from September 15-25. This decision follows Al-Arabi Club's withdrawal as hosts due to delays in completing its new hall, which was not approved by the Public Authority for Sports in time. The tournament will take place at the Sheikh Saad Al Abdullah Complex.

Recently, the Arab Handball Federation revealed the eight participating clubs: defending champion and host Al-Kuwait, alongside Al-Arabi and Al-Qadisiya from Kuwait, Al-Karkh and Al-Hashd from Iraq, Al-Ahly from Qatar, Maliha from the Emirates, and the National Bank of Egypt. Mudar and Al-Huda, Saudi clubs, are awaiting official approval from

the Saudi Ministry of Sports to participate.

In preparation for the Arab Club Championship, Kuwait Club's handball director, Sameh Al-Hajri, announced plans for an external training camp in Croatia from September 1-13. This camp aims to strengthen the team's readiness through rigor-

HANDBALL

ous training and competitive matches ahead of defending their title on home ground.

Meanwhile, Al-Arabi Club is yet to finalize plans for its external camp, having renewed contracts with team coach Dr. Ahmed Foulad and Tunisian professional Osama Jaziri. It is also in negotiations to add two European professionals to its roster.

In youth handball, Kuwait's national team is currently competing in the 18th Asian Youth Handball Championship in Amman. It is set to face Bahrain in the third round of the main round, with matches against Jordan and South Korea to follow. The tournament format will see top finishers from each group qualify for the 2025 Youth World Cup finals in Poland.

Al-Nassr sign Brazilian goalkeeper Pinto until 2028

Saudi Arabia coach recalls Al-Aqidi after suspension ends

RIYADH, July 18: Italian coach Roberto Mancini, leading the Saudi national team, has opted to call up Nawaf Al-Aqidi, goalkeeper for Al-Nassr, following the expiration of his suspension. Meanwhile, former Al-Hilal captain Salman Al-Faraj remains excluded from the squad.

Mancini sparked controversy in January when he confirmed the dissent of six players, including Nawaf Al-Aqidi and Salman Al-Faraj, who declined to join the national team

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for the 2023 Asian Nations Cup. Al-Aqidi received a severe punishment of a five-month suspension and a 300,000 Saudi riyal fine, while Al-Faraj was fined 100,000 riyals.

With Al-Aqidi's suspension ending earlier this July, Mancini has included him in the preliminary squad ahead of the third round of 2026 World Cup qualifiers. The Saudi national team competes in Group Three against Indonesia, Australia, Japan, China, and Bahrain.

The team will face Indonesia on September 5 and China on September 10. Mancini's preliminary squad includes Al-Aqidi and his Al-Nassr teammate Sultan Al-Ghannam.



Saudi Arabia Italian coach Roberto Mancini.



Matheus Pinto with Ibrahim Al-Muhaidib and Fernando Hierro.

However, Al-Faraj, who has been absent from international duty since the dissent incident, has not been called up.

Reports indicate that Al-Aqidi is now eligible to play for the national team and his absence from the Portugal camp was due to passport issues, which are expected to be resolved soon.

Previously, Mancini had also summoned Al-Ghannam, who was fined 200,000 riyals in connection with the dissent, to the final team camp for matches against Pakistan and Jordan in the second round of qualifiers.

Meanwhile, Al-Nassr, the Saudi Professional League runner-up, announced yesterday the signing of Brazilian goalkeeper Matheus Pinto until 2028, joining from Atletico Paranaense.

The contract signing ceremony was held at the first team camp headquarters in Portugal, with the presence of Ibrahim Al-Muhaidib, Chairman of the Board of Directors of Al-Nassr Club Company, and Sports Director Fernando Hierro.

Al-Nassr, which includes Portuguese star Cristiano Ronaldo, secured second place in the previous Saudi League season, finishing 14 points behind title winner Al-Hilal.

By Hassan Musa

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 18: The Al Arabi Club delegation departed early this morning for a training camp in Erzurum, Turkey, in preparation for the upcoming season.

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Initially planned for Bosnia, the camp location was shifted to Turkey due to visa complications for the team's foreign players.

During its training camp, Al-Arabi is scheduled to play three friendly matches, continuing until the end of this month.

Ranked second in the Zain Premier League, Al Arabi will also participate in the group stage of the Asian Challenge Cup League.

In related news, Algerian professional Sofiane Bouchard is set to join the team's camp next week, following his recent return from special leave in Algeria. The club clarified there are no financial disputes, reaffirming Bouchard's commitment to continue his career at Al-Arabi.

Bouchard recently completed a loan spell with CS Belouizdad, concluding with the Algerian Cup victory on July 5 against MC Alger.

Meanwhile, Kuwait Club team continues rigorous training sessions twice daily in Turkey, part of their ongoing



Players training for the upcoming season.

camp until July 29.

Kuwait Club will play its second friendly match against Uzbekistan's Lokomotiv. It began its camp with a victory over Turkey's Amed FK, securing a 2-0 win with goals from Ali Hussein and Amr Abdel Fattah.

The team starts its season against Al-Qadisiya on August 8 in the Zain Premier League. It will then face Al-Ahly of Bahrain in Manama on August 14 in the preliminary round of the AFC Champions League's inaugural Western Region edition.

The preliminary rounds for both East and West regions involve single-match competitions, with winners advancing directly to the group stage and losers moving to the Challenge Cup.



Belgium's Victor Campenaerts celebrates as he crosses the finish line ahead of France's Matteo Vercher, hidden behind Campenaerts, and Poland's Michal Kwiatkowski, left, to win during the eighteenth stage of the Tour de France cycling race over 179.5 kilometers (111.5 miles) with start in Gap and finish in Barcelonnette, France. (AP)

Sports

Latest sports scores at — <http://sports.arabtimesonline.com>

Kuwaitis dominate West Asian Championships

Kuwait Olympic Committee congratulates the champions

AMMAN, July 18: The Kuwaiti Olympic Committee congratulated the champions of Kuwait judo team for their exceptional performance at the West Asian Judo Championship for youth and juniors, held in Amman, Jordan.

Muhammad Ali clinched the gold medal in the under-100 kg category, Shehab Al-Salman secured gold in the under-90 kg category, Fahd Al-Anazi earned bronze in the under-73 kg category, Anas Buqmaz took bronze in the under-81 kg category, and Yousef Al-Barrak won bronze in the under-60 kg category.

JUDO

In the junior category, Khaled Al-Kandari captured gold in the under-60 kg weight class, Abdullah Al-Dehani won gold in the under-90 kg weight class, Hussein Mahawish achieved gold in the under-90 kg weight class, Anas Buqmaz secured gold in the under-81 kg weight class, and Mishari Adel took silver in the under-66 kg weight class. Additionally, Ali Al-Ramzi won silver in the under-55 kg weight class, Sultan Al-Otaibi earned bronze in the under-50 kg weight class, Turki Al-Anazi took bronze in the under-81 kg weight class, and Saud Al-Anazi captured bronze in the under-60 kg weight class.



The Kuwaiti champions celebrate on the podium.

Kuwaiti parkour team competes in the 'inaugural' Arab Championship



Kuwaiti parkour team set for the inaugural Arab Championship.

KUWAIT CITY, July 18: The Kuwaiti parkour team has embarked on their journey to participate in the inaugural Arab championship for the sport, which commenced in Amman, Jordan yesterday and will continue until next Sunday.

Led by Nasser Al-Helfi, Treasurer of both the Kuwaiti and Arab Gymnastics Federations, the delegation includes Coach Suleiman Abdul-Rida, referee Muhammad Al-Attar, and athletes Ali Al-Shatti and Khalifa Al-Asfar.

The Kuwait Gymnastics Association expressed gratitude to the Public Authority for Sports, under Acting Director General Bashar Abdullah, for his steadfast support and approval of the parkour team's participation in this landmark event. He wished the team success in achieving a notable Arab performance in this modern discipline, slated to debut in the Olympic Games at "Los Angeles 2028".

Parkour, supervised by the Kuwait Gymnastics Association alongside artistic gymnastics and rhythmic gymnastics, represents a strategic focus for the association as it aims to establish a robust presence in the sport.

ZURICH, July 18, (AP): Argentina was confirmed as the world's No. 1 team in the FIFA men's rankings on Thursday, as the national government doubled down on defending the players who celebrated winning the Copa America by singing a racist song targeting No. 2-ranked France.

The fallout of the chant sung late on Sunday in Miami - which mocked the African heritage of some France players - continued four days later, including a rebuke to Argentina's critics by the vice president in its far-right government.

Argentina's government on Wednesday fired one of its leading sports officials who urged Lionel Messi and the president of the Argentine Football Association to apologize.

The sports under-secretary, Julio Garro, spoke after FIFA said it was

AFC imposes fines on Al Hilal, Al Nassr for violations

KUALA LUMPUR, July 18: The Asian Football Confederation has imposed financial penalties on Saudi Arabian clubs Al Hilal and Al Nassr for multiple infractions during last season's AFC Champions League qualifying rounds.

Al-Nassr Club has been fined \$30,000 by the Disciplinary Committee for incidents where their fans threw water bottles and projectiles at Al Ain players.

Additionally, Al-Nassr Club faces a \$15,000 fine for its players not adhering to the mixed zone protocol during the AFC Champions League quarter-finals match against Al Ain.

Meanwhile, Al Hilal Club has been fined \$20,000 for failing to prepare the medical room as required for its match against Iran's Sepahan,



Salem Al Dossary

in accordance with Article 71/1 of the regulations.

Furthermore, Al Hilal Club incurred a \$16,750 fine for its fans' misconduct involving throwing water bottles during the match against Sepahan.

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Al Hilal Club also received a \$10,000 fine for player Salem Al Dossary's failure to attend a media meeting following the match against Al Ain, UAE.

These penalties were imposed by the AFC Disciplinary Committee following investigations into various incidents during the AFC Champions League competitions.

Copa America champs top FIFA men's rankings

Govt hits back at critics of Argentina racist France song

looking into the incident and English club Chelsea started a disciplinary process against its midfielder Enzo Fernandez. He broadcast the footage on social media from the Argentina team bus in Florida.

SOCCER

Fernandez later published an apology on his Instagram account, which disappeared by Thursday, saying he was "truly sorry. That video, that moment, those words, do not reflect my beliefs or my character."

However, a defiant post by the vice

president of Argentina, Victoria Villarruel, on social media hit back at the country's critics.

"No country with a colonial history is going to put us down for a song sung on a field nor for speaking a truth that nobody wants to admit," Villarruel wrote.

"Enough of pretending to be offended, hypocrites. Enzo I am with you, Messi thanks for everything! Argentines always keep your heads high! Long live Argentina!"

Villarruel said Argentina's history had been forged by people of all races: "We never forced our way of life on anyone, nor will we tolerate that some-

one tries to do the same to us."

The song refers to France players being "all from Angola," having parents from Nigeria and Cameroon, and also includes an offensive reference to Kylian Mbappé.

One of Fernandez's French teammates at Chelsea, Wesley Fofana, who is Black, described the video as "uninhibited racism." France players Jules Koundé and Mike Maignan also posted critical comments about the Argentina incident.

The chant was first sung by Argentina fans in Qatar ahead of the 2022 World Cup final against France. Argentina won a penalty shootout after a thrilling 3-3 draw.

FIFA President Gianni Infantino has said soccer and its 211 national federations must have a zero tolerance approach to racism and in May committed to relaunching a task force to monitor incidents.

Argentina has topped the FIFA rankings since April 2023 and has extended its lead over second-placed France, which lost in the European Championship semifinals to Spain.

Euro 2024 winner Spain rose five places to No. 3. Beaten finalist England moved up one place, swapping with No. 5 Brazil. Copa America beaten finalist Colombia rose three places to No. 9.

Morocco is at No. 14, with the 2022 World Cup semifinalist dropping two places as Africa's top-ranked men's team. The United States dropped five places to No. 16, one ahead of its CONCACAF regional rival Mexico.

No. 18 Japan is the highest-ranked Asian team.

Campenaerts wins 3-man sprint to take stage 18

BARCELONNETTE, France, July 18, (AP): Belgian rider Victor Campenaerts posted the biggest win of his career Thursday as he claimed the tough and hilly 18th stage of the Tour de France after a three-man sprint.

Two-time Tour champion Tadej Pogacar kept the race leader's yellow jersey as the top of the overall standings remained unchanged with just three days of racing left.

Campenaerts spent most of the day at the front and jumped away from a breakaway group some 35 kilometers (22 miles) from the finish together with Frenchman Matteo Vercher and former world champion Michal Kwiatkowski of Poland.

Campenaerts, who won a Giro stage in 2021, patiently waited behind his rivals in the last kilometer and did not panic when Vercher attacked. He stayed in the wheel of Kwiatkowski, then launched his sprint from behind.

The Lotto Dstny rider celebrated his win with his partner and baby on a video call straight after the finish.

There was a flurry of attacks at the start of the rollercoaster stage featuring five climbs as riders tried to break away before the first ascent, the Col du Festre. But the peloton rode at a high speed, thwarting all those early efforts.

About 20 riders finally managed to open a gap during that climb and were

joined by Wednesday's stage winner Richard Carapaz and other talented contenders for the stage win, including Ben Healy and Geraint Thomas.

With the best-placed rider in that large group already lagging nearly 34 minutes behind race leader Tadej Pogacar overall, the pack let the break get away. The main contenders for the overall win, including Pogacar and his rivals Jonas Vingegaard and Remco Evenepoel, finished 13 minutes and 40 seconds behind Campenaerts.

Earlier, Healy attacked twice from the leading group in the Cote de Saint-Apollinaire but his move eventually backfired as the Irishman got dropped when others upped the pace.



Mateo Carabajal, (left), of Ecuador's Independiente del Valle battles for the ball with Exequiel Zeballos of Argentina's Boca Juniors during a Copa Sudamericana playoffs soccer match at Banco Guayaquil stadium in Quito, Ecuador. The match ended 0-0. (AP)