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Page 16



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Opinion

A joke called social justice and touching the citizens' pockets

By Ahmed Al-Jarallah

Editor-in-Chief, the Arab Times

THE reality is that the citizens' pocket is touched daily for decades, despite the slogan that was raised at every occasion in the past about not touching the citizens' pocket, which means ensuring their income is not impacted. This is an empty slogan that neither sustains nor alleviates hunger.



Al-Jarallah

This issue was turned into a dilemma because of the opportunistic political trading of former MPs, the selfish and envious individuals, and the currently powerful figures who prioritize their own interests above all else.

The size of this dilemma increases whenever an opportunity for political gain arises either from former or current ministers, or from MPs in the past. This means achieving social justice without impacting citizens' finances is merely a fantasy, and it is likely to remain so.

The citizen's pockets are impacted by unjustified subsidies that allow owners of multiple buildings to avoid paying their dues for electricity and water services, shifting the burden to public funds. This situation ultimately deprives low-income citizens of opportunities to improve their earnings.

All the talk about this matter revolves around the interests of stakeholders, but no one has asked why citizens are deprived of enjoying a decent life, and who is preventing their financial stability.

Is it the wealthy man who invests abroad the money he obtained from tenders whose prices were inflated through favoritism by corrupt officials, while his own country is deprived of productive projects? Or perhaps it is the one who amasses wealth through real estate, owning vast lands and properties, driving prices beyond what citizens can afford? Could it be the greedy merchant, or the owner of 30 or 40 agencies, and many others who exploit people's hardships for personal gain?

Thus, when food and services are subsidized, it often leads to increased arrogance and greed, fostering a societal attitude of demanding more.

There is no long-term vision that would benefit the future of generations, which are currently threatened with losing fundamental resources in the near future.

The concept of "Public Reserve" means increased austerity, thereby jeopardizing the prospects for productive projects on which young people could depend in the future.

So we say frankly - Yes, touch the pockets of the citizens and those described above, but not those with low income. Take from the affluent and redistribute to the needy, as is practiced in countries worldwide that are striving to align individuals' incomes with the services they receive.

In Kuwait, retirees are suffering like those with limited salaries. The majority of them, along with a significant segment of citizens, are under the sword of loans that consume the majority of their income.

Continued on Page 5

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Kuwaiti nationality pulled from three persons: gov't

KUWAIT CITY, July 21: The Council of Ministers has issued a new decision to withdraw the Kuwaiti citizenship certificate from 3 persons based on Article (21) repeated "A" of Amiri Decree No. 15 of 1959 regarding the Kuwaiti Citizenship Law and its amending laws, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The decision was issued based on a proposal by the First Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defense and Minister of Interior.

The decision stipulates the withdrawal of the Kuwaiti citizenship certificate by establishment from individuals and from those who acquired it from the holder of that certificate by way of dependency.

The decision affects the following individuals -- Abdullah Mohammad Saeed Abu Jumah Al-Ajami, Abdul Rahman Mohammad Saeed Abu Jumah Al-Ajami and Khaled Mashafi Awad Masoud Al-Ajami

This measure underscores the government's commitment to upholding the integrity of the nationality process and ensuring that citizenship is granted based on accurate and truthful information.

NewsWatch

Kuwait Ports Authority gets new board via Amiri decree

KUWAIT CITY, July 21. (KUNA): An Amiri decree has been issued appointing a new board of directors of Kuwait Ports Authority (KPA) for a three-year term of office.

The newly named board comprises Alya Aryan, Bashaer Al-Ghanim, Yousef Al-Eseri, Amer Al-Bader, director general of the General Administration of Customs, Assistant Undersecretary of the Ministry of Interior for Ports and Border Security and Assistant Director General of the General Directorate of Coast Guard.

Under the decree, each board member will be paid KD 5,000 per annum.

CAIRO: Kuwait's Permanent Representative at the Arab League Ambassador Talal Al-Mutairi said Saturday that the State of Kuwait pays due heed to Arab issues.

The Kuwaiti diplomat made the statement to KUNA to mark 63 years since Kuwait joined the Arab League on July 20, 1961.

On this occasion, Al-Mutairi highly commended the Cairo-based Arab bloc as one of the most prestigious regional and international organizations and as a pioneering agency that diligently seeks to fulfill the Arab people's expectations for development and prosperity. (KUNA)

DUBAI: Authorities in the United Arab Emirates ordered an investigation and an expedited trial of Bangladeshi nationals arrested after protesting against their home government across the Gulf country, state media reported.

The protests came as nationwide demonstrations spread across the South Asian country weeks ago to protest a quota system that reserves up to 30% of government jobs for relatives of veterans who fought in Bangladesh's war of independence in 1971. (AP)

See Also Page 7



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah receives Qatar's Ambassador to the State of Kuwait, Ali bin Abdullah Al-Mahmoud.

Kuwait Amir receives invitation to attend ACD from Qatari counterpart

KUWAIT CITY, July 21. (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received, Sunday, a letter from his counterpart, Qatar's Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani, inviting him to participate in third summit of Asian Cooperation Dialogue (ACD) titled sports diplomacy.

Qatari Ambassador to Kuwait Ali bin Abdullah Al-Mahmoud handed His Highness the Amir the invitation to the summit, slated to be held next October in Qatari capital of Doha. Attending the meeting were a number of senior officials.

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah also received His Highness the Crown Prince

Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah at Seif Palace Sunday.

His Highness the Amir then received His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, as well as First Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defense and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yousuf Saud Al-Sabah.

Around 200,000 fall victim to e-fraud, deceit in four years

Elderly, less educated vulnerable to fake broker companies

Kuwait's GDP sees decline in Q1 2024

KUWAIT CITY, July 21: Kuwait's economy faced a decline in the first quarter of 2024, with the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) at constant prices dropping by 2.7% year-on-year, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The GDP for this period was 10.082 billion dinars, down from 10.360 billion dinars in the same quarter of 2023, according to the Central Administration of Statistics.

The primary driver behind the GDP decline was a 9.8% decrease in the total value added of the oil sector, which fell to 47.2% of GDP. This reduction was attributed to lower crude oil production levels.

Conversely, the non-oil sector showed positive growth, with its value added increasing by approximately 4.7% year-on-year in the first quarter.

Sector Contributions to GDP include the following:

Manufacturing Sector -- This sector, including petroleum product refining activities, contributed 8.7% to the GDP.

Public Administration, Defense, and Social Security -- These activities contributed 12.9%.

Financial Intermediation -- This sector made up 8.8% of the GDP.

Services Sector -- Covering essential areas such as education, health, social work, and real estate, the services sector contributed 18.8% to the GDP.

Continued on Page 5



Undersecretary of the Interior Ministry Lieutenant General Sheikh Salem Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, on Sunday, emphasized the security leadership's dedication to improving collaboration between governmental and civil bodies. This effort aims to review all proposals that enhance traffic flow, whether through innovative road and intersection designs, public awareness and education, or stricter penalties. (KUNA)

Experts: Strategic gov't planning must to avert cybersecurity risks

By Mohammad Al-Musleh Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 21: Recent oversight reports have highlighted the weak preparedness of many government agencies to handle cybersecurity risks and technical system disruptions. In response, technical experts are urging the development of a comprehensive government strategy plan to enhance readiness against such risks. Experts speaking to Al-Seyassah emphasized

the importance of creating emergency and response plans, as well as ensuring the availability of advanced backup systems for rapid data recovery. They highlighted the necessity of having dedicated work teams ready to tackle these challenges.

"Sudden technical failures pose a significant challenge that can disrupt the daily operations of the government and its services to citizens," they noted.

Continued on Page 5

Kuwait concerned over Israeli attacks on Yemen

KUWAIT CITY, July 21, (Agencies) : Kuwait is following with great concern the unprecedented Israeli attacks on the territory of the Republic of Yemen, the resulting deterioration of the security situation in the region, and the undermining of international efforts aimed at ending the cycle of violence, said Ministry of Foreign Affairs Sunday.

In a statement, the Ministry stressed Kuwait's position on the need to distance the region and its people from the dangers of

violence and destruction, urging the international community and the Security Council to assuming its responsibilities in ending all conflicts.

The ministry emphasized Kuwait's continued support for efforts aimed at establishing security and stability in Yemen, and sparing its people further harm and suffering.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is following with great concern the developments of the military escalation

in Yemen after the Israeli attacks in Al Hudaydah governorate on Saturday.

In a statement on Sunday, The Ministry called on all parties to exercise maximum restraint and to distance the region and its people from the dangers of war.

It also called on the international community and active influential parties to fulfill their responsibilities to end conflicts in the region.

Continued on Page 5



Minister of Information and Culture Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi speaking at the event.

'All parties must join heads for planning sustainable growth'

KUWAIT CITY, July 21, (KUNA): Minister of Information and Culture Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi affirmed the Ministry adopted a participatory approach in planning its strategy (2021-2026), which is a globally approved scientific methodology, aiming to involve all concerned parties in the decision-making process.

Minister Al-Mutairi said during a press conference on Sunday at the Government Communication Center entitled (Outputs of the Ministry of Information

Strategy) that this conference comes under the directives of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, and the instructions of His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah to be transparent when presenting information to citizens and enhancing media communication.

Continued on Page 5

KUWAIT CITY, July 21: Along with the recent global technical glitch known as the "blue screen of death", experts have raised alarms about the increasing number of victims falling prey to electronic fraud, hackers, and fake brokers.

According to a professor of Information Technology at Kuwait University and Head of the Kuwait Society for Information Security Safaa Al-Zaman, the number of fake broker companies in Kuwait is increasing. These companies adopt misleading tactics to convince victims to engage in trading in capital markets and real estate.

She revealed that the number of banking fraud victims among citizens and residents has reached 200,000 over a period of four years, disclosing that she herself fell victim to electronic fraud.

Al-Zaman recounted being informed by a fellow citizen of losing KD 300,000 to a fake trading company.

Continued on Page 5

3 TV channels show slashed

By Mohammad Al-Musleh Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 21: The Ministry of Information recently issued a decision to stop the broadcasting of three channels affiliated with the official Kuwait Television - Al-Qurain, Al-Arabi and Ithra - effective July 28, clarifying that these channels' content shall remain exclusively available on the its '51' digital platform.

In a video posted on its electronic accounts, the ministry announced "it is possible to watch these channels' live and continuously on the '51' platform, while the television broadcast of these channels will stop permanently."

In the same context, sources told the newspaper that the decision is part of the ministry's strategy to develop digital content in order to attract viewers in a more modern way in light of the growing demand for digital platforms.

The decision prompted social media platform users to express dissatisfaction over the suspension of satellite channels, which they consider hasty and impulsive.

Continued on Page 5

Prayer Timings

Fajr 03:30 Asr 15:29
 Sunrise .. 05:01 Maghrib .. 18:47
 Zohr 11:54 Isha 20:16

Local

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

Weather

Expected weather for next 24 hrs:
By Day: Very hot with light to moderate freshening at times northwesterly wind, with speeds of 12-40 km/h.
By Night: Hot to rather hot with

Station	Max Exp	Min Rec	Abdaly	Jahra	Salmiyah	Nuwaisib	Wafra
Kuwait City	51	38	50	51	46	49	50
Kuwait Airport	50	31	31	34	38	32	30



HH the PM with the Qatari ambassador.

HH Prime Minister hosts Qatari ambassador

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah received, at Seif Palace on Sunday, the Qatari Ambassador to the State of Ku-

wait, Ali Abdullah Al-Mahmoud. The head of the Prime Minister's Diwan, Abdulaziz Dekheel Al-Dekheel, attended the meeting. (KUNA)

Other Voices

First Deputy and the new obstruction

By Ahmed alsarraf

If someone promotes his driver to become the manager of a store he owns, does any party have the right to object to his decision, on the grounds that the driver does not have an educational certificate that qualifies him to manage the store or company?

If a person wanted to marry his daughter, with her knowledge and consent, to someone who holds an incorrect university degree, does the government have the right to object to this marriage?



alsarraf

Naturally, the answer is no, in both cases, and in other similar examples!

Historically, our government has suffered from terrible bureaucracy, and only recently has it begun to get tired of it, and move towards "digitization, automation and mechanization", with obvious slowness!

I have a partner who works as a general manager of the company, and has been residing in Kuwait for about 40 years. He is highly efficient and honest. His residency expired, so we applied as usual on 7/4/2024 to renew it online, but the application was rejected due to the invalidity of the attachments.

We completed the requirements, and the system requested documents and certificates, but the rejection was repeated five times.

The process was completed after 14 days, after meeting all the requests of the Labor authority for all of the partner's university certificates, his secondary school certificates, and all transcripts for eight years of study, with the need to translate and authenticate them.

Then we face the problem of the incompatibility of his academic specialization, as a chemistry graduate, with his work as general man-

ager of a commercial company! This is happening for the first time after 40 years of residency in the country!

There are no words that are enough to describe the extent of the suffering, nor the number of hours that were wasted, of our time and the time of the authority's employees, without a logical reason, or even a semi-valid reason!

Question: What is the government's relationship with the educational certificates of those working in the private sector? Especially if they are commercial entities that do not deal with food, medicine, or any materials related to human health?

Why does the Public Authority for Manpower, with all its overcrowding, scrutiny and responsibilities, occupy itself with such unreasonable demands in the first place?!

How can we understand all the government's statements regarding its intention to facilitate the work of the private sector, and then issue decisions that are not part of its core work, and have no benefit other than obstructing the work of the private sector and driving away qualified people?

We understand the government's desire to verify the authenticity of the certificates of its employees, as this is its right, as long as their salaries are determined based on it. But what does it have to do with the certificates of tens of thousands of workers in the private sector, when it has not even completed one-tenth of one percent of the process of verifying the certificates of government employees?

We hope that His Excellency the First Deputy Prime Minister, who does not need to be praised for his great reform efforts, will intervene immediately and stop this shameful and useless farce, which has caused and continues to cause obstruction of the work of all parties, including governmental ones.

□ □ □
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HH Crown Prince receives PM & First Deputy PM

KUWAIT CITY, July 21, (KUNA): His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah received His Highness Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah the Prime Minister at Seif Palace Sunday.

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

Ghana gov't finalizing bilateral labor deals with Kuwait: envoy

Ambassador Idris meets with Ghanaian nationals in Kuwait

By Fares Al-Abdan

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 21: The Ambassador of Ghana to Kuwait Mohammed Habib Idris held an open meeting with Ghanaian residents in Kuwait during which he listened to the challenges they face in their jobs.

The meeting was attended by the Ambassador of Kenya, the Ambassador of Central Africa, and the representative of the Kuwait Trade Unions Federation Muhammad Al-Arada, as well as a delegation from the Public Authority for Manpower, headed by Dr. Adnan Al Baloushi, and a large crowd of Ghanaian citizens working in the country.

During the meeting, Ambassador Idris said, "We are meeting today to work on providing our citizens in Kuwait with information about the fair and ethical recruitment of expatriate workers, and to enable our embassy to hear directly about the challenges faced by Ghanaian workers here." He expressed his appreciation to the government of Kuwait "for kindly sending experts to talk to us about the laws and regulations related to expatriate workers in the country and to provide further education on labor issues in Kuwait."

Growth

He explained, "Ghana has always been a beacon of opportunity and growth. It is known for its relatively highly skilled workforce with dedication and strong work ethic that has proven its value in various sectors, thus attracting labor demand across the world, especially the Gulf countries.

However, it is also fair to reveal that the labor recruitment process has not been smooth as a whole. There is still a lot of work to be done to address some of the challenges that this sector suffers from.

In an attempt to promote the rights of Ghanaian workers abroad and in view of the complaints made by our citizens, the government of Ghana, in partnership with some international organizations including the International Organization for Migration and the International Labor Organization, is seeking to find solutions to this issue at the international level.

It is for this reason, along with other reasons, that the Embassy of Ghana has sought to collaborate with relevant stakeholders to convene this forum for ascertaining the challenges faced by our citizens during the recruitment process in their conditions of service, as well as possible ways to address the challenges.

The State of Kuwait has always been a sought-after destination for expatriate workers who have continued to help drive the Kuwaiti economy through their skills, knowledge and cultural diversity.

Ghanaians have been part of this process, offering their expertise in various sectors from healthcare and education to construction and technology, as well as domestic workers.

I am pleased to announce that the government of Ghana is in the process of finalizing bilateral labor agreements between Kuwait and Ghana.

Upon completion, the agreements will simplify the process of employing Ghanaian workers in Kuwait by providing them with legal protection, ensuring their well-being, and eliminating or reducing many challenges associated with the migration of Ghanaian workers to Kuwait.

In addition, these agreements will allow the Ghanaian authorities to control the flow of expatriate workers by examining those heading to the State of Kuwait,



Ghanaian Ambassador Idris with PAM and other officials.

Photo by Rizk Taufiq



Algerian Ambassador Al-Huseini.



Bangladeshi Ambassador Hussain.



Ambassador of Kyrgyzstan.



Ambassador of South Korea.

KUNA photos

'Algeria, Bangladesh, Kyrgyzstan and South Korea'

FM receives credentials of new ambassadors

KUWAIT CITY, July 21, (KUNA): Kuwait Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Al-Yahya received Sunday the credentials of the new Ambassador of Algeria to the country, Abdulqader Qasimi Al-Huseini.

During the meeting, the minister wished the new ambassador success in his work in the country and the ties between the two countries further prosperity.

Bangladesh
 FM Al-Yahya met on Sunday with the newly-appointed Bangladesh Ambassador to Kuwait

which will contribute significantly to supporting the Ghanaian economy by increasing remittances to enhance family income, as well as increasing investments.

Cooperation and dialogue between the relevant Ghanaian authorities and their Kuwaiti counterparts will be vital in order to simplify labor issues for mutual benefit.

Migration

Ghana is also committed to working closely with labor-sending countries and international organizations dealing with migration and labor issues in order to develop policies and exchange best practices for more effective and humane labor migration.

I hope that the knowledge exchanged at this meeting will enhance our understanding of the laws and regulations related to employment issues in Kuwait and that we will benefit from it for the benefit of both the workers and employers. Therefore, I

Sayed Tariq Hussain, and received his appointment credentials.

During the meeting, Minister Al-Yahya wished the new ambassador success at his new position and wished more progress in bilateral ties between Kuwait and Bangladesh.

Kyrgyzstan
 FM Al-Yahya received Sunday the credentials of the new Ambassador of Kyrgyzstan to the country.

During the meeting, the minister wished the new ambassador success in his work in the country

and the ties between the two countries further prosperity.

South Korea

FM Al-Yahya received a copy of the credentials of the Ambassador of the Republic of Korea to the State of Kuwait Park Chung-sook during a meeting held Sunday at the ministry's headquarters. The minister wished the new ambassador success in his duties and for the close bilateral relations between the two friendly countries further progress and prosperity.

A common mistake committed by a worker is to flee from the employer, and not submit a complaint and provide reasons for the dispute. This results in the loss of all his entitlements and rights.

Dr. Al-Baloushi affirmed that the Public Authority for Manpower provides a shelter to receive workers until the dispute is resolved, adding, "It usually ends with either the worker being transferred to a new employer or returning to his country with all his dues being paid. The administration has the right to extend the worker's stay until the dispute is resolved. The shelter can meet all the workers' needs, including housing, food, and full care."

In the event of a dispute between the worker and the employer, the worker can submit a complaint to the relevant department, which will in turn implement the domestic workers Law No. 68/2015 that guarantees the worker's rights and entitlements.

One of the most important

'Comply with submission protocols'

'Audit Bureau' urges KPA to expedite tender issue amid contract extensions

By Mohammed Al Musleh

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 21: The Kuwait Ports Authority is currently working on extending several key contracts, including those for the operation and maintenance of mobile bridge cranes and Shuaiba ports.

However, the Audit Bureau has called for the swift completion of procedures related to issuing and awarding new tenders.

Sources informed Al-Seyassah daily that the Kuwait Ports Authority has requested a 180-day extension for two contracts, amounting to 917 thousand dinars, to maintain the operation and upkeep of the mobile bridge cranes and ground equipment at both ports.

The Audit Bureau has approved the extension for Shuaiba Port but has rejected the extension request for Shuwaikh Port due to several preconditions.

The Audit Bureau confirmed that there are no obstacles to extending the

contract for Shuaiba Port for a total of 477.9 thousand dinars, provided the extension adheres to the Ministry of Finance's circular regarding disbursements until the issuance of the new budget law for the fiscal year 2024-2025.

In contrast, the extension request for the Shuwaikh Port contract, valued at 439.7 thousand dinars, which was to begin at the start of this month and run until the end of December, faced scrutiny.

The Audit Bureau asked the Kuwait Ports Authority to comply with its circular regarding submission protocols and to adhere to the guidelines for preparing tender papers, draft contracts, engagements, and agreements.

The Audit Bureau also requested additional information on the fourth extension's procedures and justification for the increased amount compared to the previous extension. This will allow the bureau to review the request thoroughly and provide a prior opinion after considering the comments and documentation provided.

diwaniya ديوانية

A DIGEST OF PUBLIC OPINION

'Media need to be responsible in presenting and solving problem'

"I DO not like the flattering media, which is biased and continues to praise, exaggerate admiration and theorize, just to please those in power and the relevant parties," columnist and former deputy director-general of Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) **Iqbal Al-Ahmed** wrote for **Al-Qabas** daily.

"I don't like the media that is so pessimistic, so extreme, that it reflects this pessimism and extremism in every word it says or publishes."

"I do not like media that is narrow in its goals and interests, and far removed from the public interest and the national interest."

"I don't like media that doesn't tire itself out in its research, connection and transparency."

"I do not like the colorful media, which has multiple images every day, and is different day after day, according to what it achieves to its goal and its own narrow objective."

"I do not like the media that exploits a mistake and turns its results into slapping, hair pulling, and causing fear, anxiety, and pain."

"I like the media, which talks about the negatives, warns and explains with complete objectivity, even if sometimes it is harsh and raises fear and anxiety about the future, and puts forward solutions and visions that raise hope and propose solutions."

"I like the media, which does not hide any non-secret information that the people must hear or read, and speaks about it clearly and objectively with full confidence, without unnecessary embellishment."

"I like media that is objective in its reaction, and does not exaggerate in its tensions and regret."

"I like the media that thinks for the good of the country, by presenting any information that worries the people, and diagnosing it in all its details with complete clarity and boldness."

"I do not like the media that throws out information, numbers or statistics that arouse fear and anxiety among the people or citizens about the reality and the future, then leaves the arena empty except for superficial comments, interpretations and analyses that make matters worse, do not solve problems, correct mistakes, limit exaggerations, reduce pessimism and eliminate fear."

"I like the media, which does not leave this arena empty without accompanying it with logical analyses, based on scientific visions, the conscious media that is confident in itself."

"I like the media, which does not exploit any information that causes terror, fear, and anxiety, without presenting solutions and suggestions from effective specialists who know what to say, how to say it, when to speak, and who know how to diagnose the diseases and problems of the country."

"We are increasingly demanding a media that is aware and responsible in presenting the problem and solving it, and that opens the way for collecting development suggestions and solutions, and developing ideal visions based on facts, by specialists who love and are jealous of the homeland."

Also:

"I have been known outside of Kuwait for many years, which gives me a unique perspective on developments or changes in reality. Unfortunately, Kuwait is not progressing, and I can perceive this more clearly than others who may find it difficult to notice gradual changes," columnist **AbdulLatif Al-Duajj** wrote for **Al-Jarida** daily.

"While I am considering whether to return or stay, that is not our main topic. What I have observed is the proliferation of high-rise buildings and new constructions everywhere, predominantly residential apartments in so-called investment areas. In truth, all of Kuwait can be considered an investment area."

"I asked a knowledgeable friend about this phenomenon, and he shared that in Beirut, Lebanon, such activity was attributed to money laundering. This might be the case here as well."

"Whether true or not is less relevant to me because money laundering is an international crime, not just a Kuwaiti one. The crucial point is the source of the money. If it stems from local illegal trades, especially drugs, this would be a disaster needing urgent and severe intervention."

"Our government, according to repeated statements, is pursuing austerity and reducing services while aiming to manage demographic composition. The increasing population, whether citizens or expatriates, is straining services, infrastructure, and resources like roads, electricity, water, and healthcare."

"Given this situation, why permit such extensive construction? Although we have a free economy, allowing merchants and real estate owners considerable freedom in their investments, there remains the question of the purpose behind these developments. It could be legitimate investments or potentially money laundering."

"I spoke with a friend responsible for one of these major buildings, completed years ago, and he revealed that the occupancy rate has not yet reached 40%. Until someone investigates and explains the reasons behind this trend, we can only speculate, much like the Iraqi who, upon seeing numerous pictures of Saddam Hussein, said, 'We are left to wonder who will occupy these buildings.'"

"Newspapers informed us of the statements made by public financial officials regarding the deficit that the state is suffering from, and that it will be a struggle to meet certain financial obligations. This leaves citizens in a state of constant anxiety and skepticism as they observe government's donations, gifts, and loans to other countries at a time when the citizens have to endure austerity measures and financial constraints due to the limited thinking and vision of those responsible for addressing the deficit with sustainable solutions and alternatives," columnist **Dr. Nayef Al Adwani** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

"The first of the solutions to be implemented is to control the money transfers made by expatriate workers, which are estimated at billions of dinars. They are transferred illegally through unofficial money exchanges inside Kuwait and in their countries, without the state benefiting or collecting any amount of money, even though it provides them with the opportunity to create financial wealth in the form of salaries, commissions, trading, brokerage, and private lessons."

"An important point to note is that the state allows them to take up more than one job, as these workers came to Kuwait to earn money, and will therefore try to work with all his energy in any field to earn money by any means and within the fastest time. On the other hand, the state prohibits citizens from taking up more than one job."

"The state takes God into account when dealing with these workers, and protects their rights and fights as much as possible against visa traders. The principles of International Labor Organization (ILO) law apply to them, but the vast majority of them evade by transferring this money through official banking channels, such as banks and approved money exchange bureaus, thus depriving the state of funds worth billions."

"According to the latest statistics from the Central Bank, official banking channels handle billions in money transfers from expatriate workers. Therefore, it is essential to impose annual taxes on their earnings to reduce illicit transfers. Additionally, they should be included in social insurance schemes where they contribute towards their retirement funds. This ensures they have a stable income post-retirement and throughout their lives after reaching the legal age and leaving the country."

"Implementing unemployment and disability insurance in line with International Labor Organization standards will not only generate billions of dinars annually in a legal and organized manner but also help alleviate the general budget deficit."

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



Photo by Samer Shiqr Securitymen checking civil IDs of expatriates.

Security campaign nets dozens of law violators

By **Munif Naif**

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 21: In compliance with the instructions of First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense and Interior Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef Al-Sabah and Interior Ministry Undersecretary Lieutenant General Salem Al-Nawaf; the Ministry of Interior on Sunday evening carried out a major security campaign along Al-Sahafa Street (Newspaper Street) in Shuwaikh Industrial Area, which resulted in the arrest

of dozens of Residency Law violators who were referred to the competent authorities.

They arrested Residency Law violators, wanted persons and outlaws; in addition to the issuance of citations for various traffic violations.

The extremely hot weather made worse by the heat emanating from vehicle engines did not prevent the surprise security campaign along Al-Sahafa Street (Newspaper Street); where the security officials of various ranks were seen verifying people's identification documents.

Fashionista's 3-year jail with hard labor stays over deadly car crash

15 days extension in exam leak case; woman dies in accident

By **Jaber Al-Hamoud, Munif Naif**

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff and Agencies

KUWAIT CITY, July 21: The Misdemeanor Court of Cassation upheld the verdict issued by a lower court, which sentenced the fashionista **Fatima Al-Momen** to three-year imprisonment with hard labor and the withdrawal of her driver's license for one year, due to a traffic accident that resulted in the death of two people. The court referred the civil lawsuit to the concerned circuit.

The Public Prosecution had charged her with the following: (1) Crossing the red light, in accordance with article 33-bis of law No. 52/2001 that amended some provisions of decree law No. 67/1976 regarding traffic. (2) Exceeding the maximum speed limit set in accordance with article 1/33-bis of law No. 52/2001 that amended some provisions of decree law No. 67/1976 regarding traffic. (3) Driving a vehicle under the influence of intoxicants, in accordance with article 38 of law No. 52/2001 that amended some provisions of decree law No. 67/1976 regarding traffic. (4) Causing an accident that damaged private and public properties, in accordance with article 1/3,4 of law No. 52/2001 that amended some provisions of decree law No. 67/1976 regarding traffic. (5) Manslaughter, in accordance with article 154 of the Penal Code. (6) Wrongful injury in accordance with article 164 of the Penal Code. (7) Driving a vehicle with an invalid insurance, in accordance with article 14/35 of law No. 52/2001 that amended some provisions of decree law No. 67/1976 regarding traffic. (8) Driving a vehicle without a driving license, in accordance with article 4/36 of law No. 52/2001 that amended some provisions of decree law No. 67/1976 regarding traffic. (9) Driving a vehicle recklessly and negligently, in accordance with article 2/33 of law No. 52/2001 that amended some provisions of decree law No. 67/1976 regarding traffic.

According to the case file, the tragic accident occurred on Thursday, August 24, 2023 at exactly 3:17am at the intersection of Soor Street and King Fahad Bin Abdulaziz Road. It resulted in the death of two people and the injuries to two others accompanying them. The injured victims were referred to a hospital where they are still receiving treatment.

The incident was registered as misdemeanor traffic case No. 86/2023 at Abdullah Al-Salem Police Station.

Detention extended in exam leak case: The detention renewal judge decided to extend for 15 days the detention of four individuals - two Kuwaiti citizens, a Bedoun resident and an Iraqi expatriate - for further investigations on charges of leaking high school exam papers.

The Public Prosecution had charged the accused with disclosing confidential information by leaking high school exam papers of the last academic year, and money laundering.

The investigations are still ongoing, and six other defendants in the same case are scheduled to appear tomorrow before the detention renewal judge.

Hacker's case dismissed: The Court of Cassation upheld the ruling of a lower court that dismissed the criminal case filed against the most dangerous Kuwaiti hacker who hacked the US Department of Defense website, because the accused could not be tried for charges he committed 10 years ago.

The 28-year-old hacker hacked the US Department of Defense website and accessed sensitive weapons sites, which endangered Kuwait's relationship with an ally and the Kuwaiti national security, as he infiltrated 200 American websites.

Woman dies in traffic accident: A 27 year-old Kuwaiti woman died and seven individuals, including four members of her family, sustained injuries due to a tragic accident that occurred on Abdali Road.

According to security sources, when the Operations Room of the Ministry of Interior received information about a two-vehicle collision on Abdali Road, securitymen and paramedics rushed to the location.

Upon arrival, they discovered that one of the vehicles contained a five-member Kuwaiti family, and the other vehicle contained an Egyptian and two Indians. They also realized that the collision resulted in the death of a 27 year old woman, and injuries to four of her family members, and the three expatriates who were in the other vehicle.

After the arrival of the air ambulance, the injured victims were immediately taken to Jahra Hospital, and the body of the deceased was referred to the Forensic Medicine Department. A case was filed.

Iron, copper cable thieves arrested: Criminal Investigation Department officers have successfully apprehended a four-member gang specializing in the theft of iron, copper, and cables from construction projects in the South Saad Al-Abdullah City project, reports Al-Anba daily.

According to a source, the Criminal Investigation Department received confidential information about an expatriate frequently visiting the Amghara scrapyard to sell stolen iron, copper, and electrical cables. After thorough surveillance and investigation, it was discovered that he was part of a gang of four individuals. The officers closely monitored the gang's activities in the South Saad Al-Abdullah City project. During their surveillance, the gang members were caught stealing electrical cables and iron and loading the stolen items into their vehicle. The officers swiftly intervened, closing off the road and arresting the suspects after a brief resistance. A search of the vehicle revealed a significant quantity of stolen goods.

Fire safety brochures

Chief of Staff urges high vigilance and readiness

KUWAIT CITY, July 21, (KUNA): Chief of General Staff of Kuwait's Armed Forces Lt-Gen. Bander Al-Muzain has stressed the need of keeping getting prepared and cautious.

While inspecting some military units and sites, Al-Muzain said it is imperative to continue serious action in order to maintain the country's security and safety, the General Staff said in a press release.

Al-Muzain voiced appreciation for efforts made by the army's personnel and their high readiness, it added.

Fire safety brochures: Kuwait Fire Force (KFF) has been distributing fire safety brochures on the five procedures that must be followed in case of fire in order to prevent injuries or loss of lives, reports Al-Anba daily.

These procedures include informing all those inside the house or building about the fire, vacating the area through the emergency exits, using the stairs instead of elevators, calling the emergency hotline and not carrying valuable items.

This brochure is part of KFF's commitment to educate the public about the procedures to prevent injuries and deaths that may result from fire incidents; especially the emission of thick smoke, which has been reported to be a major cause of injuries or deaths like the most recent Farwaniya fire incident that claimed the lives of an entire expatriate family - the parents and three children whose death was proven to be due to inhalation of smoke from the fire in a neighboring apartment.



Iqbal Al-Ahmed



The four persons with the seized packets of hashish.

Securitymen foil alcohol smuggling bid

Four suspects held for smuggling 160 kg hashish by sea could face death penalty

KUWAIT CITY, July 21: Authorities have successfully intercepted a substantial smuggling operation at Shuwaikh Port, resulting in significant seizures of illegal substances, reports Al-Anba daily.

The General Department for Combating Narcotics, in collaboration with the General Department of Coast Guard, apprehended four individuals attempting to smuggle 160 kilograms of hashish by sea. These suspects were subsequently referred to the Public Prosecution, facing charges of narcotics trafficking - a crime that could result in the death penalty. The arrest followed extensive surveillance and intelligence efforts, culminating in the necessary authorization from the Public Prosecution.

In a separate incident, a large quantity of imported alcohol was prevented from entering the country through Shuwaikh Port. A security source confirmed that the Ministry of Interior will release a comprehensive statement detailing the seizure once the investigation concludes and those involved are detained. Both operations underscore the

ongoing efforts by the Ministry of Interior to combat smuggling and uphold security within the region.

Also, last evening, patrolmen from the Farwaniya Security Directorate arrested an unidentified drug addict and seized from him sachets of shabu and drug paraphernalia, reports Al-Anba daily.

The daily said the suspect was arrested by a night patrol on suspicion because when the officer ordered the man to pull over to the side of the road, he stepped on the gas pedal in a vain attempt to escape.

The patrolmen pursued him and forced him to pull over and arrested him. The suspect reportedly attempted to escape in vain. A search revealed bags of shabu and drug abuse tools in his possession. The suspect and the seized narcotics have been referred to the Directorate-General for Drugs Control.

In a separate incident, a young man in his twenties was arrested in the Mubarak Al-Kabeer area. He was found under the influence of drugs and in possession of a sachet of heroin.

'Coast Guard monitors Kuwait territorial waters by advanced radar system 24/7'

KUWAIT CITY, July 21: Colonel Musaed Abdul Salam Al-Shatti, Assistant Director General of the General Administration of the Coast Guard, said Kuwaiti territorial waters are monitored by an advanced radar system operating 24 hours a day, reports Al-Anba daily.

This system is under the constant supervision and follow-up of Coast Guard officers and personnel.

Colonel Al-Shatti emphasized that the role of the Coast Guard is to secure territorial waters and beaches, prevent smuggling and illegal infiltration, protect the lives of seafarers, ensure the safety of maritime traffic, and maintain security in territorial waters.

They also inspect suspected ships and boats to ensure compliance with maritime laws.

Colonel Al-Shatti mentioned that there are occasional attempts to smuggle contraband or infiltrate by individuals with malicious intent.

These attempts are met with decisive action by the Coast Guard, including the use of firearms if necessary, following legal procedures and adhering to international and local laws and human rights standards.

He also revealed that there is cooperation, coordination, and information exchange with neighboring countries to secure territorial waters and combat smuggling and illegal activities at sea.

Additionally, there are bilateral and multilateral agreements with neighboring countries and Gulf Cooperation Council countries to enhance maritime security and protect territorial waters.



Col Al-Shatti

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Boushahri pushes for efficiency in electricity and water services

'Hafiz' program and training initiatives highlighted

By Mohammed Ghanem

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 21: The Minister of Electricity, Water, and Renewable Energy and the Minister of State for Housing Affairs Dr. Mahmoud Boushahri assessed the current status of electric power generation and water distillation plants. He followed up the latest developments in the electricity and water networks, and the projected loads for the coming months, and ensured the ministry's commitment to meeting the needs of customers of all categories.

During a meeting held yesterday under the chairmanship of Dr. Boushahri, he studied the future trends related to power generation, water desalination, renewable energy, and the development of smart networks and meters, as well as the expected time frames for their implementation and completion.

They also discussed the latest developments in financial and administrative matters. They stressed the need to increase the efficiency in collecting the ministry's dues, following up the executive position of tenders with the regulatory authorities and working to speed them up.

In parallel, Minister Boushahri stressed the importance of involving the private sector in energy production and water distillation projects, either traditional or renewable, similar to the successful experience of the first North Zour station project.

He highlighted the need to raise community awareness about the im-



KUNA photo
Minister of Electricity, Water, and Renewable Energy and Minister of State for Housing Affairs, Dr. Mahmoud Boushahri meets with leaders in the ministry.

Insurance and tourism top agenda

Municipal Council tackles key issues

KUWAIT CITY, July 21: The Municipal Council was to address several important issues, including proposals related to insurance regulation and infrastructure development during meeting, reports Al-Jarida daily.

During the meeting the council was to review two letters from the Insurance Regulatory Unit concerning the localization of all insurance activities within craft and industrial areas. This proposal aligns with Law No. 125 of 2019, which regulates the insurance sector.

Muhammad Al-Otaibi, head of the Insurance Regulatory Unit, will highlight the initiative as part of a broader strategy to enhance the insurance sector in Kuwait. He emphasized the need to facilitate access to insurance services for business owners, neighboring citizens, and visitors in these areas.

The council was also to discuss a document outlining the vision for tourism in Kuwait from a scientific perspective. This discussion aims to evaluate and advance the strategic approach to tourism development.

portance of rationalizing electricity and water consumption, especially at peak times during the summer period.

The minister revealed the introduction of the "Hafiz" (Save) program, which gives a discount on the electricity and water bill if rationalization of

these vital resources is proven.

He said qualifying and training all national cadres working in the ministry is one of the most important priorities during the next stage, especially recent graduates.

Minister Boushahri called on the

ministry's leaders to work in a team spirit and commit to quickly completing the work assigned to all its sectors, and to work seriously to serve citizens and residents in accordance with the controls and procedures followed.

Crown Prince, PM extend greetings

Kuwait's HH Amir congratulates Belgium's King on National Day

KUWAIT CITY, July 21, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah extended on Sunday his congratulations to King Philippe of Belgium on the occasion of the country's national day. He wished the King good health and the people of Belgium continued progress and prosperity. Also, His Highness the Crown

Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah sent a congratulatory cable to King Philippe, expressing his best wishes for the King's health.

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah also sent a congratulatory message to King Philippe on Belgium's national day.

Probe exposes significant breaches

17 major violations uncovered in Farwaniya cooperative: ministry

KUWAIT CITY, July 21: The Cooperative Supervision and Inspection Department of the Ministry of Social Affairs has identified approximately 17 serious financial and administrative violations committed by the board of directors of a cooperative in the Farwaniya Governorate, reports Al-Jarida daily.

These issues could lead to severe legal consequences, including the potential dissolution or removal of some board members if not addressed promptly.

The following are the key violations that have surfaced.

Financial Irregularities include the liquidity issues in the form of significant decline in liquidity with no clear signs of improvement; increasing debt balances with suppliers of food and consumer goods, coupled with failure to meet payment deadlines; a low turnover rate and shortages of essential items like chicken and soft drinks; goods on pallets without payment of rental fees.

This is in addition to failure to comply with Ministerial Resolution No. (115/T) of 2022, which mandates that local boards purchase at least 75% of their needs from local agricultural products; excess inventory from suppliers without corresponding sales and lack of proper points of sale for some suppliers; presence of unsold and damaged goods, indicating poor adherence

KDIPA drops major firms from register

KUWAIT CITY, July 21: The Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority (KDIPA) decided to remove all of the famed Kuwait Company for Hospital Management and Project Management, in addition to a branch of the Tecnicas Reunidas Company, from the Authority's investment register, reports Al-Jarida daily.

to purchasing policies. Add to this the inadequate record-keeping for board meetings and employee overtime exceeding legal limits; accumulation of employee leave balances and issues with employee residency documentation.

Immediate actions are required in the form of deadline for compliance: The board has been given a final deadline to rectify these violations. The Assistant Undersecretary for Cooperation Sector Affairs has demanded swift action to address and resolve the issues.

Failure to comply within the given timeframe will result in strict legal measures, including potential dissolution of the board or removal of its members.

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KUNA photo
From right: student Anwar Al-Jaafar, student Janan Al-Sharif, the Speaker of Parliament, Ayman Al-Barout, Secretary-General of Parliament, supervisor of the Kuwaiti delegation Bader Al-Anzi, student Saud Al-Mutawwatah, and student Abdullah Al-Mansouri. Kuwait, represented by Al-Sharif, has assumed the presidency of the Arab Parliament for Children. This took place during Kuwaiti delegation's participation in the fourth session of the third parliamentary session at the Consultative Council in Sharjah under the theme 'Social Responsibility of Parliament Members'.

Delay allows for final adjustments

Deadline for new synthetic detergent standards 'extended' to January 2025

By Marwa Al-Bahrawi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 21: Omar Al-Omar, Minister of Commerce and Industry and Minister of State for Communications Affairs, has announced a significant change in the implementation schedule for Kuwaiti technical regulations concerning synthetic detergents, specifically synthetic household washing powders.

Under Decision No. 16/2024, the enforcement of these regulations, initially set to align with Gulf standard specifications, has been deferred until January 2025.

The postponement impacts Article 3 of the original decision, allowing additional time before these technical regulations become mandatory.

The delay follows an extensive review of several key legal and regulatory frameworks such as Law No. 43 of 1964, which pertains to import regulations; Law No. 56

Al-Bidhan reinstated

KUWAIT CITY, July 21: The Minister of Youth, Dr. Amthal Al-Huwailah, has issued a decision reinstating Yousef Al-Bidhan as the Director of the Public Authority for Sports, effective today, Sunday, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

Al-Bidhan was previously suspended by the former Minister of Youth, Dawood Maarefi.

of 1996 and subsequent amendments related to the Industry Law and the unified industrial regulation system for the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC).

The decision to delay the regulations follows a proposal from the Director General of the Public Authority for Industry. This postponement is deemed necessary to address any potential issues and to ensure that the regulations meet public interest requirements effectively.

This extension provides additional time to resolve any concerns and make necessary adjustments before the regulations come into force.

Minister forms task force to keep in check encroachments on govt land

KUWAIT CITY, July 21: Dr. Noura Al-Mashaan, Minister of Public Works and Minister of State for Municipal Affairs, has established a dedicated task force to oversee encroachments and violations on state property across all regions of Kuwait, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

This team aims to enforce regulations and take appropriate measures to address and remove these encroachments.

During its inaugural meeting, team leader Abdullah Jaber announced the commencement of a campaign focused initially on wilderness areas.

The action plan includes removing encroachments and implementing legal measures to ensure compliance with regulations.

Flyovers around Grand Avenues to be opened

KUWAIT CITY, July 21: The Public Authority for Roads and Transportation (PART) is planning to inaugurate the flyovers surrounding the Grand Avenues within ten days, reports Al-Anba daily quoting informed sources.

They explained that project No. 266 is related to the establishment and maintenance of the network of roads and bridges linking the Fifth Ring Road to Ghazali Road and Mohammed bin Jassim Road, and other services.

Kuwait, China advance renewable energy projects



KUNA photo
Minister of Finance Dr. Anwar Al-Mudhaf and Minister of Electricity Dr. Mahmoud Bushehri with the Commissioner-General of the Representative Office for the Middle East and Africa in China.

A joke

Continued from Page 1

Is it reasonable that a quarter of citizens are borrowers, with half of their salaries eaten up by interest payments, while 120,000 individuals face sentences, travel bans, arrest orders, and habeas corpus, and many among them are imprisoned?

Successive governments have overlooked this fact, because they perhaps refused to do justice to these people in line with the argument put forth by those who benefit from people's injustice, which is "social justice does not accept that".

When a large number of citizens face a crisis, article 25 of the Constitution provides a solution. It stipulates, "The state guarantees the solidarity of society in bearing the burdens resulting from disasters and public tribulations."

Likewise, if an area is exposed to an earthquake or a natural disaster, will the state refrain from taking care of the damage because another area was not affected by the disaster? Is this the social justice that some people are trading on?

Also, is there a citizen who borrows funds, except out of necessity? Is it humane for Kuwaiti money to benefit all of humanity but not contribute to alleviating the plight of 25 percent of Kuwaitis? Shouldn't the Foreign Minister, who extends loans to a hundred countries, consider lifting the burden on these citizens?

Around 200,000

Continued from Page 1

She said she wondered how these fraudulent companies manage to operate from well-known complexes in Kuwait and use names and labels similar to trusted companies, with slight alterations to deceive clients.

Al-Zaman warned individuals that these companies employ non-Kuwaiti workers who are fluent in Kuwaiti dialect to promise gains exceeding 100 percent of the capital.

She expressed dismay that some local banks facilitate money transfers abroad through applications, which could be exploited by fraudsters.

Al-Zaman indicated that fraud companies might exploit a bank's identity, hack its email, and reroute victims' funds to themselves instead of the intended bank account.

Meanwhile, Bader Al-Khudhari, an Information Technology professor at the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training (PAAET), highlighted a rise in the number of fake broker companies, indicating that the elderly, less educated are particularly vulnerable.

He expressed astonishment over reports that the number of fraud crimes in Kuwait reached 128,000 during the period between 2020 and 2022.

Al-Khudhari wondered what action was taken by regulatory institutions in response to these figures.

He stressed the importance of communication companies to strengthen regulations on SIM card purchases to help safeguard the public.

Shafi Al-Ajmi, CEO of Kuwait Petroleum International (KPI), is actively overseeing the company's branches across Europe and Asia, as well as its global investments, to assess the impact of the recent global technical failure.

The monitoring and follow-up process has affirmed that KPI's operations remain unaffected.

According to sources speaking to Al-Seyassah, all of the company's international fuel stations continued to operate normally without any interruptions.

The company's supply lines for jet fuel, crucial for global air navigation, remained stable despite the widespread technical disruptions.

Furthermore, KPI's investment in the Italian company Ecofox, which specializes in manufacturing organic fuel, was also unaffected by the crisis.

This underscores KPI's resilience and effective management in maintaining its business operations amidst global challenges.

Sheikh Khaled Ahmad Al-Sabah, Acting CEO of the Kuwait Oil Tanker Company, has assured that the company's tankers are continuing their global voyages uninterrupted despite the recent global technical glitch, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

In a press statement, Sheikh Khaled Al-Sabah confirmed that the company's operations remain normal, thanks to established precautionary measures designed for such

scenarios.

He emphasized that the company is maintaining a close watch on operations and conducting continuous risk assessments to navigate these emergency circumstances effectively.

Ahmad Al-Kreibani, CEO of Kuwait Airways, has confirmed that the airline's systems are functioning normally and without interruption around the clock. The airline has ensured continuous communication with passengers, external stations, and security sectors to guarantee the safety of both passengers and aircraft, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

In a recent press statement, Al-Kreibani highlighted the swift actions taken by the Cyber Security Sector and the Information Technology Department at Kuwait Airways. They implemented necessary measures to quickly isolate any affected systems, demonstrating the airline's commitment to maintaining uninterrupted operations and providing seamless services to its customers.

Al-Kreibani also noted that maintenance and monitoring of the company's internal systems, including operational systems and passenger acceptance systems at Terminal (T4), are ongoing. This proactive approach underscores Kuwait Airways' dedication to ensuring that its services remain reliable and efficient despite the global technical disruptions affecting various sectors.

Kuwait's GDP

Continued from Page 1

On a quarterly basis, Kuwait's GDP saw a decline of 2.42% compared to the fourth quarter of 2023, where it was 10.332 billion dinars.

At current prices, Kuwait's GDP decreased by 1.6% to 12.37 billion dinars from 12.57 billion dinars in the first quarter of 2023.

This reduction was due to a 9.1% annual drop in the oil sector's contribution, which fell to 5.34 billion dinars; while the non-oil sector's contribution increased by 4.9% to 7.03 billion dinars.

The report highlights the ongoing challenges faced by the oil sector and the resilience of the non-oil sector in Kuwait's economic landscape.

Kuwait's Central Statistical Bureau (CSB) reported on Sunday that the consumer price index (CPI) rose by 2.84 percent year-on-year in June. According to the CSB, the inflation rate also saw a 0.22 percent increase in June compared to May.

The annual rise in inflation was driven by higher prices in key categories, including clothing, food, and education. The food and beverage group saw a significant increase of 5.60 percent compared to June 2023, while the cigarettes and tobacco group experienced a slight rise of 0.15 percent.

The clothing group index rose by 5.58 percent, housing services increased by 0.91 percent, and home furnishings saw a 3.80 percent rise. Health-related prices went up by 3.99 percent, and transportation costs increased by 0.70 percent year-on-year.

The communications group prices rose by 2.29 percent, entertainment and culture by 2.04 percent, and education by 0.96 percent. Restaurant and hotel prices increased by 2.52 percent, and various goods and services saw a rise of 4.55 percent.

Excluding the food and beverage group, the inflation rate in Kuwait rose by 2.27 percent in June on an annual basis.

Experts: Strategic

Continued from Page 1

"It is crucial for government agencies to be prepared to address these failures effectively and swiftly to ensure business continuity and minimize potential damage."

Dr. Safaa Zaman, head of the Kuwait Information Security Association, stressed the importance of establishing an information center and using local cloud services in light of the recent global technical failures caused by an error in a software update from the cybersecurity company CrowdStrike.

Zaman advised everyone to refrain from interacting with emails, links, or messages until the situation stabilizes and systems return to normal. She called on government agencies to create backup copies of all their systems and develop a comprehensive emergency plan focused on risk management.

Zaman emphasized the need for plans and systems that operate on multiple pathways. "If damage occurs in one path, the other path should take over. Therefore, the contingency plan must differ from the primary plan," she explained. She also advocated for periodic security system inspections and the launch of local applications to complete tasks, particularly social networking applications.

Zaman further recommended investing in data and analyzing it to enhance operations and predict potential difficulties and obstacles. "Analyzing and processing data has a significant impact on the future of nations," she added. Information and communications technology expert Qusay Al-Shatti highlighted the importance of ensuring that cloud services are located within Kuwait and subject to its laws. This measure would help maintain data confidentiality and expedite storage and access.

"This step helps control any sudden interruptions to electronic systems, allowing data to be restored quickly and more effectively," Al-Shatti noted. He also pointed out that the recent global outage underscores the need for clear agreements with software and electronic system providers, ensuring that responsibility is held by the service provider in the event of a system failure.

'All parties

Continued from Page 1

He explained that various work teams were formed in the ministry that collected information, managed discussion groups and desk surveys, and reviewed the best global practices and international experiences to ensure the strategy is compatible with international standards.

After collecting all the data and information, the ministry launched and approved the strategy, which was judged by a committee of specialists, guiding the employees who worked on developing the output strategy, the minister added.

He noted that the work mechanism was based on operational plans, which focuses on increasing productivity and controlling quality, and creative initiatives which the ministry proceeded with in directions based on its strategic objectives.

Regarding the paths of the past three years, the minister stated that 99 electronic systems were launched to keep pace with and advance digital transformation processes, adding that these processes greatly helped improve the business environment, increasing the television and radio advertising revenues.

Kuwait concerned

Continued from Page 1

The Ministry affirmed the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's continued efforts to end the war on Gaza and affirmed its continuous support for peace efforts in Yemen to spare its people more suffering and achieve security and peace in the region.

The Israeli military said it intercepted a missile fired from Yemen early Sunday, hours after Israeli warplanes struck several Houthi targets in the Arabian Peninsula country.

The Israeli airstrikes - in response to a deadly Houthi drone strike on Tel Aviv - were the first time Israel is known to have responded to repeated Houthi attacks throughout its nine-month war against Hamas. The burst of violence between the distant enemies has threatened to open a new front as Israel battles a series of Iranian proxies across the region.

The Israeli army late Saturday confirmed the airstrikes in the western Yemeni port city of Hodeidah, a Houthi stronghold. It said the strikes, carried out by U.S.-made F-15 and F-35 warplanes, were a response to hundreds of Houthi attacks.

3 TV

Continued from Page 1

They pointed out that most of the followers of these channels in and outside Kuwait are from the first generation and do not know how to use electronic applications.

They said some phones cannot download the new digital platform for technical reasons, indicating this is an obstacle to watching these channels that focus on heritage and show old series and artistic materials.

Efforts to implement key agreements

KUWAIT CITY, July 21, (KUNA): Minister of Finance and Minister of State for Economic Affairs and Investment Dr. Anwar Al-Mudhaf met on Friday with Ma Zhao, the Commissioner-General of the Representative Office for the Middle East and Africa in the People's Republic of China, to discuss enhancing cooperation in the electric power system and developing renewable energy.

The Ministry of Finance stated in a press release that the meeting, held at the ministry's headquarters, focused on joint efforts and bilateral work to begin implementing and translating the agreements and memoranda of understanding signed during the visit of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, may God protect him, to the People's Republic of China in September 2023.

The statement also mentioned that the latest developments concerning the memorandum of understanding for cooperation in the electric power system and renewable energy involve implementing several energy projects by specialized Chinese companies, adhering to the latest technical standards and specifications. Notably, this includes the project to build, operate, and manage the Shagaya Renewable Energy Station (Area 3 + 4).

The statement quoted the Minister of Finance, who is also the Chairman of the Committee for Following Up on the Implementation of Agreements and Memoranda of Understanding Signed with the People's Republic of China, as saying that work is ongoing at the highest levels to translate the recommendations agreed upon during the successful visit of His Highness the Amir to China. Al-Mudhaf highlighted the role of major Chinese companies in implementing many strategic projects included in the development plan, which aligns with the strategic relationship between the two friendly countries.

He emphasized the Kuwaiti government's commitment, represented by His Highness Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, the Prime Minister, and the government team responsible for following up on the agreements and memoranda of understanding with China, to overcome obstacles and support efforts to ensure that the agreements are put into effect as soon as possible, reflecting a shared desire to



KUNA photo
The Governor of the Capital stressed the great efforts made by the state to provide health care to patients and visitors.

Enhanced training urged

Capital Governor lauds healthcare, calls for better emergency services

KUWAIT CITY, July 21, (KUNA): Capital Governor Sheikh Abdullah Salem Al-Ali Al-Sabah lauded the state's commendable efforts in delivering essential services and integrated health care for patients and visitors. He also praised the Ministry of Health's effective role and the dedicated work of medical and administrative staff in hospitals and specialized centers.

In a press statement issued today, Sunday, following his visit to an ambulance center affiliated with the Medical Emergency Department in the Shuwaikh residential area, Sheikh Abdullah Al-Sabah highlighted the need for enhanced efforts to ensure efficient workflow and fully equipped facilities to handle medical emergencies. He underscored the importance of maintaining security and safety measures and effectively managing accidents, crises, and emergencies.

Sheikh Abdullah expressed his appreciation for the work of center personnel, including technicians and paramedics, and encouraged collaboration to improve operations. He urged eve-

ryone to submit proposals and recommendations to address and overcome any challenges.

He commended the center's crucial role in saving lives, protecting property, and providing emergency health care. He emphasized the need for ongoing improvements in health and safety measures for both citizens and residents.

Sheikh Abdullah called for increased training and development for paramedics, technicians, and medical staff. He also advocated for the introduction of specialized first aid courses to enhance public skills in emergency situations.

He stressed the importance of continued cooperation between the Capital Governorate and the Medical Emergency Department to advance the nation's safety, health, and prevention efforts.

Dr. Ahmed Al-Shatti, Director of the Medical Emergency Department at the Ministry of Health, thanked Sheikh Abdullah for his visit, noting its positive impact on the center's staff.

expedite completion.

The meeting was attended by Minister of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy, and Minister of State for Housing Affairs Dr. Mahmoud Bush-ehri, Chinese Ambassador to Kuwait

Zhang Jianwei, Assistant Foreign Minister for Asian Affairs Ambassador Samih Jawhar Hayat, and several officials from the Ministries of Electricity and Water and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.



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The American University of Kuwait received its Institutional Accreditation from the Private Universities Council (PUC), Ministry of Higher Education in the State of Kuwait, and has a Memorandum of Understanding and Cooperation with Dartmouth College (Hanover, N Hampshire - USA).

World News Roundup

Europe

Ex-lawmaker killed

Democracy under 'threat' in Georgia

TBILISI, Georgia, July 21, (AP): Eka Gigauri is used to harsh words from officials about the anti-corruption work she does in Georgia. But seeing her face on posters, accusing her of being an agent of foreign influence, a traitor and a spy, rattled her.

Gigauri, who leads one of Georgia's main anti-corruption campaign groups, says she and many others have been targeted in connection with a new law, pushed through parliament by the government.

The "foreign influence" law requires media, civil society groups and nonprofit organizations to register as "pursuing the interests of a foreign power" if they receive more than 20% of their funding from abroad. It also subjects them to intense state scrutiny and imposes steep fines for noncompliance.

The government argues the law is needed to curb harmful foreign actors trying to destabilize the South Caucasus nation of 3.7 million. Many journalists and activists say its true goal is to stigmatize them and restrict debate before an election scheduled for October. It could also threaten Georgia's bid to join the European Union.



Ivanishvili

The law resembles similar legislation in Russia, where it has been used to crack down on opposition supporters, independent media and human rights activists. Georgian Dream, the country's ruling party, got the legislation through on its second attempt.

In 2012, after years of turbulence, Georgian Dream came to power. The party was set up by **Bidzina Ivanishvili**, a shadowy billionaire who made his fortune in Russia and served briefly as Georgia's prime minister. He has stayed out of public view since 2013.

Georgian Dream promised to restore civil rights and "reset" relations with Moscow. It also vowed to pursue EU membership and ties with the U.S., reassuring those Georgians who looked to the West to protect them from their overbearing northern neighbor.

Control

In August 2008, Russia fought a brief war with Georgia, which had made a botched attempt to regain control over the breakaway province of South Ossetia. Moscow then recognized the independence of South Ossetia and another breakaway Georgian province, Abkhazia, and set up military bases there.

Many in Georgia, with its long history of domination by Moscow, supported Ukraine as it battled the Russian invasion. But the Georgian government abstained from joining sanctions against Russia, barred dozens of Kremlin critics from entering the country, and accused the West of trying to drag Tbilisi into open conflict with Moscow.

Almost exactly a year later, Georgian Dream first put the "foreign influence" bill before parliament. Weeks of demonstrations followed, where police used tear gas and water cannons to disperse protesters.

The EU made clear that the bill, if passed, would damage Georgia's membership prospects. In March 2023, the draft legislation was withdrawn. In December, the EU offered Georgia official candidate status, despite concerns about the rule of law.

In April 2024, Georgian Dream brought the bill back to parliament and the protesters returned to the streets. Georgia's pro-EU President Salome Zourabichvili used her veto, but parliament overrode her with a simple majority, and the bill became law.

Rights advocates cast the law as an existential threat.

Also:

KYIV, Ukraine: A Ukrainian former lawmaker best known for her crusade to promote the Ukrainian language has died after being shot in the street by an unknown assailant.

Iryna Fariion, 60, initially survived the assault in the western city of **Lviv** on Friday, but later died from her wounds in a hospital. A manhunt is currently underway for her attacker, who fled from the scene. Ukrainian officials said an investigation is being carried out and that the attack is being treated as an assassination.

"All available surveillance cameras are being worked on, witness interviews are ongoing and several districts are being surveyed. All leads are being investigated, including the one that leads to **Russia**," Ukrainian President **Volodymyr Zelenskyy** said on his official Telegram channel Saturday.

"All necessary forces from the National Police of Ukraine and the Ukrainian Security Service have been deployed to search for the criminal."

Fariion served as a member of the Ukrainian parliament between 2012 and 2014, and was best known for her campaigns to promote the use of the Ukrainian language by Ukrainian officials who spoke Russian.

Police are considering "personal animosity" toward the former MP due to her social and political activities as a likely motive behind the attack, said Interior Minister **Ihor Klymenko**, who will oversee the investigation in Lviv.

Elsewhere in Ukraine, at least two people were killed and three more injured after a Russian missile strike on infrastructure in the country's northeastern **Kharkiv** region, Gov **Oleh Syniuhubov** said Saturday.

TIRANA, Albania: A member of Albania's ethnic Greek minority returned to prison Saturday after a five-day reprieve to attend the opening session of the European Parliament where he was elected to represent Greece's ruling party.

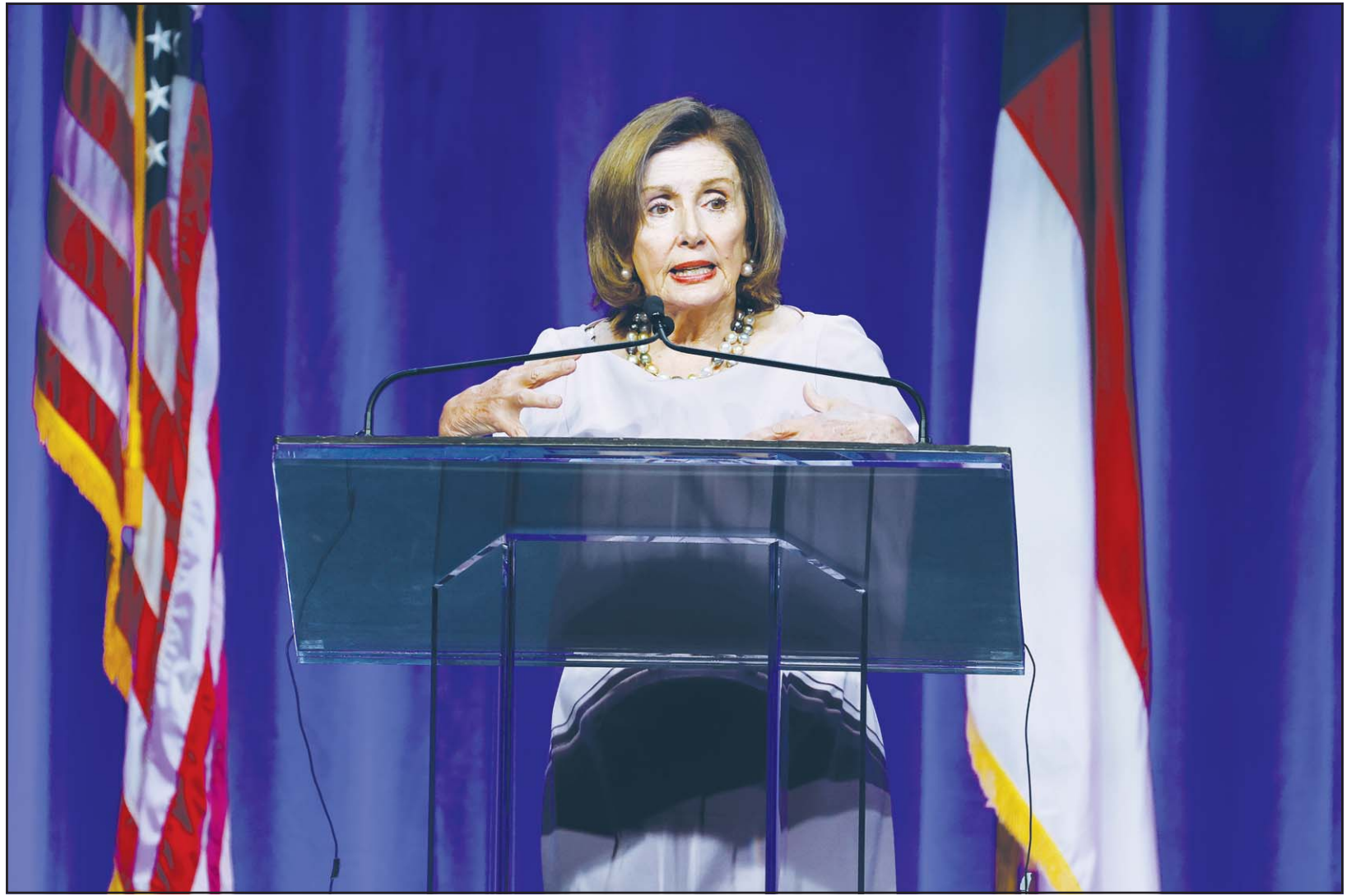
Fredis Beleris, who holds dual Greek-Albanian citizenship, is serving a two-year prison sentence for vote-buying in municipal elections last year in Albania. He denies the charges, and Greece has described the case against him as being politically motivated.

"I am not sorry to go back to the (prison) cell," said Beleris upon landing at Tirana International Airport.

The 51-year-old politician won the European Parliament after getting a place on Greece's governing New Democracy party ticket in last month's European elections. He received 238,801 votes, the fourth among the seven members elected for the party.

European Parliament members enjoy legal immunity from prosecution within the 27-state bloc, even for allegations relating to crimes committed prior to their election. But Albania is not an EU member yet.

Beleris was arrested two days before the May 14, 2023 municipal elections in Himara, with a large ethnic Greek minority in the town on the Albanian Riviera, 220 kilometers (140 miles) southwest of the capital **Tirana**. He was charged with offering about 40,000 Albanian leks (360 euros or \$390) to buy eight votes.



Democratic Speaker Emerita Nancy Pelosi speaks at the North Carolina Democratic Unity Dinner fundraiser in Raleigh, NC on July 20. (AP)

Politics

Trump campaign releases letter on injury

Pelosi delivers speech to NC Democrats

RALEIGH, NC, July 21, (AP): In a state expected to help decide the presidency, House Speaker Emerita Nancy Pelosi did little to quell speculation on President Joe Biden's path forward as the Democratic nominee to a room full of North Carolina Democrats on Saturday.

Pelosi addressed more than 900 people at the North Carolina Democratic Party fundraiser in Raleigh - an event billed as the annual "Unity Dinner" during a time of significant national discord over how the party will proceed in the 2024 presidential election. All eyes are on Democratic leaders like Pelosi, who colleagues say has her finger on the party's pulse, to get a glimpse of what Biden's future holds.

The power she holds in the Democratic Party - and in the direction the party takes - was no better emphasized than in her introduction by U.S. Rep. Alma Adams, D-N.C.

"When Nancy Pelosi speaks, everybody listens," Adams said.

And with everybody listening, Pelosi gave a speech largely absent of mentions to Biden's presidential bid. Pelosi spent most of her speech recounting battles over budget and policy in the US House, highlighting the importance of funding public education and reiterating the dangers of the Republican agenda. When she did mention Biden, it was mostly to tout his administration's policies.

Shifted

At the end of her speech, Pelosi shifted to discussing the party's plans in the coming months and chose to focus on Democratic mobilization efforts rather than who to mobilize behind.

"Are you ready for a Democratic president?" Pelosi said amid cheers. "I thought so."

Since Biden's dismal showing in the June 27 debate with former Republican President Donald Trump, significant fallout has ensued within the Democratic Party on whether the president is capable of defeating Trump.

The former speaker is among a growing group of prominent Democratic leaders who have expressed concerns behind closed doors on Biden's ability to win in November. Pelosi told Biden in private that Democrats may fail to control the House if he doesn't drop out, but she later said her conver-

sations were misrepresented.

Despite a swell of Democratic lawmakers calling for Biden to drop out, none of North Carolina's seven Democratic representatives have publicly signaled support for finding a new nominee to lead the ticket.

While some reports say Biden is more open to the idea of leaving the race in private discussions, his campaign staff has continually reaffirmed his commitment to staying in as the nominee.

Brenda Pollard, a Durham delegate who has attended five Democratic conventions, said she's had conversations with Democrats around the state who want Biden to stay in.

"As a pledged delegate, until he says 'I'm not,' I'm going to continue to be pledged," the 73-year-old said, adding later that she felt Vice President Kamala Harris has the qualifications to be president if Biden dropped out.

About 6 in 10 Democrats believe Harris has the makings of a good president, according to a recent AP-NORC Center poll. North Carolina is also home to one of the most hotly contested gubernatorial races in the country, pitting Democratic state Attorney General Josh Stein against Republican Lt Gov Mark Robinson. The latter has become known for his similar, brash politicking style to Trump, which has made Robinson a lightning rod for criticism about statements some have found offensive and harmful.

To reiterate the stakes of his race, Stein told the audience that voters have a choice between "two competing visions" in a competitive election - one that he said North Carolina will play a large role in deciding.

"People in other states hunger for the kind of power that we have here in North Carolina. To possess this political power is a privilege," Stein said.

Also:

NEW YORK: Donald Trump's campaign released an update on the former president's health Saturday, one week after he survived an attempted assassination at a rally in **Butler, Pennsylvania**.

The memo, from **Texas Rep. Ronny Jackson**, a staunch supporter who served as Trump's White House physician, offers new details on the nature of the GOP nominee's injuries and the

treatment he received in the immediate aftermath of the attack.

It is the most thorough accounting to date of the former president's condition since the night of the shooting, which also left one rally-goer dead and injured two others.

According to Jackson, Trump sustained a gunshot wound to the right ear that came "less than a quarter of an inch from entering his head, and struck the top of his right ear."

The bullet track, he said, "produced a 2 cm wide wound that extended down to the cartilaginous surface of the ear. There was initially significant bleeding, followed by marked swelling of the entire upper ear."

While the swelling has resolved and the wound "is beginning to granulate and heal properly," he said Trump is still experiencing intermittent bleeding, requiring the dressing that was on display at last week's Republican National Convention.

"Given the broad and blunt nature of the wound itself, no sutures were required," Jackson wrote.

Trump was initially treated by medical staff at Butler Memorial Hospital. According to Jackson, doctors "provided a thorough evaluation for additional injuries that included a CT of his head."

Trump, he said, "will have further evaluations, including a comprehensive hearing exam, as needed. He will follow up with his primary care physician, as directed by the doctors that initially evaluated him," he wrote.

"In summary, former President Trump is doing well, and he is recovering as expected from the gunshot wound sustained last Saturday afternoon," he added.

Jackson said in the letter that, as Trump's former doctor, he was worried and traveled to **Bedminster, New Jersey**, where Trump had flown late Saturday after he returned from **Pennsylvania**, "to personally check on him, and offer my assistance in any way possible."

He said he has been with Trump since that time, evaluating and treating his wound daily, and would remain with Trump through the weekend, including traveling to **Michigan**, where Trump held his first rally since the shooting, joined by his new running mate, **Ohio Sen. JD Vance**.



The Salt Lake City fire Department, with help from other departments, prepare to battle a wildfire around Ensign Peak in Salt Lake City on Saturday, July 20. Salt Lake City officials have ordered residents to evacuate some areas ahead of a wildfire as more than 100 firefighters work to contain the blaze. (AP)



Agee



Forest

America

Heat-related Texas deaths up: As the temperature soared in the Houston-area home Janet Jarrett shared with her sister after losing electricity in Hurricane Beryl, she did everything she could to keep her 64-year-old sibling cool.

But on their fourth day without power, she awoke to hear Pamela Jarrett, who used a wheelchair and relied on a feeding tube, gasping for breath. Paramedics were called but she was pronounced dead at the hospital, with the medical examiner saying her death was caused by the heat.

"It's so hard to know that she's gone right now because this wasn't supposed to happen to her," Janet Jarrett said.

Almost two weeks after Beryl hit, heat-related deaths during the prolonged power outages have pushed the number of storm-related fatalities to at least 23 in Texas.

The combination of searing summer heat and residents unable to power up air conditioning in the days after the Category 1 storm made landfall on July 8 resulted in increasingly dangerous conditions for some in America's fourth-largest city. (AP)

Wildfire prompts evacuations: Salt Lake City officials have ordered residents to evacuate some areas ahead of a wildfire as more than 100 firefighters work to contain the blaze.

Helicopters and airplanes were dropping buckets over the flames Saturday as ground crews tried to contain the fire on Ensign Peak.

The first fire crew was dispatched around 4:30 pm and more than six different emergency agencies have joined the effort to stop the brush fire. Division Chief Bob Silverthorne of the Salt Lake City Fire Department said at a news briefing.

The fire department ordered a mandatory evacuation for an area of 40 homes on Sandhurst Drive, north of Dorchester Drive, and the police department were going to individual homes to notify residents. Other areas were evacuating voluntarily, Silverthorne said.

There were no immediate reports of injuries or structure damage, he said. (AP)

Comedian punched in NY: An 89-year-old comedian is recovering after being randomly punched and knocked to the ground while waiting to cross a street in New York earlier this month.

D'yan Forest said she had just stopped at a coffee shop and was heading to a swimming pool when someone came up to her from behind and hit her in the eye. She lay

on the ground in shock as police and paramedics came to her aid.

"I thought I had lost use of the eye because I couldn't see anything," Forest said.



Demonstrators against 'the Russian law' try to remove a police barrier outside the parliament building in Tbilisi, Georgia, on April 28. Thousands of people rallied in Georgia for weeks against the foreign influence bill. Critics compared it to similar legislation Russia uses to stifle dissent, and they worried it would jeopardize Georgia's prospects of joining the European Union. (AP)

Her eyesight returned over the next four hours while she underwent tests at a hospital.

Police on Saturday said the female suspect in the July 10 incident had a medium complexion and cornrow braids and was last seen wearing a tank top and shorts with a Jurassic Park logo.

Forest said she has lived in Greenwich Village since 1966 and had never had anything else bad happen to her aside from watching the 9/11 attacks from her roof. (AP)

Girl charged with murder: A 12-year-old girl in Tennessee has been charged with murder, accused of smothering her 8-year-old cousin as the younger girl slept. A relative said they had been arguing over an iPhone.

A security camera recorded the killing, inside the bedroom they shared on July 15 in Humboldt, Tennessee, the county prosecutor said.

The recording shows the older child using bedding to suffocate her cousin as the younger girl slept in the top bunk. Gibson District Attorney **Frederick Agee's** statement said. After the child died, "the juvenile cleaned up the victim and repositioned her body," Agee said.

A relative told WREG-TV in Memphis that the girls had been arguing over an iPhone after coming from out of town to stay with their grandmother. (AP)

Lat/Am

Road accident kills 5

Colombia pushes for labor changes

BOGOTA, Colombia, July 21, (Agencies): Colombia's government will propose legislation aimed at overhauling the health sector and will pursue changes to labor laws, President **Gustavo Petro** said Saturday as he inaugurated a new session of congress.

Petro, Colombia's first left-wing president, has pushed an ambitious set of economic changes that includes changing the pension system, raising the minimum wage and redistributing land to farmers affected by Colombia's armed conflict.

He managed to get the minimum wage boosted last year and his pension plan approved by congress earlier this year, but he has struggled to persuade legislators to adopt his ideas on labor laws and the health system.



Petro

The coalition of political parties that joined Petro's government at the beginning of his term has broken up due to ideological differences. Meanwhile, numerous corruption scandals involving government ministers and the president's eldest son have decreased Petro's popularity.

Leftist parties loyal to the president have their highest number of legislative seats in Colombia's history, but they lack the 50% majority needed to pass legislation on their own and have been forced to bargain with parties on the center and the right.

For health care, Petro wants a government agency to be in charge of collecting billions of dollars in insurance fees from Colombians, sidelining the private insurance companies that currently manage much of the health system.

Temporary

For the labor sector, he wants to make it harder for companies to hire workers on temporary contracts and also require employers to pay workers full wages on rest days. He also proposed Saturday that legislators reduce the work week from 47 hours to 40, arguing that could increase employment and spur productivity.

Petro told congress Saturday that increasing the minimum wage by 16% last year helped to reduce poverty, which decreased 10% in 2023 and is now at similar levels seen in 2019, according to the national statistics department.

"We are fulfilling our promises" to reduce inequality, the president said.

Petro is nearing the halfway point of his four-year term, which ends in August 2026. Critics say his government has struggled to contain inflation and collect taxes.

In his speech to congress, Petro urged Colombia's central bank to reduce interest rates as a way to boost economic growth. He suggested congress could help curb inflation by "controlling speculation" in real estate rentals and reining in electricity fees.

Petro also said his government will propose a bill that would enable congress to speedily approve legislation related to Colombia's 2016 peace deal with the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia. He said implementation of the accord is lagging in areas such as land distribution and economic development projects for rural communities.

Critics have expressed concern about efforts to expedite legislation, arguing that such mechanisms could be used to give the president more power and eliminate term limits.

Also:

LA PAZ, Bolivia: Sixteen people were killed and 14 others injured on Saturday in a road accident on an international highway connecting Bolivia with Chile, police said.

A cargo truck returning to Bolivia from the country's border with Chile crashed into a passenger bus heading for the Arica region of Chile, said **Nilo Torrico**, director of the accident division of the La Paz traffic operational organization.

The injured, seven women and seven men, were sent to a local hospital for treatment.

"The driver of the high-tonnage vehicle was the one who crossed into the opposite lane and collided head-on with the bus," said Torrico.

The drivers of both vehicles died in the incident. The police were investigating the accident.

LIMA, Peru: An advocacy group for Indigenous peoples has released photographs of a reclusive tribe's members searching for food on a beach in the Peruvian Amazon, calling it evidence that logging concessions are "dangerously close" to the tribe's territory.

Survival International said the photos and video it posted this week show members of the Mashco Piro looking for plantains and cassava near the community of Monte Salvado, on the Las Piedras River in Madre de Dios province.

Several logging companies hold timber concessions inside territory inhabited by the tribe, according to Survival International, which has long sought to protect what it says is the largest "uncontacted" tribe in the world. The proximity raises fears of conflict between logging workers and tribal members, as well as the possibility that loggers could bring dangerous disease to the Mashco Piro, the advocacy group said.

Two loggers were shot with arrows while fishing in 2022, one fatally, in a reported encounter with tribal members.

Cesar Ipenza, a lawyer who specializes in environmental law in Peru and is not affiliated with the advocacy group, said the new images "show us a very alarming and also worrying situation because we do not know exactly what is the reason for their departure (from the rainforest) to the beaches."

Isolated Indigenous tribes may migrate in August to collect turtle eggs to eat, he said. "But we also see with great concern that some illegal activity may be taking place in the areas where they live and lead them to leave and be under pressure," he said. "We cannot deny the presence of a logging concession kilometers away from where they live."

Survival International called for the Forest Stewardship Council, a group that verifies sustainable forestry, to revoke its certification of the timber operations of one of those companies, Peru-based Canales Tahuamanu. The FSC responded in a statement Wednesday that it would "conduct a comprehensive review" of the company's operations to ensure it's protecting the rights of Indigenous peoples.

Canales Tahuamanu, also known as Catahua, has said in the past that it is operating with official authorizations. The company did not immediately respond to a message Thursday seeking comment on its operations and the tribe.



Students clash with police during a protest over the quota system in public service, in Dhaka, Bangladesh on July 19. Inset: Police fire tear gas shells to disperse students. (AP)

Bangladesh's top court scales back government jobs quota

Bangladesh's top court on Sunday scaled back a controversial quota system for government job applicants, a partial victory for student protesters after days of nationwide unrest and deadly clashes between police and demonstrators that have killed scores of people.

Students, frustrated by shortages of

good jobs, have been demanding an end to a quota that reserved 30% of government jobs for relatives of veterans who fought in Bangladesh's war of independence in 1971. The government previously halted it in 2018 following mass student protests, but in June, Bangladesh's High Court reinstated the quotas and set off a new

round of protests.

Ruling on an appeal, the Supreme Court ordered that the veterans' quota be cut to 5%, with 93% of jobs to be allocated on merit. The remaining 2% will be set aside for members of ethnic minorities and transgender and disabled people.

The protests have posed the most

serious challenge to Bangladesh's government since Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina won a fourth consecutive term in January elections that were boycotted by the main opposition groups. Universities have been closed, the internet has been shut off and the government has ordered people to stay at home. (AP)

Asia

SKorea boosts loudspeaker ops at border

Manila, Beijing reach deal to avoid clashes

MANILA, Philippines, July 21, (AP): China and the Philippines reached a deal they hope will end confrontations at the most fiercely disputed shoal in the South China Sea, the Philippine government said Sunday.

The Philippines occupies Second Thomas Shoal but China also claims it, and increasingly hostile clashes at sea have sparked fears of larger conflicts that could involve the United States.

The crucial deal was reached on Sunday, after a series of meetings between Philippine and Chinese diplomats in Manila and exchanges of diplomatic notes that aimed to establish a mutually acceptable arrangement at the shoal without conceding either side's territorial claims. Two Philippine officials, who have knowledge of the negotiations, confirmed the deal to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity and the government later issued a brief statement announcing the deal without providing details.

Recognize

"Both sides continue to recognize the need to deescalate the situation in the South China Sea and manage differences through dialogue and consultation and agree that the agreement will not prejudice each other's positions in the South China Sea," the Department of Foreign Affairs in Manila said.

China has disputes with several governments over land and sea borders, many of them in the South China Sea, and the rare deal with the Philippines could spark hope that similar arrangements could be forged by Beijing with other rival countries to avoid clashes while thorny territorial issues remain unresolved. It remains to be seen, however, if the deal could be implemented successfully and how long it will last. Chinese coast guard and other forces have used powerful water cannons and dangerous blocking maneuvers to prevent food and other supplies from reaching Filipino navy personnel at Manila's outpost at the shoal. The yearslong territorial standoff at

the shoal has flared repeatedly since last year between Chinese coast guard, navy and suspected militia ships and Philippine coast guard-escorted navy boats transporting food, water and fresh navy and marine personnel to an outpost on a long-grounded and rusting warship, the BRP Sierra Madre.

In the worst confrontation, Chinese forces on motorboats repeatedly rammed and then boarded two Philippine navy boats on June 17 to prevent Filipino personnel from transferring food and other supplies including firearms to the ship outposts in the shallows of the shoal, according to the Philippine government.

Faceoff

After repeated ramming, the Chinese seized the Philippine navy boats and damaged them with machetes and improvised spears. They also seized seven M4 rifles, which were packed in cases, and other supplies. The violent faceoff wounded several Filipino navy personnel, including one who lost his thumb, in a chaotic skirmish that was captured in video and photos that were later made public by Philippine officials.

China and the Philippines blamed each other for the confrontation and each asserted their own sovereign rights over the shoal, which Filipinos call Ayungin and the Chinese call Ren'ai Jiao.

The United States and its key Asian and Western allies, including Japan and Australia, condemned the Chinese acts at the shoal and called for the rule of law and freedom of navigation to be upheld in the South China Sea, a key global trade route with rich fishing areas and undersea gas deposits.

In addition to China and the Philippines, Vietnam, Malaysia, Brunei and Taiwan have been locked in separate but increasingly tense territorial disputes in the waterway, which is regarded as a potential flashpoint and a delicate fault line in the US-China regional rivalry.

Also:

SEOUL, South Korea: South Korea said Sunday it was bolstering its anti-Pyongyang propaganda broadcasts across the tense border with rival North Korea, after the North launched more balloons likely carrying trash toward South Korea.

The Cold War-style psychological battle between the two Koreas is adding to already-high tensions on the Korean Peninsula, with the rivals threatening stronger steps against each other and warning of devastating consequences.

South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff said the North Korean balloons were flying Sunday morning north of Seoul, the South Korean capital, after crossing the border. It said later Sunday that the South Korean military was responding by expanding loudspeaker broadcasts at all major sections of the Korea's 248-kilometer (154-mile)-long border.

"The North Korean military's tension-escalating acts can result in causing critical consequences for it," the South Korean Joint Chiefs of Staff said in a statement. "The responsibility for this kind of situation is entirely on North Korea's government."

Details of the expansion of South Korea's loudspeaker operations were not immediately available. On Thursday, it resumed blasting frontline propaganda broadcasts for the first time in about 40 days in response to the North's previous balloon activities. But observers say South Korea hadn't been conducting the broadcasts around the clock and it also hadn't yet mobilized all of its loudspeakers.

The latest South Korean broadcasts included K-pop songs and news on BTS member Jin's torch-bearing ahead of the Paris Olympics and the recent defection of a senior North Korean diplomat. The broadcasts also called the mine-planting works by North Korean soldiers at the border "hellish, slave-like lives," according to South Korean media.

'\$203 mln aid to Sudan': The US ambassador to the United Nations announced nearly \$203 million in additional humanitarian assistance to Sudan but warned that

the money is not a "panacea" and urged other countries to fulfill their financial pledges to address what she called "the world's worst humanitarian crisis."

World leaders pledged more than \$2.1 billion in humanitarian aid for Sudan at a donors conference in Paris in April, but US envoy **Linda Thomas-Greenfield** said only about a quarter of the promised funds have been received three months later.

The northeastern African country descended into chaos in April 2023 when simmering tensions between the country's military and a notorious paramilitary group, the Rapid Support Forces, exploded into open fighting in the capital of Khartoum.

The devastating conflict has spread, especially to western Darfur, and has killed more than 14,000 people and wounded 33,000 others, according to the United Nations. It has also created the world's largest displacement crisis, with more than 11 million people forced to flee their homes.

Thomas-Greenfield said contribution raises total US humanitarian assistance to Sudan to \$1.6 billion since September 2023, making the United States Sudan's largest single donor. "We hope this new round of aid serves as a call to action for others to follow," she said.

Last week, representatives of the two sides arrived in Geneva for separate talks with the UN secretary-general's personal envoy, **Ramtane Lamamra**, about protecting civilians through possible local cease-fires. (AP)



Colombian President Gustavo Petro delivers a speech during the opening session of a new congressional year, in Bogota, Colombia on July 20. Colombia's government will propose legislation aimed at overhauling the health sector and will pursue changes to labor laws, Petro said on Saturday. (AP)



Lamamra



Greenfield

Africa

Sfrica police bust meth lab: The South African Police Service (SAPS) said Saturday that they have uncovered a huge illicit drug laboratory on a farm in Groblersdal, in the country's northernmost province of Limpopo, with four suspects being arrested.

Those arrested in an operation Friday included the farm owner and two Mexican nationals, the SAPS said in a statement.

"Four structures on the property were searched on and large quantities of chemicals used in the manufacturing of illicit drugs including acetone as well as crystal meth with an estimated street value of 2 billion rand (about 109 million U.S. dollars) were recovered," the SAPS said.

Since the beginning of this year, South African police have uncovered 10 clandestine drug laboratories and made 34 arrests, according to the statement. (Xinhua)

4 separatists dead in Cameroon:

At least four armed separatists have been killed in a military offensive in Cameroon's English-speaking region of Northwest, the army said on Saturday.

The raid took place Friday in Alubukam, a neighborhood in Bamenda, the regional capital.

Among those killed was deputy commander of separatist fighters in the locality "who has been terrorizing" civilians, the military said in a statement.

Bamenda has witnessed renewed violence since early July, after separatist fighters ordered that all taxis in the city be painted in blue and white, the colors of the flag of so-called "Ambazonia," which they want to create in Cameroon's Anglophone regions of Northwest and Southwest.

Armed separatists began clashing with government forces in the regions in 2017. (Xinhua)



Rescuers evacuate a disaster-affected resident at Xinhua Village, Malie Township, Hanyuan County, Ya'an City, southwest China's Sichuan Province on July 21. Rescuers have retrieved 8 bodies, found and brought four to safety as of 8 pm on July 20, after rain-triggered flash floods in southwest China's Sichuan Province left over 30 missing. (Xinhua)

		Change	Closing pts
SAUDI	- Tadawul	+14.61	12,202.93
EGYPT	- EGX 30	+129.39	28,783.24

Change Closing pts

Business

Bank declares 10 fils semi-annual dividend amid strong performance

NBK focuses on Kuwait's mega-projects and international expansion

KUWAIT CITY, July 21: Mr. Isam Al-Sager, the Vice Chairman and Group CEO of National Bank of Kuwait (NBK), said, "We continue implementing our diversification strategy and utilizing our adaptable business model against the volatile macroeconomic environment to maintain our strong performance."

On the sidelines of the Analyst Conference for the results of 1H2024, Al-Sager added, "We reported net profits of KD 292.4 million in the first half of the year, growing by 6.2%. As for the three months ended-June 2024; NBK posted year-on-year growth of 3.3% in net profits to reach KD 145.8 million. Moreover, NBK's Board of Directors has approved its third semi-annual cash dividend distribution of 10 fils per share."

"Growth in core banking income continues to boost our performance and is well diversified across our business segments. Our diversification strategy continues to prove its success and effectiveness in mitigating risks and maximizing efficiency. We achieved a growth of 8.2% year on year in net operating income to reach KD 612.4 million," Al-Sager highlighted.

"As we continue to steadfast our commitment towards long-term value creation for stakeholders and tailored customer experience to our clients, we continued to leverage our strong fundamentals and strategic investments in technology and innovation to maximize returns and optimize costs. Our return on average assets for the reporting period reached 1.55% whereas our return on average equity reached 15.0%," he remarked.

Local market

Speaking on NBK's performance in the local market, Al-Sager stated, "In Kuwait, we continue to focus on optimizing our market position in key sectors, expanding our customer base with digital products, and offering excellent customer service. Spearheading Kuwait's infrastructure program is our top priority as we expect financing national mega-projects."

"Moreover, our Islamic banking arm, Boubyan Bank, along with our international operations both continue to support our diversification strategy with their growing contributions to the Group. Additionally, our wealth management business continued expanding globally to position itself as a major player in the wealth management industry."

"Our leadership in the ESG space was further strengthened with the recently issued USD 500 million green bonds, the first green bond issuance from a Kuwaiti financial institution. We will continue contributing to the sustainable development of our communities and providing the support for our clients' sustainable and transition finance initiatives," he emphasized.



Isam Al-Sager

International expansion

On foreseeing more active international expansion, Al-Sager mentioned, "NBK will continue to be competitive in the domestic market. On the international scene outside Kuwait, MENA and specifically the GCC remain our focus markets, especially Saudi Arabia. We are tapping the Saudi market at all fronts as we complement our growing operations with the opportunities that align with our strategic goals."

"Similarly, the wealth management business is of great importance for our strategic ambitions as we continue to expand with the launch of 'NBK Wealth' brand."

Inflation and project awards

Commenting on the conditions of local economy, Al-Sager stated, "In Kuwait, inflation remains stable as consumer spending, business credit and project activity recorded moderate growth. We forecast a modest deceleration of inflation to 3.0% on average for the year as inflexibility in some price areas persists. GDP growth on the other hand is to witness muted growth on the back of oil production cut mandates by OPEC+ members while improvement thus far in consumer spending, business credit, real estate and project activity may provide grounds for optimism to non-oil growth ahead."

"Furthermore, project activity rebounded significantly in the second quarter, growing at 5-fold quarter-on-quarter. This is driven mainly by activity related to infrastructure works in the construction, transport and power & water sectors."

"The project awards outlook for the remainder of 2024 is promising with projects valued at around KD 7 billion in the pipeline for the year. We believe that the rebound in project awards will continue in 2024 and 2025, as after dissolving the parliament, the decision making is in the hands of the govern-

Al-Sager:

■ Spearheading the financing of national megaprojects is NBK's top priority

■ We continue implementing our diversification strategy and utilizing our adaptable business model against the volatile macroeconomic environment

■ We continued to leverage our strong fundamentals and strategic investments in technology and innovation to maximize returns and optimize costs

■ We strengthened our market position in key sectors, expanding our customer base with digital products, and offering excellent customer service

■ Boubyan Bank, along with our international operations both continue to support our diversification strategy with their growing contributions to the Group

■ Our leadership in the ESG space was further strengthened with the recently issued USD 500 million green bonds

■ We are tapping GCC markets, especially the Saudi market as we complement our growing operations with the opportunities that align with our strategic goals

■ Improvement in consumer spending, business credit, real estate and project activity may provide grounds for optimism to non-oil growth ahead

■ We believe that the rebound in project awards will continue in 2024 and 2025, as the decision is now in the hands of the government

■ The government acknowledges the importance of public debt but focuses more on reforming the budget as a step to adjust imbalances

■ We see more chances for passing mortgage law with outstanding housing applications approaching 100k

ment, which makes decision making much easier," he clarified.

"This has driven implementing and pushing megaprojects significantly, and we felt that recently in various



NBK Headquarters

Ronghe:

■ Growth in business volumes, relatively higher interest rates, and a stronger operating performance are the underlying drivers for the robust bottom-line performance

■ International Banking contributed 24% to net operating income and 23% to the Group's profit, enforcing the diversification agenda of the Group

■ International Banking and Boubyan Bank contributed 40% and 24% respectively to Group's total assets by end of June 2024

■ Our presence in the region and worldwide serves as an important franchise for collection of deposits and diversifying our funding sources

■ We expect the overall loan growth for 2024 to be in the mid-single digit range

sectors. There will be further awards in 2024 and 2025, but it is too early to give certain numbers at this point in time," he continued.

Public debt and mortgage laws

On the chances to pass public debt and mortgage laws, Al-Sager said, "Speaking of the debt law, no material development on the topic took place but the government acknowledges its importance while focusing more on reforming the budget as a step to adjust imbalances. On the mortgage law, the late parliament passed underlying laws and initiatives pertaining to housing, and we see more chances for this law to be passed without standing housing

applications approaching 100k putting more pressure on the need for a housing finance mechanism."

Global and regional economy

"In light of the recent divergence in economic performance globally, market expectations for the global economic outlook have varied. Higher than expected levels of inflation still exist while geopolitical tensions are escalating, indicating a cautious approach to monetary easing for the remainder of the year."

"Regionally, growth in the GCC area is expected to remain solid as oil prices continue to feed fiscal positions of GCC governments and supporting strides in its diversification agendas and capital expenditure plans."

Strong operating performance

On his part, Mr. Sujit Ronghe, Group CFO of National Bank of Kuwait commented, "In the first half of 2024, the continued higher interest rate regime and an overall stable operating environment in Kuwait have benefitted the Bank in general. Underlying drivers for the robust bottom-line performance are a combination of YoY growth in business volumes, relatively higher interest rates, and a stronger operating performance. NBK's strong operating performance was driven by a healthy balance sheet, comfortable liquidity levels and a strong capital base."

"In light of the ongoing regional and international geopolitical developments, we remain cautiously optimistic that the overall operating environment, although challenging, will remain generally stable during the remainder of 2024," he noted.

"The Group's balance sheet remains strong with a stable credit quality. NBK's capital base along with the ability to generate healthy operating profits provides a strong credit loss-absorption capacity. Additionally, the Group continues to benefit from its unique position amongst Kuwaiti

banks in terms of geographical spread through International Banking and the ability to conduct business in both Conventional and Islamic Banking," he explained.

"In 1H2024, NBK's net profit stood at KD292.4m, reflecting a YoY growth of KD17.1m i.e. 6.2%. Group loans and advances grew year on year by 5.4%. Investment securities also contributed strongly to Group assets with a growth of 12.3% compared to June 2023."

"Net operating income increased by KD46.5m, i.e. 8.2%, whilst operating income mix continues to show a healthy mix with 21% coming from non-interest income sources."

"Average earning assets grew by KD1.6bn i.e. 4.5% from June 23, to reach KD36.1bn. Fees and commissions income was strong, reflecting robust contributions across different lines of business and geographies."

"Total operating expenses for 1H2024 stood at KD226.6m, i.e. 9.6% higher than the previous year. The cost growth reflects increased activity levels at Kuwait and across the Group's network as well as investments in key businesses initiatives, digital technologies, and processes. This enables the Group to offer best-in-class service to its customers and optimize resources to improve operational efficiency," he highlighted.

Sectors contributions in income

Ronghe mentioned that in 1H2024, International Banking contributed 24% to net operating income and 23% to the Group's profit, reflecting a strong operating performance. International Banking and Boubyan Bank contributed 40% and 24% respectively to Group's total assets enforcing the diversification agenda of the Group.

"Overall, we see International operations as a growing contributor to Group's assets and profits, and a very important pillar for the bank's diversification strategy."

"Our presence in the region or in UK, Europe, US etc. is a very important driver not only from the point of view of booking assets, but also serves as an important franchise for collection of deposits and diversifying our funding sources," he confirmed.

Loans and income forecasts

As regards local loan growth, Ronghe said, "Given the current geopolitical and the general macroeconomic situation, we continue to expect the overall loan growth for 2024 to be in the mid-single digit range."

"Given the overall geopolitical and macroeconomic uncertainties, it would not be prudent to give specific guidance on earnings / capital adequacy. We are hopeful of maintaining capital adequacy ratios in line with our internal targets above the regulatory minimum," he added.

Finance Minister reviews Kuwait's financial deficit

Financial deficit since 2015 totals KD 33.6 bln

KUWAIT CITY, July 21: The recent budget forum for 2024, highlighted in Al-Shall Weekly Report, has drawn significant attention in Kuwait, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The Minister of Finance provided a detailed overview of Kuwait's financial deficit history and future projections.

Current financial deficit overview includes the following:

Historical Deficit -- Since 2015, Kuwait has accumulated a net financial deficit of approximately 33.6 billion dinars. This figure could have reached around 40 billion dinars if not for the mitigating effects of the Russian-Ukrainian war.

Future Projections -- The anticipated financial deficit for the coming fiscal years, up to 2028/2029, is estimated at about 26.1 billion dinars.

Excessive Bureaucracy -- The report criticizes Kuwait's current administrative setup, pointing out that the country has numerous bodies, institutions, and committees, many of which are deemed ineffective.

Lack of Binding Financial Programs -- The proposed financial treatments are criticized for being more about intentions rather than concrete plans. There is no accompanying binding financial program for future expenditures and revenues.

Modest Deficit Reduction -- The efforts to reduce the deficit are seen as insufficient, potentially delaying resolution and falling short of a comprehensive solution.

Oil Market Dependency -- The effectiveness of the proposed measures is heavily reliant on volatile oil market conditions, which the financial authorities cannot control. A decline in oil prices could further complicate the situation.

The following are the proposals for addressing the deficit:

Cap on Public Spending -- The Minister proposed fixing public spending at its current level of 24.5 billion dinars. While this is seen as a step in the right direction, it is considered insufficient on its own.

Increase in Non-Oil Revenues -- There is also a plan to increase non-oil revenues from 2.7 billion dinars to 4 billion dinars by the fiscal year 2027/2028. This proposal is acknowledged as correct but modest in scale.

Current financial policies persist, the deficit for the fiscal years 2025-2026 through 2027-2028 is expected to be around 18 billion dinars. The proposed measures could reduce this deficit to approximately 11 billion dinars, potentially saving around 7 billion dinars.

The report highlights that while the proposed measures may provide some relief, they fall short of a comprehensive solution. The focus on oil market variables and the lack of a binding financial framework are significant concerns that need addressing to effectively manage Kuwait's financial challenges.

Recent discussions in Kuwait have highlighted significant issues with the country's financial and economic strategies.

There are numerous ineffective bodies, institutions, and

committees in Kuwait -- estimated at around 50 -- many of which are considered to be ineffective and redundant.

Zero Unemployment Project -- This initiative, aimed at creating thousands of jobs in the public sector, is criticized for misleadingly suggesting that Kuwait has moved from no planning to effective planning. In reality, it exacerbates the issue of ineffective planning.

Current Deficit -- The Minister of Finance reported that salaries and wages in Kuwait account for approximately 30% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), compared to 7-13% in other Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries. This disparity represents 2.3 to 4.3 times higher than other GCC nations. The "Zero Unemployment" initiative will further increase this percentage, contrary to the intended reforms.

Budget Proposals -- The proposed measures include capping public spending at its current level of 24.5 billion dinars and increasing non-oil revenues from 2.7 billion dinars to 4 billion dinars by the fiscal year 2027/2028. However, these measures are seen as inadequate and might only modestly reduce the anticipated deficit.

Financial Reforms -- There is a critical need for deeper and more effective financial reforms beyond superficial measures. The current strategies are deemed insufficient and may only delay addressing the underlying financial issues.

Economic Dependency -- Kuwait's economy is heavily reliant on oil, with oil contributing between 47% and 57% of GDP in recent years. The potential future decline in oil prices poses a significant risk, as the country's public finances are largely dependent on oil revenues (about 90%).

2035 Vision Critique -- Both the Minister of Finance and the Supreme Council for Planning and Development acknowledge that the Vision 2035 goals are unlikely to be met. Current strategies and projections indicate that Kuwait is not making adequate progress toward achieving these targets and is instead deepening structural economic imbalances.

Education and Workforce -- The education system and workforce are facing challenges, with concerns about declining quality and inefficiency. Additionally, the demographic structure is not conducive to effective population management, making it difficult to control growth rates and improve quality.

Diagnosis and Solutions -- There is a consensus that the country's economic situation requires more than temporary fixes. The focus needs to shift toward comprehensive and sustainable reforms that address the root causes of financial instability and economic inefficiency.

These points reflect the urgent need for Kuwait to implement deeper and more effective reforms to address its financial and economic challenges comprehensively.

Kuwait faces significant hurdles in achieving the sustainability goals outlined in Vision 2035. The current public policies and financial strategies are falling short, leading to several critical issues:

Current Policies -- The existing economic and financial policies are not conducive to long-term sustainability. If these policies persist, they are likely to undermine efforts to stabilize the economy and manage public finances effectively.

ECB holds rates steady amid persistent inflation concerns

US retail sales flat, exceeding expectations

By National Bank of Kuwait

United States

Empire State Manufacturing Index

The NY Empire State Manufacturing Index fell to -6.6 in July 2024, slightly below expectations of -6. New orders were stable, shipments increased slightly, and delivery times improved. Inventories decreased, reflecting ongoing challenges, and the labor market remained weak with declining employment. Input prices rose modestly, while selling prices saw minor increases. Despite these conditions, firms remained optimistic about future improvements. Richard Deitz, an economic research advisor at the New York Fed, noted sluggish manufacturing but highlighted positive signs such as steady orders and increased shipments, though weak employment and capital spending plans remain challenges.

Retail Sales m/m & Fed's Chair Powell Speaks

US retail sales came in higher than expectations in June, where the figure was unchanged for the month, above expectations for a 0.3% decline, while lower than the 0.3% increase seen in May. Meanwhile core retail sales increased 0.4% for the month, higher than expectations and the previous 0.1% increase in May. The figure comes following an interview with Fed Chair Jerome Powell, where he spoke about the current situation of the economy, emphasizing that the upcoming data would be crucial in determining the next step for the Fed in terms of interest rates. Adding that while the second quarter of the year showed improvements in inflation and a softening labor market, more improvements need to be seen in order to be sure inflation is moving down sustainably.

Industrial Production m/m

In June 2024, US industrial production increased by 0.6%, surpassing market expectations of a 0.3% rise. Manufacturing output, which constitutes 78% of total production, grew by 0.4%, exceeding the forecasted 0.2% increase. Mining output increased by 0.3%, and utilities output rose by 2.8%. Capacity utilization reached 78.8%, slightly below its long-term average. Over the second quarter, industrial production grew at an annual rate of 4.3%, with manufacturing output rising by 3.4%.

Unemployment Claims

The latest figures released by the Department of Labor paint a concerning picture of the job market. The number of people filing initial unemployment claims for the week ending

Currencies	Previous Week Levels			This Week's Expected Range		3-Month Forward	
	Open	Low	High	Close	Minimum		Maximum
EUR	1.0886	1.0870	1.0947	1.0877	1.0800	1.0950	1.0925
GBP	1.2992	1.2898	1.3044	1.2919	1.2760	1.3000	1.2928
JPY	157.85	155.36	158.85	157.49	156.60	158.70	0.8796
CHF	0.8943	0.8818	0.8978	0.8890	0.8820	0.9050	155.37

July 13th reached 243,000, a significant increase from the previous week's 222,000 filings and exceeding economists' predictions of 229,000. This ties with the highest weekly jobless claims reported in June, representing the most claims since August of last year. Furthermore, the number of continuing claims, which track those who have been unemployed for more than a week, also reached a new high. In the week ending

July 6th, nearly 1.87 million continuing claims were filed, surpassing the prior week's 1.85 million and marking the highest level since November 2021. While some of this rise might be attributed to disruptions caused by Hurricane Beryl, according to Thomas Simons, an economist at Jefferies, the overall trend in recent weeks suggests a potential weakening in the labor market, with more cracks beginning to show.

The US Dollar index closed the week at 104.396.

Europe

ECB Press Conference

The European Central Bank decided to hold interest rates steady after lowering them in June. This decision was unanimous and reflects ongoing concerns about inflation, especially wage growth. While recent data shows some improvement, inflation is still above the ECB's target of 2% and is expected to remain high for a while. The central bank is waiting for more economic data, particularly on wages and growth, before considering further interest rate cuts. President Lagarde acknowledged that inflation will likely fluctuate throughout the year but expects it to decline overall in the second half due to several factors, including lower labor costs and the effects of the ECB's policies.

The EUR/USD currency pair closed the week at 1.0877.

Canada

Canadian Consumer Price Index

Canadian CPI rose 2.7% y/y in June, down from 2.9% in May. While the m/m figure was down 0.1%, lower than the 0.6% increase seen in May. The decrease

is mainly attributed to a slower y/y growth in gas prices, which rose 0.4% in June compared to 5.6% in May. Decreases were also seen in durable goods as well as cellular services which decreased 1.8% and 12.8% respectively.

Retail Sales m/m

Canada's retail sales data released on Friday showed a steeper decline than expected in May, further strengthening the case for another interest rate cut by the Bank of Canada. This news comes as financial markets are already nearly certain the Bank will reduce rates by 0.25% again at its next meeting. The data from Statistics Canada revealed a drop of 0.8% in May sales compared to April, reversing the previous month's small increase. This decline was driven in large part by reduced spending at grocery stores and supermarkets, likely due to a combination of high food prices and rising interest rates impacting consumers.

The USD/CAD currency pair closed the week at 1.3732.

Asia-Pacific

Chinese Gross Domestic Product

The Chinese economy grew by 4.7% year-on-year in Q2 2024, falling short of the 5.1% forecast and down from 5.3% in Q1. This marks the slowest annual growth since Q1 2023, influenced by a property downturn, weak domestic demand, a declining yuan, and trade tensions with the West. The Third Plenum of the Communist Party, a significant political event, is expected to introduce reforms and support measures. The economy grew by 5.0% in the first half of the year, with the government targeting a 5.0% growth for 2024. In June, economic indicators showed a slowdown, with minimal retail sales growth and a three-month low in industrial output growth, while the urban jobless rate stayed at 5.0% for the third consecutive month. Exports rose more than expected but imports unexpectedly decreased.

The USD/CNY currency pair closed the week at 7.2695.

Kuwait

Kuwaiti Dirham

USD/KWD closed last week at 0.30540.

Germany's chancellor praises lithium deal with Serbia

German Chancellor Olaf Scholz praised a tentative deal between Serbia and the European Union signed on Friday that paves the way for the disputed excavation of lithium, a mega project that could reduce Europe's dependency on China but one that has been fiercely criticized by environmentalists and opposition groups. Scholz attended a "critical raw materials summit" in the Serbian

capital where a memorandum of understanding between the EU and Serbia's government on a "strategic partnership" on sustainable raw materials, battery supply chains and electric vehicles was signed. He said after the signing ceremony that "this is an important European project," adding that it is necessary for Europe "to remain sovereign in a changing world and not be dependent on

others, which is why new sources of raw materials should be discovered." "I'm glad the decision was made," he said. "I admit, this decision required courage, but it was made at the right moment," Scholz said. Germany, the largest carmaker in Europe, is seeking to secure lithium for its electric vehicle makers as the European Union struggles to reduce its dependence on imports from China. (AP)

Nigeria fines Meta \$220 million

Nigeria's government on Friday announced a fine of \$220 million on Meta, saying its investigations found "multiple and repeated" violations of the country's data protection and consumer rights laws on Facebook and WhatsApp. A statement from Nigeria's Federal Competition and Consumer Protection Commission, or FCCPC, listed five ways that Meta violated data laws in the

West African country, including by sharing the data of Nigerians without authorization, denying consumers the right to self-determine the use of their data, discriminatory practices as well as abuse of market dominance. "Being satisfied with the significant evidence on the record, and that Meta Parties have been provided every opportunity to articulate any position ... the Commission has now entered a

Final Order, and issued a penalty against Meta Parties," FCCPC chief executive Adamu Abdullahi said in a statement. A spokesperson for Meta didn't immediately respond to a request for comment. Nigeria, which is Africa's most populous country, also has one of the world's highest number of internet users with 154 million active subscribers in 2022, according to the country's statistics agency.

Amount represents a 38% increase from the same period last year

Markaz: GCC Fixed Income markets see USD 75.5 bln in primary issuances during H1 '24

KUWAIT CITY, July 21: In its Fixed Income Report, Kuwait Financial Centre "Markaz" states that Primary debt issuances of Bonds and Sukuk in the Gulf Cooperation Council ("GCC") Countries amounted to USD 75.5 billion during H1 2024 compared to USD 54.8 billion raised in H1 2023, representing a 38% increase.

During H1 2024, there were 173 primary debt issuances including fixed and floating rate tranches compared to 130 issuances in H1 2023.

Issuances by Geography: Saudi-based issuers led the GCC Bonds and Sukuk market during the half, raising a total of USD 37.0 billion through 44 issuances, representing 49% of the total value raised in the GCC, followed by UAE issuers which raised USD 20.6 billion with 64 issuances, representing 27%.

Qatar entities raised a total of USD 10.5 billion through 39 issuances, representing 14%, while Bahraini Entities witness 4 issuances raising USD 3.0 billion representing 4% of the market. Omani entities raised a total of USD 1.7 billion representing 2% of the total new amount issued during H1 2024. Kuwaiti Entities raised a total of USD 2.6 billion through 15 issuances representing 4% of the market.

Sovereign vs. Corporate: Issuances by Sovereign entities in the GCC made up 55% of the total value of GCC primary issuances during H1 2024, amounting to USD 41.5 billion and up 77% from H1 2023. Primary issuances by Corporates amounted to USD 34.0 billion during the half constituting 45% of the total value of GCC primary issuances and marking a growth of 8% compared to H1 2023.

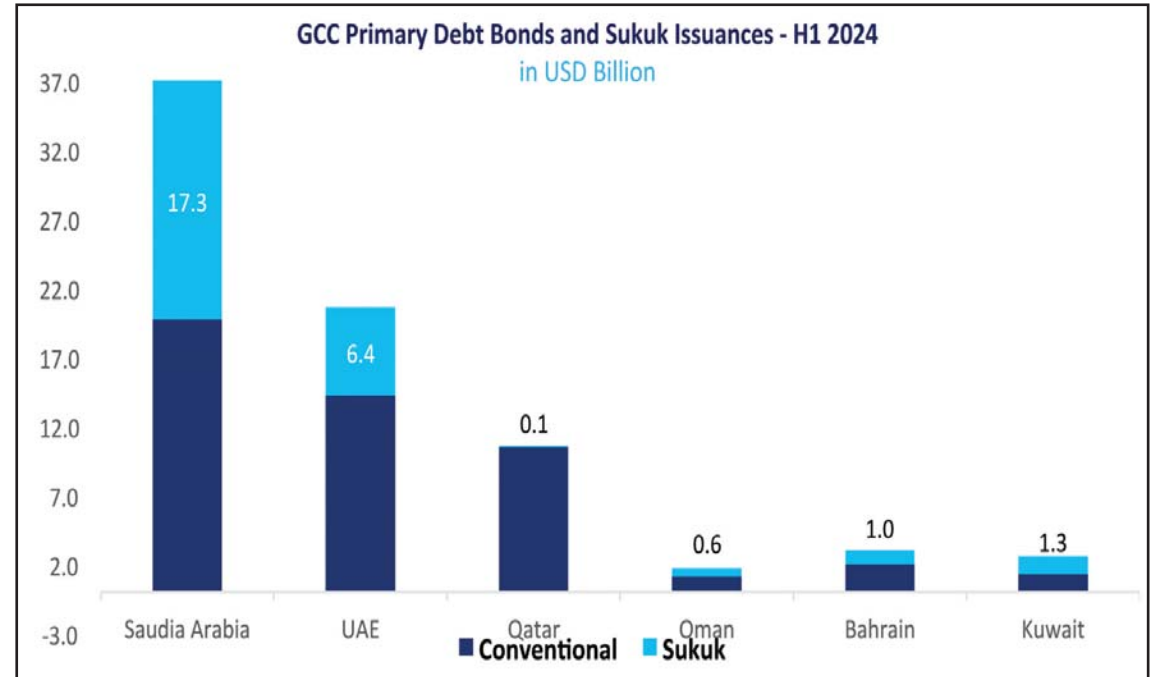
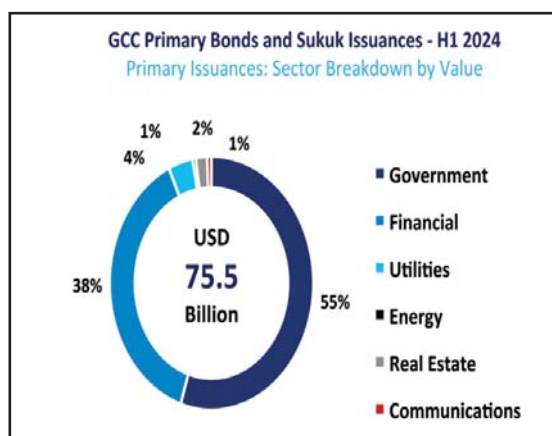
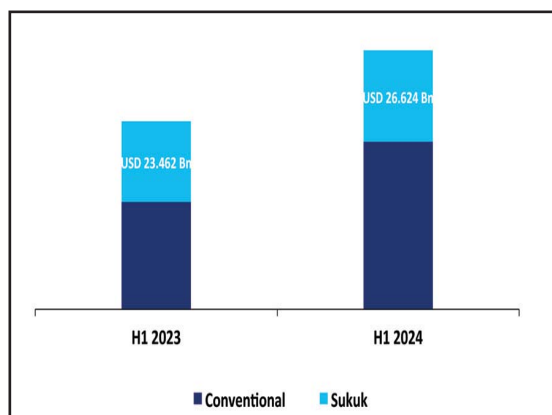
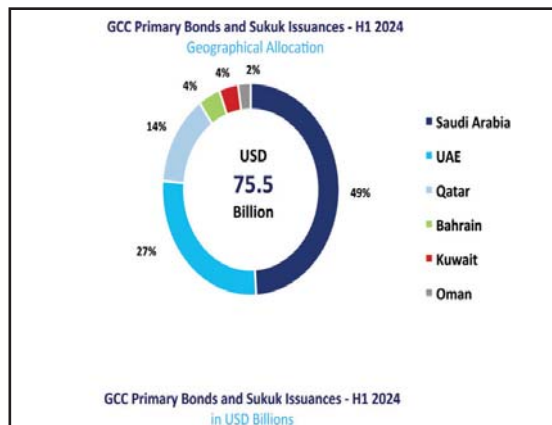
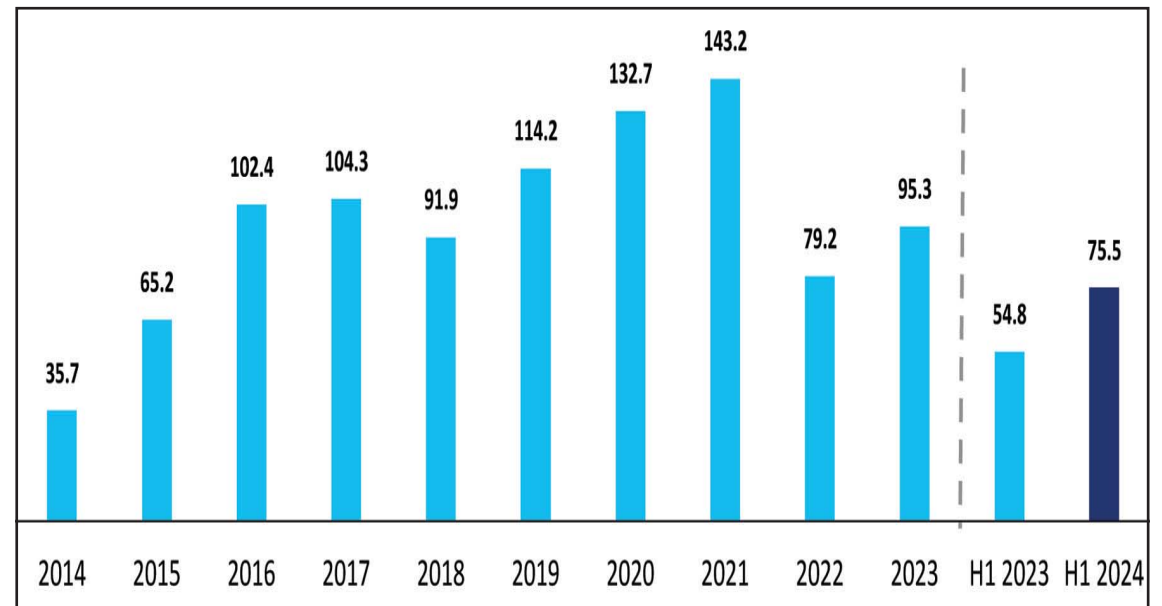
Conventional vs. Sukuk: Conventional issuances increased by 56% in H1 2024 compared to the same period last year, raising a total of USD 48.8 billion representing 65% of the total value of primary issuances in the GCC. On the other hand, Sukuk issuances amounting to USD 26.6 billion made up 35% of the total value of primary issuances during H1 2024 and recording a 14% increase from the same period last year.

Sector Segmentation: The Government sector accounted for the largest amount of primary debt issuances by value, raising a total of USD 41.5 billion, or 55% of the total value of issuances in the GCC in H1 2024, followed by the financial sector (including quasi-government entities) that raised a total value of USD 28.8 billion, representing 38% of the total amount issued.

Maturity Profile: Perpetual issuances dominated the GCC debt capital markets by total value, with a total of USD 28.6 billion, or 38% of the total value of issuances. Issuances with tenors of less than 5 years (LT5 years) came in second with a total value raised of USD 19.9 billion, or 26% of the total value of issuances.

Issue Size Profile: The size of GCC Bonds and Sukuk primary issuances during the half ranged from USD 545 thousand to USD 5.0 billion. Issuances with principal amounts greater than or equal to USD 1 billion raised the largest amount totaling USD 48.7 billion, representing 65% of the total primary issuances.

Currency Profile: US Dollar-denominated issu-



ances led the GCC Bonds and Sukuk primary market in H1 2024, raising a total of USD 57.5 billion or 76% of the total value of GCC primary issuances. This was followed by Saudi Riyal denominated issuances that raised a total of USD 8.5 billion or 12% of the total value of issuances in the GCC.

Rating: In H1 2024, a total of 75% of GCC primary Bonds and Sukuk issuances (in terms of value) were rated by either one of the following rating agencies: Standard & Poor's, Moody's, Fitch and/or Capital Intelligence, of which 71% were rated within the Investment Grade.

American homes find fewer foreign buyers

LOS ANGELES, July 21, (AP): Sales of U.S. homes to Chinese, Canadian and other foreign buyers have fallen to the lowest level in more than a decade, hampered by a strong dollar and more hurdles that have kept the housing market in a deep sales slump for over two years.

Some 54,300 previously occupied U.S. homes were purchased by non-U.S. citizens in the 12 months ended in March, according to a report this week by the National Association of Realtors.

That's the fewest homes sold to foreign nationals in data going back to 2009. Sales were down about 36% compared to the same period a year earlier. Those transactions from April 2023 through March of this year totaled \$42 billion, a 21.2% decline from the prior-year period, NAR said.

"International buyers face the same difficult market challenges as domestic buyers - lack of inventory, higher mortgage rates, the affordability condition," said Lawrence Yun, NAR's chief economist. "On top of that, for many international buyers the stronger dollar was not in their favor."

The U.S. housing market has been stuck in a slump since 2022, when mortgage rates began to climb from pandemic-era lows. Existing home sales sank to a nearly 30-year low last year as the average rate on a 30-year mortgage surged to a 23-year high of 7.79%, according to mortgage buyer Freddie Mac.

The average rate has mostly hovered around 7%, limiting home shoppers' purchasing power. At the same time, the supply of homes for sale, though rising in recent months, remains close to historic lows. That's kept the market competitive enough to lift home prices to new highs.

On top of those affordability challenges, foreign buyers have to factor in the potential for additional costs when the U.S. dollar is stronger than their currency. The U.S. Dollar Index, which tracks the value of the greenback relative to a basket of foreign currencies, has risen 3.9% over the past 12 months.

"The strong U.S. dollar makes international travel cheaper for Americans but makes U.S. homes much more expensive for foreigners," said Yun. "Therefore, it's not surprising to see a pullback in U.S. home sales from foreign buyers."

Treasury says anti-woke banking laws like Florida's are national security risk

Department sends letters to lawmakers

WASHINGTON, July 21, (AP): The Treasury Department is warning that state laws that restrict banks from considering environmental, social and governance factors could harm efforts to address money laundering and terrorism financing.

The Associated Press obtained a copy of the letter sent Thursday to lawmakers. The letter singled out a law signed by Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis in May that says it would be an "unsafe and unsound practice" for banks to consider non-financial factors when doing business. The letter concludes that "such laws create uncertainty and may inhibit" national security efforts.

Investing

Conservative Republicans such as DeSantis have sought to block environmental and socially conscious standards for investing, saying that such initiatives can lead to unfair discrimination based on political beliefs and harm legitimate businesses. They say that considering environmental, social and corporate-governance issues, or ESG, before deciding whether to invest is woke behavior gone amok.

Tennessee recently enacted a similar law, although it was not mentioned in the Treasury letter. State legislatures in Arizona, Georgia, Idaho, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Louisiana and South Dakota also have measures along these same lines under consideration.

DeSantis has said the law being questioned by the Treasury Department would protect the access that conservative groups and the firearms industry have to the financial sector, arguing that such organizations have at times had their accounts frozen or

India has ramped up its wind and solar energy

Need to expand places to store it

BENGALURU, India, July 21, (AP): At a Coca-Cola factory on the outskirts of Chennai in southern India a giant battery powers machinery day and night, replacing a diesel-spewing generator. It's one of just a handful of sites in India powered by electricity stored in batteries, a key component to fast-tracking India's energy transition away from dirty fuels.

The country's lithium ion battery storage industry - which can store electricity generated by wind turbines or solar panels for when the sun isn't shining or the wind isn't blowing - makes up just 0.1% of global battery storage systems. But battery storage is growing fast, with around a third of India's total battery infrastructure coming online just this year.

"Our orders are growing exponentially," said Ayush Misra, CEO of Amperehour Energy, the company that installed the batteries at the Chennai factory. "It's a really exciting time to be a battery storage provider."

India currently has around 100 megawatts of storage capacity from batteries, with another 3.3 gigawatts of clean energy storage coming from hydropower. The Indian government estimates that the country will need about 74 gigawatts of energy storage from batteries, hydropower and nuclear

closed.

The Treasury Department letter said that the Florida law could, however, undermine the work of federal agencies, heightening "the risk that international drug traffickers, trans-

national organized criminals, terrorists, and corrupt foreign officials will use the U.S. financial system to launder money, evade sanctions, and threaten our national security."

The Treasury Department letter was a response to a July 8 request from Rep. Josh Gottheimer, D-N.J., Rep. Blaine Luetkemeyer, R-Mo., and Rep. Brad Sherman, D-Calif. Gottheimer said he was pleased that the Treasury Department shared

of renewable energy combined with storage is cheaper than new coal. Global battery costs are declining faster than expected, and experts say that if costs continue to plummet, energy storage systems can better compete with both coal and clean energy sources like hydropower and nuclear energy that can also control their supply to meet demand.

"Battery storage is now the largest resource to meet California's evening peak electricity requirements. It's more than gas, nuclear or coal," he said. This is being replicated in the U.K., China and even smaller nations like Tonga. "There's no reason why this can't happen in India too," he said.

One of India's unique challenges is that energy needs are growing more rapidly than most nations: the population is increasing and extreme heat fueled by climate change means more and more people are using energy-guzzling air conditioning. India's electricity demand grew by 7% last year and is expected to grow by at least 6% every year for the next three years, according to the International Energy Agency.

"The country needs to quadruple its renewable energy deployment just to meet demand growth," said Hogeveen Rutter. Ankit Mittal, co-founder of Sheru, a software company that offers

energy storage and management solutions, said that making battery storage sites more flexible can help the industry ramp up quickly.

Mittal said battery storage sites should be more accessible to the national energy grid, so they can provide electricity to whichever regions need the extra boost of energy most. Currently, battery storage sites in India only power up more local sites.

To encourage further growth of the battery sector, the Indian government announced last year a \$452 million scheme to support an additional four gigawatts of battery storage by 2031. But the government also provides subsidies for coal plants, making the electricity generated there a cheaper bet for some utility companies.

Future government policy could level the playing field. The country is set to announce a new national budget later in July that industry leaders hope will contain incentives for clean energy storage.

Akshay Singhal, co-founder of the Bengaluru-based battery tech startup Log 9 Materials, thinks that better government support can help the country meet growing energy demands "the right way," with clean energy.

"One significant policy change can kickstart the entire ecosystem," he said.

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Future government policy could level the playing field. The country is set to announce a new national budget later in July that industry leaders hope will contain incentives for clean energy storage.

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Bank reinforces commitment to rewarding loyalty and promoting savings

Burgan Bank hosts winner of KD 500,000 Kanz semi-annual draw prize

KUWAIT CITY, July 21: Burgan Bank recently welcomed Mohammad Hassan Zeinalpour, who was announced the winner of the KD 500,000 Kanz semi-annual draw, at its head office where he met with Burgan Bank's management. This follows the Bank's event that was held at 360 Mall where Zeinalpour was announced the winner, under the supervision of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry. Burgan Bank's invitation for the winner is a testament to its commitment to its loyal customers as it continues to play an active role in providing them with opportunities to enhance their quality of life and take active steps toward realizing their dreams.

In light of Zeinalpour's visit, Mr. Yousef Al-Ali, Manager – Products and Segments at Burgan Bank, said: "We are delighted to welcome Mr. Mohammad Zeinalpour at our head office and we renew our congratulations to him on his life-changing triumph. Even though winning any of the Kanz draws holds an element of luck, it is also indicative of the winner's commitment to saving and managing their spending in a sound and responsible manner. We hope this prize will be a turning point for Mr. Zeinalpour and



Yousef Al-Ali, Manager – Products and Segments at Burgan Bank

we wish all of our Kanz draw participants luck in the upcoming draws."

On his part, Mr. Zeinalpour said: "I would like to thank Burgan Bank for the invitation and the hospitality they showed me today. Winning the Kanz semi-annual draw is truly life-changing and I am simply overjoyed.



Mohammad Zeinalpour receiving his cash prize from Burgan Bank's management.

The chance to save your money in an account that is rewarding and secure is reason enough to open a Kanz account, but its prizes and their dream-making

potential make Kanz a must."

It serves to note that Kanz remains Burgan Bank's flagship saving draw account, thanks to its regular year-long

cash prizes, whether the monthly KD 2,000 prize awarded to 20 winners, the semi-annual KD 500,000 prize granted to one customer, or the annual KD

1,500,000 prize allocated to a single lucky winner.

In addition, the Kanz account also serves as one of Burgan Bank's engaging tools for raising awareness about financial literacy and instilling a savings culture among its customers, as part of its active participation in the "Let's Be Aware" (Diraya) banking awareness and financial literacy campaign – launched by the Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) and the Kuwait Banking Association (KBA), with the support of local banks in Kuwait.

Interested Kanz account customers still have an opportunity to participate in the monthly draws and the end-of-year mega annual draw. To enter the Kanz draws, existing or new customers must have a Kanz account with a minimum balance of KD 200 – or the equivalent in USD, GBP, or EUR. Upon meeting the entry requirements, every KD 25 counts as a draw entry.

For more information on opening a Kanz account, the draws, or other Burgan products and services, please head to any of the Bank's branches, call the customer service center at 1804080, or visit Burgan Bank's website at www.burgan.com.



Be more than a Millionaire with Al-Najma

1,500,000 KD

Commercial Bank of Kuwait awards cash prize to Al Najma winner.

Open Al Najma account via app

Al-Tijari announces 'winner' of Al Najma Account weekly draw

KUWAIT CITY, July 21: Commercial Bank of Kuwait conducted the weekly draw for Al Najma Account on Sunday July 21, 2024. The draw was conducted in the presence of Ministry of Commerce and Industry representative Mr. Mansour Al-Dhafari.

The result of the draw as follows:
1. Al Najma weekly draw – the prize of 5,000/- Kuwaiti Dinars went to the winner Ms. Nedhal Ahmad Al-Dhafeeri

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

1,500,000.

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

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

In line with its support of Diraya campaign

KIB hosts real estate workshop at Kuwait University

KUWAIT CITY, July 21: Kuwait International Bank (KIB), represented by its Real Estate Department, recently delivered its second specialized workshop on the fundamentals of investment and real estate appraisal at Kuwait University's (KU) College of Business Administration. This initiative comes as part of KIB's support of the "Let's Be Aware" (Diraya) awareness campaign and the Bank's mission to transfer knowledge and expertise to a wide range of students, whom KIB views as promising future assets. Additionally, this effort is part of implementing its memorandum of understanding with KU to integrate practical studies into the university's academic curriculum.

This important event saw the participation of Real Estate Expert Eng. Hussam Al-Kolak and Real Estate Advisor Arch. Basil Salem. The workshop was also attended by several faculty members from the university and a group of students from the college.

Commenting on the workshop, Al-Kolak said: "At KIB, we take pride in being an essential and active supporter of students who represent the future generations, entrepreneurs, and leaders of real estate development in Kuwait. As a specialized institution in the investment and real estate appraisal field since our inception, we continue to en-

gage in initiatives that aim to meet the goals of our partnership with Kuwait University." He also noted that this workshop adopts a set of international standards for real estate valuation and the fundamental factors involved, including the cost approach, the income capitalization approach, and the market sales comparison approach.

On his part, Basil said: "We are pleased to be back at Kuwait University once again. Strengthening our relationships with our partners in the educational sector allows us to unify efforts aimed at enhancing the academic curriculum and increasing awareness among students and faculty members regarding the fundamentals of investment and real estate appraisal. We see such occasions as unique opportunities to directly engage with students and share the experiences and knowledge that enrich their academic journey. Additionally, it reaffirms the Bank's commitment to its comprehensive social responsibility strategy, which embraces the principles of environmental, social, and corporate governance."

During the workshop, KIB representatives provided a detailed explanation of the concept of real estate investment and its key characteristics, along with several examples of how to invest in the real estate market, both locally



Hussam Al-Kolak

and globally. They also clarified the principle of sustainability in the local real estate market and the fundamental pillars that maintain its stability and growth despite the various changes and challenges it continually faces. This included discussions on private and investment housing, commercial buildings, complexes, and more.

The Bank's various administrative and financial services, including Islamic financing, aimed at develop-

ing environmentally friendly homes in our society that reduce electricity and water consumption. Rather, it produces electricity from renewable sources in order to not only save natural resources, but enhance the quality of life."

Al-Mutairi explained that we at Warba Bank are keen to provide the best exclusive offers, sign agreements, and organize activities and events that suit the requirements of clients' daily lives, indicating that Warba Bank is always looking for everything that is new and unique to offer it to its clients, such as modern technology and new interests.

Al-Mutairi stated that Warba Bank's strategy aims to successfully integrate international sustainability standards, implementing its standards, and invest in its goals, out of its belief in the necessity of creating a positive impact on society in a way that ensures providing added value to reduce the amount of expected risks.

He pointed out that sustainable development represents a fundamental pillar of Warba Bank's strategy, through which it adopts initiatives that contribute to spreading awareness of the necessity of preserving the environment from future risks by providing innovative and practical solutions, including solutions to improve energy efficiency, solar energy systems, water purification and recycling systems, and more.

For his part, Barak Al-Maraghi,

In addition to providing free consultations and technical evaluations

Warba partners with Al Dhow for 10% discount on environmental solutions

KUWAIT CITY, July 21: Warba Bank announced its cooperation with Al Dhow for Environmental Projects Company, which will provide an exclusive 10% discount to Warba Bank clients, in addition to providing free consultations and technical evaluations of the company's services in the field of environmental solutions for private housing.

On this occasion, Ayman Salem Al-Mutairi, Director Marketing and Corporate Communications at Warba Bank, said: "We are happy to cooperate with Al-Dhow for Environmental Projects Company, as part of the Bank's continuing efforts to follow up on the most prominent global and regional developments in the areas of sustainability and their impact on the environmental and social sectors."

Al-Mutairi added that we at Warba Bank are keen to keep up with our clients' daily requirements and are keen to provide them with the best exclusive offers, adding that the cooperation with Al Dhow for Environmental Projects Company came as it is one of the leading companies in the field of environmental engineering and sustainability. "Through this cooperation, we hope to provide innovative and practical solutions, including solutions to improve energy efficiency, solar energy systems, water purification and recycling systems, and others. Also promoting awareness of sustainable housing and achieving the greatest spread of sustainability projects by creat-

ing environmentally friendly homes in our society that reduce electricity and water consumption. Rather, it produces electricity from renewable sources in order to not only save natural resources, but enhance the quality of life."

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Warba Bank and Al Dhow collaborate on sustainable housing solutions.

Al-Mutairi:

Warba's strategy to successfully integrate international sustainability standards, implementing its standards, and invest in its goals
We are keen to provide the best exclusive offers to our clients and enhance the quality of life

Al-Maraghi:

We are happy to cooperate with Warba Bank to offer an exclusive 10% discount for the Bank's clients
We are committed to providing the latest technologies in the field of renewable and sustainable energy to achieve our vision

CEO - Vice Chairman of Al Dhow for Environmental Projects Company, said: "We at Al Dhow for Environmental Projects Company are happy to cooperate with Warba Bank to offer an exclusive 10% discount to the Bank's clients (in addition to providing free technical consultation and evaluation) on our services in the field of environmental solutions for private housing, including solar energy systems and water purification and recycling systems. Al Dhow, a leader in environmental engineering and sustainability – and in sustainability reporting (ESG) such as environmental impact assessments, carbon footprint analysis, renewable energy solutions, waste management strategies, water management and conservation, environmental compliance services and sustainable development – serves a wide range of clients in the public and private sectors to provide innovative and practical solutions.

"Through this cooperation, we hope to enhance awareness of sustainable housing and achieve the greatest spread of sustainability projects, thus creating environmentally friendly homes in our society, reducing electricity and water consumption, and even producing electricity from renewable sources, in order to not only save natural resources, but enhance the quality of life."

Al-Maraghi added that the solar energy system in addition to optional components such as the energy storage system, electric vehicle chargers, and solar lighting for gardens, which we adopt in our solutions through

which we achieve reducing carbon emissions and creating environmentally friendly homes for sustainable living. As for the water reuse system and optional components such as the drinking water filter or any other components needed by the customer, they contribute to reducing water consumption and preserving natural water resources, which enhances the sustainability of homes and ensures the provision of clean and healthy water for residents.

Al-Maraghi concluded by saying: "We are committed to provide the latest technologies in the field of renewable and sustainable energy to achieve our vision of making homes more efficient and environmentally friendly, and we always strive to provide unique and integrated solutions that include all aspects of environmental sustainability, from system design to implementation and maintenance, to ensure achieving the highest levels of performance and reliability. We also invite all Warba Bank clients to take advantage of this special offer and contribute with us in building a green and sustainable future, and together let us be part of the positive change for a better environment and a brighter future."

Warba Bank is one of the banks that has achieved great successes in a short period, as it occupied a leadership position in the field of Islamic digital banking services for individuals, and it is one of the largest local banks in the number of shareholders, and these are among the most prominent components that make the Bank close to all members of society.

UPNRI Forum Kuwait successfully completes general body elections

KUWAIT CITY, July 21: The UPNRI Forum Kuwait has successfully completed its general body elections, and the newly appointed office bearers for the next two years have been announced. The election was conducted under the supervision of Mr. Shaheel Ahmad Khan, ensuring a fair and transparent process.

The outgoing president, Dr. Mohan Ram, expressed his gratitude to the previous office bearers for their unwavering support and dedication. He also extended his heartfelt congratulations to the new team and wished them all

the success in their future endeavors. Below is the list of newly appointed Office Bearers and Executive Committee (EC) members:

- President: Zeeshan Ullah Khan
- Vice-President: Shaikh Noorul Hasan
- General Secretary: Shafaq Mumtaz
- Joint Secretary: Gaurav Bhatnagar
- Treasurer: M. A. Aleem Siddique
- Joint Treasurer: Habib Ur Rehman Alvi
- Convenor: Mohammad Kaleem Ansari
- Joint Convenor: Gaurav Singh

- Event Manager: Jitendra Kuntal
- Joint Event Manager: Mohammad Shahid
- EC Member: Dr. Mohan Ram
- EC Member: Shaheel Ahmad
- EC Member: Mohammad Khaleel Khan
- EC Member: Qaseem Ahmad
- EC Member: Aqeel Ahmad
- EC Member: Mujeeb Ur Rahman
- EC Member: Mahboob Ahmad
- EC Member: Dr. Ashhad Ali Khan
- EC Member: Mohammad Aslam Khan

- EC Member: Habib Ullah
 - EC Member: Nafees Ahmed Id-risi
 - EC Member: Tarun Kumar
 - EC Member: Mirza Ashraf Beg
 - EC Member: Manvendra Kumar Garg
 - EC Member: Meraj Ahmad
 - EC Member: Yusuf Khan
 - EC Member: Javed Khan
- The UPNRI Forum Kuwait looks forward to the leadership and vision of the new office bearers in advancing the forum's mission and fostering a strong sense of community among its members.



Photo during the event.

Olympics

PARIS, July 21, (AP) - In a luxurious hotel room on the 16th floor, overlooking the heart of Paris and the iconic Seine River, Thomas Jolly prepares for the grand spectacle that will inaugurate the Paris 2024 Olympics.

"I was overwhelmed at first. I wondered how I could create a show where everyone can feel represented as part of this great union," admits Jolly, the actor and stage director who was tapped two years ago to helm the artistic direction of the opening and closing ceremonies. "This responsibility was ambitious, complex, but magnificent for an artist."

More than a billion people are expected to watch the July 26 opening ceremony. But Jolly, 42, is no stranger to outsized projects in France, producing a 24-hour-long Shakespearean tetralogy in 2022 and reviving the favorite musical "Starmania." He has earned three Molière prizes, France's highest theater award.

Now, he is tasked with sharing France with the rest of the world in a parade that's expected to last nearly four hours.

"France is a story that never stops being constructed, deconstructed, and reconstructed. It's alive, it remains alive," Jolly passionately explained in an interview on Friday. This dynamism, he believes, fuels the country's reputation for protests and strikes - manifestations of France's constant reexamination of its identity and values.

Behind Jolly, the scene is a hive of activity, with construction workers toiling on the settings for the upcoming ceremony on the riverbanks

of the Seine, sealed to the public. At one point, Tony Estanguet, the head of the Paris 2024 organizing committee who is also giving interviews in the hotel, joins Jolly on the balcony, away from the media frenzy. Cigarette in hand, Jolly gestures animatedly towards the Seine as they discuss final details, Estanguet nodding in agreement.



Jolly

Last year, France hosted the Rugby World Cup. The opening ceremony imagined by Oscar-winning actor Jean Dujardin, who portrayed a beret-wearing baker in a 1950s rendition of France, received criticism for being too stereotypical and outdated.

Stereotypes

While acknowledging the clichés, Jolly is determined to both play with and subvert these stereotypes, believing that opening ceremonies often tell the story of a country.

"When we watch 'Emily in Paris' or 'Amélie Poulain,' we know it's not quite the real Paris. We're going to play with all those clichés, but we're also going to challenge them," said Jolly, who is also directing the Paralympics ceremonies. "Paris is also a vibrant youth. Different cultures rubbing shoulders in the streets."

The opening ceremony will be attended by approximately 300,000 people, most of whom have been invited, with the organizers intent on celebrating inclusion and diversity. The original plan was to have a 100% free ceremony, with millions watching the parade from the riverbanks. Those ambitions were dialed down by the French government, who feared security threats in a city that has had major extremist attacks as recently as 2015.

"An opening ceremony has never been held outside of a stadium. There is no model; it's absolute creation," Jolly said, acknowledging the challenges of such a feat. He envisioned a giant ballet in 12 acts with hundreds of dancers stationed on the many bridges that span the Seine, as boats floats down the river carrying the Olympic athletes to the Eiffel Tower.

Jolly is extremely tight-lipped about what will eventually transpire at the ceremony. Rehearsals are being held in secret locations scattered throughout France, but there will be no full rehearsal before the actual date. The mystery has prompted much speculation, with some of the most audacious theories positing the use of submarines in the Seine and performances by pop stars such as Celine Dion, Lady Gaga and French-Malian singer Aya Nakamura.

"I'll be fired if I tell you anything," Jolly says with a cheeky laugh. "All I can tell you is that it will be very meaningful for the artists that will perform."

Variety



Maika Monroe, a cast member in the film 'Longlegs,' poses for a portrait at the London Hotel, Tuesday, June 25, in West Hollywood, Calif. (AP)

Film

Star's whimsical charm shines in 'Longlegs'

Monroe's healthy view fuels her success

LOS ANGELES, July 21, (AP) - One of the few moments of levity in "Longlegs" - the Neon horror film in theaters now about a Satanist serial killer - happens when Maika Monroe's character, Lee Harker, meets her co-worker's young daughter.

It's obvious the analytical FBI agent doesn't spend a lot of time around kids. Her stoic, awkward personality is comically heightened by this interaction with the child, who asks Harker to do things she obviously has no interest in, like seeing the girl's bedroom or coming to her birthday party.

Critics have praised the 31-year-old's "Longlegs" performance - which says something when you share the screen with Nicolas Cage. But her calculated, offbeat character is even more impressive given Monroe's affable, almost whimsical personality.

"There's a kind of childlike quality to her that is extremely compelling and graceful and charming," said Cage of his co-star.

Her endearing approachability is perhaps at least somewhat attributable to the fact that she has always kept Hollywood at arm's length. "I don't necessarily like being fully consumed in this world," Monroe said in a recent interview.

Neither of her parents work in the entertainment industry and only reluctantly agreed to start driving her to Los Angeles from Santa Barbara for auditions as a kid while she balanced school and her kiteboarding hobby. And instead of obsessing about getting her big break after years of trying, Monroe took some time away to be a professional kiteboarder in the Dominican Republic when she was 17.

"I was pretty much like, 'Acting just isn't for me.' I go to classes, I work on my lines, I work so hard for these auditions, and I feel like I'm doing all the things and it just isn't clicking," Monroe recalled. "It was so frustrating. And it was get-

ting to a place where it just wasn't feeling good anymore."

But she wasn't ready to give up entirely. Although she got rid of her agent, Monroe kept her manager, who would occasionally encourage her to send in audition tapes.

In almost a year, she only sent in four or five. She didn't hear anything back - until she did.

Monroe enjoyed being a professional athlete and said it gave her a healthy perspective on her career, but as soon as she was cast in "At Any Price" alongside Zac Efron and Dennis Quaid, she rushed home. Soon after, her big break did come with David Robert Mitchell's 2014 cult indie horror film, "It Follows."

Career

"There's been so many ups and downs and so many times where I question, like, 'What the hell am I doing here?' And it's such a tough industry, just mentally," she admitted. "There's been probably two other times throughout my career where I'm like, 'I can't do this anymore.' And yet I just keep getting pulled back. And at the end of the day, I feel like this is what I'm meant to be doing and this is what I'm good at."

Rather than look back on her time as a kiteboarder as a detour, Monroe said it was formative, especially since she competed at a time in the sport when women were considerably outnumbered. "I'm so grateful for the strength that I felt. I felt powerful and strong. And it was just like a very important experience for me," she said.

Superstition makes her reluctant to admit it, but she said this feels like a turning point in her career. She is set to reprise her role as Jay Height for Mitchell's "They Follow," which is scheduled to begin production early next year.

But Monroe said she initially worried a sequel 10 years later might just be a cash grab or ruin the original.

"I was like, 'Oh no' ... because it was just so iconic at that time when it came out and the way that it ended," she said. "But I always had faith in David. He's so particular about what he does. Clearly, he does barely anything because he's so picky. It has to be on his terms, his scripts. And yeah, I read it, and I was like, 'Oh, okay. This is how you do it.' So, I have high hopes."

Although "It Follows" and "Longlegs" have been Monroe's most high-profile horror films to date, her list of acting credits within the genre is an extensive one.

"I want a goddamn rom-com. Come on. Good God. What am I doing?" she joked about her reputation as a scream queen, but said that she's happy to stay in the world of scary movies if it means continued creative fulfillment.

"The most interesting roles, the most interesting stories and scripts that I've been sent usually fall under this genre and usually end up being the films that I'm most proud of, not only as a whole, but my performance. And I feel like the most growth as an actor happens through these."

Also:

LOS ANGELES: It's been 40 years since the original "Ghostbusters," and some might argue that it's time to move on. I ain't afraid of no ghosts, but I am of needlessly prolonged film franchises. "Ghostbusters: Frozen Empire," which begins streaming Monday on Netflix, has some things going for it. Namely **Kumail Nanjiani**, who steals the movie as the reluctant "Fire Master." But there's a pleasant-enough kid-friendly-ish vibe to "Frozen Empire," in which the **Spengler** family (**Paul Rudd**, **Carrie Coon**, **Finn Wolfhard**, **Mckenna Grace**) returns to **New York**. OG **Ghostbusters** **Bill Murray**, **Ernie Hudson** and **Dan Aykroyd** are also still on hand. In my review, I wrote that the movie has "a modest charm as an '80s-tinged family adventure."

BEIJING: Chinese comedy "Successor" continued to top the daily box office chart on the Chinese mainland with a daily earning of 256.84 million yuan (about 36 million US dollars) on Saturday, according to the China Movie Data Information Network.

Featuring 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.

It was followed by crime thriller "A Place Called Silence," which raked in 44.46 million yuan on Saturday.

Japanese anime film "Your Name" came up third, with 23.92 million yuan of box office sales.

The total box office revenue of the Chinese mainland on Saturday stood at about 371.48 million yuan.

The Chinese mainland summer box office surged past 5 billion yuan (about 701 million U.S. dollars) on Thursday, fueled by an accelerated growth trajectory driven by titles like the comedy hit "Successor."

According to data from ticketing platform Maoyan, the cumulative summer box office on the Chinese mainland has surpassed 5.01 billion yuan, as of 8 p.m. Thursday. Leading the chart is the crime mystery "A Place Called Silence," which debuted on July 3 and has grossed nearly 1 billion yuan (including presales), claiming approximately 19.8 percent of the seasonal box office.

Following closely behind is the comedy sensation "Successor," starring the renowned comedic duo Shen Teng and Ma Li. The film, which opened with massive preview screenings on July 13 and officially premiered on July 16, has grossed over 928 million yuan, accounting for 18.5 percent of the total.

The film's preview screenings on July 13 and 14 propelled the Chinese mainland's daily box office revenues above 300 million yuan, marking the first instance since May 3 this year that the market's daily box office has reached this milestone.

Buoyed by its robust performance, both **Maoyan** and **Beacon**, another film data platform, have revised their total box office forecasts for "Successor" to around 3.7 billion yuan.

The drama "Moments We Shared," released on June 22, secures the third spot in the seasonal rankings with approximately 500 million yuan in box office earnings. (Xinhua)

MONTREUX, Switzerland: French singer **Samanta Cotta**



Santa



Ma

aka **Santa** said at the ongoing Montreux Jazz Festival here that she hopes to visit **China** soon and "win more musical hearts" there. "As an artist, to perform in front of a new audience, meet other people, other cultures and to create a union, emotions and bridges with music, is a dream," said Santa, who has never been to China.

She talked to Xinhua during the festival's 58th edition taking place here from July 5 to 20. Having made her name with the pop rock group **Hyphen Hyphen**, the singer from **Nice, France**, has landed a hit with "Popcorn Sale" ("Salted Popcorn") from her debut album "Recommence-moi."

With her powerful voice and poetic lyrics, the young musician pays tribute to various great names, while infusing her music with a touch of modernity. Santa said that she was impressed by China's music scene and technological innovations, and hopes to launch a drone show there. (Xinhua)

People & Places

Books

Fans mark birthday

Key West celebrates Hemingway's legacy

KEY WEST, Fla., July 21, (AP): Ernest Hemingway spent the 1930s in Key West, Florida, and more than six decades after his death, fans, scholars and relatives continue to congregate on the island city to celebrate the author's award-winning novels and adventure-filled life.

Hemingway Days started in 1981 with a short-story competition and a look-alike contest. This year's celebration concludes Sunday on the 125th anniversary of Hemingway's birth on July 21, 1899.

As a novelist, short-story writer and journalist, Hemingway's spot in the pantheon of American literature is undeniable and his legacy permeates the culture and character of Key West.

Hemingway's great-grandson, Stephen Hemingway Adams, was born nearly three decades after Hemingway died. Adams said working with his grandfather, Patrick Hemingway, who was Ernest Hemingway's second son, helped him gain a deeper understanding of his famous ancestor.

"I got to work with my granddad, and we put out a book called 'Dear Papa,' which was all of the letters between Ernest and my grandfather," Adams said.

The difference between the public perception and the documented reality of Hemingway can be fuzzy. He loved big-game fishing in the Caribbean and hunting in Africa. He loved bullfighting, baseball, boxing and barhopping. But he also was a serious artist who won Pulitzer and Nobel prizes. He put so much of his life experiences into his writing that it can be tricky to separate the man from the myth.

Adams said he's fine with some people loving the adventurer more than the writer.

"I think it's a split, and I think that's what's fun," Adams said of the throngs of look-alikes who visit Key West every year.

The Key West that Hemingway first visited in 1928 was a rustic fishing village, not a bustling tourist destination. Hemingway and his second wife, Pauline, had only planned a brief stop to pick up a car during their move from Paris to Arkansas, where Pauline's family lived. But the car wasn't ready and they had to wait several weeks.

Lifestyle

Hemingway quickly made friends with local business owners and fishermen. The couple made frequent visits to the island and eventually bought a French Colonial home on a 1.5-acre (0.61-hectare) lot in 1931.

After spending most of his 20s in Paris, Hemingway embraced the vastly different island lifestyle, according to **Cori Convertito**, a curator at Key West Museum of Art & History at the Custom House.

"He doesn't come here to act like a recluse and just write," Convertito said. "He's out at the bars all the time. He's out fishing with people. He's interacting in boxing matches."

Convertito pointed out that Hemingway was in his 30s for most of the time he lived in Key West, not the white-bearded "Papa Hemingway" most look-alike contestants emulate. "A Farewell to Arms" was finished shortly after he began visiting Key West and that book's reception, along with his coverage of the Spanish Civil War in the late 1930s, increased his fame.

Much of Hemingway's time in Key West was devoted to big-game fishing with friends. Convertito said Hemingway began to pioneer new techniques after getting his own boat, the Pilar, in 1934.

"He was desperate to land a fully intact marlin," Convertito said.

The slow process of reeling in a trophy fish left them vulnerable to sharks, similar to the giant marlin caught in Hemingway's 1952 novel, "The Old Man and the Sea."

Hemingway focused on catching fish and removing them from the water quickly. He was an early member of the International Game Fish Association and named a vice president in 1940.

He also became an advocate for the Florida Keys and the people who lived there. "To Have and Have Not," which was published in 1937, is set in a Key West ravaged by the Great Depression.

Hemingway was a vocal critic of how the federal government responded to the 1935 Labor Day hurricane. The official death toll was 423, but more than 250 of the fatalities were World War I veterans hired through a federal jobs program to build the Overseas Highway, which connects the Florida Keys to mainland Florida.

Preserve

Hemingway drove an ambulance during World War I and felt a particular kinship with the veterans. Corey Malcom, a historian with the Florida Keys History Center, said Hemingway joined the recovery efforts and used his own boat to pull bodies out of the ocean.

Michael Morawski, CEO of the Hemingway Home & Museum, credits his great-aunt, Bernice Dixon, as one of the first people to help preserve Hemingway's legacy in Key West. The local jewelry store owner bought the house for \$80,000 in 1961, shortly after Hemingway's death. The home became a museum in 1964 and eventually was designated a National Historic Landmark.

"The only reason that she did it was to create a living memorial to Ernest Hemingway," Morawski said.

Besides the historical and literary significance of the home, the museum also is famous for housing the Hemingway cats. About 60 polydactyl cats with a genetic mutation for extra toes continue to live at the estate. Some of these cats are descendants of the original white, six-toed cat that Hemingway was gifted from a ship's captain.

The Hemingway Days festival started as a promotional stunt for Sloppy Joe's Bar, one of Hemingway's favorite hangouts. Michael Whalton was working as a manager at the bar in 1980 when he read about a Bad Hemingway Contest, where writers parodied Hemingway's sparse, blunt style.

Whalton decided a look-alike contest and other activities around Hemingway's July birthday might be a great way to attract costumers during the island's slow season, when hot and humid weather scares many tourists away.

"I really didn't know what to expect," Whalton said. "I was getting nervous because we didn't have anybody signed up for the look-alike contest, so I called everybody I knew in Key West who had a beard."

The turnout was better than expected. The author's younger brother, Leicester Hemingway, contacted Whalton and agreed to judge the look-alike contest with his wife and daughters. Whalton convinced another granddaughter of Ernest Hemingway, Lorian Hemingway, to judge a short story contest.



James Young, (left), and Tommy Shaw of Styx perform at Ameris Bank Amphitheater on Wednesday, July 17, in Atlanta. (AP)

Music

Glass Animals craft emotional vignettes

BTS star Jimin's 'Muse' is charming

LOS ANGELES, July 21, (AP): Flying solo from the nest of a mega successful band is difficult, but BTS member Jimin did it with last year's "FACE," his first studio album under his own name. Finding that magic with a sophomore outing is always a much harder proposition. And doing so while serving South Korea's mandatory military service for men of a certain age? That's high impossible.

While most likely recorded and produced before Jimin's December 2023 enlistment, the K-pop superstar's second album, titled "MUSE," feels a bit subdued and almost melancholy in its beats.

It's not a record in search of an audience - that's built in, always waiting for a new release. "Muse" functions like a palace bard (Jimin's label, BIG HIT) in search of something to say to keep fans' spirits up while the prince (Jimin) is away on duty. Will his subjects remember him fondly? Will they keep him in their hearts until his return? Although an official press release describes "Muse" as a work portraying Jimin's "journey of finding inspiration from his surroundings," it feels more like a sometimes-fruitless search for an elusive muse.

Across the seven songs - which feels more like six, because "Interlude: Showtime" is an instrumental that leads into the third track, the single "Smeraldo Garden Marching Band (feat. Loco)" - Jimin finds his footing with songs that don't aim to be innovative but are charming nonetheless. Clearly a fan of the sad trombone, which was also used on "FACE," Jimin employs the instrument on the lively tune, mixing hip-hop with an orchestra and unsyncopated beats. Visually, the song's music video was loosely inspired by The Beatles' "Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band." It's a wholesome bop that feels fast

and slow at the same time.

Elsewhere, "Who" is an enchanting R&B tune that slays the dance floor and the hearts of its patrons with a little recorder-like accent on the beat. The other one that grabs with its rhythm is "Be Mine," a bombastic afrobeat song.

"Slow Dance" is the second collaboration on "MUSE," with American singer and actress Sofia Carson - a medium tempo R&B song that leans on guitar and would work as a soundtrack for a cute rom-com.

The album closes with "Closer Than This," a love letter to fans that was previously released in December, a stripped back, easy listening coda.

While "Muse" doesn't reinvent the wheel, it will keep Jimin's fans entertained.

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Love songs have existed for millennia but leave it to Glass Animals to give them a refreshing spin, where love isn't always a honeymoon phase or heartbreak - it's much, much more.

The British indie-pop band, known for hits like 2014's "Goopy" or 2020's viral "Heat Waves," has won listeners over with its unique, often dreamlike sound. Singer-songwriter **Dave Bayley's** moody lyrics and simple harmonies meld with experimental instrumentals from guitarist **Drew MacFarlane** and bassist **Edmund Irwin-Singer**, who also plays keys, and drummer **Joe Seaward**.

On Glass Animals' fourth full album, "I Love You So (Expletive) Much," Bayley's up-and-down vocals reach the occasional falsetto and weave a different depiction of love in each song. Over the course of the 10-track album, love is beautiful, terrifying, painful, complicated, and, ultimately, what connects as all.

It's also a tricky word for rhyming, as Bayley twists vowels to somehow match "love" with words like "apart-

ment" and "chasm."

The album starts strong with "Show Pony," a catchy vignette of a complex, roller coaster relationship that Bayley grew up seeing. The summery pop-rock song tells the story of a love that burns bright off the start and then fades out until all that's left is the memory of the good times. "When's it going to end?/Maybe when you're dead?" he sings. "Maybe you're a fool/But he loved you."

"Wonderful Nothing" introduces orchestral strings and spacey synths as Bayley sings of when hate and love collide. The track has bite to it with lyrics like "I'd say burn in hell/But they'd hate you, too," but, nonetheless, the last line admits, "I'm trying to stop/But I still love you."

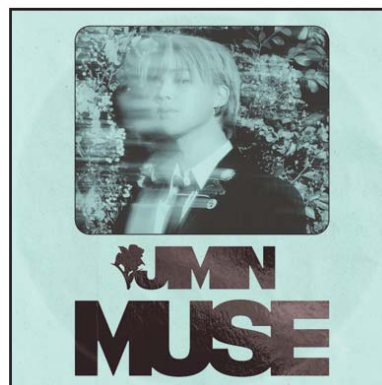
Vast imagery of oceans and outer space are used throughout the album, signifying the lost-in-the-universe feeling Bayley says inspired the album.

In the not-as-catchy waltz "Lost in the Ocean," Bayley questions himself and how he could be "so loved and so lonesome." He throws up his hands at a lack of an answer: "I want to scream at the top of my lungs!"

While a simple rise-and-fall melody pattern repeats throughout the album to the point of redundancy, it gets better with every listen as the concepts in the lyrics come into focus.

See "I Can't Make You Fall in Love Again" for an example. At first blush, it's an awkwardly syncopated track that flips between dull and lively. But listen again and it's a layered, emotional ballad that pulls close and pushes away a loved one from the past. The chorus is pretty catchy, too.

"I Love You So (Expletive) Much" is ultimately an emotional exploration of love, where it's so complicated and yet so simple. At the end of the day, it's all we've got.



This album cover image released by BigHit shows 'Muse' by JIMIN. (AP)



Erdogan



Wilton

Variety

ISTANBUL: After six years of restoration, Yildiz Palace in Istanbul, the final imperial governance venue of the Ottoman Empire, reopened its doors to visitors on Friday.

Speaking at the ceremony held at the palace in the Besiktas district on the European side, Turkish President **Recep Tayyip Erdogan** praised the meticulous six-year restoration carried out by the Presidency of National Palaces.

"With the restoration of Yildiz Palace, I believe that the historical, cultural, and touristic allure of Istanbul will be further enhanced," he said.

The palace, "one of the iconic symbols of Istanbul," Erdogan noted, will be open to the public free of charge until the end of August.

Yildiz Palace was constructed in 1880 and expanded with additional venues and pavilions, sprawling across hills and valleys along the shores of the **Bosphorus Strait**. (Xinhua)

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BEIJING: British actor **Terence Wilton** remembers vividly when they first visited **China** with the stage play Hamlet in 1979, the young actors and actresses were so excited that they "kissed the ground" upon arrival.

Forty-five years later, the 81-year-old actor revisited the Chinese mainland to tread the boards once again as a judge in the new theatrical adaptation of the **Agatha Christie** thriller "And Then There Were None."

As the nearly-three-month China tour of the original London West End play drew to an end this week, Wilton shared with Xinhua that his two visits felt like two seemingly drastically different "spectrums."

During the tour, 68 performances have been staged in 13 cities across China from May to July, attracting an attendance of over 60,000, and captivating Chinese theatrical enthusiasts as well as Agatha Christie fans with its intricate plot and authentic British flair.

Among the 13 cities, Beijing and **Shanghai** registered the highest attendance. Each performance in Beijing had an average audience of over 1,400 people, and Shanghai's 1,800-seat theatre registered an average attendance rate of over 92 percent. (Xinhua)

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DOHA: The Cultural Village Foundation (Katara) in **Qatar** has become a globally recognized venue for culture and art, in addition to a viable tourism attraction in the

center of the Qatari capital, Doha.

The 2010-established Katara mixed tradition and modernity, leading to a congregation of global heritages, along with authentic Qatari culture and tradition.

Several exhibitions are usually held and organized by the cultural village as part of

achieving Qatar's national vision of 2030, which includes an exchange of cultures, as well as cultivating talents and ingenuity, regionally and globally.

Katara gathers people from across the globe and immerses them in a variety of cultural, tourist, and entertainment events.



South Korean actress Ahn Eun-jin poses during the Blue Dragon Series Awards in Incheon, South Korea, Friday, July 19. (AP)

The Katara Foundation issued last May its 2023 annual cultural index, which showed that 1,570 events were held, from art galleries to symposiums and forums.

The index also detailed other figures, including 86 workshops, 122 dialogue sessions, 45 exhibitions and other functions.

Theaters in Katara screened 83 Arab and foreign films, and 39 contests, which attracted visitors from far and wide.

The Arab League Educational, Cultural, and Scientific Organization announced last March that Katara was chosen as the Arab cultural heritage city for Arabian horses in recognition of its contribution to the field. (KUHA)

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WELLINGTON: A carcass believed to belong to a spade-toothed whale, the world's rarest whale, was found on the beach of **New Zealand's** Dunedin, and it reportedly died either on the day or a day or two before it was found.

The creature, reportedly a male spade-toothed whale about five meters long, was washed up on the beach at **Taiari Mouth** in the **Otago** region on July 4, according to the Department of Conservation (DOC).

It was a very significant scientific find if its DNA was confirmed, which would take weeks due to its rarity and international significance, Radio New Zealand reported citing the DOC. (Xinhua)

Debunking the myth: Swimming after eating isn't dangerous

Do you really have to wait to go swimming after eating?

NEW YORK, July 21, (AP): Did your parents warn you against jumping in the pool right after eating? They were misguided.

In most cases, there's no need to wait at least 30 minutes after eating to go for a swim, doctors say.

That old warning stems from worry that people might drown or struggle because blood will be diverted to their full stomachs instead of their muscles.

In reality, people still have plenty of blood flowing to their muscles after eating, said Dr. Matthew Badgett of the Cleveland Clinic. A former high school swimmer, Badgett used to eat a couple of bananas and drink some water or Gatorade before he raced.

He worries that the old warning can actually cause complications. It's important to quench your thirst before swimming, especially on sunny days. People often don't realize they can still get dehydrated,

Cold water showers boost health, promote weight loss

Study finds unexpected benefits of cold water baths

KUWAIT CITY, July 21: A study involving 3,000 volunteers in the Netherlands found that those who turned the water to the coldest possible during the last 30, 60, or 90 seconds of their shower took 29 percent fewer sick days over three months, regardless of the duration of the cold water exposure, reports Al-Rai daily.

The following are the benefits:
Promotes mental health: Research suggests that exposure to cold water can significantly improve mental health, even when medications fail.

which can lead to muscle cramps.
"We sweat when we are in the water, we just don't appreciate the water loss," he said.

Professor Mike Tipton from the British University of Portsmouth found that weekly swimming in cold water helped a 24-year-old woman relieve depression, a condition she had been battling for seven years without success through medication.

Improves skin and hair health: Dr. Anastasia Thriano, a consultant dermatologist, explains that while lukewarm water is ideal for washing your face, cold water can constrict blood vessels, reducing redness and inflam-

mation, thus improving skin appearance.

For hair, cold water helps lock in moisture by closing the hair cuticle, which is beneficial for people with thin hair that tends to break easily.

Supports weight loss: A review of over 100 studies indicated that cold water immersion, such as swimming or cold showers, can activate brown adipose tissue, a type of fat that burns calories and reduces bad white fat, thus aiding in weight loss.

Relieves muscle pain and speeds up recovery: Athletes often use ice baths for recovery, as cold reduces blood flow and muscle swelling.

Similarly, a cold shower can act as a pain reliever and reduce swelling, though evidence on its effectiveness for muscle pain treatment is mixed. Some studies suggest cold water may reduce protein production, which is vital for muscle repair.

Alleviates pain and reduces migraines: Anecdotal evidence suggests that cold baths and swimming in cold

water can reduce the severity of migraines.

Cold receptors beneath the skin's surface release information to the central nervous system, changing blood flow in the brain and potentially relieving pain.

Improves mood and mental activity: Many swimmers have reported that cold water swimming greatly improves their mood and mental health likely due to the cold shock response and the release of endorphins which energize and wake people up.

Nipah virus case in India

2 dead, 28 hospitalized in US listeria outbreak

NEW YORK, July 21, (AP): At least two people have died and more than two dozen were hospitalized in an outbreak of listeria food poisoning linked to meat sliced at grocery store deli counters, federal health officials said Friday.

At least 28 people in a dozen states have gotten sick, though the largest number, seven, were in New York, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The people who died were from Illinois and New Jersey. Samples were collected from May 29 to July 5 and so far, all of the people known to be part of the outbreak have been hospitalized.

Many of the people in the outbreak reported eating meats that were sliced at grocery store deli counters. So far, there's no information showing that people are getting sick from prepackaged deli meats, the CDC said. People most commonly reported eating deli-sliced turkey, liverwurst and ham, officials said. CDC doesn't have enough information to say which deli meats are the source of the outbreak.

Infections

Listeria infections typically cause fever, muscle aches and tiredness and may cause stiff neck, confusion, loss of balance and convulsions. Symptoms can occur quickly or to up to 10 weeks after eating contaminated food. The infections are especially dangerous for people older than 65, those with weakened immune systems and pregnant people, who can have miscarriages. This outbreak includes people aged 32 to 94, with a median age of 75. One pregnant person got sick, but retained the pregnancy, officials said.

As US health officials investigate a fatal outbreak of listeria food poisoning, they're advising people who are pregnant, elderly or have compromised immune systems to avoid eating sliced deli meat unless it's recooked at home to be steaming hot.

The US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention didn't mandate a food recall as of early Saturday. This means the contaminated food may still be in circulation, and consumers should consider their personal risk level when consuming deli meats.

Federal health officials warned on Friday that the number of illnesses is likely an undercount, because people who recover at home aren't likely to be tested. For the same reason, the outbreak may have spread wider than

the states where listeria infections have been reported, mostly in the Midwest and along the US eastern coast.

The largest number known to get sick - seven - were in New York, according to the CDC. The people who died were from Illinois and New Jersey.

Of the people investigators have been able to interview, "89% reported eating meats sliced at a deli, most commonly deli-sliced turkey, liverwurst, and ham. Meats were sliced at a variety of supermarket and grocery store delis," the CDC said.

And samples collected from victims from May 29 to July 5 show the bacteria is closely related genetically.

"This information suggests that meats sliced at the deli are a likely source of this outbreak. However, at this time CDC doesn't have enough information to say which deli meats are the source of this outbreak," the agency said in a statement published on its website Friday.

Listeria infections typically cause fever, muscle aches and tiredness and may cause stiff neck, confusion, loss of balance and convulsions. Symptoms can occur quickly or to up to 10 weeks after eating contaminated food.

It can be diagnosed by testing bodily fluids, usually blood, and sometimes urine or spinal fluid, according to the Mayo Clinic.

Listeria infections are especially dangerous for people older than 65 and those with weakened immune systems, according to the CDC. Victims of this outbreak ranged in age from 32 to 94, with a median age of 75.

For pregnant people, listeria can increase the risk of miscarriages. One of the victims of the current outbreak was pregnant, but did not have a miscarriage, officials said.

Also:

NEW DELHI: A suspected case of Nipah virus was reported in India's southern state of Kerala, the state's Health Minister **Veena George** told media on Saturday.

According to the minister, the polymerase chain reaction test had been carried out on the patient, a 15-year-old boy, and the blood samples had been sent to a virology lab in the Pune city of south-western state of **Maharashtra**.

The test's result was awaited and the medical protocol was in place to deal with the situation, added the minister.

So, jumping in the pool or ocean after eating is no big deal for recreational swimming. But people planning to swim laps or exercise

may want to let their food digest to avoid cramps, just like they'd wait before jogging.

Also, swimming after tossing

back a few beers is risky. People tend to be more aggressive, less coordinated and prone to bad choices when they swim after consuming

alcohol. Those factors all can cause problems when dealing with strong currents or ocean tides at the beach this summer.

Poorer children more at risk

Late bedtimes and not enough sleep can harm developing brains: experts

By Emily C. Merz and Melissa Hansen

Colorado State University

The Conversation is an independent and nonprofit source of news, analysis and commentary from academic experts.

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Shorter sleep and later bedtimes are linked to potentially harmful functional changes to parts of the brain important for coping with stress and controlling negative emotions, our recently published research found. And children in families with low economic resources are particularly at risk.

We are neuroscientists who are passionate about reducing socioeconomic disparities in child development. To better understand how socioeconomic disadvantage affects sleep health and brain development in children, we recruited 94 5- to 9-year-old children from socioeconomically diverse families living in New York. About 30% of the participating families had incomes below the US poverty threshold.

We asked parents to report on their child's sleep environment, the consistency of their family routines, and their child's bedtime and wake-up time. We also had children complete a magnetic resonance imaging scan of their brains to analyze the size of a brain region called the amygdala and the strength of its connections with other regions of the brain. The amygdala plays a critical role in processing emotions and the amount of negative emotion a person experiences. Adversity experienced early in life can affect how the amygdala works.

We found that children in families with low economic resources were getting less sleep at night and going to sleep later compared with children in families with higher economic resources. In turn, shorter sleep and going to sleep later were associated with reduced amygdala size and weaker connections between the amygdala and other emotion-processing brain regions. This link between socioeconomic disadvantage, sleep duration and timing, and amygdala size and connectivity was found in children as young as 5.

Our results suggest that both amount

and timing of sleep matter for the functioning of these brain regions involved in emotion processing.

Not getting enough sleep increases the risk of developing mental health problems and interferes with academic achievement. Reduced sleep may make it harder for children to cope with stress and manage their emotions. Children from families or neighborhoods with low socioeconomic resources may be at increased risk for stress-related mental health problems due in part to the negative effects of their environment on sleep health.

During childhood, the brain develops at a fast pace. Because of this, childhood experiences can have effects on brain function that last a lifetime. Problems from childhood can continue throughout life.

Our findings reinforce the importance of ensuring all families have sufficient economic resources to provide for their children. Research suggests that income supplements for families in need can help support children's brain function, along with their mental health and academic outcomes.

his version in 1900 while living in his own San Francisco studio apartment.

Some Murphy beds combine a sofa with a wall bed.

To separate your sleep area from the rest of the apartment, you could get a freestanding screen, room divider or "floating" (hanging) wall.

And as much as you can, keep that area strictly for sleeping.

"Avoid doing work or anything stressful from your bed," says Jeff Kahn, co-founder of the Chicago-based sleep-research company Rise Science, which developed a sleep-tracking app, Rise.

Stress

"This helps to maintain what sleep medicine practitioners call 'stimulus control,' which helps your brain associate the bed with sleep, rather than wakefulness and stress," he says.

If the bed is the only place of refuge, still do what you can to keep wakefulness and sleep in separate zones. Lisa Strauss, a psychologist specializing in cognitive behavioral treatment of sleep disorders, has suggested designating different sides or ends of the bed for reading and sleeping.

"Make sure your space is well ventilated, and consider an air purifier,"

says Kahn. This is especially important if you're cooking in the same space you're sleeping in.

Consider a diffuser for similar reasons, says Spruce editor Mia Ingui. She suggests using calming scents like lavender or chamomile just at bedtime, to "set the tone for restful sleep."

Also, be sure that computer, TV and other screens, which are just a short distance away, are turned off. Their light at night can disrupt our internal clocks, or circadian rhythm.

If the buzz of nearby appliances or street sounds are keeping you up, consider a noise machine. Ingui likes the Hatch Restore, a "sunrise lamp" that provides soothing sounds and lights up gradually in the morning. She also suggests blackout curtains.

"One of my don'ts when it comes to studio living is leaving beds unmade," says Morris. "It's amazing how much better you feel after a hard day entering a space with a made bed. And in a studio, it's often the sofa, too. So make it inviting for yourself and others."

Stow away electronics overnight and out of sight; side tables with plugs and ports are handy and an efficient way to reduce clutter.

vantaged environments make it hard for children to sleep?

Our research suggests that parents who were struggling to make ends meet had a harder time maintaining consistent family routines, possibly leading to less consistent bedtime routines, which may have contributed to children getting less sleep.

However, there are likely multiple factors connecting socioeconomic disadvantage and poor sleep quality, such as not being able to afford a comfortable bed, overcrowding, neighborhood noise, excessive light and heat. (AP)

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Custer, Almirola complete the podium

Daring pass on final lap sends Herbst to victory lane in Xfinity Series

INDIANAPOLIS, July 21, (AP): Riley Herbst saw an opening Saturday and made it pay off with a trip to victory lane at the Brickyard.

The 25-year-old NASCAR Xfinity Series driver chased down Aric Almirola on the final lap, then got close enough to tap Almirola's car with his front bumper in the final turn, dart to the inside for the lead and hold onto his sliding car to win his first race at Indianapolis Motor Speedway.

Herbst gave Stewart-Haas Racing

its second straight victory, finishing ahead of teammate Cole Custer by 0.167 seconds. Almirola wound up third.

"This is the Indianapolis Motor Speedway, everyone in the world

CAR RACING

wants to race here and win here," Herbst said, explaining he barely held onto the car when it started to go sideways. "I don't care if it's the

Xfinity Series or the go-kart series. This is Indianapolis."

Herbst's only other career win came on his home track, Las Vegas, in October, and just one week after his teammate, Custer captured his first win of the season at Pocono.

The back-to-back wins give SHR, a team that's closing its doors after the season, some momentum heading into the final six regular-season races.

Herbst also won the first Xfinity

race held on Indy's historic 2.5-mile oval since 2018, doing it in thrilling fashion.

Each of the top three finishers held the lead during the final three laps and Custer came within a whisker of capping a perfect weekend with his second straight trip to victory lane when he passed Almirola on the inside of the front straightaway.

Earlier Saturday, Custer was named the Haas Factory Team's Cup driver for 2025.

"I just needed one less lap, you know," Custer said. "I felt like it was kind of a disadvantage to lead, in my opinion, all day. If you were in second, it actually got your car looser and it would save your tires. But what an awesome day for SHR."

The results kept Custer atop the series standings while Herbst locked up a playoff spot. Custer led the most laps, 47, while Herbst led 30 in a race marred by seven caution periods and a big crash on Lap 2.

Herbst also won the first stage and finished third in the second stage.

Almirola, meanwhile, led five laps but couldn't hang on when it mattered most.

"Maybe just not carry as much speed at Turn 3," he said when asked if he'd have done anything different. That miscue was all Herbst needed to get past Almirola for a milestone win.

"It's fun, it's fun," Herbst said. "I'm going to go drink a beer and turn my phone on. This is iconic."

Ogunbowale & Clark lead WNBA All-Stars to win over US Oly team



Caitlin Clark (left), of Team WNBA, dribbles against Sabrina Ionescu (6), of Team USA, during the second half of a WNBA All-Star basketball game in Phoenix. (AP)

'We have work to do'

PHOENIX, July 21, (AP): Arike Ogunbowale was the dominant scorer on the floor. Caitlin Clark was the best passer. Angel Reese was her usual double-double machine.

The U.S. may still have the best team at the Olympics, but at the All-Star Game, they didn't have all the best players on Saturday night.

Ogunbowale set the All-Star scoring record with 34 points and Clark fell just short of the assist mark in her All-Star debut as the WNBA team beat the U.S. Olympic team 117-109.

It was the second consecutive win for the WNBA All-Star team over the Olympians. The All-Stars also won in 2021 led by Ogunbowale, who was MVP of both that game and this one.

BASKETBALL

"This is going to help us tremendously. We don't get that many game opportunities," said Breanna Stewart who had 31 points to lead the U.S. "We can go back and watch the film and focus on how we can continue to be better. It was like a little bit of deja vu feeling but just locking in."

The loss didn't slow down the Americans in 2021 as they went on to winning their seventh consecutive Olympic gold medal. The U.S. hopes for the same results in Paris later this month. No team in the world could match the depth or talent that the WNBA All-Stars had.

Top surfers meet at 'The End of Road'

PARIS, July 21, (Xinhua): Surfing is making its second appearance at the Olympic Games as the world's top surfers meet at French Polynesia's Teahupo'o, while China makes its historic debut on the Olympic waves.

Following the first Olympic appearance in Tokyo 2020, the surfing competition is set for the South Pacific Ocean, more than 15,000km away from the host city Paris. Dubbed "The End of the Road", Teahupo'o is one of the world's most majestic and spectacular surfing locations, offering beautiful waves which could also be intimidating for even the most experienced surfers.

After a two-year qualification process, 48 of the world's best surfers, 24 women and 24 men respectively, have earned the opportunity to take on the unique challenge that Teahupo'o will provide, up from the 20 women and men in Tokyo 2020.

"Is Arike playing for any of these teams we are going to play?" U.S. coach Cheryl Reeve deadpanned.

Saturday's loss came hours after the U.S. men's Olympic team rallied to beat South Sudan by one point in an exhibition game in London.

The U.S. women's team will next play Germany in London for an exhibition game Tuesday before going to France for the Olympics. The Americans are in a pool with Belgium, Japan and Germany.

"We have work to do and we know that," Reeve said. "Some-

Reigning Olympic champion Carissa Moore is returning to defend her title. While Tokyo 2020 men's gold medalist Italo Ferreira will be absent, his country Brazil is sending the most representatives, with six in total.

Tough competitions lie ahead as other surfing powerhouses like the

OLYMPICS

U.S. and Australia will also head to Tahiti with stacked rosters of top-ranked athletes. Meanwhile, China, Canada, El Salvador, Mexico, Nicaragua, and Spain will each see their first Olympic surfing representatives in Paris.

Fernando Aguerre, President of the International Surfing Association (ISA), expects the surfing in Paris 2024 to be "very likely an amazing competition that will go

down in history." Despite being a latecomer to this highly professional sport, China would achieve a historic breakthrough in Paris 2024. 15-year-old Yang Siqi is set to make the Olympic debut in surfing for her country as China's first female surfer, after securing the berth at the World Surfing Games (WSG) 2024 in Arecibo, Puerto Rico.

"I think it's amazing that there is a Chinese surfer. It's an amazing, beautiful surprise to have her," Aguerre said of Yang's upcoming Olympic appearance. "I met her in the juniors' competitions. She's an amazing athlete. She loves surfing and I think she has a great opportunity in her life being so young and being so well connected with the ocean," Aguerre told Xinhua in a telephone interview. "She has great physical condition. She understands the ocean, and she surfs like she has surfed for a long time."

just couldn't stop her. Ogunbowale said that WNBA team coach Cheryl Miller said something to her at the half about being more aggressive.

"Told me to take a deep breath and go out and play my game," she said.

Ogunbowale has been in the U.S. national team pool for the past two Olympics, but didn't make the roster either time. She pulled her name out of the pool of players early this time around saying the whole process was political.

RUGBY

against Australia on Saturday. After Sunday's match, Italy has won eight of 10 matches against Japan.

Italy led throughout the match. Australia-born center Dylan Riley scored both of Ja-

Koretzky will have home fans cheering him on

Hilltop out of town setting to provide backdrop of Oly mountain bike thrills

PARIS, July 21, (Xinhua): The Olympic Games is coming ever-closer to the first medals in cycling mountain bike to be decided with the women's race on July 28 and the men's race on the following day.

The races will take place at Elancourt Hill which is in the town of Saint-Quentin-en-Yvelines. The 231-meter Elancourt Hill is the highest point the 'Ile-de-France' region of Paris, with views that promise to be almost as spectacular as the racing, where there are some clear favorites in an event that mixes strength, courage, stamina and bike-handling skills.

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British rider Tom Pidcock goes into the Olympics as reigning champion and this year he has mixed cycle-cross, road racing and mountain biking, winning both the World Cup events he has taken part in.

Pidcock will double up in the road race in Paris, although there could be a slight doubt over his form as he was out of this year's Tour de France early.

Nino Schurter of Switzerland is one of the all-time mountain bike greats, and the 38-year-old already has Olympic gold from 2016, along with a host of World Championship and World Cup golds. Another Olympic success would be the icing on the cake for Schurter in a career going back over 15 years.

France's Victor Koretzky will have home fans cheering him on after a season that has

seen two successes in short-track and a recent second place in the World Cup held in Val di Sole.

Mathias Fluckiger currently tops the rankings, with the Swiss rider looking to go one better than the silver medal he won in Tokyo and boosted by second-place finishes in World Cup events in Les Gets.

In the women's race, Pauline Ferrand-Prevot of France, is the favorite, despite disappointing in the European Championships. She will have home support, and her wins in the last two World Cup events show that she is going to Paris in peak form.

The young Dutch rider, Puck Pieterse looks to be Prevot's main rival after her European success and two World Cup wins, while she has also shown her speed in short track events.

France's Loana Lecomte was second in the last World Championships and is the reigning French champion, although the fact she missed the last World Cup race has raised a couple of doubts about her current fitness.

Other riders to look out for includes Alesandra Keller of Switzerland, and her position at the top of the World Cup rankings means she has to be considered a medal option. Sweden's Jenny Rissveds, if she has a good day, could surprise everyone.

Significant changes to volleyball format

Intense group stages, dramatic KO's in store

BEIJING, July 21, (Xinhua): The significant changes to volleyball's competition format at the Paris Olympics may lead to heightened intensity and drama. With the group stage reduced from five matches to three and modifications in the knockout stage matching mechanism, all teams are bracing for unprecedented competition.

The reformed structure features 12 teams divided into three groups, with the top two teams from each group and the two best third-place teams advancing to the knockout stage. The reduction of group stage matches from five to three means teams must hit the ground running, with little time to adjust to the high-stakes Olympic environment.

This format sets the stage for potentially the most fiercely contested Olympic volleyball group stages in history.

In the women's competition, Group A includes China, France, the United States and Serbia. Group B consists of Brazil, Poland, Japan and Kenya, while Italy, Turkey, the Netherlands and the Dominican Republic comprise Group C.

Group A and Group C each feature multiple title contenders, promising final-worthy matchups in the early rounds, such as China and Serbia against the U.S., and Italy taking on Turkey.

The men's competition features Canada, France, Slovenia and Serbia in Group A, Brazil, Egypt, Italy and Poland in Group B, and Argentina, Germany, Japan and the United States in Group C.

Anticipation is high for intense group stage clashes, like world fourth-ranked France against fifth-ranked Slovenia, and world number one Poland against Italy.

Teams advancing from the group stage will face dramatic knockout rounds. The quarterfinals will pair teams based on overall group stage performance, with the first seed facing the eighth seed, the second seed facing the seventh, and so on.

Ranking by overall group stage performance may prevent strategic losses, but it also means that group stage rivals might meet again in the knockout rounds, adding a layer of unpredictability to the quarterfinals.

Among the women's teams, Italy, Turkey,

Brazil and Serbia are the gold favorites. The three European teams are known for their power-oriented playing styles, capable of disrupting opponents' receiving systems and quickly turning points. This trend reflects a new technical preference in world volleyball since the Tokyo Olympic cycle.

Italy, with a balanced offense and defense, are widely regarded as the top contenders for gold. Despite an older roster, Brazil's 12-match winning streak in this season's Volleyball Nations League showcases their current form.

Reigning Olympic champions the United States are also potential title challengers, along with China. However, both teams lack new faces, making their tactics and player strengths well-known to their competitors.

China's additional challenge is the decline in form of star spiker Zhu Ting. Although Zhu, a key figure in China's 2016 Rio gold victory, has rejoined the national

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team, her lingering injuries and limited recent match experience may cause problems.

In the men's competition, the focus will be whether host nation France can defend their Olympic title.

France's recent form, including a World Volleyball League title, suggests they are in excellent shape. However, as a nation without a deep men's volleyball tradition, their true strength will only be revealed under Olympic pressure. Before their Tokyo 2020 win, France were never considered Olympic medal contenders, but now they are no longer underdogs.

The only Asian team to qualify for the Paris Olympics men's volleyball, Japan have also garnered significant attention. Ranked second globally, Japan's performance against European and American teams remains a captivating storyline for volleyball fans. The Paris Olympics volleyball competitions will run from July 27 to August 11, with the men's starting on July 27 and ending on August 10, and the women's playing from July 28 to August 11.

Japan 0-3 under Eddie Jones after big loss to Italy

SAPPORO, Japan, July 21, (AP): Japan remains without a win in three matches under returning coach Eddie Jones after losing 42-14, by five tries to two at the Sapporo Dome

Change Name

I, Vinaya (old name), S/O Late Mahabala molly, aged about 45 years, bearing Driving License No KA 1920130003210, Passport No. Z 5426964, have changed my name as VINAYA MOILY (new name) for all purposes.

on Sunday.

Australia-born Jones coached Japan from 2012 to 2015 and returned to the head coaching role in controversial circumstances this year after quitting as Wallabies coach. In the second Jones era, Japan has lost to England, Georgia and now Italy and has slipped two places to 14th on world rankings.

Italy came into the match as favorite after a 36-24 win last weekend over Tonga in Nuku'alofa, its first win in the Pacific. It

lost to Samoa 33-25 in Apia the previous weekend.

Japan's 25-23 loss to Georgia last weekend looked to be an upset but was put into context by Georgia's spirited performance

pan's tries which were converted by Rikiya Matsuda.

Lyon scrumhalf Martin Page-Relo opened the scoring for Italy with a penalty after three minutes. Fullback Ange Capuozzo scored the first try in the eighth minute which Page-Relo converted for a 10-0 lead.

Page-Relo then scored his own try in the 13th which was converted by Paolo Garbisi to make the score 17-0 at better than a point a minute. Lock Andrea Zam-

bonin scored in the 35th minute and Garbisi's conversion made the lead 24-0. But Riley's first try cut the advantage to 24-7 at halftime.

Japan was back in the match when Riley scored his second try after only two minutes of the second half, reducing the lead to 24-14.

Page-Relo extended Japan's lead to 30-14 with two penalties before replacement Alessandro Garbisi's try in the 72nd minute put Italy out of reach of a Japan rally.

Italy finished with a try in the 81st to South Africa-born flanker Ross Vintcent. Its win was achieved though it lost a player to the sin-bin in each half.

Change Name

I, PURUM JAYARAMU Holder of passport no. W4669240, do hereby change my name to JAYARAMU (as given name) PURAM (as surname) for all purposes I will henceforth be known in the name PURAM JAYARAMU and I also undertake to carry out this name change in all my documents



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Sporty and luxurious: The new, top Panamera models

Panamera Turbo S E-Hybrid and Panamera GTS: The dynamic peak



The interior of Panamera Turbo S E-Hybrid



Panamera GTS

KUWAIT CITY, July 21: Porsche is launching the dynamic top series models with the Panamera Turbo S E-Hybrid and the Panamera GTS. The particularly performance-focused tuning of the Panamera GTS is setting standards when it comes to purism and agility. The Turbo S E-Hybrid, in turn, impresses by spanning the range from luxurious driving properties to racetrack-level top performance.

Stuttgart/Dubai. The Porsche Panamera has redefined the luxury saloon segment. It combines smooth driving comfort with the properties of a Porsche sports car in a unique way. Now two particularly powerful and sporty variants have been added to the model range.

These are cars with different focuses: the Panamera GTS is a dynamic sports saloon that places the emotional driving experience in the foreground. The Panamera Turbo S E-Hybrid is positioned at the very top of the model series as the most powerful, fastest and most luxurious derivative. This top model is the new record holder in the official ranking of the fastest combustion engine cars and hybrid luxury saloons on the Nürburgring Nordschleife.

Both models are driven by the further developed 4.0-litre biturbo V8 engine that is already used to power the Panamera Turbo E-Hybrid. This powerful engine is prepared for the strict requirements of the Euro 7 emission standard. Changing from a twin-scroll to a single-scroll turbocharger shortens the warm-up phase of its catalytic converters. Exhaust gas temperatures of up to 1,000°C and the associated clean combustion, as well as the increase in the mean peak pressure to 140 bar in the combustion chambers, increase the efficiency of the drive, especially in the highly dynamic range.

The 8-speed Porsche dual clutch transmission (PDK) has been fundamentally redesigned. With optimised power-transmitting surfaces and a higher thermal load capacity, it is able to implement the enormous drive torque of the Panamera Turbo S E-Hybrid.

The most powerful Panamera: Panamera Turbo S E-Hybrid

At Porsche, the Turbo model designation traditionally stands for the pinnacle of performance among the model variants mainly intended for the road.

At the same time, the Turbo logo signifies technological leadership in the respective segment. The combination of highly efficient combustion engines and electric powertrain enables particularly powerful drive and exceptional performance.

The new Panamera Turbo S E-Hybrid is the most powerful Panamera produced in series so far. Its V8 biturbo engine has an output of 441 kW (599 PS), and the output of the electric motor completely integrated into the housing and into the cooling circuit of the PDK amounts to 140 kW (190 PS). Compared to its predecessor, its system output has been increased by 75 kW (102 PS) to 575 kW (782 PS), and the system torque has risen by 150 Nm to 1,000 Nm. The Panamera Turbo S E-Hybrid accelerates from zero to 100 km/h in 2.9 seconds and has a top speed of 325 km/h. This signifies an enhancement of 25 km/h and 0.5 seconds.

At the same time, the new Panamera Turbo S E-Hybrid is efficient to drive. Compared to the previous generation, its hybrid powertrain offers greater electric range, faster charging and more agile responsiveness. With a capacity of 25.9 kWh (gross), the high voltage battery stores 45 per cent more energy than the predecessor battery did. This gives the most powerful Panamera an electric range of up to 88 km (WLTP EAER City). With an increase in recuperation output to 88 kW, the Panamera Turbo S E-Hybrid drives more efficiently than ever in the fully electric mode. At a suitable power source, the 11 kW on-board AC charger charges the battery from zero to 100 per cent in around two hours and 39 minutes.

Distinctive design of the Turbo models

Porsche underlines the role of the Turbo models as the top performers in their model lines with a distinctive rear bumper and a distinctive front end in the exterior colour. At the rear, the chrome-plated tailpipes in Dark Bronze complete this look. The standard equipment for the Turbo S E-Hybrid also includes the Porsche Ceramic Composite Brake (PCCB) with yellow brake callipers. Acid Green is also available as a typical E-Hybrid colour.

Turbonite, the elegant metallic grey tone, is exclusively reserved for the Turbo models. The Panamera Turbo

S E-Hybrid has this colour on its airblades at the front of the car, on the strip of its rear bumper, and on the forged 21-inch Panamera Turbo S centre-lock wheels. Porsche also uses Turbonite in the interior, for example on the trim strips and belt straps, the controls in the centre console, and the steering wheel. Turbonite contrast stitching also features on the seats, door panel trim, dashboard and floor mats. The roof lining is completely upholstered with the suede-like Race-Tex.

New record for the Panamera Turbo S E-Hybrid

Even before its launch, the new Panamera Turbo S E-Hybrid set a best time. Porsche test driver Lars Kern (36) completed a lap of the Nürburgring Nordschleife (20.832 kilometres) in just 7:24.172 minutes. With this notarisated time, Porsche set the record for the fastest top-class saloon with a combustion and hybrid engine in the official ranking of Nürburgring 1927 GmbH & Co. KG. The new Panamera broke the existing record in this car class by 3.62 seconds. The record lap was driven by Lars Kern on 12 July 2024. To protect the driver, the record-breaking Panamera was equipped with a racing seat and a safety cage, but otherwise corresponded to the series version.

Lars Kern had already set Nordschleife class records in 2016 and 2020 with the Panamera, most recently in the Panamera Turbo S. This new faster time by the Panamera Turbo S E-Hybrid



Panamera Turbo S E-Hybrid

is proof of the consistent further development of the four-door sports car. With the new time of 7:24.172, Lars Kern improved on his record from 2020 by 5.64 seconds.

Track tyres and Carbon Aerokit for the Panamera Turbo models

With this new class record, the new Panamera has shown what it is capable of. To a great extent, the car's performance is due to the new Carbon Aerokit and the specially developed UHP tyres from Michelin. The Aerokit is available for the sports saloon models of the Panamera Turbo and the Turbo S E-Hybrid. It includes airblades, side skirts and a rear diffuser made of carbon, and optimises the aerodynamic balance for driving on the racetrack. The front spoiler lip completely eliminates lift on the front axle. In combination with the Gurney flap on the adaptive 4-way rear spoiler, its net effect is to generate downforce.

At a speed of 200 km/h, it improves the downforce by 60 kilograms and enables even higher speeds to be attained in challenging series of bends. Michelin Pilot Sport Cup 2 tyres with the N0 marking further improve the car's traction. The Michelin Pilot Sport Cup 2 tyres with dimensions 275/35 ZR 21 at the front and 325/30 ZR 21 at the rear were specially developed for the Panamera and for dynamic driving situations.

Comprehensive equipment range in the Panamera Turbo S E-Hybrid

Porsche has equipped the top model of the Panamera series with the Por-

sche Active Ride suspension as standard. This innovative chassis is coupled with a 400 V high-voltage system and is therefore technically feasible only in the Panamera models with an E-Hybrid drive. Each shock absorber has an electrically operated hydraulic pump that actively generates forces in the rebound or compression direction. In this way, the suspension almost fully compensates body movements and keeps the car horizontal during dynamic driving manoeuvres. The technology enables innovative functions such as the overcompensation of pitching and rolling motions. It also matches the wheel load distribution to the grip level, thereby optimising the traction. The comprehensive range of equipment available for the Panamera Turbo S E-Hybrid also includes all the driving dynamics control systems, rear-axle steering, the Porsche Ceramic Composite Brake (PCCB) with 440 millimetre brake discs at the front and a 380 millimetre diameter at the rear, as well as a Bose® sound system.

The most agile Panamera: Panamera GTS

GTS stands for Gran Turismo Sport. Porsche cars with this model designation offer an extra serving of sportiness and maximum driving pleasure, together with high day-to-day usability. In line with this philosophy, the Panamera GTS is also distinguished by a chassis tuned for high performance, an exclusive SportDesign package and a sporty, high-quality interior. It is a particularly direct and agile variant of the top-class sports saloon. The powerful, comprehensively upgraded V8 biturbo engine plays a major role in the especially intensive driving experience in the Panamera GTS. It offers linear power delivery that is clearly noticeable even at engine speeds above 6,000 rpm.

The engine delivers 368 kW (500 PS), 20 PS more than the drive that its predecessor exhibited. This results in better driving performance and dynamics, and even greater efficiency. The four-door sports car accelerates from zero to 100 km/h in 3.8 seconds and has a top speed of 302 km/h. The standard sports exhaust system in the Panamera GTS was specifically developed to create a powerful, emotional soundscape.

Porsche has given the standard dual-chamber two-valve air suspension in-

cluding PASM in the Panamera GTS a particularly sporty tuning. The 10 millimetre-lower body and reinforced anti-roll bars provide a noticeably more direct driving experience and a lower basic spring rate. The electronically controlled PTV Plus differential lock ensures the torque is distributed optimally between the wheels. In combination, these measures ensure greater body stability and reduced pitching and rolling over the entire speed range. These added dynamics come without any significant reduction in comfort.

Exclusive GTS-style design and equipment

As is the case across all model lines, the Porsche GTS models can be identified by their distinctive sporty design. Black GTS logos on the sides and rear of the car, a unique front section, dark-tinted HD matrix LED headlights and tail lights, as well as red brake callipers also make the Panamera GTS unmistakable. The standard Sport package also includes body trim elements in satin-matt Black. These include side skirts, insets in the front area, side window trim, and the rear bumper. Porsche has kept the tailpipes of the sports exhaust system in Dark Bronze to create an exciting contrast. A further accent is added by the 21-inch Turbo S centre-lock wheels in Anthracite Grey.

In the interior, Porsche is lavish in its use of the suede-like Race-Tex. It covers the roof lining, armrests and door panels, as well as the centre panels of the adaptive sports seats with 18-way adjustment. Porsche also offers two GTS-specific interior packages in Carmine Red or Slate Grey Neo. The decorative stitching and belts also come in the colour of the selected package. An interior package in Carbon matt is also available. The standard equipment of the Panamera GTS also includes a Bose® sound system and the Sport Chrono package with a stopwatch and the push-to-pass function.

Market launch

The Porsche Panamera Turbo S E-Hybrid and the Panamera GTS are now available to order as sports saloons. Both models benefit from the many new features of the third generation of the Panamera. These include the Porsche Driver Experience control concept and the high-resolution matrix LED headlights, offering exceptional resolution and particularly far reach.

Mendy constant attacking threat

Argentina 'run' in 12 tries in demolition of Uruguay

MALDONADO, Uruguay, July 21, (AP): Winger Ignacio Mendy had a double inside 12 minutes and finished with three tries as Argentina overwhelmed Uruguay 79-5 on Saturday in the first official test between them in 18 years.

Mendy was a constant attacking threat on the right wing, weaving through tackles or coming into the line as the extra man. Play ran his way constantly at the start of the match but left winger Mateo Carreras also got in the action, scoring two tries and creating another for fullback Santiago Cordero.

Los Pumas, who have never lost to Los Teros, eclipsed their previous biggest win, 72-5 in 1998. After tying the home series with France, new Pumas coach Filipe Contepomi used the match to try several new or returning players, including the Benetton winger Mendy, who was playing his first test since 2021.

Among the newcomers, back-rower Joaquin Moro debuted in place of Pablo Matera on the blindsides flank and marked the occasion with two tries.

"From the first (France) game to the second we improved, and the big challenge for us was to keep improving and I think we did it," said Matera, who came off the bench.

Argentina had almost constant possession and Uruguay was worn down by the need to make tackles. Uruguay tended to commit too many players to

the breakdown, defending narrowly which left space out wide for wingers Mendy and Carreras.

Uruguay was playing only its second match under new coach Rodolfo Ambrosio, an Argentine who played flyhalf for Italy. Los Teros lost to a France Development XV 43-28 in the first match of Ambrosio's tenure last week in Montevideo.

There was some optimism around the team this season after it beat Namibia at last year's Rugby World Cup and was competitive against France and Italy. But on Saturday, its challenge of Argentina's rugby supremacy in South America faded quickly.

RUGBY

Mendy had his first try in the fifth minute and added his second in the 11th after Moro broke out, carrying the ball in one hand. Uruguay often found itself defending laterally, rushing across to make tackles and Mendy was able to fend off the tackle of scrumhalf Santiago Alvarez.

Mendy's incision into the backline on the left in the 27th contributed to a try to center Jeronimo de la Fuente.

Mateo Carreras got his hands on the ball for the first time in the 30th, beat thin defense down the left touch and handed the ball infield for Cordero to score.

De la Fuente provided the last pass for Moro's first try, and fellow back-rower Joaquin Oviedo scored in the 38th in a move in which Mendy handled twice. Mateo Carreras' try ended a dominant first half after which Argentina led 44-0.

Mendy needed only three minutes in the second half to complete his hat trick.

With AI, jets, police squadrons, Paris securing Olympics, worrying critics

Games face unprecedented security challenges

PARIS, July 21, (AP): A year ago, the head of the Paris Olympics boldly declared that France's capital would be "the safest place in the world" when the Games open this Friday. Tony Estanguet's confident forecast looks less far-fetched now with squadrons of police patrolling Paris' streets, fighter jets and soldiers primed to scramble, and imposing metal-fence security barriers erected like an iron curtain on both sides of the River Seine that will star in the opening show.

France's vast police and military operation is in large part because the July 26-Aug. 11 Games face unprecedented security challenges. The city has repeatedly suffered deadly extremist attacks and international tensions are high because of the wars in Ukraine and Gaza.

Rather than build an Olympic park with venues grouped together outside of the city center, like Rio de Janeiro in 2016 or London in 2012, Paris has chosen to host many of the events in the heart of the bustling capital of 2 million inhabitants, with others dotted around suburbs that house millions more. Putting temporary sports arenas in public

spaces and the unprecedented choice to stage a river-borne opening ceremony stretching for kilometers (miles) along the Seine, makes safeguarding them more complex.

Olympic organizers also have cyberattack concerns, while rights campaigners and Games critics are worried about Paris' use of AI-equipped surveillance technology and the broad

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scope and scale of Olympic security. Paris, in short, has a lot riding on keeping 10,500 athletes and millions of visitors safe. Here's how it aims to do it.

A Games-time force of up to 45,000 police and gendarmes is also backed up by a 10,000-strong contingent of soldiers that has set up the largest military camp in Paris since World War II, from which soldiers should be able to reach any of the city's Olympic venues within 30 minutes.

Armed military patrols aboard vehicles and on foot have become common in crowded places in France since gunmen and suicide bombers acting in the names of al-Qaeda and the Islamic State group repeatedly struck Paris in 2015. They don't have police powers of arrest but can tackle attackers and restrain them until police arrive. For visitors from countries where armed street patrols aren't the norm, the sight of soldiers with assault rifles might be jarring, just as it was initially for people in France.

"At the beginning, it was very strange for them to see us and they were



Press agency photographer Christina Assi, (left), holds the Olympic torch with Tinam Pung, right, at the 2024 Summer Olympics in Vincennes, outside Paris, France. (AP)

always avoiding our presence, making a detour," said Gen. Eric Chasboeuf, deputy commander of the counter-terror military force, called Sentinelle.

"Now, it's in the landscape," he said. Rafale fighter jets, airspace-monitoring AWACS surveillance flights, Reaper surveillance drones, helicopters that can carry sharpshooters, and equipment to disable drones will police Paris skies, which will be closed during the opening ceremony by a no-fly zone extending for 150 kilometers (93 miles) around the capital. Cameras twinned with artificial intelligence software - authorized by a law that expands the state's surveillance powers for the Games - will flag potential security risks, such as abandoned packages or crowd surges.

France is also getting help from

more than 40 countries that, together, have sent at least 1,900 police reinforcements.

Attacks by lone individuals are major concern, a risk driven home most recently to French officials by the assassination attempt against Donald Trump.

Some involved in the Olympic security operation were stunned that the gunman armed with an AR-style rifle got within range of the former U.S. president.

"No one can guarantee that there won't be mistakes. There, however, it was quite glaring," said Gen. Philippe Pourqué, who oversaw the construction of a temporary camp in southeast Paris housing 4,500 soldiers from the Sentinelle force.

In France, in the last 13 months alone, men acting alone have carried out knife attacks that targeted tourists in Paris, and children in a park in an Alpine town, among others.

Campaigners for digital rights worry that Olympic surveillance cameras and AI systems could erode privacy and other freedoms, and zero in on people without fixed homes who spend a lot of time in public spaces.

Saccage 2024, a group that has campaigned for months against the Paris Games, took aim at the scope of the Olympic security, describing it as a "repressive arsenal" in a statement to The Associated Press.

"And this is not a French exception, far from it, but a systematic occurrence in host countries," it said. "Is it reasonable to offer one month of 'festivities' to the most well-off tourists at the cost of a long-term securitization legacy for all residents of the city and the country?"



Portugal's Nuno Borges returns the ball to Spain's Rafael Nadal during the singles final of the Nordea Open tennis tournament in Bastad, Sweden. (AP)

Sports

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Optimism in Kuwait team ahead of Oly

Stage set for Paris 2024, says IOC President Bach

KUWAIT CITY, July 21, (Agencies): Ali Al-Marri, Director of Kuwait's delegation to the 33rd Summer Olympic Games in Paris 2024, expressed strong confidence in the capabilities of Kuwaiti athletes to achieve high levels of success.

In a press statement, Al-Marri emphasized that the Kuwaiti Olympic Committee has diligently provided all necessary technical and physical support to ensure the athletes' success, including both internal and external training camps.

The Kuwaiti delegation for the 2024 Paris Olympics includes nine athletes competing in six sports: archery, fencing, swimming, athletics, rowing, and sailing.

Representing Kuwait in shooting are Khaled Al-Mudhaf and Mohammed Al-Daihani; in fencing, Yousef Al-Shamlan; in athletics, Yaqoub Al-Youha and Amal

Al-Roumi; in swimming, Mohammed Al-Zubaidi and Lara Dashti; and in rowing, Souad Al-Faqan and Amina Shah Al-Sharaa.

The 33rd Summer Olympic Games in Paris will begin on July 26th and continue until August 11th.

Kuwait has participated in 14 previous Summer Olympics, starting with the 1968 Mexico Olympics with two athletes. The largest Kuwaiti delegation was at the 1980 Moscow Olympics with 56 athletes. The first female Kuwaiti athlete, Dana Al-Nasrallah, participated in the 2004 Athens Olympics in athletics. Kuwait won its first Olympic medal through shooting champion Fuhaid Al-Deehani, who won a bronze medal at the 2000 Sydney Olympics and repeated the achievement with another bronze at the 2012 London Olympics. In the 2016 Rio Olympics, Kuwaiti athletes competed under the

Olympic flag, where Fuhaid Al-Deehani won Kuwait's first Olympic gold medal and Abdullah Al-Tarqi won a bronze medal. Abdullah Al-Tarqi continued his success at the Tokyo 2020 Olympics with another bronze medal in shooting. Over the course of its Olympic participations, Kuwait has won one gold and four bronze medals.

OLYMPICS

International Olympic Committee (IOC) President Thomas Bach said the stage is set for the Games as the Paris 2024 Organizing Committee reported to the IOC Executive Board its final stages of readiness on Saturday.

"What we can see here, and I'm now myself, I have been here for more than a week, and wherever you

come and go, you see that the lights are on green. The preparations are going very well. The stage is set," said Bach.

The Organizing Committee reported that it is on the final straight. Nearly half of all National Olympic Committees are now in Paris, with 2,000 athletes already living in the Olympic Village and training for the events.

The first competitions are scheduled for July 24, two days before the opening ceremony, while 8.8 million tickets have been sold so far.

"We have an organizing committee which remains vigilant, which does not ignore any kind of challenges which you always have when you're organizing the most complex event in this world. And all this can give us really great confidence in looking forward to these Games," Bach added.



Director of the Kuwait Mission, Ali Al-Marri with other officials. KUNA photo

Points leader Verstappen finishes fifth

Piastri wins first F1 race in McLaren one-two



From left: McLaren driver Oscar Piastri of Australia, McLaren driver Lando Norris of Britain, and Red Bull driver Max Verstappen of the Netherlands lead the field after the start of the Hungarian Formula One Grand Prix race at the Hungaroring racetrack in Mogyorod, Hungary. (AP)

BUDAPEST, July 21, (AP): Oscar Piastri won his first Formula One race after completing a McLaren one-two with Lando Norris at the Hungarian Grand Prix on Sunday.

The 23-year-old Australian driver started second behind pole-sitting Norris and beat him to the first turn to take the lead. Norris got ahead after a pit-stop strategy that favored him, but he then finally complied with a request by his team to give the lead back to his partner.

"This is the day I dreamed off, standing on the top step of an F1 podium," Piastri said.

MOTOR RACING

Lewis Hamilton finished third behind the papaya-colored pair for his record-extending 200th career podium.

Points leader Max Verstappen finished fifth behind Charles Leclerc in a Ferrari and has now gone three races without a victory. Verstappen leads the standings with 265 points to Norris' 189.

McLaren celebrated the one-two, but the huge victory will also be remembered for the team debate over which driver would finally come out on top.

At first, the team told Piastri that the pit strategy was to ensure Norris could keep Hamilton at bay, while asking Norris to give the place back "at his convenience."

Nadal falls to Nuno Borges at Nordea Open

BASTAD, Sweden, July 21, (AP): Rafael Nadal's winning run at the clay-court Nordea Open ended Sunday when the Spaniard was beaten by Nuno Borges 6-3, 6-2 in the final on Sunday.

The seventh-seeded Portuguese player broke the Nadal serve five times on his way to a first ATP tour victory. It was Nadal's first final since the 2022 French Open.

"It's crazy, in tennis it doesn't happen when you expect it sometimes," said Borges. "I know we all wanted Rafa to win, a part of me wished that too, but something even bigger inside of me really pushed through today."

As the laps ticked by and Norris didn't budge, McLaren told Piastri that he could get back in front

when he caught up with Norris. Finally, the team turned to pleading with Norris just to let Piastri



McLaren driver Lando Norris of Britain celebrates his second place at the Hungarian Formula One Grand Prix race at the Hungaroring racetrack in Mogyorod, Hungary. (AP)

Nadal was playing at the tournament in Sweden for the first time since he won the title as a 19-year-old in 2005 as he prepares for the Olympic tournament on clay at Roland Garros in Paris.

TENNIS

The 38-year-old Nadal skipped Wimbledon as he didn't want to switch surface to grass and then back to clay and risk injury. He has been dealing with hip and abdominal injuries over the past 1 1/2 years.

by.

"I know you will do the right thing," the team told Norris. After a long silence, Norris replied "tell him to catch up then please."

The tension was building until Norris eased up and allowed Piastri past with two laps go.

Piastri and Norris exchanged a brief handshake while taking off their helmets and after both were congratulated by McLaren staff and other drivers.

Lando had no harsh words before stepping onto the second spot on the winners podium, even though he had come so close to adding to his maiden F1 win in Miami in May.

"An amazing day as a team, that is the main thing. I am so happy. It has been a long journey to achieve this on merit," Norris said. "Oscar had a good start. (His win) was coming at some point, and he deserved it today."

Kuwait youth handball team suffers close loss to S.Korea

AMMAN, July 21, (KUNA): Kuwait's youth handball team suffered a close defeat to South Korea, losing 24-25 in a thrilling match held on Sunday at Al-Hussein Youth City in Amman, Jordan.

The match was part of the decisive second round of the 18th Asian Championship, which serves as a qualifier for the 2025 World Championship in Poland.

HANDBALL

Exiting the second round with two points, the Kuwaiti team had previously secured a victory against Jordan but faced consecutive losses to Bahrain and South Korea.

Despite the intense pressure to secure points for World Cup qualification, the Kuwaiti team showcased an enthusiastic and technically



Kuwaiti player makes a goal attempt during the Asian Youth Handball Championship.

skilled performance. The match was marked by high competitiveness and excitement, with both teams displaying distinctive technical abilities. South Korea clinched the victory in the final minutes of the game.

Toronto pips Montreal

Alba 'delivers' winner as Inter Milan overcome Fire

FORT LAUDERDALE, July 21, (AP): Defender Jordi Alba scored two minutes after Chicago pulled even in the second half to rally Inter Miami to a 2-1 victory over the Fire on Saturday night.

Rookie Matías Rojas scored for a fourth time this season to give Inter Miami (16-4-5) a 1-0 lead in the 6th minute. Robert Taylor picked up his fourth assist and 20-year-old defender Tomás Avilés snagged his first of the season and the second of his two-year career on the goal. It was the seventh start and 10th appearance of the campaign for Rojas.

Chicago (6-12-7) trailed until defender Rafael Czichos used Gastón Giménez's third assist of the season in the 75th minute to score his first goal this season and the sixth in his three years in the league.

The tie lasted until Alba scored unassisted with a left-footed shot from the left side of the box in the 77th. It was the fourth goal this season for Alba and his fifth in 22 starts and 27 appearances in his two seasons with the club.

Drake Callender finished with four saves in goal for Inter Miami. Chris Brady stopped seven shots for the Fire. Callender needed to make just one save to keep the Fire off the scoreboard in the first half. Brady had four saves by halftime to keep Chicago close.

Chicago knocked FC Cincinnati out of the top spot in the Supporters' Shield race with a 1-0 road victory on Wednesday.

Inter Miami is 2-4-1 all time versus the Fire.

The league goes on a month-long hiatus for the Leagues Cup. Inter Miami, which leads the league with 53 points at the break, will host FC Cincinnati on Aug. 24 when play resumes. The Fire will travel to play New York City FC on Aug. 24.

Richie Laryea's first-half goal led Toronto to a 1-0 victory over Montreal. After combining with Federico Bernardeschi, Lorenzo Insigne found Laryea at the back post for a tap into the open goal with five minutes left to play in the first half.

The goal stood up in a defensive battle in which Toronto finished with two shots on goal and Montreal had one.

Still, Montreal had two near misses late in the second half.

Bryce Duke had a shot deflected off the crossbar in the 80th minute and just a minute before regulation time ended, Josef Martinez was played in alone but could not convert.

Toronto (9-14-3) swept the season series with Montreal (6-10-9) for the first time since 2019.

Montreal entered the match riding a seven-game unbeaten streak at home.

The series between the rivals now stands at 16-14-5 in Toronto's favor.

MLS now takes a break from regular-season play, with the All-Star Game in Columbus on Wednesday and the annual Leagues Cup running from Friday to Aug. 25.

Minnesota United used a first-half own goal and a second-half score by Bongokuhle Hlongwane to snap a nine-match winless streak with a 2-0 victory over the San Jose Earthquakes.

SOCCER

Minnesota United (9-10-6) took a 1-0 lead into halftime thanks to an own goal by San Jose defender Tanner Beason in the 38th minute.

That was it until Hlongwane used assists from Joseph Rosales - his 10th - and Sang Bin Jeong - his first - in the 75th minute to score his seventh goal of the season.

Dayne St. Claire needed to make just one save to earn his third clean sheet of the season for Minnesota United.



CF Montreal's Raheem Edwards (left), challenges Toronto FC's Federico Bernardeschi (10) during the first half of an MLS soccer match in Montreal. (AP)