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# Expatriate count up in gov't, private sectors

Termination of Kuwaitis draws scorn

## Opinion

### Our Amir to the government: I will monitor your performance

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

IT IS good that the Council of Ministers is paying attention to the New Kuwait 2035 Vision, even though it was initially called Vision 2030.

However, for some reason, its implementation was delayed for five years, and it was renamed as "Vision 2040". It then stayed in the drawers until it got dusted off and became "Kuwait 2035".

Will the correction of the development path actually commence, or will it remain mere rhetoric? Can this correction be accomplished under the current ministers?

Most of them seek self-interest, personal benefit, and "prestigious" retirement with exceptional benefits.

That is why the majority of them fell in disarray in the first test, which means that they are not qualified to implement a development vision of this size. This is because they don't have what it takes for realizing such achievement. They are of the same caliber as many former ministers who had these projects with them but failed to acknowledge it for various reasons that we cannot currently enumerate but are known to everyone.

It all began after the approval of these projects, with parliamentary and ministerial quotas, influential figures, and those with narrow interests seeking to gain a share by any means necessary.

In fact, some sought to align these projects with their personal desires and the agendas of their parties, leading to an 18-year delay in implementation. If the current ministerial approach continued as it is, this delay would have extended even further.

If there is serious intention to correct the path, then it is necessary to start amending all the laws that were built on private interests and for temporary reform, and did not serve the country in any way. They had instead increased the closure and backwardness of the country, and led to the decline of the economy, investment, and even society. This is because in successive governments, ministers adopted the "deaf ear" approach, with their primary ambition often revolving around securing substantial pensions for themselves.

This kind of approach does not build a state, but rather turns public institutions into mere personal farms for certain individuals. These legislations have passed by the clouds, because there is no one to hold them accountable.

Based on this, how can one invest in a country that prevents anyone from visiting it, unless he meets subjective conditions?

Even with its current amendments, it still lacks the openness seen in other Gulf countries, which have become hubs for foreign investment and tourism, attracting millions of visitors from around the globe annually.

During the days of the late Sheikh Abdullah Al-Salem, Kuwait was blessed with openness in all fields. Many places of entertainment and amusement, and model public parks were established, and parties were held every week. No unusual conditions, which some parliamentarians later mandated and pressured information ministers to accept, were imposed back then. What they did has been detrimental to the country, which requires round-the-clock efforts to navigate out of this impasse.

Irrespective of the case, we today have a leader who has pledged to monitor the ministers' performance and hold them accountable, and with him the people. His Highness had said, "We are in a new phase, and I will hold accountable the negligent. The people seek actual achievements and we want unlimited giving. I will follow up the implementation of your work."

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## Day by Day

ONCE upon a time, a ruler asked one of his citizens to take a tour of the neighboring cities. After several months, the citizen returned home. The ruler asked, "What have you seen there?"

The citizen replied, "I saw someone blowing and another deflating."

Puzzled, the ruler asked, "What do you mean?"

The citizen explained, "I encountered people who praised me highly, inflating my ego, while others criticized me harshly, deflating my spirits. I find myself confused between these extremes."

... Yet tomorrow is another day.

Zahed Matar



Photo by Samer Shaqair

Families try to cool down at the Mubarakiya automatic fountains on a hot summer day. Mercury is still in the red despite a slight dip in temperature with the onset of humid weather.

## Talks aim to unify efforts in anti-drugs fight

### Interior Minister in Iraq for int'l drug control confab

BAGHDAD, July 22, (KUNA): First Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defense and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahd Al-Yousef arrived in Iraq on an official visit to participate in the Second Baghdad International Anti-Drug Conference 2024.

The Iraqi Ministry of Interior said in a statement that Sheikh Fahd Al-Yousef was received by the Iraqi Interior Minister Abdul Amir Al-Shammari at Baghdad International Airport.

The conference, which will be held at a ministerial level under the patronage of Iraqi Prime Minister Muhammad al-Sudani, is scheduled to begin later today, with the participation of delegations from Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Syria, Turkey, Iran, Lebanon, Egypt, as well as Iraq.

The conference is also scheduled to discuss efforts to combat drugs and ways of coordination and cooperation between the countries of the region.

The gathering in the Iraqi capital Baghdad on Monday sought to ratchet up global efforts against drug trafficking, agreeing on the need to unify measures to clamp down on the scourge.

The International Conference on Drug Control, which brought together interior ministers from some nine countries, including Kuwait, cited efforts including surveillance measures and the sharing of information, as crucial in the fight against narcotics, according to a final statement released after the talks. In addition to these measures, the statement also cited the passage of relevant legislation, coupled with greater security cooperation and gradually updating criminal records, as amongst the significant steps required to push forward the global battle against drugs.

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## Other Voices

### People of the Gulf, beware!

By Khalaf Ahmad Al Habtoor  
UAE businessman

The recent escalation of tensions in our region compels me to reiterate a warning I have sounded for years about the threats we face, which jeopardize our security in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC). Today, more than ever, I sense we are on the brink of a significant confrontation in our area.

Following the Israeli airstrikes on Yemen's Red Sea port city of Hodeidah on Saturday, there are growing

fears that a regional war could ignite. We might know when it starts, but we cannot predict how or when it will end. Statements accusing Arab countries of aiding Israeli aviation in its attacks on Yemen are emerging. These accusations set the stage for a dangerous scenario, aligning with the long-standing incitement policy pursued by Iranian militia platforms in the region, including the Houthis in Yemen, the Popular Mobilization Forces in Iraq, and Hezbollah in Lebanon. These groups accuse our Gulf nations of treason and issue explicit threats against us.

Despite our attempts to mend relations with the Iranian regime, its proxies continue to fight us. Trust is impossible with those who practice duplicity in their dealings.

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Al Habtoor



KUNA photo

The Iraqi Minister of Interior Abdul Amir Al-Shammari receives his Kuwaiti counterpart at Baghdad International Airport.

## Hunt for strategy to streamline traffic flow

KUWAIT CITY, July 22, (KUNA): In a concerted effort to address traffic challenges and enhance public transport services, the Supreme Traffic Council held its 21st meeting under the leadership of Lieutenant General Sheikh Salem Al-Nawaf, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Interior.

The meeting brought together members from various ministries and agencies concerned with traffic.

Lieutenant General Sheikh Salem Al-Nawaf underscored the importance of fostering cooperation and

coordination between governmental and civil bodies to develop effective strategies for improving traffic flow.

He emphasized that the security leadership is committed to considering all proposals that contribute to smoother traffic. These proposals may include innovative engineering ideas for roads and intersections, increased awareness and education efforts, or stricter penalties.

Continued on Page 5

## Kuwait supports role of Arab youth for prosperous future

CAIRO, July 22, (KUNA): Kuwait affirmed on Monday the importance of supporting Arab youth and encouraging entrepreneurship as they are the foundation of the future, the leaders of change, the driving force and the hope in building a better and prosperous future for the nation.

This came in a speech by the Kuwaiti delegation delivered by Engineer Dalal Thani during her participation in a dialogue session within the third edition of the Arab Youth Parliament, which was launched at the headquarters of the League of Arab States with the participation of 100 young men and women from 16 Arab countries.

Engineer Dalal said that the political leadership in Kuwait fully believes in the role of Arab youth in promoting economic integration between Arab countries towards achieving a more prosperous future.

She also referred to many Kuwaiti projects that began as youth initiatives under the umbrella of the Kuwaiti Ministry of Youth and later turned into successful cross-border projects that left their mark in many Arab countries.

Further, she stressed that Kuwait played a pioneering role in supporting and developing the Arab economy through many joint economic initiatives and projects, noting the role of the Kuwait Fund for Development in promoting Arab economic integration.

On the other hand, she expressed her happiness at Kuwait's celebration of the 63rd anniversary of its accession to the League of Arab States, which falls on July 20, stressing that this reflects a deep and continuing commitment to strengthening unity and cooperation among Arab countries.

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## Steps to speed up Vision 2035

KUWAIT CITY, July 22: Despite being launched 18 years ago, the New Kuwait 2035 Vision has only reached a completion rate of 30 percent for 55 projects, while others are still in their early stages. Coordinating efforts are underway among relevant institutions to correct the course and accelerate progress towards achieving the vision's goals, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

According to informed government sources, the New Kuwait 2035 Vision and the strategic plan, which includes a number of major development projects, witnessed a setback in the recent years due to political squabbles and disputes.

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## NewsWatch

**KUWAIT CITY:** His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent on Monday a cable of congratulations to Ursula von der Leyen on being re-elected to a second five-year term as president of the European Commission.

In the cable, His Highness the Amir wished her success and long-lasting health, as well as praised the existing cooperation between Kuwait and the European Union in all fields. (KUNA)

**DEIR AL-BALAH, Gaza Strip:** The Israeli military ordered the evacuation Monday of part of a crowded area in the Gaza Strip it had designated a humanitarian zone, saying it is planning an operation against Hamas militants there.

Thousands of Palestinians, many carrying backpacks and accompanied by children, walked down dusty roads under the scorching sun, navigating dilapidated cars with belongings tied on top. (AP)

**DUBAI:** A court in the United Arab Emirates sentenced dozens of Bangladeshi nationals to prison, including three for life imprisonment, over protests against their home government in the Gulf country, state media reported Monday.

The Abu Dhabi Federal Court of Appeal on Sunday handed 10-year prison sentences to 53 Bangladeshi nationals and an 11-year term to another Bangladeshi national, in addition to the three life imprisonments, according to the state-owned Emirates News Agency, WAM. (AP)



## Prayer Timings

Fajr ..... 03:31 Asr ..... 15:29  
 Sunrise .. 05:02 Maghrib .. 18:46  
 Zohr ..... 11:54 Isha ..... 20:15

# Local

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

**Expected weather for next 24 hrs:**  
**By Day:** Very hot with light to moderate northwesterly wind and some scattered clouds will appear.  
**By Night:** Hot to rather hot with

Weather		Station	
light to moderate northwesterly wind, with speeds of 10-30 km/h and some scattered clouds will appear.	Kuwait Airport	49	31
	Abdaly	49	31
	Jahra	49	33
	Salmiyah	46	36
	Nuwaisib	48	31
	Wafra	49	29
Max Exp	Min Rec		
48	36		

## Embassy in Kuwait opens Book of Condolences to pay tribute to Phu Trong

# HH Amir offers condolences to Vietnamese President Lam

KUWAIT CITY, July 22, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent a cable of condolences on Monday to President of Vietnam To Lam, expressing sincere condolences over the passing away of Nguyen Phu Trong.

In the cable, His Highness the Amir asked (His Almighty) Allah to grant his family and relatives patience and solace.

Meanwhile, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah sent a cable of condolences to President To Lam, expressing sincere condolences over the passing of Nguyen Phu Trong.

In the cable, His Highness the Crown Prince asked (His Almighty) Allah to grant his family and relatives patience and solace.

Also, His Highness the Prime Minis-

ter Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah sent a cable of condolences to President To Lam, expressing sincere condolences over the passing of Nguyen Phu Trong.

Meanwhile, the Embassy of Vietnam in Kuwait opened a Book of Condolence to Vietnamese and foreign organizations and individuals who wish to pay tribute to General Secretary Nguyen Phu Trong, general secretary of Vietnam's ruling Communist Party and the country's most powerful politician.

Nguyen Phu Trong who passed away on July 19, 2024, at the 108 Central Military Hospital due to old age and serious illness was 80 years.

The book is opened at the Embassy at Jabriya, Block 10, Street 19, Villa 96 from 10:00 am to 2:00 noon on Wednesday and Thursday, July 24-25, 2024.

# KAB highlights shortcomings in MoSA's aid debt management

Ministry confirms collection of 76% of total principal amount

**KUWAIT CITY, July 22:** The annual report of the Kuwait Audit Bureau for fiscal 2023/2024 has shed light on significant issues concerning the Ministry of Social Affairs, particularly regarding the management of aid debts, reports Al-Jarida daily.

The report revealed a troubling increase in accumulated aid debt, which has risen by 20 million dinars.

In response, the ministry has confirmed that it has successfully collected 76% of the total principal amount, amounting to 15 million dinars. This recovery rate is attributed to ongoing efforts by the Legal Affairs Department and a specialized committee tasked with managing debt balances and implementing collection measures.

The ministry has addressed the Audit Bureau's observations by emphasizing that the rates of debt collection are steadily improving.

### Deduction

Official communications have been sent to employers to facilitate the deduction of these debts from monthly salaries, with the ministry also seeking the cancellation of old debts in accordance with the law.

Efforts are being made to resolve outstanding debts amicably, either through full payment or installment plans. Should these approaches fail, the ministry plans to resort to legal action to recover the funds, highlighting the importance of safeguarding public funds.

The accumulation of debts has been partly attributed to delays by some government agencies in completing automated connections with the ministry and the inadequate monthly deduction rate, which has been set at only 10% of the original debt.

This has resulted in slow collection rates and extended recovery periods. Additionally, the discovery of new debts related to aid disbursements in violation of regulations has further complicated efforts to improve collection rates.

Cases involving beneficiaries with income sources, such as government employees, require substantial time to address, while those without income sources necessitate lengthy efforts to negotiate repayment or seek legal recourse.

The ministry has taken steps to address these challenges, including investigating computer management contracts to ensure compliance with spending rationalization directives and prevent financial waste.

### 'PIFSS advances in electronic services'

**KUWAIT CITY, July 22:** The Public Institute for Social Security (PIFSS) has reported significant advancements in electronic service delivery, particularly through the Sahel application, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

According to recent statistics shared on its platform, during the first half of this year, a total of 530,737 certificates were issued electronically.

Among these, the Sahel application accounted for the issuance of 373,347 certificates, reflecting its predominant role in facilitating administrative processes.

In addition to certificates, electronic transactions were also notable, with the "Dhukr Insurance" application handling the largest share, processing 46,609 transactions.

Overall, the organization recorded 67,546 transactions completed through electronic channels, underscoring the growing preference for digital platforms in managing social insurance matters.

Furthermore, the institution reported receiving 591,490 visitors during this period, indicating a robust engagement with its services. Among these visits, 81,913 transactions were successfully completed, including 173,146 certificates issued for individuals and 42,690 certificates issued for business owners.



Al-Rai photo  
Governor Al-Asfar meeting with the members of MEW's rationalization committee.

## Hawally governor receives MEW's rationalization panel team

Hawally Governor Ali Al-Asfar recently received the members of the Ministry of Electricity, Water, and Renewable Energy's rationalization committee, reports Al-Rai daily.

During the meeting, they affirmed Hawally Governorate's active participation in the ministry's energy conservation campaign titled "Waffar", which aims to promote workshops and awareness campaigns on water and electricity conservation among individuals. They also highlighted the "Hafez" rationalization

program, which provides discounts on electricity and water bills in order to encourage energy savings and promote the use of sustainable energy resources in households.

Governor Al-Asfar expressed the governorate's readiness to support initiatives aimed at enhancing rationalization strategies. He said he will urge cooperative societies to comply with ministerial decision No. 159/2023, which mandates tree planting in surrounding areas.

## Other Voices

### Warehouses and the mosquito swamps

By Ahmed alsarraf

After the infamous Mangaf fire, from which we seem to have forgotten the valuable lessons, the authorities, including the municipality and fire brigade, took action.

They evacuated the basements of buildings designated as parking lots, cleared out the goods stored there, and removed violations related to basement storage in homes.

The sheer number of violations was overwhelming, compounded by a shortage of inspectors and the extreme heat. As a result, only minimal progress was made, and the issue of storage violations persisted, exacerbating the problems for merchants and companies who urgently needed storage spaces.

Addressing the storage problem is akin to someone trying to eliminate mosquitoes by killing one here and another there -- an exercise in futility.

A more effective approach would be to fill in the swamps where mosquitoes breed. It is insufficient to merely fine building or house owners for renting out their basements for storage, especially when the income from such rentals is highly attractive.

What is needed is a swift response to the severe shortage of legal storage space, which continues to grow. When merchants have access to the storage space they need legally, they will be less likely to resort to illegal means.

For nearly twenty years, the government has continuously sought ways to address the vast areas of unexploited land it owns, but weak decision-making has consistently hindered progress.

The most recent attempt was in 2007, when high-level government decisions were made during the National Assembly recess to establish a company for public warehouses.

However, confusion and suspicions surrounding its establishment and those behind it led the government to cancel the entire idea, leaving the deteriorating situation unchanged.

In 2012, the Council of Ministers issued a decision to form a "Storage Space Provision Com-

mittee." This committee's mission was to inventory the vouchers allocated to various government agencies, reclaim these spaces, and equip them for storage activities.

Additionally, the committee was to coordinate with the Ministry of Commerce and the Chamber of Commerce to assess the actual needs for storage space.

None of these decisions were implemented, even after twelve years, and the problem continued to worsen, with rents continuing to rise. The government remains indecisive about choosing between several alternatives such as:

Identifying the lands and handing over their management to the Industry Authority; assigning the Ministry of Commerce to manage them, establishing a public joint-stock company to manage them, establishing a joint commercial entity -- private and governmental -- to manage the storage areas.

This indecision has perpetuated the problem, with worsening conditions, louder complaints from merchants, and rising prices of various goods and services.

Regardless of the government's eventual decision on managing the millions of square meters available for storage, it will take time to implement, and determining the rental value will take even longer.

The government faces a difficult choice regarding rental values: either increase state revenues by raising rental values, which will lead to significant price inflation as suppliers pass on the increased costs to consumers, or keep rental increases reasonable to avoid harming citizens indirectly and prevent inflation.

Our recommendation is to hand over the management of the new storage areas to specialized companies, both new and existing, through public bidding and strict exploitation contracts. It is important to note that the previous experience of the Public Authority Industry in this field was not successful, possibly due to weak contract formulations and inadequate administrative control.

This article came about due to the "absence" of the body that represents merchants and industrialists, six months ago. Kuwait may be the only country where this important group has no one to represent it and defend its legitimate issues!

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Peruvian Ambassador Carlos Mendiola.



Austrian Ambassador Marian Wrba.

KUNA photos

## Deputy FM receives outgoing ambassadors

Deputy Foreign Minister Ambassador Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah received on Monday the Ambassador of the Republic of Peru, Ambassador Carlos Manuel Mendiola on the occasion of ending his duties as the Ambassador of Peru to

Kuwait.

Meanwhile, Deputy FM Sheikh Jarrah Jaber received on Monday the Ambassador of the Republic of Austria, Marian Wrba, on the occasion of ending his duties as Ambassador of Austria to Kuwait. (KUNA)

## Al-Bahr criticizes mismatch

# Society calls for comprehensive reforms in the education sector

**KUWAIT CITY, July 22:** Badr Al-Bahr, President of the Kuwaiti Society for Quality Education, has called for urgent reforms in Kuwait's education system, citing its decline and the issue of disguised unemployment, reports Al-Jarida daily.

He stressed the need for restructuring and a comprehensive review of educational institutions to ensure they meet labor market demands.

Al-Bahr criticized the mismatch between the specializations offered by universities and the actual needs of the job market, noting that while some fields are deemed unnecessary by the Civil Service Commission, educational institutions continue to promote and provide them.

He proposed the establishment of a higher body to oversee and ensure alignment between educational offerings and employment opportunities, aiming to prevent the creation of disguised unemployment.

To address issues in the education sector, Al-Bahr suggested the creation of an independent academic accreditation body with authority above the ministerial level. This body would review laws and policies governing educational institutions to prevent financial waste and ensure that academic standards are upheld.

He also highlighted the need for this body to review regulations related to academic certificates and address the issue of forged or non-equivalent qualifications.

The association has previously sub-

mitted a law to criminalize the use of non-equivalent academic certificates, which was approved in July 2019. They are now awaiting the issuance of executive regulations for this law.

In addition to addressing fraudulent academic practices, Al-Bahr proposed new legislation to combat plagiarism in research and cheating in exams. He emphasized the importance of enforcing penalties for academic misconduct and suggested practical measures, such as using central exam halls and multiple exam models to prevent cheating.

Al-Bahr also called for a major overhaul in the leadership of educational institutions, advocating for the appointment of original leaders rather than temporary or acting positions, which have led to administrative chaos. He urged for an immediate appointment of a new university director and a restructuring of the leadership roles to enhance stability and effectiveness.

The association has also proposed reforms to ensure that faculty members adhere to office hours and lecture schedules, implement measures to prevent exploitation of students, and establish a national center for admission tests and academic licensing.

Furthermore, Al-Bahr criticized the current state of academic sabbaticals, suggesting that they should be reformed to ensure that they serve their intended purpose and that faculty members provide valuable contributions upon their return.

The association's statement concludes with a call for a fact-finding committee to investigate any violations in promotions, appointments, and scholarships. They advocate for transparent and fair processes in academic evaluations and decision-making.



Badr Al-Bahr



## 'Virtues and vices get entangled over Western culture imitation'

"DURING the Renaissance and Enlightenment of the eighteenth century, the East was awakened by the allure of Western development, sophistication, and civilization," columnist Dr **Abdul Rahman Al-Jeeran** wrote for **Al-Rai** daily.

"These concepts, absorbed eagerly by political, academic, and military elites, became deeply ingrained in the region's psyche.

"Yet, this early enthusiasm for Western values often resulted in superficial and misguided imitation rather than genuine transformation.

"The East adopted Western practices and ideologies with fervor, sometimes to the point of absurdity—embracing Western behaviors and symbols, even those that conflicted with traditional values.

"This blind emulation led to a dissonance between appearance and reality, as the East sought to replicate the West's cultural markers without fully understanding or integrating their underlying principles.

"Now, as the world shifts and the dominance of Western hegemony wanes, the East finds itself confronting the aftermath of this misguided imitation.

"The grand promises of globalism and multilateralism have given way to a fragmented world, dominated by slogans like "America First," which undermines the very ideals that once seemed so appealing.

"In this environment, virtues and vices have become entangled, leading to a moral confusion where good and evil are often indistinguishable.

"The challenges facing the East are profound, and there is a pressing need for a clear-eyed assessment of these complexities.

"As the world moves forward, the East must navigate these turbulent waters, reassessing its values and strategies in a landscape that is increasingly marked by fragmentation and shifting priorities."



Dr. Al-Jeeran

### Also:

"As part of my annual tradition, I traveled with my family to various cities and mountain resorts across Europe," columnist **Ahmed Yaqoub Baqer** wrote for **Al-Jarida** daily.

"The region's beauty is truly a testament to the magnificence of nature—its picturesque climate, stunning mountains, charming architecture, and harmonious gardens are a sight to behold.

"During the day, the streets and markets are bustling with tourists from across Europe. However, by nightfall, these streets turn into quiet, dark lanes, and the mountains become intimidating black silhouettes due to the reduction of public lighting, aimed at conserving expensive electricity.

"I observed a noticeable trend of smaller cars replacing the larger luxury vehicles, a shift driven by the high cost of fuel.

"It was also evident that the number of electric cars has surged, reflecting a broader effort to save money. I found myself pondering why even the wealthiest and most powerful countries do not provide their citizens with subsidized or nominally priced electricity and fuel.

"Could it be that their governments are not as robust or that they lack a populist National Assembly? Throughout these cities, it was clear that everyone was engaged in work, whether in hotels, restaurants, parks, or lakes.

"Young people, full of vitality, were seen working hard to support themselves, cover educational costs, and pay taxes.

"There was no sign of them asking their affluent governments for subsidies or grants without earning their keep. Immigrants, too, worked diligently in various roles, striving for citizenship despite the challenges posed by right-wing parties that harbor xenophobic sentiments. In these tourist resorts, I saw countless children, ranging from toddlers to ten-year-olds, joyfully playing in various attractions.

"Their parents followed them, beaming with happiness and capturing memories through photographs. This scene reminded me of my own children during our past annual trips to parks and amusement centers.

"I recalled how they would run and play before falling asleep in the car on the way back to our hotel, and how I would carry them to their beds. It's a comfort to see that they have grown and are now living their own lives with their families.

"To the youth of Kuwait, cherish these moments with your children and create lasting memories. These years are irreplaceable and offer opportunities to make beautiful memories with your loved ones."

"The main enemy of the people of Kuwait is restaurant, especially the cheap one. This is something that everyone should know," columnist **Talal Al-Saeed** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

"After an expatriate posted an advertisement to attract customers, authorities discovered a residential apartment being operated as a restaurant with serious sanitary neglect. The fate of those who ate there remains uncertain, given the lack of hygiene standards.

"Additionally, at Souk Mubarakiya, Kuwait's prominent shopping

center, authorities uncovered tons of rotten meat unfit for human consumption. This discovery was made in two batches, with the second batch being larger than the first. Inspection also revealed the presence of cockroaches, insects, and mice in the vicinity. This contamination spreads to other areas in Kuwait, where many seizures involve spoiled meat or violations of hygiene regulations.

"Currently, there is talk among people about the spread of schistosomiasis. Our country does not have pools of stagnant water. People in our country usually swim in the sea, and the sea does not incubate schistosomiasis. So where did this disease come from? Isn't it from the food served in restaurants? Who is responsible - the cook, the restaurant worker, or the delivery worker?"

"Recently, authorities discovered houses and basements in areas like Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh that are being operated as unlicensed restaurants or food preparation facilities but they all fail to meet the basic hygiene standards. Kuwaiti citizens are particularly affected by these, as dining out has become an almost weekly routine, despite the health risks. This is from the health perspective.

"From a social standpoint, workers such as cooks and drivers have increasingly taken to delivering orders in their own private vehicles, which often suffer rapid wear and tear. This frequently causes traffic congestion on the roads. Many of these workers flee from their sponsors and work in restaurants without a licence or regular oversight from authorities. This situation poses inherent risks and demands attention.

"Another matter is that the wages of domestic workers have risen in general. If any of them does not run away from them and maintains his/her contract, their sponsor may be forced to raise their wages.

"We must also address the issue of transportation of female students on bicycles, which poses inconveniences in residential areas and risks to both drivers and pedestrians on the streets. Concerns have been raised about what delivery cyclists do with orders before delivering them, with discussions and videos circulating on this matter. However, there appears to be a lack of understanding or effective response to these issues, leaving concerns undressed.

"Unfortunately, we do not know our enemy. If we know our enemy, we do not know how to deal with him. The red eye is absent."

"Why do some private channels and platforms ignore the original citizens, and deliberately conduct interviews with naturalized Kuwaitis? This is happening repeatedly but no one knows the intention of those channels and platforms in doing so," columnist **Al-Sheikh Ali Al-Jaber Al-Ahmad** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

"The Ministry of Foreign Affairs must punish anyone who displays his diplomatic or private passport to the public on social media in good or bad faith. Why does a person commit himself to saying, "What is in my heart is on my tongue" while those who hear it does not know the truth about what is in his heart, whether it is true or false, as only the Knower of the Unseen, Glory be to Him, knows about it?"

"Some worshippers who use chairs still believe that they are equal to those who stand, even though the correct thing to do is sit. In the parking lot of a mosque inside the city during Friday prayers, only five cars park longitudinally parallel to the sidewalk, ensuring full shade for their vehicles instead of allowing ten cars to park in the same spots but with sun protection only for the front half of their cars. This reflects the selfishness of some people who care only about their cars and not about the cars of their Muslim brothers. Something like this is seen only in Kuwait.

"Why lie, O' you who bear the title of "doctor" before your name? Rather, why exaggerate it? Is it because of the hatred you hold in your heart or to provoke society against the government?"

"I hope that you will fear God within yourself, even if your conscience is lacking. You cannot ignore what you have mentioned from your Creator, for lying leads to immorality, and immorality leads to Hell.

"Something that has been observed in the recent period is an increase in rivalries and hostilities between people, as some are known for spreading rumours, sharing the conversations that occur in private councils, abolishing secrecy, replacing dreams and wisdom with fanaticism, and increasing distance instead of rapprochement. Is this change in people's behaviors caused by the use of mobile phones, or by money or interests?"

"Irrespective of the reason, such a change is rejected. This is because love, communication, and fear are part of the nature of Kuwaitis. We ask God Almighty to correct these people and guide them to do everything that is good for them and for others.

"Don't spread your legs when your quilt is short

Do not peer above and get tired of looking  
Contentment is a treasure if you dream big

Life is lessons and the world is full of lessons.

"May God protect Kuwait and its people from all evil and harm."

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

## 34 citations for sanitation, road work violations

KUWAIT CITY, July 22: The Public Relations Department at the Kuwait Municipality has announced that the inspection teams from the Public Sanitation and Road Works departments in the governorates continued their intensive inspection campaigns to check the cleaning works in various parts of the country as per the directive of Minister of State for Municipal Affairs Dr. Noura Al-Mashaan and under the supervision of Municipality Director General Eng. Saud Al-Dabbous, reports **Al-Anba** daily.

Director of the Public Sanitation and Road Works Department in Jahra Governorate Nawaf Al-Mutairi confirmed that the department's supervisory team intensified its field tours; which resulted in the issuance of 34 citations for sanitation and road work violations, removal of 14 abandoned cars and scraps and demolition of four chalets in the governorate.

The Municipality has stressed the need for the public to cooperate with inspection teams in all governorates to strictly implement the municipal laws, rules and regulations. It warned that violations or encroachments will not be tolerated, illegal structures will be removed by the supervisory teams and legal measures will be taken against violators.

## Traffic campaigns

## GTD issues 37,000 citations, seizes 78 motorcycles and 53 vehicles last week

KUWAIT CITY, July 22: The General Traffic Department's Technical Affairs Sector held a campaign in Jahra Vocational, Sulabiya Industrial, and Shuwaikh Industrial areas in coordination with the Ministry of Commerce and Industry based on the directives of Assistant Undersecretary for Traffic Operations at Ministry of Interior Major General Yousef Al-Khadda and under the field supervision of the Assistant Director for Technical Affairs Brigadier Ghazi Buraqaba and Director of Technical Testing Sector Brigadier Mishal Al-Suwaihi, reports **Al-Jarida** daily.

Head of Department of Public Relations and Traffic Guidance at General Traffic Department Lieutenant Colonel Abdullah Bu Hassan explained that the campaigns resulted in the issuance of 302 citations, with 115 of them issued in Jahra and Sulabiya, and 187 in Shuwaikh. Also, 24

vehicles were seized and 11 citations were issued by inspectors of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry. Also, 18 arrest and summon orders were issued, of which five were issued in Sulabiya and Jahra, and six in Shuwaikh.



Bu Hassan

Lieutenant Colonel Bu Hassan explained that inspectors from the Technical Affairs Sector, led by Colonel Abdulaziz Al-Tattan, discovered shops that sell silencers that do not meet the requirements set by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, as well as a large number of equipment used for producing loud noise. These equipment have been seized and referred to

the concerned department. Legal procedures are ongoing in this regard.

He went on to explain that the General Traffic Department issued a total of 37,000 citations last week, seized 78 motorcycles and 53 vehicles, and referred to Public Prosecution 17 juveniles who were caught driving without a license. Rescue police arrested 49 individuals in possession of drugs, drug paraphernalia and liquor. They were referred with the seized items to the Drug Control General Department.

Lieutenant Colonel Bu Hassan revealed that a total of 289 individuals have been arrested by rescue police including those wanted for criminal issues, absconding workers, residency violators and those without any identification documents, adding that 1,471 security operations were carried out.

# Discussion held on human rights issues and anti-trafficking efforts

Two brothers attack bedouin; son sets fire to family home

**KUWAIT CITY, July 22: The Public Prosecution reported that Attorney General Counselor Saad Al-Safran met with the Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs for Human Rights Affairs, Jawaher Al-Sabah, to discuss key human rights issues and the fight against human trafficking in Kuwait, reports Al-Seyassah daily.**

During the meeting, they reviewed the latest progress in implementing the national strategy to prevent human trafficking and smuggling of migrants, highlighting developments in these areas. This discussion is part of the ongoing collaboration between the Public Prosecution and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to address and combat these critical issues.

The Public Prosecution has reported that Attorney General Counselor Saad Al-Safran recently met with Jawaher Al-Sabah, the Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs for Human Rights Affairs, to discuss critical human rights issues and efforts to combat human trafficking in Kuwait.

During the meeting, the officials reviewed various human rights files and examined the latest developments in the implementation of Kuwait's national strategy to prevent human trafficking and the smuggling of migrants. This discussion is part of the broader framework of ongoing cooperation between the Public Prosecution and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Counselor Saad Al-Safran and Jawaher Al-Sabah focused on assessing the progress and current status of initiatives aimed at combating human trafficking. They emphasized the importance of coordinated efforts to effectively address and mitigate these issues, ensuring that Kuwait remains committed to upholding human rights and adhering to international standards.

This meeting underscores the significance of the collaborative efforts between the Public Prosecution and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. By working together, these entities aim to enhance the effectiveness of policies and strategies designed to protect human rights and prevent human trafficking, contributing to the overall welfare and safety of the community.

The ongoing dialogue and cooperation between the Attorney General and the Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs highlight Kuwait's dedication to addressing human rights concerns and strengthening measures against human trafficking. This collaborative approach is essential for developing robust and comprehensive strategies to safeguard the rights and well-being of all individuals in the country.

**Two brothers attack young man:** Abdullah Qunais has tasked criminal security personnel with apprehending two brothers who allegedly assaulted an illegal resident born in 2001 in the Kabd area, reports **Al-Anba** daily. The victim reported that he was struck with a machete by the accused. Accompanying the case file, classified as a felony, is a medical report indicating that the victim sustained injuries from the attack. The report details a cut wound on the right finger, abrasions on the right leg, and multiple bruises, all treated with stitches due to the sharp instrument used.

The victim provided the names of the two young men he claims assaulted him but did not specify the motive behind the attack.

**Son accused of setting house on fire:** Mubarak Al-Taneeb, the Deputy Attorney General, has directed the registration of a felony case of arson following a complaint from an elderly woman accusing her son of intentionally setting fire to their family home after a dispute, reports **Al-Anba** daily.

According to a security source, the Ministry of Interior's operations received a report of a house fire. Firefighters arrived promptly and discovered that the blaze was confined to the living room, which had been doused with a highly flammable substance.

The elderly woman reported that her 21-year-old son was responsible for deliberately starting the fire. She demanded legal action against her son, whom she described as disobedient. Subsequently, the mother was taken to the local police station where she formally registered the case.

**55 shops closed down:** Friday morning, the Public Relations and Media Department of the Directorate-General of Fire Department (DGFD) said the department has administratively closed 55 shops and facilities across several governorates, reports **Al-Seyassah** daily.

The closures were due to the establishments' failure to obtain fire licenses and comply with safety and fire prevention requirements, despite having been previously warned to address these violations.

**Limited number of food poisoning cases:** The Ministry of Health (MoH), in coordination with the Public Authority for Food and Nutrition (PAFN), reported a limited number of cases of food poisoning among individuals who dined at a restaurant, reports **Al-Anba** daily.

It revealed that necessary legal procedures have been taken by PAFN to close the restaurant.

The ministry reassured people that the number of cases is limited and they have either recovered or are under recovery.

It denied the rumors that schistosomiasis was found in a restaurant which was the cause for the food poisoning cases.

The ministry explained that schistosomiasis is a parasitic disease and infects people who swim in rivers that contain schistosomiasis.

### 'Drivers beware'

## Imprisonment, KD25 fine, vehicle seizure for safety lane violations

By Munif Naif

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 22: In a decisive move to ensure the safety lane remains clear for emergency vehicles, the head of the Traffic Awareness Department at the General Traffic Department, Lieutenant Colonel Abdullah Bu Hassan, announced stringent penalties for those misusing this lane. Offenders face vehicle impounding for two months and up to 15 days in prison, along with a fine of 25 dinars if the case is brought to court.

During an appearance on the "This Morning" program yesterday, Bu Hassan urged drivers not to drive or park in the safety lane, emphasizing that it is strictly reserved for emergency ve-

hicles. He confirmed that surveillance cameras are actively monitoring violators to ensure appropriate penalties are enforced.

Bu Hassan highlighted that traffic patrols deployed nationwide will issue tickets and seize vehicles found on the road shoulder. He also advised drivers whose vehicles experience sudden breakdowns or emergency stops to promptly move their vehicles away from the safety lane. This action is crucial for the safety of all road users and to avoid the specified violations.

Regarding the increase in juvenile traffic violations, Bu Hassan confirmed that the Operations Department at the General Traffic Department is intensifying its efforts to address this issue.

## 3-vehicle collision kills Egyptian, injures 2

By Munif Naif

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff and Agencies

KUWAIT CITY, July 22: A 48-year old Egyptian expatriate died and two individuals sustained injuries in an accident that resulted from the collision of three vehicles on Jahra Road.

According to security sources, when the Operations Room of the Ministry of Interior received information about the three-vehicle collision on Jahra Road opposite Amghara, securitymen and paramedics rushed to the location.

Upon arrival, they discovered that the accident resulted in the death of an Egyptian expatriate and injuries to two other individuals.

The body of the deceased was referred to the Forensic Medicine Department, and the injured victims were taken to the nearest hospital for treatment. A case has been filed.

**Expat dies in road accident:** An unidentified expatriate born in 1970 has died from severe injuries sustained in a car accident on the Sixth Ring Road, reports **Al-Anba** daily.

The collision occurred when his vehicle ran out of control and collided with an iron barrier.

Acting on information emergency medical personnel rushed to the scene but could not save the man's life who bled to death.

A case of death due to collision has been registered at the area police station.

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Top bidders emerge for Sabah Al-Ahmad Medical City project

Local consulting firms compete to oversee major healthcare development

# Kuwait's fiber optic network granted expansion with a new site in Al-Salmi



KUNA photo  
Minister of Social Affairs Dr. Amthal Al-Huwailah honors engineer Sara Burajeb on being the first Arab to win the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) global award.

## Minister Al-Huwailah commends Kuwaiti inventor on WIPO award

KUWAIT CITY, July 22. (KUNA): Minister of Social Affairs, Family and Childhood Affairs and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Dr. Amthal Al-Huwailah praised engineer Sara Burajeb on being the first Arab to win the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) global award, describing it a Kuwaiti accomplishment.

The Minister received Burajeb on Monday after winning the global award that supports innovation and creativity, she was one of nine winners amongst 667 competitors

from 107 countries.

In a statement to KUNA, Burajeb said that her invention "ScansX" is revolutionizing brain injury diagnostic procedures by replacing or complementing MRIs with a portable, non-invasive brain scanner, which can help detect early signs of brain hemorrhages and tumors.

She added that being honored by the Minister meant a great deal to her, which showed Kuwait's interest in supporting their youth on achieving more accomplishment in the name of Kuwait.

### Municipality imposes conditions

KUWAIT CITY, July 22: The Kuwait Municipality has granted approval for the request submitted by the Ministry of Communication to allocate a site for the third phase of the major fiber optic network project in the Al-Salmi area. The designated site spans 2,008 square meters, reports Al-Jarida daily.

In its technical opinion, the municipality outlined several conditions for the project. It requires adherence to the requirements outlined in the Subcommittee on Public Facilities and Services' responses from its meeting on February 7, 2023.

Additionally, the project must coordinate with this subcommittee before proceeding, provide necessary parking within the site boundaries, and secure authorization from the relevant administration for any adjustments to the site's dimensions that may be needed due to conflicts with existing infrastructure services or regulatory issues.

The Public Authority for Roads and Land Transport (PART), has given its consent for the project, provided that coordination occurs with the Road Design Department before starting and implementing the contract for Al-Salmi Road's development.

Meanwhile, the Public Authority for Agriculture Affairs and Fisheries has highlighted that the selected site contains an agricultural and irrigation project, which must be preserved.

Coordination with the authority is required before beginning the project to avoid disrupting these existing agricultural activities.

## KU honors faculty members

KUWAIT CITY, July 22: The Kuwait University recently celebrated the achievements of its faculty members who were honored with the Distinguished Teaching Award for the academic year 2023/2024, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

Additionally, the university recognized the inventors who obtained a patent for their innovation, "the dual system for producing hydrogen and nanofluids using effervescent tablets."

KUWAIT CITY, July 22: The Central Agency for Public Tenders has recently opened financial bids for selecting a local consulting office to oversee the Medical City Project in Sabah Al-Ahmad Residential City, reports Al-Jarida daily.

The project, deemed a top priority by the Ministry of Public Works, aims to enhance healthcare facilities for the southern region, with a particular focus on Sabah Al-Ahmad.

At a bid opening meeting held yesterday morning, three companies submitted offers for the consulting role -- First Offer: 90.307%; Second Offer: 88.600% and Third Offer: 87.780%

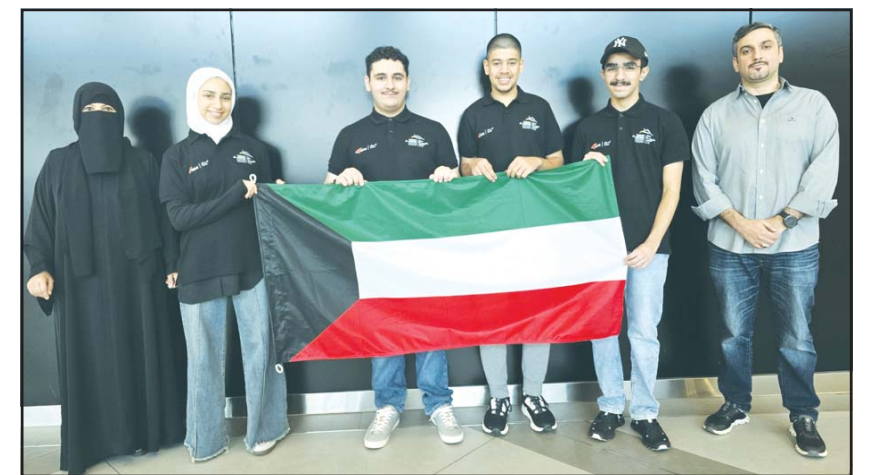
The project encompasses an area of

300,000 square meters and includes several key components such as a hospital with a 500-bed facility; a dental building featuring 100 clinics; housing for doctors and nurses and additional facilities for outpatient services.

In addition to this, the agency has approved several contract modifications such as an increase of 1.198 million dinars for the general maintenance of roads and squares in the Hawalli Governorate, extending the maintenance period by 180 days and an extension of maintenance contract -- a 180-day extension for road construction in northern agricultural areas, with a contract value of 447,000 dinars.



Participants in the Physics Olympiad in the Islamic Republic of Iran.



KUNA photos  
Participants in the International Chemistry Olympiad hosted by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

### KFAS hails MoE's support

## SACGC supports Kuwaiti students in global chemistry, physics Olympiads

KUWAIT CITY, July 22, (KUNA): Sabah Al-Ahmad Center for Giftedness and Creativity (SACGC), a branch of the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences (KFAS), is committed to supporting its students participating in the International Chemistry Olympiad (IChO), hosted by Saudi Arabia from July 21-30, and the International Physics Olympiad (IPhO) in Iran from July 20-30, in collaboration with the Ministry of Education (MoE).

Director General Neda Al-Daihani stated to KUNA on Sunday that the center's support for students in global scientific competitions aligns with its strategy and the directives of its board to develop students' skills and abilities, contributing to the vision of New Kuwait 2035.

Al-Daihani appreciated MoE's cooperation, which involved forming a coordination committee between both sides to arrange student participation in the 2024 Chemistry and Physics Olympiads, highlighting a short-term training plan supervised by the center to prepare students for

these competitions.

He mentioned that students were well-prepared for the Olympiads with the help of Dr. Peter Bogard from University of Cambridge and University College London, and a former member of IChO's committee.

Additionally, Hussein Al-Rashid, a physics trainer from Swansea University in the UK, was brought in to provide necessary training for Kuwaiti students, he pointed out.

The center is keen on involving both international and local experts to develop long-term professional training plans to enhance Kuwait's participation in international Olympiads, beginning with the 2025 competitions.

Students participating in the IChO in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia include Mohammad Al-Najem, Ali Behbehani, Taiba Al-Damkhi, and Faisal Mohammad, while the IPhO students in Isfahan, Iran are Ahmad Hassan, Hussein Al-Awadi, Salem Al-Ajmi, Salman Hussein, and Jasem Jasem.

### Monthly eligibility reviews required

## Public Authority for Manpower sets new guidelines process for 'Graduates Bonus'

KUWAIT CITY, July 22: The Public Authority for Manpower has outlined the process for applying for the "Graduates Bonus," which includes submitting an academic certificate and its equivalency if from a private university or abroad, along with an "IBAN" salary transfer certificate, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

Applications must be submitted online within three months to retain retroactive benefits. Applications can be made via the Sahel platform or the Authority's website.

PAM has emphasized the importance of monthly online reviews to ensure continued eligibility for the reward.

Disbursements may be halted if the recipient receives aid from the Ministry of Social Affairs, applies to the Civil Service Commission, enrolls in a training course with a monthly stipend, or completes their studies. If a disbursement is suspended, it may be reinstated if the cause of suspension is resolved.

Certain situations result in the permanent loss of the right to the reward, even if the reason for loss is rectified. These include gaining employment, registering with the Lawyers' Association for law graduates, declining government job opportunities, or rejecting two job offers in the private sector.

The Authority also provides periodic guidance sessions with certified career counselors. These sessions cover job security, the benefits of working in the private sector, techniques for successful interviews, and identifying career preferences within the private sector.

### Rumaithiya power cut

KUWAIT CITY, July 22: The Ministry of Electricity and Water announced that a power outage occurred in limited parts of the Rumaithiya area, specifically in Block 1, due to the failure of two sub-feeders (11 kV) from the main transformer station "Salwa P."

The emergency teams were on hand to restore electricity as soon as possible.

### Qatoof Al-Khair series

## Awqaf releases two Braille volumes for blind children

By Abdul Nasser Al-Aslami  
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 22: The acting Deputy Secretary-General for Administration and Support Services at the General Secretariat of Awqaf Amal Al-Dalal announced that the secretariat's Information and Documentation Department, with the cooperation of the Kuwait Blind Association, issued two volumes of the "Qatoof Al-Khair Series" in Braille for the blind.



Al-Dalal

In a press statement, Al-Dalal said, "The two volumes contained the following stories: The Beast of Possession, Farah and the House of Fun, The Thread of Goodness and Happiness, The Grandson of the Awqaf, Captain Hilar, The Fruitful Dinar, The Travels of the Dinar, My Grandfather's Glasses, The Owner of the Black Umbrella, The story of Ahmed, Summer Vacation, and Best Friends.

Each volume contained six stories. These stories cover various topics related to endowment, and charitable and volunteer work to form a valuable and enriching addition to libraries for the blind in the State of Kuwait and abroad, and to enrich the endowment collection of an important group in society, namely blind children."

# JULY

## Room Promotion

Weekdays (Saturday - Wednesday)	
Queen Cabana (2 persons inclusive of breakfast) per night.	2 Bedroom Chalet (4 persons inclusive of breakfast) per night.
NOW	NOW
BHD 60.984 net	BHD 136.198 net
Weekends (Thursday & Friday)	
Queen Cabana (2 persons inclusive of breakfast) per night.	2 Bedroom Chalet (4 persons inclusive of breakfast) per night.
NOW	NOW
BHD 76.230 net	BHD 170.247 net

Promo period from 23<sup>rd</sup> June to 31<sup>st</sup> July 2024      Terms & conditions apply\*



## Members complete authentication through Chamber's website

# KCCI launches new online service for document certification

## Khaitan residential project expansion approved

By Inaas Awadh

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 22: In today's session, the Municipal Council approved a request from the Public Authority for Housing Welfare to expand the Khaitan residential project.

The total area allocated for the project in southern Khaitan has been increased from 2,509,197 square meters to 2,584,042 square meters -- an expansion of 74,845 square meters.

As a result of this increase, the number of proposed plots and housing units has risen from 1,200 to 1,448, adding 228 new plots to the project. This expansion aims to accommodate the growing housing needs in the area.



KUNA photo

Part of the Al-Najat Charitable Society's aid distribution.

## Society supports 1,450 refugee orphans in Jordan

# Al-Najat charity expands humanitarian aid

KUWAIT CITY, July 22: (KUNA): Kuwait's Al-Najat Charitable Society announced on Sunday, it has distributed financial sponsorships to 1,450 refugee orphans in Jordan, working in collaboration with official authorities. Abdullah Al-Shehab, Acting Director General of the Society, informed KUNA that the organization has carried out several humanitarian initiatives in Jordan to promote social solidarity and strengthen fraternal bonds.

Al-Shehab highlighted that the Society's efforts go beyond just providing financial sponsorships. "In addition to supporting Al-Najat Orphanage in Jordan, which is home to 54 orphans, the Society has also covered university fees for 42 outstanding students of various nationalities studying in Jordan," he said. The Society is also committed to patient care, having provided treatment for 20 Syrian refugee kidney patients, with this issue being a top priority.

He further explained that the Society's delegations have distributed food baskets and financial aid to impoverished families, assisted 66 Syrian refugee families with their basic needs, including medicine, food, and education. Additionally, the Society has supported productive projects

## Applications for 'Expo 2025' open to ministry employees via website

KUWAIT CITY, July 22, (KUNA): Commissioner-General for Kuwait Pavilion at Expo 2025 Osaka and Assistant Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Information for Administrative and Financial Affairs Salem Al-Watyan announced that applications for candidates will be opened to select organizers and communication officers from the Ministry's employees who will represent Kuwait at the Expo, Monday on the Ministry's website.

In a statement to KUNA, Al-Watyan said, the directives of the Minister of Information and Culture Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi that the selection to be made among the applicants according to competence, stressing the importance of choosing the most qualified and appropriate candidates to ensure the best representation of Kuwait.

The selection also would be made to reflect the positive image of the Kuwait and empowering individuals in international forums, he said.

Al-Watyan added that this comes as a continuation of Kuwait's preparations for its participation at the Expo, which will be held next April to October 2025 in Japan titled "Designing Future Societies for Our Lives."

By implementing the selection process, the Ministry of Information can maximize the benefits of its participation at the Expo and consolidate its international presence, he said.

A Practical interviews and special training courses will be conducted for qualified candidates in preparation for participating at the Expo.

and ensured the provision of clean drinking water.

Al-Shehab expressed gratitude to the charitable individuals who support the Society, acknowledging

their contributions in alleviating the suffering of those in need and enabling impactful humanitarian projects that significantly improve the lives of beneficiaries.

## Our Amir

Continued from Page 1

As is known about His Highness the Amir, he follows up and looks into every matter, and sometimes orders the removal of anything that obstructs work.

This is due to the fact that His Highness realizes more than anyone else that Kuwait has retreated from its surroundings for more than 40 years, and it needs hard work and responsibility. The ministry is not an honorary position, but rather of work, and such a position cannot afford to make mistakes.

## People of

Continued from Page 1

Hezbollah's Secretary-General Hassan Nasrallah, in a televised speech, openly threatened Saudi Arabia, claiming it incited and funded Israel for its attacks on Hezbollah. The Houthi's vow to strike Saudi Arabia again. And Iranian-backed Shiite militias in Iraq provoke and threaten our countries with baseless accusations. Clerics there exploit Ashura's commemoration, using platforms to spread lies against Gulf countries. Muqtada al-Sadr's recent speech is a glaring example of their provocations and insults, especially when he distorts verses of the Holy Quran, compares Najaf to Makkah, and curses the Umayyads entirely, insisting on entering God's house only through Ali's gate.

Moreover, statements from Ahmed Alam Al-Huda, member of the Council of Experts of the Leadership and representative of the Supreme Leader Khorasan Razavi province in Iran, openly admit that Hezbollah, the Houthis, the Popular Mobilization Forces, and others are working for Iran against the countries they are present in. He boasts that Iran has surrounded the Arabian Gulf nations from the north and south with the goal of dismantling them.

Given that these militias are directed by Iran, one must question where the promises of a new relationship stand. Iran's method of waging war through proxies indicates its aim to turn our Arab lands into battlegrounds to further its agenda.

Everything I am warning about today I highlighted decades ago, compiled into a book titled "Is Anybody Listening?". The fundamental question remains: What are we doing to counter the danger that threatens our security and existence?

We must revive the unification of our military forces within the Gulf as a deterrent against any acts of aggression. We are strong and not weak; our reach can extend everywhere, but we must remain vigilant and cautious.

I urge our leaders to focus on the Iraqi border, where the threat of an

Iranian proxy war against us is being brewing. Pay attention to the statements of the Iranian militia leaders in Iraq and their clerics. Understand the gravity of their threats, and you will understand my warnings' urgency.

We must act now to avoid regretting later for not recognizing the seriousness of the situation until it is too late. But the question remains: "Is anybody listening?"

## Expat count

Continued from Page 1

mid-2024, an increase of 6,605 workers.

The statistics showed an increase in expatriate workers in the private sector. Their numbers grew from 1,562,492 at the end of 2023 to 1,589,525 by mid-2024, reflecting an increase of 27,033 workers.

Moreover, expatriate workers in the government sector increased from 111,147 at the end of last year to 112,002 by mid-2024.

Khaled Al-Enezi, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Kuwait Union of Private Sector Workers, expressed concern over the decline in national workers in the private sector.

He criticized the effectiveness of policies aimed at encouraging national employment in the private sector, labeling them as "ink on paper."

Al-Enezi pointed out that the Public Authority for Manpower is merely observing the situation without taking action to address the increasing termination of citizens' services and their dismissal without justification. He cited an instance where a telecommunications company terminated the services of 300 Kuwaitis.

Al-Enezi also highlighted the strain on the state budget due to government employment. He revealed that the salaries item has increased by 40% in recent years, reaching 14.8 billion dinars in the 2024 budget, compared to 9.9 billion in 2015.

## Steps to

Continued from Page 1

The corrective measures include placing the development plan projects approved by the Council of Ministers and the Higher Planning Council into a dedicated chapter titled "Development Program" in the budget of the Ministry of Finance. This approach aims to give special attention to pushing these projects forward and expediting their completion processes by all responsible parties including the Fatwa and Legislation Department and the Central Agency for Public Tenders (CAPT).

The sources revealed that, "For the first time, CAPT has approached the Higher Planning Council to request information on the highest-priority projects."

They explained that one of the

reasons behind the initial disruption of New Kuwait 2035 vision was the submission of 1,200 projects by ministers and public institutions as development projects. Upon review, it was determined that only 120 of these projects qualified as development projects, while the rest were reclassified as operational projects.

The 19 projects that are yet to commence include privatization, development of the northern zone, educational reform, and the carbon neutrality initiative, which is still in the beginning stage.

## Interior Minister

Continued from Page 1

It went on to warn against the rampant use of social media platforms by traffickers, many of whom rely on such methods to advertise their products to large global audiences, with young adolescents often being easy prey to these gangs, it added.

## Kuwait supports

Continued from Page 1

Youth representatives from 16 Arab countries, namely Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, the Emirates, Somalia, Tunisia, Oman, Algeria, Lebanon, Syria, Palestine, Mauritania, Yemen, Libya, Jordan, Qatar, in addition to Egypt (the host country), participate in the Arab Youth Parliament.

The Arab League confirmed on Monday its ongoing commitment to preparing Arab youth for new developments and challenges, emphasizing the importance of understanding and tackling regional issues.

This statement was delivered by Director of the Youth and Sports Department at the League and the official of the Technical Secretariat of the Council of Arab Youth and Sports Ministers Faisal Ghassal, during the opening of the Arab Youth Parliament mock session at the League headquarters, the League said.

## Hunt for

Continued from Page 1

During the meeting, Brigadier Salem Al-Ajmi, Secretary of the Supreme Traffic Council, along with the Chairman of the Public Transport Committee, presented a detailed visual report.

The presentation highlighted the committee's observations on the negative aspects and defects that have led to the decline and deterioration of public transport services, particularly bus services, in Kuwait.

The report included a comprehensive set of proposals and recommendations aimed at improving and developing public transport services for the benefit of both citizens and residents.

KUWAIT CITY, July 22: The Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI) has announced a new service aimed at enhancing convenience for its members, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

In collaboration with the Authentication Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Chamber has streamlined the process for certifying invoices and certificates of origin.

This new service eliminates the

need for members to visit both the Chamber and the Authentication Department - Consular Administration at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Instead, members can now complete the entire authentication process online.

Here's how it works: Members submit their application for certification through the Chamber's website, including payment of the prescribed fees. The Chamber then forwards the

certificate to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for authentication and fee collection. Once certified, the document is sent directly back to the member.

The service became available as of last Thursday and can be accessed through the Chamber's website: www.kuwaitchamber.org.kw. This initiative aims to simplify administrative procedures and improve efficiency for KCCI members.

# Kuwait's integrity strategy deadline extended to 2025

Nazaha reports 78% achievement

By Inaas Awadh

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 22: First Administrative Specialist in Management in the Planning and Follow-up Office at Kuwait Anti-Corruption Authority (Nazaha) Elaf Al-Shamlan said the period for implementing the first Kuwait strategy to enhance integrity and combat corruption has been extended until the end of 2025, instead of the end of the current year.

In an interview with the newspaper, Al-Shamlan revealed the strategy has achieved 78 percent of its goals since its launching in 2019 till date. She stated that the most notable achievements of the strategy include improving Kuwait's ranking in the Corruption Perceptions Index by 22 notches, and the launching of 'Sahel' and 'Business Sahel' applications for commercial companies. She pointed out that the two applications provided 356 services to about 35 government agencies as at the end of 2023, with a total of 30 million services according to the statistics issued in January 2024.

She added the first Kuwait Strategy for Promoting Integrity and Anti-Corruption was launched in 2019 to provide an integrated guiding framework for the State of Kuwait's efforts to enhance integrity and combat corruption through a comprehensive plan that includes legislation, policies and executive procedures for the realization of the vision.

Nazaha led the project to prepare and launch the strategy in accordance with Article Five of Law No. 2/2016 on its establishment, which mandates the authority to "develop a comprehensive national strategy for integrity, transparency and anti-corruption; prepare the mechanisms, plans and programs for its implementation; and follow up its implementation with the concerned authorities."

Al-Shamlan enumerated the four objectives of the strategy as follows:

- Protecting the integrity of the public sector and developing the effectiveness and efficiency of the public services it provides within a framework of transparency and accountability.

- Encouraging the private sector to contribute to enhancing integrity and combating corruption.

- Enabling society to contribute to building a culture that embraces integrity against corruption.

- Enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of bodies specialized in promoting integrity and combating corruption.

She clarified that each goal includes a set of priorities and initiatives that are implemented by various government agencies. The extent of achievement is measured through a monitoring and evaluation mechanism and a set of performance measurement indicators. The authority publishes annual reports on the progress of the strategy on its website <https://www.nazaha.gov.kw>, she added.

She indicated that the rate of completion of the strategy has reached about 78 percent, and that the most important aspect of which is the advancement of Kuwait's ranking in the Corruption Perceptions Index by 22 notches since the launching of the strategy.

She said this is in addition to strengthening the financial disclosure system and committing to submit financial disclosure statements for those subject to the authority's Integrity Law, as well as the launching the 'Sahel' and 'Business Sahel' applications for commercial companies.

The number of services on the 'Sahel' application as at the end of 2023 reached 356 services provided by 35 government agencies, with a total of 30 million services according to the statistics issued in January 2024, she disclosed.

"In addition, we approved many legislation and laws like the Right to Access Information Law in 2020 and the Conflict of Interest Law in 2023; while we amended some provisions of the Penal Code, including defining and assigning criminal liability to a legal person in corruption crimes in 2023," she noted.

She went on to say that Nazaha prepared and approved a mechanism for rewarding and honoring whistleblowers of corruption cases in 2020. She cited as examples the two whistleblowers who were rewarded through this mechanism in 2021 and 2023; while maintaining confidentiality to protect the whistleblower after the issuance of the final ruling. "We were able to include anti-corruption concepts in the school curricula for all educational levels in coordination with the Ministry of Education," she affirmed.

She pointed out the most notable achievement is the mechanism for combating the forgery of university and pro-

fessional certificates by the Ministry of Higher Education in 2021. The ministry is currently evaluating the application of this mechanism on an annual basis, she confirmed.

She added the Ministry of Commerce issued a decision to determine the identity of the actual beneficiary; and to provide a number of initiatives to private civil society institutions in the field of community oversight, the number of which has reached 36 initiatives.

The strategy includes as well the development and approval of the codes of professional conduct for public sector employees, members of the judiciary and prosecutors, members of the police and employees of the Ministry of Interior. The Kuwait Institute for Judicial Studies trained 83 prosecutors, judges of the Court of First Instance and 313 members of the Public Prosecution, she confirmed.

She indicated that Nazaha was commissioned by the Council of Ministers to form the Supreme Committee whose tasks include leading and coordinating the national strategy to enhance integrity and combat corruption, headed by Nazaha and with the membership of 19 officials representing the most prominent agencies implementing the strategy's initiatives, stakeholders, and representatives of the private sector and civil society.

The Supreme Committee is responsible for general supervision of the progress of the strategy's work; providing guidance and resources required to ensure the progress of work; reviewing, approving and publishing reports on monitoring and evaluating the strategy; and approving fundamental amendments to the strategy and its implementation plans.

Each member of the committee is responsible for following up the implementation of what is required by the entity it represents within the axes of Kuwait's strategic initiatives to promote integrity and combat corruption.

Nazaha formed four technical committees specialized in each of the four strategic goals. The technical committees follow up with the parties concerned with implementation, collect periodic achievement reports from the implementing agencies, analyze them, and submit them to the management of the Planning and Follow-up Office in the authority. They prepare periodic reports on business progress, including the most difficult challenges, lessons learned, and recommendations to be presented to the Supreme Committee for Accreditation and Publication.

One of the most difficult challenges that the strategy faced at the start of the implementation phase was the Corona pandemic and the accompanying precautionary measures. Therefore, the Supreme Committee of the strategy took a decision at its meeting in March 2024 to extend its implementation period until the end of 2025, instead of the end of the current year.

With reference to the New Kuwait Vision 2035 and development areas in the development plan of the State of Kuwait, specifically the fifth program concerned with developing an interconnected and transparent government; this program aims to achieve three pillars of the New Kuwait Vision -- effective government administration, advanced infrastructure and a sustainable diversified economy.

Project No. 5 of the Program for Developing an Interconnected and Transparent Government includes preparation and implementation of Kuwait's strategy to enhance integrity and combat corruption. This project aims to raise the level of transparency, consolidate the rule of law, enhance economic competitiveness, and contribute to achieving the goals of the State of Kuwait in reform and institutional transformation in implementation of the United Nations Convention against Corruption in order to achieve better rates on sustainable development indicators in accordance with the New Kuwait vision to improve the position of the country on international indicators related to integrity and anti-corruption.

The vision, mission, goals and projects that seek to fight corruption of all kinds and the possibility of its presence in the government or private sector or even in society have been defined. This is to enable the strategic plan to reduce corruption by enhancing transparency and accountability.

The media is considered one of the most important means used to raise awareness and uncover corruption, because of its widespread characteristics and differences in its methods used in audio, print media and social media.

This is the reason why the national strategy in the 10th priority focused on initiatives aimed at strengthening efforts with civil society organizations in the field of public awareness against corruption, as well as enhancing cooperation and communication between media outlets and government agencies on issues related to integrity and anti-corruption. Workshops were held for journalists and media professionals to raise awareness on the role of the media in exposing corruption and to enhance the role of investigative journalism in revealing and fighting against corruption.

## 'Incentive' program mechanism explained

# Hawalli Governor advocates for enhanced community role in resource conservation

KUWAIT CITY, July 22: Hawalli Governor Ali Al-Asfar has emphasized the critical role of community awareness in conserving



Al-Asfar

electricity and water, especially during peak times, to ensure their sustainability, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

During his meeting with members of the Rationalization Committee at the Ministry of Electricity and Water, he highlighted that the governorate provides all necessary resources to educate the community on the importance of energy conservation.

This includes collaborating with cooperative societies in the governorate to implement the decision to amend regulations for organizing cooperative work and beautifying areas through tree planting.

## KFAED launches sanitation project in Yemen

KUWAIT CITY, July 22: The Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development has announced the launch of a significant sanitation infrastructure project in Aden, Yemen, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

This initiative, funded by the Kuwait Fund in partnership with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, reflects the Fund's commitment to supporting humanitarian efforts through collaborative

development projects.

The project is expected to benefit approximately 1.5 million people by 2026. It aims to significantly enhance the quality of life and health conditions in the region.

By improving sanitation infrastructure, the project will help prevent water-borne diseases and reduce environmental pollution, thereby contributing to a healthier and more sustainable living environment.

The campaign involves holding lectures, seminars, workshops, and discussion groups, as well as evaluating vital buildings in the governorate. Additionally, the mechanism of the "Incentive" program for rationalization was explained.



## World News Roundup

## Europe

## FM to visit NKorea

## Assailant kills 5 at Croatia care home

ZAGREB, Croatia, July 22, (AP): An armed assailant entered a care home for older people in central Croatia Monday and opened fire, killing five people and wounding several others, authorities and media reports said.

The Index news portal said five people died immediately, while others were still receiving medical assistance. The suspect fled the scene, but the police soon caught him in a cafe near the facility in the town of Daruvar, the report said.

"We are appalled by the murder of five people in the Home for the Elderly in Daruvar," Croatia's prime minister, **Andrej Plenkovic**, wrote on X. "We express our condolences to the families of the victims and hope for the recovery of the wounded."



Plenkovic

Police said they were informed after 10 am Monday that a man using firearms killed and wounded several people at the nursing home. The suspect is "under police supervision," said a statement by the regional police office.

The N1 regional television reported that the shooter was born in 1973, that he was a former fighter from the 1991-95 war in Croatia and a relative of one of the nursing home's residents.

The attack has left the quiet town stunned and grieving.

The mayor of Daruvar, Damir Lnenick, told N1 that everyone was shocked by the murder.



**Belarus FM to visit NKorea:** Belarus' foreign minister is to visit North Korea this week, the two countries announced Monday, a trip expected to focus on discussions of trilateral cooperation involving Russia in the face of their separate confrontations with the West.

Belarusian Foreign Minister Maxim Ryzhenkov will come to North Korea on Tuesday for a three-day trip at the invitation of the North Korean Foreign Ministry, the North's official Korean Central News Agency reported in a one-sentence report. Belarus' Foreign Ministry issued a similar brief statement on his planned trip.

Neither country provided details of Ryzhenkov's itinerary in North Korea, though observers say he's expected to meet his North Korean counterpart Choe Son Hui. Ryzhenkov would be Belarus' first foreign minister to travel to North Korea, according to South Korea's Unification Ministry.



**Man dies after being struck by lightning:** A man died after being struck by lightning near the summit of Germany's highest peak, police said Monday.

The 18-year-old German resident was one of a group of three young men who took the mountain railway up the Zugspitze late Sunday afternoon and then continued to the summit, which is a climb of about 80 meters (260 feet) from a terrace used by many visitors.

Lightning struck repeatedly as the men descended from the summit and the 18-year-old suffered a fatal electric shock, police said. Recovery efforts were complicated by the ongoing storm.

The Zugspitze sits at 2,962 meters (9,718 feet) above sea level and is located in the Alps on Germany's border with Austria.



**Anti-whaling campaigner arrested:** Greenland police said they arrested a veteran environmental activist and anti-whaling campaigner on Sunday on an international arrest warrant issued by Japan.

Paul Watson was arrested when his ship docked in Nuuk, Greenland's capital, a police statement said. He will be brought before a district court with a request to detain him pending a decision on his possible extradition to Japan, the statement said.

The Captain Paul Watson Foundation said that more than a dozen police boarded the vessel and led Watson away in handcuffs when it stopped to refuel. The foundation said the ship, along with 25 volunteer crew members, was en route to the North Pacific on a mission to intercept a new Japanese whaling ship.



**Russia, Ukraine trade attacks:** Russia and Ukraine exchanged drone, missile and shelling attacks on Sunday. At least two people were killed in Ukrainian strikes on the partly Russian-occupied Donetsk region, Russian state media said, while Ukrainian officials said Russian strikes wounded at least five people.

Along the front line in the east, Russia said it had taken control of two villages, one in the Kharkiv region and one in the Luhansk region.

Ukrainian shelling of Russia-held areas of the Donetsk region killed two people in the village of Horlivka, Russian state news agency RIA Novosti said.



**Russia scrambles fighter jets:** Russia said Sunday it scrambled fighter jets to intercept two US military long-range bomber aircraft that approached the Russian border over the Barents Sea in the Arctic.

"The crews of the Russian fighters identified the aerial target as a pair of US Air Force B-52H strategic bombers," Moscow's defense ministry wrote on the social media platform Telegram, specifying that the planes scrambled were MiG-29 and MiG-31 fighters.

The US routinely carries out flights over international waters. Moscow has recently responded more aggressively to the exercises, accusing the US in June of using its reconnaissance drone flights over neutral waters in the Black Sea to help Ukraine strike Russian-occupied Crimea.



**Protesters detained in Austria:** Police said Sunday that they detained more than 50 people as they clashed with protesters trying to disrupt a march by hundreds of right-wing extremists in the Austrian capital.

The demonstrations on Saturday came as Austria's political parties gear up for September parliamentary elections that are expected to see the far-right make significant gains.

Anti-fascist groups and left-leaning political parties had called for protests against a demonstration and march by identitarian and other hard-right activists, the Austrian Press Agency reported. Social media posts showed marchers in downtown Vienna with a banner calling for "remigration," a term used to advocate for the mass return of migrants to their countries of origin.

Hundreds of officers were deployed to keep apart the opposing groups - each several hundred strong.



US President Joe Biden, (left), and Vice President Kamala Harris stand on stage at the Democratic National Committee winter meeting, Feb. 3, 2023, in Philadelphia. She's already broken barriers, and now Harris could soon become the first Black woman to head a major party's presidential ticket after Biden's ended his reelection bid. Harris was endorsed by Biden on July 21, after he stepped aside amid widespread concerns about the viability of his candidacy. (AP)

## Politics

## Biden's decision to drop out leaves Dems relieved

## Harris gets chance to press reset on race

WASHINGTON, July 22, (AP): For the past year, the presidential campaign seemed destined to be a monotonous slog featuring two candidates, President Joe Biden and former president Donald Trump, that voters didn't really want.

But that all changed on a quiet Sunday afternoon just 107 days before the election.

Biden's decision to drop out of the race and endorse Vice President Kamala Harris as his successor resets the campaign with a swiftness that is unparalleled in modern American politics.

Once a contest between two elderly white men, the election will likely force Trump to contend with the much younger Harris, who was consolidating support among Democrats and would be the first woman of color atop a major party's ticket.

"It shakes things up entirely," said Dan Pfeiffer, a former adviser to President Barack Obama. "It turns everything on its head."

The crumbling of Biden's reelection effort, which began with his shaky debate performance last month, has left both parties scrambling. Although no one has stepped forward to challenge Harris for the Democratic nomination, she still faces the unprecedented challenge of taking over a campaign only four weeks before the party gathers in Chicago for its convention.

## Rematch

At the same time, Trump must pivot his focus to Harris after designing his campaign for a rematch with Biden. Trump's team claimed they were prepared to run against the vice president, and Republicans stepped up their criticism during the party's convention last week in Milwaukee.

However, Trump himself expressed disappointment that "we have to start all over again" with the campaign. He mused on Truth Social, his social media platform, that Republicans should be "reimbursed for fraud" for all the money they've spent running against Biden.

The shakeup in the presidential race came after an extraordinarily tumultuous month in American politics, starting with an unusually early debate between Biden and Trump.

The June 27 showdown catalyzed concerns that Biden, 81, was too old for a second term.

As Democrats pushed to dislodge him from the top of the ticket, Trump

barely survived an assassination attempt on July 13 during a campaign rally in Butler, Pennsylvania.

Then, on Sunday, Biden bowed to pressure within his party to step aside. He swiftly endorsed Harris, who is the first woman, Black person and person of South Asian descent to serve as vice president.

The breakneck developments left the political world gasping for breath as everyone tried to reorient themselves to a new reality.

Trump, who is 78, will almost certainly be the oldest candidate on the ballot after spending months battering Biden over his age. Harris is only 59, giving her a claim to representing generational change that Biden could never fulfill.

## Assail

In addition, Harris is a former prosecutor, providing a fresh opportunity to assail Trump's status as a convicted felon after being found guilty in a hush money trial earlier this year.

She is also the daughter of immigrants, raised by a Jamaican father and an Indian mother, a background that heightens the contrast with Trump, who has used racist, sexist and nativist rhetoric.

Harris tried to summarize their differences in a campaign advertisement five years ago, when she was seeking the Democratic nomination before dropping out and joining Biden's campaign as his running mate.

"In every possible way, this is the anti-Trump," the narrator said. "So if that's what you're looking for in your next president, there's really only one - Kamala."

After weeks of uncertainty about who would be at the top of the Democratic Party's ticket in November, many voters expressed relief over the news that Biden would drop his reelection bid and began to think about who might replace him in a dramatically altered election landscape.

Jerod Keene, a 40-year-old athletic trainer from swing-state Arizona, had planned to vote for Biden in November but was thankful for the president's decision, calling it "inevitable." Keene said he's excited about the next candidate, hoping it will be Harris, whom Biden endorsed on Sunday.

"Kamala Harris is the easiest pick based on the fact that she's vice presi-

dent and it would be tough for the party to try to go a different direction on that," said Keene, who lives in Tucson. "And I think she seems ready."

The Democratic Party has been deeply divided since Biden's poor debate performance on June 27, which left many questioning his ability to defeat Trump in November and secure another term. Party leaders had increasingly called for Biden to step aside, but his reluctance to bow out left voters nationwide uncertain about who would face Trump in November.

## Perform

Recent AP-NORC polling revealed that nearly two-thirds of Democrats felt Biden should withdraw from the presidential race, while a majority believe Harris would perform well in the top slot.

Keene's relief that the saga surrounding Biden's decision was over was echoed by voters nationwide in interviews with The Associated Press. In key swing states such as Wisconsin, Arizona, Michigan, Pennsylvania, Georgia, and Nevada, many expressed optimism about the party's next nominee - whether it be Harris or someone else.

In Pittsburgh, Fred Johnston said he has been terrified of another Trump presidency and had long worried that Biden couldn't beat Trump again. After seeing Biden's wobbly debate performance, he was eager for Biden to drop out and hand off his candidacy to Harris.

"Kamala is someone we can vote for, and that's what we need," Johnston said.

He also thinks she can win Pennsylvania: "I have no logical basis for this, but it's good to have hope. I haven't had hope for a while."

In Las Vegas, Lucy Ouano, 68, said she was proud of both Biden's decision to drop out of the race and his move to quickly endorse Harris.

"He's ending on a great note," Ouano said. "Trump should be worried. He's now running against someone strong."

Ouano, who emigrated in 1960 to the U.S. from Thailand as a young child with her parents, said she couldn't have imagined this outcome just a few weeks ago when she attended a Harris rally in Las Vegas meant to quiet concerns about Biden's reelection campaign.



Romania's Foreign Minister Luminita Teodora Odobescu, left, talks with Croatia's Foreign Minister Gordan Grlic Radman during a meeting of EU foreign ministers at the European Council building in Brussels on July 22. European Union foreign ministers on Monday meet to discuss Russian aggression against Ukraine and the situation in the Middle East. (AP)



Abbott



Parker

## America

**Authorities search for plane:** Alaska authorities are conducting a search for a missing airplane with three people onboard.

Alaska State Troopers received a report from the US Coast Guard of a missing plane shortly before 7:30 pm Saturday, the state Department of Public Safety said in a statement.

The single-propeller, 1948 Beach Craft Bonanza was flying near Mount Crillon in Southeast Alaska with a pilot and two passengers.

The plane did not arrive on schedule in Yakutat, about 275 miles (442 kilometers) northwest of Juneau.

The ongoing search involves state troopers, the Coast Guard and the Alaska Rescue Coordination Center, the statement said. (AP)



**4 firefighters injured:** A Dallas Fire-Rescue engine crashed off an expressway bridge on Sunday and landed on a railway track below, injuring four firefighters, officials said.

The crash happened just after 6 am on the I-345 Expressway, Dallas Fire-Rescue Capt Robert Borse said. He said it was not immediately known Sunday what caused the accident or if other vehicles were involved.

All four firefighters were taken to the Baylor University Medical Center, where they were listed in stable condition Sunday morning, Borse said.

Portions of the expressway and the Dallas Area Rapid Transit rail system were shut down after the crash.

Images of the scene show the engine on its side in the middle of the DART tracks, surrounded by firefighters. On the rain-slickened pavement above, a massive highway sign structure collapsed over four lanes of the highway. Texas governor is **Greg Abbott**. (AP)



**Philadelphia shooting kills 3:** Three men were killed and at least six other people wounded in an early morning shootout at a gathering in west Philadelphia, authorities said.

Police said more than 100 people were present in the Carroll Park neighborhood when gunfire broke out just after 2 am Sun-

day. Police said their preliminary information indicated "an exchange of gunfire between multiple parties" and shell casings of more than one caliber were recovered.

A 33-year-old man was pronounced dead at the scene and two other men aged 23 and 29 were pronounced dead later at Penn Presbyterian Medical Center, police said in



This photo taken on July 21, 2024 shows a military and civilian parade of Belgian National Day celebrations in Brussels, Belgium. (Xinhua)

a statement. Their names weren't immediately released. A 26-year-old woman and five men ranging in age between 27 and 30 were listed in stable condition, police said. Philadelphia mayor is **Cherelle Parker**.

Inspector D.F. Pace told reporters at the scene that at least 25 to 30 spent shell casings were found at the scene. (AP)

**Rescue teams find hiker:** Rescue teams found a man who had been reported missing more than two weeks ago in the Red River Gorge, a wilderness area full of steep cliffs and jagged terrain in eastern Kentucky.

Searchers found 48-year-old Scott A. Hem Saturday afternoon near a cliff line after hearing someone calling for help, according to the Wolfe County Search and Rescue Team, which responds to emergencies in the area. Hem had been hiking in the area to look for waterfalls, his family told searchers.

Hem was hoisted out of the rugged area by helicopter after Wolfe County rescuers contacted Kentucky State Police for assistance.

Search crews began an intense search for Hem, who is from Ohio, early last week, using dogs and drawing on information from a diary Hem wrote in about locations he wanted to explore in the Red River Gorge. (AP)



## Lat/Am

## Migrants leave Mexico

## Venezuelans band to 'safeguard' poll

SABANETA, Venezuela, July 22, (AP): Tears roll down the face of Tanya Colmenares when she recalls her truncated dream of being a lawyer, which ended after two semesters in law school when she had to drop out to survive Venezuela's complex crisis.

While she never got to defend a client in court, she has agreed to try to defend something far greater at the end of this month: Venezuela's democracy.

Colmenares is among the thousands of supporters of Venezuela's typically fractured opposition who have agreed to organize, mobilize and support voters during the highly anticipated July 28 presidential election.

The main opposition coalition is banking on their efforts, some led by parties and others formed organically, to get people to the polls to cast ballots as well as to deter government actors from intimidating or coercing voters.

The lack of a truly independent electoral authority makes such work critical for the alliance's ability to verify or contest the outcome. The Unitary Platform coalition hopes the mere presence of large numbers of watchful voters outside polling places will neutralize some ruling party strategies that in the past left them without representatives inside the facilities, kept them away from vote counts and rendered them voiceless in the event of irregularities.



Maduro

## Cradle

The western Venezuela city of Sabaneta is the cradle of Chavismo - the self-described socialist movement founded by the late President Hugo Chávez that has dominated Venezuela since the turn of the century. It is also where Colmenares is banding with nine other neighbors to promote the vote and ensure opposition supporters reach their polling place. They are ready to find voters rides, provide support should they encounter ruling-party checkpoints or hand out water or food if long lines form.

"Whether through social media, calls, text messages (or) personally, whatever way is easier for people, the important thing is to engage with the community and get the job done," Colmenares, a stay-at-home mother of three, said after a neighborhood group meeting earlier this month.

This month's election is unlike any the ruling party has faced since Chávez was elected president in December 1998 and began transitioning Venezuela into what he described as the 21st century's socialism.

Now led by Chávez's heir, President Nicolás Maduro, the United Socialist Party of Venezuela is as unpopular as ever among many voters. Weak oil prices, corruption and economic mismanagement by the government plunged the country into a crisis that has lasted more than 11 years. Young people have had to give up college dreams, children have gone hungry and millions have emigrated. Economic sanctions imposed last decade failed to topple Maduro, as the United States and other governments hoped, but they contributed to Venezuela's decline.

Opposition politicians for years boycotted elections they saw as rigged, but they overcame deep divisions to coalesce behind a single candidate this time.

## Sustained

They also kept that spot on the ballot despite sustained government repression, including the ban from the race of María Corina Machado, the strongest challenger to Maduro's bid for a third term in office.

Machado, who overwhelmingly won the coalition's October primary, is now backing the coalition's replacement candidate, former diplomat Edmundo González Urrutia. Pollsters project up to 13 million people will cast ballots July 28.

The opposition estimates that more than a half million people have registered for its somewhat loose structure of neighborhood groups nicknamed "comanditos" - or tiny commandos.

Group members, by now all familiar with the ruling party's efforts to tilt the balance on election days, expect gas stations to not open, power outages to affect opposition strongholds, police and Maduro loyalists to block roads, and the military to limit access to polling centers.

Some groups are holding raffles and selling traditional tamale-like hallacas to raise funds to print promotional materials for their neighborhoods and cook meals for opposition supporters. Others are storing gasoline at home and offering their cars or motorcycles to transport voters.

All have been instructed by the coalition to remain outside polling centers after voting to fight fear among voters and their voting center representatives, whose duties include securing a copy of tally certificates printed by electronic voting machines after polls close.

## Also:

**CIUDAD HIDALGO, México:** Hundreds of migrants from around a dozen countries left from Mexico's southern border on foot Sunday, as they attempt to make it to the U.S. border.

Some of the members of the group said they hoped to make it to the U.S. border before elections are held in November, because they fear that if Donald Trump wins, he will follow through on a promise to close the border to asylum-seekers.

"We are running the risk that permits (to cross the border) might be blocked," said Miguel Salazar, a migrant from El Salvador. He feared that a new Trump administration might stop granting appointments to migrants through CBP One, an app used by asylum-seekers to enter the U.S. legally - by getting appointments at U.S. border posts, where they make their cases to officials.

The app only works once migrants reach Mexico City, or states in northern Mexico.

"Everyone wants to use that route," said Salazar, 37. The group left Sunday from the southern Mexican town of Ciudad Hidalgo, which is next to a river that marks Mexico's border with Guatemala. Some said they had been waiting in Ciudad Hidalgo for weeks for permits to travel to towns further to the north.

Migrants trying to pass through Mexico in recent years have organized large groups to try to reduce the risk of being attacked by gangs or stopped by Mexican immigration officials as they travel. But the caravans tend to break up in southern Mexico, as people get tired of walking for hundreds of miles (kilometers).

Recently, Mexico has also made it more difficult for migrants to reach the U.S. border on buses and trains.

Travel permits are rarely awarded to migrants who enter the country without visas and thousands of migrants have been detained by immigration officers at checkpoints in the center and north of Mexico and bused back to towns deep in the south of the country.



Philippines President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. (center), receives a standing ovation during his third State of the Nation Address as Senate President Francis Escudero, (top left) and House Speaker Martin Romualdez, (top right) look on at the House of Representatives in Quezon City, Philippines, on July 22. (AP)

## Asia

## Nepal's new PM wins vote of confidence

## Philippines prez orders closure of POGOs

MANILA, Philippines, July 22, (AP): President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. on Monday ordered an immediate ban on widespread and mostly Chinese-run online gaming operations in the Philippines accusing them of venturing into crimes, including financial scams, human trafficking, torture, kidnappings and murders.

Marcos also said in his state-of-the-nation address that the Philippines would press efforts to strengthen its defensive capability by forging security alliances with friendly countries to counter threats to its territorial interests in the South China Sea, adding that his country would only settle disputes through diplomacy.

He made the remarks on the territorial conflicts before legislators, top officials and diplomats at the House of Representatives after the worst confrontation between Chinese and Filipino forces in the disputed waters last month.

## Crackdown

Marcos' decision to ban the Chinese-run online gambling outfits - estimated to number more than 400 across the Philippines and employing tens of thousands of Chinese and Southeast Asian nationals - came amid an ongoing government crackdown backed by Beijing.

That led to the shutdown of several sprawling complexes with dozens of buildings, where authorities suspect thousands of Chinese, Vietnamese and other nationals mostly from Southeast Asia have been illegally recruited and forced to work in dismal conditions.

Relatedly, Philippine senators have ordered the arrest of a town mayor in Tarlac province north of Manila who has failed to appear in public hearings where allegations against her were being investigated, including her alleged links to a large online gambling outfit near her townhall and suspicions that she hid her Chinese nationality fraudulently to be able to run for a public office reserved only for Filipinos.

The mayor, Alice Guo, has denied any wrongdoing but has been suspended from her post with her financial assets ordered frozen. Philippine senators say the massive online gambling industry has flourished largely due to corruption in regulatory agencies and payoffs to local officials.

"Disguising as legitimate entities, their operations have ventured into illicit areas furthest from gaming such as financial scamming, money laun-

## Rescuers search for dozens missing after flooding in China kills 25 people

BEIJING, July 22, (AP): Rescuers on Monday were searching for dozens missing after heavy rains caused flash flooding and a bridge collapse in different parts of China, killing at least 25 people. Flash flooding tore through a village in southwestern Sichuan province in the middle of the night Saturday, and rescuers said 10 people died and they were searching for another 29 missing. Days of heavy rain swelled the river that runs through the village of Xinhua in Hanyuan county. The water swept away 40 houses on the riverbank, according to local media, while also breaking bridges and cutting off roads.

In northwestern Shaanxi province, vehicles fell into a rushing river when part of a highway bridge collapsed late Friday, and state broadcaster CCTV reported at least 15 deaths confirmed as of Monday. A photo released by China's Xinhua news agency showed a section of the bridge snapped and folded at almost a 90-degree angle into the rushing brown water below.

Rescuers said Saturday some 20 cars and 30 people were missing.

The collapse raised more questions about the safety of China's road and bridge infrastructure, which was built rapidly in recent decades. A similar collapse in May in Guangdong province killed 36 people.

## Also:

**HONG KONG:** A top Chinese university fired a professor on Monday, a day after a graduate student accused him of harassment on social media in a rare public allegation and posted recordings as evidence, drawing widespread support.

The woman, who identified herself as Wang Di, said she is studying in a doctoral program at Renmin University of China's School of Liberal Arts. She posted a 59-minute video on Sunday on the Weibo social media platform in which she said the professor, an ex-vice dean and former Communist Party representative at the school, physically and verbally abused her. She also said that for more than two years after she rejected him, he assigned her many tasks, scolded her and threatened that she would not graduate.

pointed prime minister secured overwhelming support in parliament on Sunday with more than two-thirds of members voting in his favor.

Prime Minister Khadga Prasad Oli got the support from members of his Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist-Leninist), his main coalition partner Nepal Congress and several smaller parties.

During voting in the House of Representatives, the lower house of parliament, 188 out of a total of 275 members voted in his favor during the vote of confidence motion. Speaker Dev Raj Ghimire announced.

Supporting members applauded soon after the announcement was made and they lined up to shake hands with Oli to congratulate him. Oli was named Nepal's prime minister last week after the previous coalition government collapsed after Oli's party withdrew their support earlier this month.

The next election in Nepal is scheduled for 2027.

This is the fourth time that Oli, 72, is serving as prime minister of the Himalayan nation.

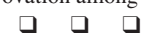
dering, prostitution, human trafficking, kidnapping, brutal torture, even murder," Marcos said. "The grave abuse and disrespect to our system of laws must stop."

Marcos ordered the government's gaming agency to wind down the operations of the so-called Philippine offshore gaming operators, or POGOs, by yearend, drawing loud applause from legislators and top officials.

He instructed labor officials to look for alternative jobs for Filipino workers who would be displaced because of the shutdown.

On Manila's increasingly hostile disputes with Beijing, Marcos stressed the Philippines would not back down but would only resort to peaceful means to resolve any dispute.

"The West Philippine Sea is not only a figment of our imagination. It belongs to us," Marcos said, using the Philippine name for the stretch of the South China Sea that Manila claims. His remarks drew loud applause and a standing ovation among lawmakers.



**KATHMANDU:** Nepal's newly ap-

providing substantial support to the Somali National Army (SNA), delivering vehicles, trucks, combat equipment, and life-saving materials.

During the event, Somali Deputy Prime Minister Salah Jama officially inau-

gurated the shooting ranges, multi-purpose track, and equipment.

The EU has played a significant role for decades in supporting Somalia's security sector and enhancing safety and security for all, committing about 120 million US dol-

lars to support the SNA to date. (Xinhua)

**No to violent protests - Ruto:** Kenya President William Ruto vowed on Sunday that his government will not allow violent protests that have led to untold suffering in several parts of the country.

Ruto who has been under intense pressure from young protesters to drop high taxes, cut wastage and fight corruption, said the government will take tough measures to protect lives and property of all Kenyans and assured the country that firm security has been put in place to ensure no group threatens the prevailing peace.

The president said he had extended an open invitation to everyone, encouraging the Gen-Z protesters to voice their concerns following the deadly protests, which has claimed more than 50 lives and several injuries, including destruction of property across the country.

He strongly condemned Gen-Z for evading discussions with him during an X Space meeting and in the planned national dialogue.

"Enough is enough. They (protesters) demanded that I withdraw the Finance Bill 2024, and I did that. I called them for a conversation, but they directed me to X Space. I went there, but they fled. Now, I have called for a dialogue, but they have refused, saying that they are faceless and formless," Ruto said in Bomet County, northwest Kenya. (Xinhua)



Nepalese Prime Minister Khadga Prasad Oli arrives to ask for a vote of confidence in parliament in Kathmandu, Nepal on July 21. Nepal's newly appointed prime minister secured overwhelming support in parliament on Sunday with more than two-thirds of members voting in his favor. (AP)



Ruto



Mahamat

## Africa

**AU calls for integration:** The African Union (AU) on Sunday opened its sixth mid-year coordination meeting in Accra, the capital of Ghana, calling for the peace and solidarity of the continent.

The meeting on the theme of "Educate and Skill Africa for the 21st Century" brought together the AU, the Regional Economic Communities (RECs), and the AU members, among some others.

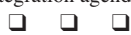
In his remarks, AU Commission Chairperson Moussa Faki Mahamat stressed the role the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) played in promoting integration in the continent.

"The AfCFTA is obliged to become a lever that catalyzes structural reforms which, in turn, will facilitate the creation of wealth, through the improvement of economic governance, the mobilization of financing and human capital," Faki said.

The chairperson further called on African countries to maximize the potential of the AfCFTA to make it an engine of growth and diversification of the economies to increase trade within the continent.

Ghanaian President Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo, who opened the meeting, said some regions in Africa are still being plagued by conflict, instability, and violence that hinder development and pose a threat to broader continental security. The president therefore called on his African counterparts to work hard to find solutions to a myriad of conflicts on the continent.

The AU introduced its mid-year coordination meeting in 2017 as the principal forum to align the work of the AU and RECs and coordinate the implementation of the continental integration agenda. (Xinhua)



**EU opens training facilities:** The European Union said on Sunday that it has inaugurated newly constructed facilities at the General Dhagabadan Training Center (GDTC) in Mogadishu, the capital of Somalia.

The EU said the training camp, managed by Somali Armed Forces, is used by EU Training Mission in Somalia (EUTM-S) to train Somali National Army and Somali Police Force, and symbolizes the collective commitment to advancing training and cooperation between the EU and Somalia.

"This event highlights the EU's enduring values and principles, reinforcing its steadfast support for Somalia's security," the EU said in a statement issued in Mogadishu.

EU Ambassador Karin Johansson reiterated the EU's commitment to assisting the Somali government in enhancing security.

The European Peace Facility (EPF), which has also contributed to the construction of the training facility itself, has been



Children try rubbing at an art space themed on Chinese culture in Qingdao, east China's Shandong Province on July 19. The art space held experience activities on traditional rubbing techniques for children during the summer vacation. (Xinhua)



Change	Closing pts	Change	Closing pts
EGYPT	- EGX 30	+209.10	28,992.34
SAUDI	- TASI	-28.17	12,174.76
DUBAI	- DFMGI	-1.97	4,179.00
JAPAN	- Nikkei 225	-464.79	39,599.00
PHILIPPINES	- PSEi	-79.64	6,712.05
PAKISTAN	- KSE 100	-1,263.54	78,644.88

# Business

## Dollar index rises to 104.3

### Gold prices drop over 2 pct to \$2,400 an ounce

KUWAIT CITY, July 22: Gold prices fell over 2% to \$2,400 an ounce by the end of last week's trading, following a profit-taking period after peaking at \$2,480 an ounce mid-week, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

According to a specialized report from Dar Al Sabayek, gold prices were negatively impacted by the recovery of the US dollar, with the dollar index rising to 104.3 points against other major currencies.

The report also noted that yields on 10-year US Treasury bonds increased to 4.21%, amid growing speculation that the Republican Party, which favors lowering interest rates, might win the upcoming US presidential elections.

Gold futures for August delivery decreased by 2.35% to \$2,399 per ounce, marking a weekly loss of 0.9% and ending

a three-week streak of gains. Expectations are that the US Federal Reserve will maintain current interest rates in its upcoming July meeting, with a potential 25 basis point cut in September.

This week, key US economic data will be released, including second-quarter GDP growth and the personal consumption expenditure inflation index, alongside manufacturing and services purchasing managers index data from Australia, Japan, France, and Germany. These factors are expected to influence the performance of precious metals.

Locally, the report highlighted that the price of 24-karat gold was 23.74 dinars (about \$71) per gram, while 22-karat gold was 21.7 dinars (about \$66) per gram. Silver was priced at 328 dinars (about \$1,075) per kilogram.

# Kuwait to integrate four oil companies into two by 2025

KPC leads merger for \$1.25 bln annual savings

**By Najeh Bilal**  
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

**KUWAIT CITY, July 22: In a significant development for Kuwait's oil industry, plans are underway to merge four oil companies into two entities by 2025. An official document obtained by Al-Seyassah reveals that the Kuwait Gulf Oil Company will be merged with the Kuwait Oil Company, marking the second stage in the consolidation process.**

## KD 39 mln net profit for 2023-24 fiscal year reported

### PIC CEO Nadia Al-Hajji celebrates 61st anniversary with profit announcement

KUWAIT CITY, July 22, (KUNA): The Petrochemical Industries Company (PIC) achieved a net profit of KD 39 million (around USD 127 million) in the 2023-24 fiscal year ending last March, said PIC CEO Nadia Al-Hajji on Monday.

In an interview with KUNA celebrating the 61st anniversary of establishing PIC due on Tuesday, Al-Hajji indicated that the aforementioned net profit announcement came by the relentless efforts of the company to achieve further growth despite the pressures affecting prices of petrochemical products worldwide.

She revealed that PIC managed to conserve expenditure and increase profits via a series of initiatives in the last fiscal year, noting that the company was currently coordinating with Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) on the Olefins IV project to gain the latter side's approval.



KUNA photo

The Petrochemical Industries Company (PIC) CEO Nadia Al-Hajji.

The strategic project includes an international-standard petrochemical complex producing "ethylene, polyethylene, ethylene glycol, and specialized petrochemical products."

Al-Hajji revealed that PIC was eager to boost partnerships with global companies through its mid and long-term strategies, which include the acquisition of established factories and shares of companies.

She revealed that the company had also set mid and long-term strategies for "green petrochemical" expansion to lessen the impact on the environment and rationalize consumption of natural resources to boost the economic growth in Kuwait.

Al-Hajji also mentioned that the company was studying several initiatives for recycling plastic waste in cooperation with KPC and other entities including Kuwait municipality, the General Secretariat of the Supreme Council for Planning and Development, and others.

She noted that recycling strategies include repurposing plastic waste via mechanical or chemical means to fabricate viable products.

Regarding human resources development, Al-Hajji said that PIC had sponsored the first-of-its-kind initiative in the oil sector to develop

the skills of youth who represent 40 percent of the company's working force. This came to realize PIC's 2040 strategy, she affirmed, adding that a youth empowerment committee was established in 2020 with rotating members chosen annually to keep things fresh and forward moving.

Back to the company's successes, Al-Hajji pointed out that with the end of the 2023-24 fiscal year, the company had ended 16 years of successfully implementing the Six Sigma plan aimed at improving quality of technical and administrative operations as well as fully utilizing human resources and preliminary resources.

The plan improved productivity in factories and employees, bringing profits and decreasing operational costs, said Al-Hajji who noted that the accumulative profits of PIC since implementing the Six Sigma plan since 2007 had reached USD 267 million.

On PIC's 2040 strategy, Al-Hajji pointed out that the company updated the plan, which was based on three criteria including firstly, the growth of basic petrochemical production via increasing manufacturing in and outside of Kuwait through ac-

quisition to reach 14 million tons of production by 2040.

The second criterion focused on expanding products in cooperation with international partners to reach one million tons by 2040 with 15 percent of said products aimed at the market in Kuwait, she revealed.

She noted that the third criterion was to boost human resources and increase training to reach optimal results, which would create more job opportunities for Kuwaitis in the country and abroad.

Meanwhile, Al-Hajji said that PIC's polypropylene factory had achieved 2023-24 the second largest annual production rate since its inception in 1997, reaching 153,000 metric ton with a production capacity of 98 percent.

More on the PIC achievements, Al-Hajji said that 11.34 million safe work hours were logged with no accidents, wasted time, or environmental accidents from 2012 until 2023-24.

She also revealed that PIC established in 2017 the Kuwait Vietnam Petrochemical Company (KVPC), an establishment aimed at production, export, and import of polypropylene.

## Liquidity hits year-low at 26.6 mln dinars

### Boursa Kuwait opens week with declines across indices

KUWAIT CITY, July 22: The Boursa Kuwait opened this week with noticeable declines across its indices, reports Al-Jarida daily.

The general market index fell by 0.42 percent, or 29.95 points, closing at 7,072.23 points. This drop was accompanied by a significant decline in liquidity, which hit a low for the year at 26.6 million dinars.

The total trading activity saw 103.6 million shares exchanged through 6,943 transactions. Of the 123 shares traded, 35 saw gains, 65 experienced losses, and 23 remained unchanged.

The Premier Market Index experienced a drop of 0.49 percent, or 37.64 points, ending at 7,721.07 points, with liquidity totaling 19.2 million dinars.

Trading volume in this sector included 57.8 million shares across 4,210 deals, with 34 shares traded -- 9 gaining and 22 losing, while 3 remained steady.

Similarly, the Main Market Index fell by 0.11 percent, or 6.36 points, closing at 5,913.07 points. Liquidity in this segment amounted to 7.4 million dinars, with 45.8 million shares traded through 2,733 transactions. Out of 89 traded shares, 26 gained, 43 lost, and 20 remained unchanged.

The trading session started with moderate liquidity exceeding one million dinars, supported by shares of IFA, Kuwait Real Estate, Arzan, and IFA Hotels.

However, major stocks like KFH, NBK, Gulf Bank, and Boubyan exhibited limited declines. Agility, in particular, experienced a notable loss of over 1.7 percent, while Integrated and National Bank shares also saw declines, with the latter losing 2 percent.

Limited gains were seen in speculative stocks like Al Khaleeji, Rasiyat, and Cables, with some speculative stocks like Unicap and Bayan also experiencing fluctuations.

The trading session's tepid performance was attributed to a broader geopolitical climate, particularly the escalating tensions between the Houthis and Israel. This unrest led to reduced investor activity on the KSE.

Additionally, global financial markets faced significant setbacks: oil prices fell by three dollars, gold declined by 2 percent -- its largest drop in six months during a single session -- and Nasdaq recorded its biggest weekly loss in over a year at 4 percent.

In the broader Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) region, four out of five market indices showed declines, including those in Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, and Oman.

Bahrain recorded a notable loss of about 1 percent, while Qatar experienced a marginal increase. Oil prices ended the week down by three dollars and 3 percent.

## Sukuk issuances grow 14% to \$26.6 billion

### Gulf Bond & Sukuk Issuances surge to 173 in H1 2024

KUWAIT CITY, July 22: In the first half of 2024, the Gulf region saw a significant increase in primary bond and sukuk issuances, reaching a total of 173 issuances compared to 130 in the same period of 2023, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

Saudi Arabia led the GCC with a total issuance value of \$37.0 billion through 44 transactions, representing 49% of the regional total.

The UAE followed, contributing \$20.6 billion through 64 issuances, which accounts for 27% of the total. Qatar reported \$10.5 billion from 39 issuances, or 14% of the total, while Bahrain issued \$0.03 billion through 4 transactions, representing 4%.

Oman's issuances amounted to \$0.7 billion, representing 2% of the total. Kuwait contributed \$2.6 billion through 15

issuances, also accounting for 4% of the total.

Sovereign issuances dominated, making up 55% of the total with a value of \$41.5 billion, marking a remarkable 77% increase compared to the first half of 2023. Conversely, corporate issuances totaled \$34.0 billion, representing 45% of the total and reflecting an 8% year-on-year increase.

Conventional bonds saw a notable 56% increase, reaching \$48.8 billion, or 65% of the total value of Gulf primary issuances. Sukuk issuances amounted to \$26.6 billion, representing 35% of the total and showing a 14% increase compared to the previous year.

The government sector led with \$41.5 billion in issuances, representing 55% of the total. The financial sector, including quasi-governmental entities, came in second with \$28.8 billion, accounting for 38% of the total.

## CMA & Kuwait Economic Society discuss cooperation to 'boost' economic activity

KUWAIT CITY, July 22: The Chairman of the Board of Commissioners of the Capital Markets Authority (CMA), Ahmed Al-Malhem, along with Ziad Al-Fulajji, Director of the Supervision Sector, Khaled Al-Saqr, Director of the Awareness Department, and Walid Al-Awaish, Director of the Coordination and Follow-up Office for the Supervision Sector, met with a delegation from the Kuwait Economic Society, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The delegation included Mishari Al-Abduljalil, Chairman of the Board of Directors, former Chairman Muhammad Al-Sanea, and Board Member Mohammed Al-Rashid.

The meeting focused on fostering cooperation between the CMA and the Economic Society to bolster economic activity and drive development. Discussions highlighted the CMA's recent efforts to advance the market system and their impact on the broader Kuwaiti economy.

The two parties reviewed the latest changes and updates in the CMA's executive regulations. The CMA plans to present these developments to the Economic Society's members through upcoming seminars and workshops.

These efforts aim to support the Kuwaiti economy, enhance economic and financial literacy, and achieve the Society's objectives by providing better community services and promoting awareness.

## Q2 sales up 22% to KD 853 million, driven by one-off deals

# Kuwait's real estate sales reach two-year high in Q2-2024

By National Bank of Kuwait

Real estate sales hit a two-year high in Q2 2024 helped by sizable one-off deals across the main three segments. The underlying picture remains softer, highlighted by continued weakness in the residential segment, while prices also appear to have edged lower. Still, excluding one-offs, overall sales activity has stayed in a fairly narrow range for several quarters, pointing to a degree of market stability. We still expect improving economic conditions and potentially lower interest rates to lift the market in 2025. Meanwhile, plot distributions under the government's housing program reached above 5,000 in H1 by our estimates, but the backlog of applications still edged up to more than 97,000. Addressing the housing shortage is set to be a key focus of the new government.

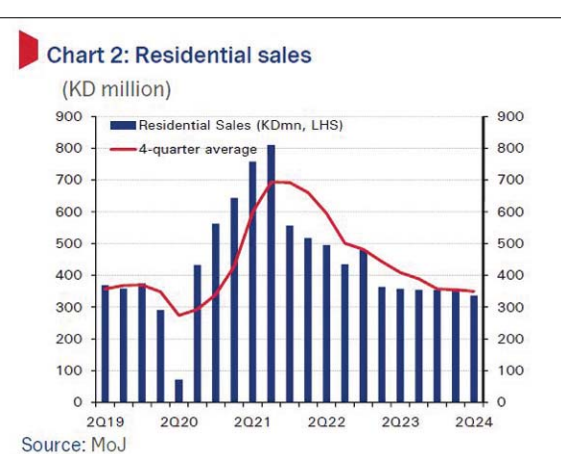
The level of overall sales rose 22% q/q in Q2 to KD853 million. Without the outlying sales in the commercial, investment, and residential segments, we estimate that sales would have been broadly flat versus Q1. We also note that seasonal factors, including the Eid Al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha holidays, may have weighed slightly on activity during the quarter.

Residential sales dropped -4.7% q/q to KD337 million, following minimal growth in Q1 and just below the 2023 quarterly average. However, residential sales were also supported by one large land sale in Mubarak Al-Kabeer governorate (Al-Fnaitees) of KD32 million. Excluding this, the residential segment would see a sharper fall of -13.7% q/q, confirming the prevailing low sentiment and demand weakness factors including high costs of financing, the potential for global interest rates to remain higher for longer and still elevated valuations within this segment.

At the same time, the investment segment registered its first quarterly decline since Q2 2023 of -3.7% to KD223 mil-

lion, despite a large building sale in Al-Salmiya of KD22 million. The number of transactions in the sector also remained historically low. Data from the consumer price index show that inflation of actual rents softened to 1.4% y/y in May from the multi-year high of 3.2% in August 2023 and below the rate of inflation overall, providing for modest growth in rental receipts. A recent loosening of visa regulations (including removing the bachelor's degree requirement to apply for a family visa albeit with income requirements) should offer some incremental support for apartment sector demand going forward.

In contrast to the other segments, sales in the commercial sector jumped during Q2 to a record high at KD294 million. Some 46% of commercial sales by value were in Al-Salmiya (four building sale deals worth KD71 million



segment index on lower building prices, while the residential index partially offset this by being unchanged in Q2. In year-on-year terms, overall real estate prices declined -3.9% in Q2 (-1.2% y/y in Q1), with falls across both the investment and residential segments.

**Solid plot distributions in H1 but outstanding applications move higher**

According to our calculations from data on the Public Authority for Housing Welfare (PAHW) website, plot distributions under the government's housing program for citizens totaled 5,005 during H1 2024 including 2,860 in Q2. Most of these allocations were concentrated in South Sa'ad Al-Abdullah city (N3,4,5) with around 7,600 remaining under the project in addition to around 4,400 residential units in Taima and Al-Sulaibiya. Although this represents a solid pace of distributions, the outstanding balance of existing housing applications still rose by 5,973 (+6.6% y/y) to 97,144 in May 2024, highlighting the challenges faced by PAHW in addressing the housing shortage. The PAHW has tendered four awards to construct 6,455 houses within the affordable housing project in addition to two infrastructure tenders for 13,812 plots in South Sabah Al-Ahmad that are expected to be completed in 2026-27, while two future large projects in Nawaf Al-Ahmad City and Al-Sabriya, of 52,000 residential units each, are in early planning stages. But a consistently fast pace of distributions is needed over the coming years to reduce the backlog of housing applications and resolve the housing crisis. Meanwhile, disbursed loans by the Kuwait Credit Bank, the public organization in charge of providing residents with home loans, saw a marginal increase of 1% y/y in Q2 to KD115 million while approved loans fell by around 21% y/y to KD126 million. Softness in this area could also be related to the impact of Eid Al-Adha & Eid Al-Fitr holidays during Q2.



# KD 175.6 mn stc's revenues for the first six months of 2024 with KD 16.9 mln net profit

EBITDA increased by 2.2% to reach KD 43.1 mn

**KUWAIT CITY, July 22:** Kuwait Telecommunications Company (stc), a world-class digital leader providing innovative services and platforms to customers and enabling the digital transformation in Kuwait, announced its financial results for the six months period ended 30 June 2024, highlighting the most significant achievements, financial and operational performance in addition to the social initiatives made by the company during 2024.

In this regard, Eng. Muataz Abdullah Aldharrab, the company's CEO, stated: "Kuwait Telecommunications Company (stc) managed to achieve good financial and operational results during the second quarter of 2024, due to the continuous and increasing demand for ICT and digital solutions for both the individual and the enterprise sectors. Since the beginning of the year, the company has been keen on implementing its corporate strategy focused on market leadership, through enhancing its portfolio of products and services while

actively seizing potential opportunities that support stc's business model and efficiently optimizing its internal operations.

Additionally, stc continually strives to strengthen its position as a leading telecommunications company and to increase its market share in a highly competitive industry. This ambition is driven by expanding its business into new areas of sustainable growth, focusing on developing its infrastructure, and offering cutting-edge solutions specifically designed to meet the evolving needs of both the individual and enterprise customers."

Aldharrab added, stc proudly announced that stc group maintained its position as the most valuable telecom brand in the Middle East for the fourth consecutive year, confirming its leadership status amongst the top 5 strongest telco brands in the world, based on the latest report issued by "Brand Finance Global 500".

stc also consistently strives to stay abreast of the latest global developments by offering fixed telecommunications services, information technology, and the best integrated solutions in the fields of communications and networks in addition to providing advanced technical solutions, fixed services, broadband, system integration, cloud, 5G, Internet of Things (IoT), and data



Eng. Muataz Abdullah Aldharrab, CEO of stc

analytics services for the individual and enterprise customers. By implementing strategic business transformation plans, stc has leveraged its highly advanced network and the expertise of its specialized subsidiaries in fixed-line telecommunications and information technology to excel in providing comprehensive, high-quality, and innovative digital solutions."

Commenting on the announcement of the financial results as of June 30th of 2024, Aldharrab stated that: "stc has achieved good finan-

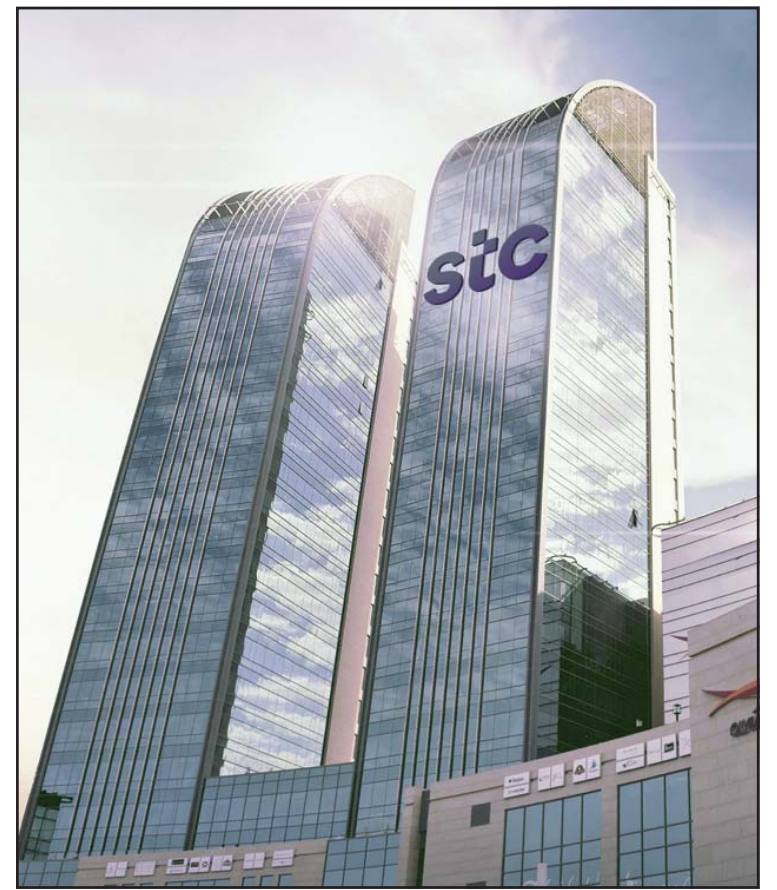


stc logo

cial results during the first half of 2024, with total revenue reaching KD 175.6mn by the end of June 2024 with a growth rate of 0.6% compared to KD 174.6mn during the same period last year. The main reason for this growth is attributed to the increase in the Consumer sector revenues, which constitute 73% of total revenues. Meanwhile, Business sector revenues accounted for 27% of the company's total revenue during the first six months of 2024. Overall, the growth in stc's revenue is a result of expanding the company's business model, developing digital services, and providing integrated technical solutions to companies in various fields."

Aldharrab added: "These outcomes resulted in a growth of EBITDA by 2.2% to reach KD 43.1mn in the first six months of 2024 compared to KD 42.1mn during the same period in 2023 supported by the increase in stc's revenue. As a result, the Company's net profit increased by 5.0% to reach KD 16.9mn (EPS 17Fils) in the first six months of 2024 Compared with KD 16.1mn (EPS 16Fils) in the same period last year. The increase in net profit is mainly attributed to the cost optimization program and enhancing the company's operational efficiency at both stc and its subsidiaries. Whereby, stc's customer base stands at approx. 2.3mn customers at the end of June 2024".

Commenting on the company's financial position as of June 30, 2024, Aldharrab said: "stc's total assets reached KD 435.9mn by the end of June 2024, while the total



stc Headquarters

equity of the company's shareholders amounted to KD 225.8mn. Furthermore, stc has a strong solvency position amongst the telecom companies in the Middle East.

As stc envisions a sustainable future, stc will continue to launch sustainability programs which aim to increase awareness and adopting long-term sustainable practices. stc also directs its efforts on the CSR program while focusing on activating sustainable development partnerships with entities and institutions from the government and private sectors, with whom we share same goals and values within a series of various initiatives to contribute to creating positive change and enhancing Culture of social responsibility."

Aldharrab Noted: "Driven by the

importance of stc's financial strategy in allocating its resources in a manner that serves the company's interests to remain at the forefront of the telecommunications companies in addition to meeting customer needs, and providing an added value to shareholders, stc is committed to periodically review and continuously update all the factors that may affect the financial strategy. stc continues to successfully implement numerous strategic projects concerning transformation and synergies with the support of the digital solutions that align with the company's strategic and financial objectives to enhance operational efficiency and regulatory practices, as well as achieving excellence in treasury management operations."

The financial results for six months period 30 June 2024	
Revenues	KD 175.6 mn
EBITDA	KD 43.1 mn
Net Profit	KD 16.9 mn
Earnings per share	17 Kuwaiti fils
Assets	KD 435.9 mn
Shareholders' equity	KD 225.8 mn
Book value per share	226 fils per share
Customer base	2.3 mn customers

## Optimism among carmakers and auto parts firms

### China & Europe 'grow' stronger auto industry ties amid closer cooperation

**SHENYANG, July 22, (Xinhua):** At the Tiexi plant of BMW Brilliance Automotive Ltd. in northeastern China, rows of sleek electric vehicles await global delivery. Just a street away, an auto parts factory buzzes with production activities, crafting components for car assembly.

The auto parts factory, which belongs to Gestamp, a Spanish multinational specializing in the design, development and manufacturing of highly engineered metal components, is one among many auto parts suppliers surrounding the plant, situated in Shenyang, the capital of northeast China's Liaoning Province.

With European automotive giants like BMW entrenching themselves in the Chinese market, a large number of supporting suppliers have been prompted to set up facilities nearby, which fosters closer integration between the Chinese and European automotive sectors.

According to Ren Tingfu, general manager of Gestamp's Shenyang factory, the factory has steadily expanded its production capacity with substantial cumulative investments since its establishment in 2012.

"To meet the growing demand from our clients, we invested in expanding the automotive component project in 2023, which will soon be operational," Ren added.

Gestamp, which began operations in China in 2007, now operates 14 factories and two research and development (R&D) centers and employs more than 5,000 people in China.

"China boasts a vast, innovative and dynamic auto market," said Antonio Lopez Arce, CEO of Gestamp's Asia division, emphasizing the strategic importance of the company's strong investment and considerable cooperation in China. "We continue to introduce our cutting-edge body in white, chassis and battery box technologies and products to China." In recent years, China's auto market has accelerated its shift towards new energy vehicles (NEVs), prompting significant investment and expanded production from European automakers.

In April 2024, BMW announced an additional investment of 20 billion yuan (about 2.8 billion U.S. dollars) in its production base in Shenyang to localize the production of a new generation of BMW models by 2026. Volkswagen AG established its largest R&D center outside of Germany in China, focusing on R&D of intelligent networked vehicles.

The thriving Chinese NEV market also offers fresh opportunities to auto parts firms like Gestamp, which is increasing its investment in R&D for new technologies and applications to

### Troubled Boeing stays close to ground at a major UK air show

**LONDON, July 22, (AP):** European planemaker Airbus plans to show off its newest passenger jet with daily flight demonstrations during one of the world's biggest aviation trade fairs. But an ongoing safety and manufacturing crisis has rival Boeing keeping a lower profile at the Farnborough International Air Show.

The beleaguered American company isn't bringing any jetliners to take part in aerial displays at the event that kicks off Monday near London. Ahead of the show's opening, the company said it remained focused on satisfying the concerns of U.S. regulators and "meeting our customer commitments" rather than selling a lot of planes.

Chief Operating Officer Stephanie Pope said Boeing was focused on "predictable deliveries" of jets to airline customers, and getting production of its troubled 737 Max jets back up to 38 per month.

"This is transformational change. And you all know we have slowed down our factories pretty significantly to execute that change," Pope, who also serves as chief executive of Boeing's commercial airplanes division, told reporters Sunday.

The Farnborough expo, held every other year in turn with the Paris Air Show, is traditionally a venue for aerospace companies to showcase their newest technological developments and for manufacturers to trumpet a flurry of orders for new passenger, cargo and military aircraft. Organizers expect about 1,500 exhibitors from 42 countries and 80,000 visitors during the weeklong event.

Boeing's subdued presence at this year's show underscores its continuing woes.

Boeing Global President Brendan

Nelson said in a news release that the company has "reduced our commercial airplanes display and flight demonstrations at the show, and will focus on new technology, sustainability, security and services solutions."

The company has been reeling since a door plug blew out of an Alaska Airlines 737 Max 9 during a flight at the start of the year, rekindling safety fears that were subsiding after two crashes of Max jets in 2018 and 2019 killed 346 people in Indonesia and Ethiopia.

The blowout of the panel, coupled with a string of current and former employees coming forward to allege quality-control lapses and retaliation against whistleblowers, brought renewed government scrutiny. The Justice Department revived a criminal fraud charge against Boeing in connection with the fatal crashes. Boeing agreed to plead guilty this month as part of an agreement that calls for an independent monitor to oversee the company's compliance.

Boeing's leadership is in limbo as it searches for a successor to CEO David Calhoun, who's stepping down at the end of the year. Calhoun apologized to crash victims' relatives during a grilling from U.S. senators last month over the company's safety record.

"Hopefully, a new CEO next year will make that horrible situation better, but until then, people are just focused on circling the wagons and doing what they can to keep the company functioning," said Richard Aboulafia, a longtime aerospace analyst and now a consultant at AeroDynamic Advisory. "It's a tragedy and an embarrassment, but hopefully this air show will be remembered as the darkness before the dawn."

cater to the needs of Chinese original equipment manufacturers for electric, lightweight and environmentally friendly parts.

Furthermore, German auto supplier ZF Group launched an NEV auto parts industrial park in Shenyang in 2023, with an approximately 2.2 billion yuan investment. Bosch, another German parts supplier, has expanded its NEV core components and autonomous driving R&D and manufacturing base in Suzhou, east China's Jiangsu Province, and it is slated to be operational later this year.

Optimism among carmakers and auto parts firms is buoyed by rising demand in the Chinese market. Data from the China Association of Automobile Manufacturers shows that in the first half of 2024, NEV production and sales in the country had reached 4.93 million units and 4.94 million units, respectively, marking respective year-on-year increases of 30.1 percent and 32 percent.

In recent times, more Chinese automakers and supply chain companies have begun establishing factories in Europe, engaging in technological collaborations concerning NEVs.

## Net Profit

16.9 <sup>+5.0%</sup>   
 KD Million

The Board of Directors of **Kuwait Telecommunications Company (stc)** is pleased to announce to its shareholders that the company has achieved a net profit of KD 16.9 million (earnings per share 17 fils) for the six months period ended 30 June 2024.

First Half 2024   
 Total Revenue **175.6** <sup>+0.6%</sup>   
 KD Million

30 June 2024   
 Subscribers **2.3** <sup>-6.6%</sup>   
 Million

First Half 2024   
 EBITDA **43.1** <sup>+2.2%</sup>   
 KD Million

First Half 2024   
 EPS **17** <sup>+5.0%</sup>   
 Kuwaiti fils per share

stc



## Company engaged with students before they start their educational journey

## Zain supports NUKS USA annual orientation session

KUWAIT CITY, July 22: Zain has sponsored the annual orientation session organized by the National Union of Kuwaiti Students in the United States (NUKS USA). This event, held at Jaber Al Ahmad Cultural Center (JACC), was aimed at students recently accepted into this year's scholarship program. Zain's support is part of a 21-year strategic partnership with NUKS USA, through which it supports all NUKS programs and initiatives held across Kuwait and the United States throughout the year.

The event was attended by H.E. U.S. Ambassador to Kuwait Karen Sasahara, Zain Kuwait Corporate Relations Department Manager Hamad Al Mosaibeeh, Head of NUKS USA Khalid Al Doukhi, notable guests and speakers, along with hundreds of high school graduates preparing to begin their college journey in the United States.

The orientation session included many engaging programs and ac-



Al Doukhi honors Al Mosaibeeh in recognition of Zain's support.

tivities designed to meet students' needs, answer their questions, and introduce them to various US states and their requirements. Many notable speakers, experts, and alumni

participated in insightful panel discussions, sharing their expertise and experiences about studying in the US. There were also entertainment segments for the students, with priz-



US Ambassador Karen Sasahara with Al Mosaibeeh, Al Doukhi, and guests.

es provided by Zain.

Under this partnership, Zain supports all community programs and initiatives organized by NUKS USA, including the annual confer-

ence in the US that brings together Kuwaiti students from across the states for days of engaging activities.

Zain also supports discussion pan-

els, activities from the local NUKS USA office to guide freshmen, academic sessions, cultural seminars, sports competitions, entertainment programs, workshops, and more. These programs receive a wide positive reaction and participation from students every year.

The company takes pride in its ongoing strategic partnership with NUKS USA, through which it strives to provide young, enthusiastic Kuwaitis with a rich social experience and listens to their ideas and experiences while they pursue their education abroad. Zain is proud to have been part of the NUKS USA family for over two decades.

NUKS USA serves thousands of Kuwaiti students in the United States. The union aims, through its events and programs, to connect Kuwaiti students with each other and with their nation and local commu-

## Al-Khrayef highlights KIB's commitment to customer loyalty

## KIB announces June winners for 'Win with KIB Rewards' campaign

KUWAIT CITY, July 22: Kuwait International Bank (KIB) has announced the draw winners of its new 'Win with KIB Rewards' campaign for the month of June. Running monthly until the end of the year, the campaign aims to reward customers who use KIB's Banking App to open an Al Dirwaza account, issue a Multicurrency prepaid card, or open a deposit investment of any kind.

The second batch of winners who won 15,000 reward points each are Julio Oliveira, Ahmad Shalayel, Saleh Alazmi, Ali Mousawi, Ahmad Gadi, Omer Ahmed, Amani Redha, Kmashah Alsaleh, Shaymaa Alshatti, and Abdulaziz Alrasheedi.

Commenting on the occasion, Nawaf Al-Khrayef, Assistant General Manager of the Retail Banking Department at KIB, said: "We are delighted to congratulate the second group of winners in this exceptional campaign, which is a great opportunity to reward our customers for their loyalty. We will continue our efforts to provide innovative banking solutions that meet their aspirations and fulfill all their needs, enhancing their overall banking experience and lifestyle, in line with our 'Bank for Life' slogan."

He added: "At KIB, we remain committed to adopting a comprehensive strategy aimed at providing the best banking benefits, particularly with regard to the KIB Rewards Program, in addition to encouraging all customer



Nawaf Al-Khrayef, Assistant General Manager of the Retail Banking Department at KIB.

segments to use our digital platforms to complete their financial transactions with utmost convenience and ease."

Customers can qualify for and participate in the draws by using the KIB Banking App to open an AlDirwaza account, issue a Multicurrency prepaid card, or open a deposit investment of any kind. Winners can redeem their reward points on KIB's rewards online

market platform, which features an extensive list of participating outlets, including electronics services, retail products, and e-vouchers, and much more.

In addition to this and numerous other campaigns, KIB offers a wide variety of products with unparalleled benefits. Those who open an Al Dirwaza account can enjoy weekly and monthly draws, with one chance to enter the draw for every KD 1 deposited, culminating in a Mega Draw.

The Multicurrency prepaid card offers a great deal of flexibility, allowing customers to use six currencies simultaneously and choose from a total of 12 currencies. Additionally, deposits starting from KD 1,000 are given competitive profit rates.

The Bank encourages its customers to stay informed about the campaign's latest developments and news, as well as to learn more about the KIB Rewards Program, by following its social media accounts and visiting its website.

It is worth mentioning that KIB spares no effort in launching initiatives and campaigns that reward its customers, while continuously striving to enhance the quality of its banking products and services. The Bank aims to elevate its banking experience by complementing digital financial solutions with attractive rewards, maintaining its leading position as a reliable partner in the market.

## 'Earn up to 100,000 Baitak bonus points'

## Kuwait Finance House launches 'You Deserve' salary transfers campaign

KUWAIT CITY, July 22: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) has launched its campaign 'You Deserve' encouraging Kuwaiti customers to transfer their salaries and enjoy the exceptional benefits.

The campaign offers a variety of rewards and competitive offers. These include a guaranteed cash gift of up to KWD 400 for transferring salary to Al-Rabeh account, and the chance to earn up to 100,000 Baitak bonus points redeemable for purchases at popular brands.

Additionally, customers can receive a KWD 500 cash gift for referring a new Kuwaiti customer to transfer their salary. Al-Rabeh account holders also have the chance to win cash prizes and a gold biscuit in a drawing with 536 winners. The campaign boasts the Emergency Cash service, allowing customers to withdraw a portion of their salaries in advance directly through the KFH app - with no fees.

KFH Deputy General Manager-Products, Nehal Almosalem said that KFH is committed to offering the best services and benefits to its customers across all segments. "This campaign reflects KFH's ongoing dedication to meeting customer expectations by upholding the highest standards of excellence and quality," she added.

Almosalem highlighted that by transferring their salaries to KFH Al-Rabeh account, customers can unlock the account's many benefits throughout the



Nehal Almosalem

year. She pointed out that customers can open Al-Rabeh account without any fees or cost, with an ATM card free for the first year. Al-Rabeh is a saving

account for salary transfer which offers annual distributions and opportunities to win K.D 1,500 weekly for ten winners, a chance to win 1 kilo of Gold per month for one winner, and K.D 25,000 for one winner every quarter. The customer may enter the weekly, monthly and quarterly draws when a minimum of three salary transfers are deposited in the account three months prior to the draw date.

It is worth noting that KFH prioritizes continuous improvement to its banking system and products. This dedication ensures it caters to the diverse needs and aspirations of its customers by offering innovative services while improving customer satisfaction. KFH's commitment has resulted in a qualitative shift and clear distinction in its service level. This is achieved by leveraging advanced technological tools and market research to precisely match the needs of each customer segment.

## Twitter campaign and reel competition to engage public in conservation efforts

## IMA-YouthWing launches 'Save Water, Energy Today' campaign

KUWAIT CITY, July 22: The IMA-YouthWing launched its much-anticipated campaign, "Save Water, Energy Today and Save Life for Tomorrow" at Masjid-e-Abu Rafe in Jeeb Al Shuyouk, Kuwait, from 1 pm, with a aim on the themes "Eat & Drink, but do not waste" (Quran 7:31) and "You will be accountable for all the Bounties you enjoyed" (Quran 102:8).

The program began with a recitation from the Quran, setting a reflective tone for the event. This was followed by an explanation of the campaign's beliefs and goals, emphasizing the moral and spiritual imperatives of conservation. The campaign organizers then welcomed the attendees, including esteemed guests:

- President of Engineers Welfare Federation Mr. M K S Mohiuddeen
- General Secretary of American Society of Safety Professionals, Kuwait Chapter Mr. Syed Khashif Wali
- And representatives of other organizations

## ■ Leadership of IMA

IMA President Moulana Mohammed Umar Falahi Sahab delivered the main speech, highlighting the critical need for resource conservation and the objectives of the campaign. Guest speakers from EWF also shared their insights and support towards the initiative.

Campaign organizers then outlined the key activities and events planned over the campaign period, which include:

- **Filter Cleaning/Changing:** Volunteers will clean and change filters for unattended water filters in public areas, ensuring access to clean water.
- **Stickers Pasting:** Awareness stickers will be posted in prominent public areas to remind everyone of the importance of saving water and energy.
- **Awareness Sessions:** Educational sessions will be conducted at public areas, camps, and beaches to inform the community about conservation practices.
- **Twitter Campaign:** An online campaign will

engage the public on social media, spreading the message of conservation.

■ **Reel Competition:** Participants are encouraged to create short reels highlighting conservation efforts, with prizes for the best entries.

■ **Flyers Sharing:** Informative flyers will be distributed to educate the community on practical steps to save water and energy.

■ **Short Videos Sharing:** Videos will be shared on social media platforms to raise awareness and encourage community participation.

The campaign will conclude on August 16, 2024, with a review of the achievements and a discussion of future initiatives.

The launch event concluded with a group photo featuring the campaign logo, symbolizing unity and commitment to the cause. A vote of thanks was given by the campaign organizers, expressing gratitude to all participants and supporters.



Group photo during the signing of memorandum of understanding.

## AU signs MoU with UTP

KUWAIT CITY, July 22: The Australian University (AU) and Universiti Teknologi Petronas (UTP) have signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) aimed at promoting academic and research excellence. The MoU was officially signed at a ceremony held on UTP campus - Malaysia by AU President, Prof. Isam Zabalawi, and UTP Vice Chancellor Prof. Dato' Ir Ts Dr. Mohamed Ibrahim Abdul Mutalib.

The MoU encompasses several key areas that will propel AU and UTP towards achieving their academic and research goals and will facilitate joint scholarly activities related to teach-

ing and learning, scientific research in areas of mutual interest, as well as providing opportunities for faculty and student mobility. It covers various areas of joint effort including fostering an exchange of academic and administrative knowledge between the universities, collaborations on scientific research, and exploring opportunities to co-organize conference, seminars and workshops.

The initiative continues to strengthen AU's commitment to internationalization and developing collaboration with strong international academic institutions.



Photos during the event.



# Hollywood reacts to Joe Biden exiting the presidential race

WASHINGTON, D.C., July 22, (AP): Hollywood was quick to react to the news that President Joe Biden was ending his bid for reelection and endorsing Vice President Kamala Harris.

Barbra Streisand, a Democratic supporter, wrote Sunday on X that "we should be grateful for his upholding of our democracy." While many paid tribute to Biden's presidency, others wondered about the future.

Cher wrote on X that she was "tortured" because she doesn't believe the Democrats could win without Biden. She said it was time to think "way outside the box" and proposed a split ticket.

In recent weeks, several high-profile Hollywood names had begun calling for Biden to exit the race. Just weeks after headlining a record-breaking fundraiser for the president's reelection campaign, George Clooney wrote a New York Times opinion piece calling for Biden to end his bid.

Clooney argued that the party should pick a new nominee, saying the process would be "messy" but "wake up" voters in the party's favor.

Others who attended or participated in the starry fundraiser in Los Angeles included Julia Roberts, Streisand, Jimmy Kimmel, former President Barack Obama, Jack Black, Sheryl Lee Ralph, Kathryn Hahn and Jason Bateman.

Ralph, on Sunday, posted a photo of herself and Harris writing "President Biden has endorsed Kamala Harris!"

Here are some notable celebrity reactions:

"Joe Biden will go down in history as a man who accomplished significant achievements in his 4 year term. We should be grateful for his upholding of our democracy." - via a post on X.

"In my heart im tortured, Because I Don't believe the Democrats Can win the Presidency With 'Pres Biden' 'Joe' whom I've Loved since we met in 2008. I Campaigned for him I believe Its Time 2 Pass The Baton. Time 4 Dems 2 Think 'Way' Outside The Box. Maybe Even A Split Ticket." - via posts on X.

"Joe Biden is a man of the highest character. He has tirelessly and effectively served US for over 50 years. He has shown what real leadership is all about. Selfless with a deep respect for our Constitution and the Rule of Law." - via a post on X that ended with a jab at Donald Trump.

## Integrity

"@JoeBiden has a record of accomplishments unmatched by any president in our lifetime. He restored honesty, dignity & integrity to the office after 4 years of lies, crime, scandal & chaos. Thank you for your service, Mr. President. It's now our duty as patriotic Americans to elect the Democrat who will honor & further your legacy." - via a post on X. The "Star Wars" star visited Biden in the Oval Office in May, jokingly calling him "Joe-bi-Wan-Kenobi."

"I want to honor our President @JoeBiden. He has served our nation admirably for decades, he is a decent honorable man, a hugely success-

ful president, and a patriot. Now let us unite behind @KamalaHarris and defeat Donald Trump in November!" - via a post on X.

In an intensely visual news world, a seismic week of politics was transformed again in an instant on Sunday by something almost old-fashioned: a printed statement.

President Biden's announcement that he would not run for a second term was dropped into his social media feed at 1:46 p.m. Eastern, followed 33 minutes later by an endorsement of his vice president, Kamala Harris. Still recovering from COVID, the president did not appear on camera. Which meant, for news outlets, scant to no visuals.

There was also virtually no warning, leading to initial concerns that the president's X feed had been hacked. The Associated Press filed a "flash" alert at 1:54 p.m. Eastern. Television networks broke into programming between 1:50 (Fox News Channel) and 2:04 p.m. (ABC).

It was, the Associated Press wrote, "a late-season campaign thunderstrike unlike any in American history." CBS News analyst Ashley Etienne called it "an incredible day in American history."

News shows on cable, particularly when covering live events or breaking news, rely on video from a scene and its aftermath to provide the all-important connecting thread between talking heads and anchor updates. With no video Sunday other than "b-roll," or old footage of Biden, news channels had to turn elsewhere.

People

Variety



This image released by Universal Pictures shows Daisy Edgar-Jones in a scene from 'Twisters.' 'Twisters' whipped up \$80.5 million at box office this weekend in the US. (AP)

Film

Directors reveal the 'real suspense' behind Netflix docu

## Heart and hazard collide in 'Skywalkers'

LOS ANGELES, July 22, (AP): It started out as a film about rooftopppers.

The risk-takers who pose atop the world's tallest buildings, without safety nets or permission, had long been a fascination for filmmaker Jeff Zimbalist. He'd dabbled in the activity, on a smaller scale in his youth, and was fascinated to learn that it had become a global phenomenon on social media.

One rooftopper who stuck out was Angela Nikolau, notable for being one of the few women operating in the space. She introduced him to Ivan Beerkus, a fellow rooftopper who she'd begun doing joint posts with. Together, they were fascinating and good on camera.

"We didn't know what the finish line was," Zimbalist said in a recent interview with The Associated Press. "We really took a leap of faith on this."

But in the making of "Skywalkers: A Love Story," now streaming on Netflix, Zimbalist quickly realized that there was something bigger happening with his subjects: They were falling in love.

This, he knew, was the story. The vertigo-inducing spectacle was the backdrop.

And like illegally climbing an under-construction skyscraper, nothing was going to be simple or straightforward about the mission of putting it all together. In total, the small team spent six years making the film, traveling to six countries with Nikolau and Beerkus to capture their attempts to pose on top of the likes of the 1,957-foot (596.6-meter) Goldin Finance 117, in Tianjin, China, and the 2,227-foot (679-meter) Merdeka 118 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

The film begins in a tense moment in Merdeka: They're trying to get to the top undetected. They're scared. And their relationship is on the line.

Behind the scenes was the inherent danger of it all: The trespassing aspect takes on a different kind of gravity in strict countries like Malaysia. Add in the difficulties of continuing production through COVID and Russia's war on Ukraine, the logistics of filming without distracting, and the constant conversation about trust - not only between filmmaker and subjects

but between the subjects themselves.

"They'd only been doing short form," Zimbalist said. "The idea that we wanted access to all of the stuff in between their perfect, polished, finished poses was a new concept to them."

Nikolau was already relatively famous by the time Zimbalist got in touch. Born in Moscow to circus performer parents, she began amassing a large social media following by posting photos of herself on the top of buildings in acrobatic poses. Beerkus was too, for his more "extreme" photographs and films. They were both ardently solo acts. But when they started climbing and posing together, around the time when Zimbalist and his team began to follow them, their popularity grew. Prior to the Netflix debut, she had over 730,000 followers on Instagram, and he had over 236,000.

## Unusual

"We wanted to give it all to this project like we always do," Beerkus said through Maria Bukhonina, who co-directed the film and translated their interview. "But it was unusual when the cameras started following us everywhere."

One place they weren't being followed, however, was to the top of the spires or cranes. The filmmakers had made an agreement with their families to only go to the base roof with their verité cameras so as not to distract. Those shots were all done by the subjects themselves.

"They rigged themselves with body cams and night vision and GoPros and selfie sticks. Ivan's a master drone operator. And Angela really started to understand what coverage was," Zimbalist said. "They're credited as extreme cinematographers in the film."

Another essential lynchpin was Bukhonina, who was born in Russia, and became the main conduit to the subjects during the pandemic. She and their small camera crew were on the road with them for years.

"We felt they were different from other subjects in the extreme space," Bukhonina said. "Many athletes like this and in the Red Bull space kind of deny that

they have any fear of death. But Ivan and Angela talked about their fears."

Both filmmakers like to say, this isn't a film about the fear of falling from heights. It's a film about the fear of falling in love.

"It doesn't matter if you don't make it to the top of Merdeka," Zimbalist said. "The real suspense of this movie is, is Angela going to ultimately choose to trust Ivan?"

In recent years there's been several high-profile documentaries chronicling the lives and exploits of extreme athletes and daredevils, including Alex Honnold in "Free Solo." Nikolau and Beerkus ignored the suggestion to watch that one and "Man on Wire" to get a sense of what a longform documentary was like. Their first foray was watching their own film.

"We saw how unusual our life is," Nikolau said. "We always thought of ourselves as a normal, typical couple. Seeing that from the side kind of gives us a new perspective."

Beerkus added: "We liked all the choices that the directors of the film made because they were able to grasp the real essence of our relationship and what's going on in there."

In the days after this interview, Nikolau and Beerkus moved from Thailand to New York. They have big dreams to explore other art forms. She likes to paint. He likes to write music.

"We don't put any limits on ourselves," Beerkus said.

## Also:

LOS ANGELES: "Bob Marley: One Love," streaming Tuesday on Prime Video, is the latest in a medley of music biopics. The film, which first debuted in theaters in February, stars Kingsley Ben-Adir as the reggae legend. It's a muddled but sincere and textured approach in capturing one of the most potent musical forces of the 20th century. In my review, I wrote that "the power and complexity of Marley is out of reach for 'One Love,' which takes a typical biopic framework."

Features

ARABIC TIMES

TUESDAY, JULY 23, 2024

Rhett and Miranda Lambert, has over 75 million streams.

Critics were mixed but mostly positive about the 2-hour thriller. Audiences gave it an enthusiastic A- CinemaScore and 4.5 stars on PostTrak, suggesting word of mouth will be good. Also of note: 24% of moviegoers polled by PostTrack said actor Glen Powell



Powell



Wilson

was a main draw.

"Our director crafted exactly what audiences want to see in theaters: A very immersive, exciting, mayhem everywhere story with a charming cast," Orr said.

Bob Bagby, the chair of the National Association of Theatre Owners and the CEO of Kansas City-based B&B Theatres, which

has about 580 screens, said their 4DX auditoriums have been nearly sold out all weekend. 4DX is an "immersive" presentation format for films that includes seat-shaking and wind effects.

"Twisters" has also whipped up some spirited online discourse and debate, some about the film not explicitly referenc-

ing climate change and some about the lack of a kiss between Powell and Daisy Edgar-Jones. A video showing the kiss that was left on the cutting room floor made the rounds on social media over the weekend.

Bagby appreciated that there was no "surprise political or social agenda." (AP)



People & Places

Media

Press honored

'Wounded' journalist carries Olympic torch

VINCENNES, France, July 22, (AP): A Lebanese photojournalist who was severely wounded during an Israeli strike on south Lebanon carried Sunday the Olympic torch in Paris to honor journalists wounded and killed in the field.

The torch relay, which started in May, is part of celebrations in which about 10,000 people from various walks of life were chosen to carry the flame across France before the Games opening ceremony on July 26.

Christina Assi, of Agence France-Presse, was among six journalists struck by Israeli shelling on Oct. 13 2023 while reporting on fire exchange along the border between Israeli troops and members of Lebanon's militant Hezbollah group. The attack killed Reuters videographer **Issam Abdallah**. Assi was severely wounded and had part of her right leg amputated.



Abdallah

AFP videographer Dylan Collins, also wounded in the Israeli attack, pushed Assi's wheelchair as she carried the torch across the suburb of Vincennes Sunday. Their colleagues from the press agency and hundreds of spectators cheered them on.

"I wish Issam was here to see this. And I wish what happened today was not because we were struck by two rockets," Assi told The Associated Press, struggling to hold back her tears. "I wish I could have honored journalists this way while walking and in my best health."

AFP, Reuters and Al Jazeera accused Israel of targeting their journalists who maintained they were positioned far from where the clashes with vehicles clearly marked as press, while international human rights organizations, Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch, said the attack was a deliberate attack on civilians and should be investigated as a war crime.

While holding the torch, Assi said participating in the relay "is to send a message that journalists should be protected and be able to work without fearing that they could die at any moment."

In late November 2023, Rabih al-Maamari and Farah Omar of the pan-Arab television network Al-Mayadeen were also killed in an apparent Israeli drone strike in southern Lebanon while covering the conflict.

Assi doesn't believe there will be retribution for the events of that fateful October day but hopes her participation in the Olympic torch relay can bring attention to the importance of protecting journalists. "For me, justice comes the day I can stand up again, hold my camera, and get back to work," she said.

The watchdog group Committee to Protect Journalists, in a preliminary count, said at least 108 journalists have been killed since the start of the Israel-Hamas war on Oct. 7, the majority in the Gaza Strip.

Attack

MSNBC "Morning Joe" host **Joe Scarborough** said recently he was "surprised and disappointed" the news show was pulled off the air the day before and hasn't received a good explanation about why.

The four-hour morning news and talk show, a favorite of President **Joe Biden** and his fans, was preempted Monday in favor of a live news feed from the NBC News Now streaming service that was focused on covering the aftermath of Saturday's assassination attempt on former President **Donald Trump**.

Scarborough said he was told Sunday night that all of NBC News channels would be working from a single, consistent feed for the entire day Monday.

"That did not happen," he said on "Morning Joe" Tuesday. "We don't know why that didn't happen. Our team was not given a good answer as to why that did not happen, but it didn't happen."

An MSNBC spokesman said the network had no comment on what Scarborough said.

The pre-emption attracted attention on Monday morning, particularly after CNN reported that MSNBC management was concerned that one of the show's cast of commentators or guests would make an inappropriate comment. MSNBC said that was not true. "Morning Joe," like other shows on the network, has often been bitingly critical of Trump.

By later last Monday afternoon, opinionated hosts like **Nicolle Wallace** and **Ari Melber** anchored their regular shows, and **Rachel Maddow** led the network's coverage of the Republican national convention.

Scarborough speculated that MSNBC changed its plans because of "blowback" it received from preempting his own show.

Audience

"We wanted to be here for our audience," said **Willie Geist**, another "Morning Joe" host. "We know you trust us, and we have the utmost respect for our audience. We are here today, and we wish we would have been here yesterday."

Scarborough said that "the next time we are told there is going to be a news feed replacing us, we will be in our chairs and the news feed will be us. Or they can get somebody else to host the show."

It's the second notable on-air rebellion by MSNBC personalities in the past few months. Several hosts, including Scarborough and former "Meet the Press" moderator **Chuck Todd**, objected in March to NBC News hiring former Republican National Committee head **Ronna McDaniel** as a contributor, a decision the network later rescinded.

Before the assassination attempt, "Morning Joe" spent several days talking about whether Biden should continue running for reelection following the president's poor performance in a debate against Trump — leading Biden to call in to the show to defend his decision to stay.

Meanwhile, **Tucker Carlson** returned to Fox News' airwaves 15 months after being unceremoniously fired, seen Thursday in its coverage of a Republican National Convention speech that highlighted his growing influence in Donald Trump's world.

Carlson called the Republican nominee to return as president a changed man who effectively "became the leader of this nation" following last Saturday's assassination attempt. His 11-minute speech in Milwaukee also highlighted changes in the media personality, who had said privately following the 2020 election that he "truly can't wait" to ignore Trump.



Ronnie Wood, (left), Steve Jordan, and Keith Richards of The Rolling Stones perform during their 'Hackney Diamonds' tour stop at Thunder Ridge Nature Arena on Sunday, July 21, in Ridgedale, Mo. (AP)



Press agency photographer Christina Assi holds the Olympic torch at the 2024 Summer Olympics, July 21, 2024, in Vincennes, outside Paris, France. Assi was struck by a tank shell on Oct. 13, 2023 while reporting clashes between the Israeli army and armed groups in southern Lebanon. (AP)

Music

Yankovic talks 'Mandatory Fun,' future projects

'Weird Al' drops new polka medley

LOS ANGELES, July 22, (AP): Ten years ago, "Weird Al" Yankovic made history, as he is wont to do. "Mandatory Fun," his 14th and final studio album, debuted at No. 1 on the Billboard 200. It was not only unprecedented for Yankovic, but unprecedented for his genre as a whole: Never before had a comedy album debuted at the top spot.

"I know it feels ironic to decide to stop making albums after having had a number one album," Yankovic told The Associated Press over Zoom. "But I just like the freedom of being able to really use whatever I want, whenever I want, and not have to be beholden to a label."

As an exercise of that freedom, and to celebrate 10 years of "Mandatory Fun," Yankovic has released a new polka medley, "Polkamanial," a creative cover of some of the biggest songs of the last decade: Billie Eilish's "Bad Guy," Adele's "Hello," Miley Cyrus' "Flowers," "We Don't Talk About Bruno" from Disney's "Encanto," Olivia Rodrigo's "Vampire," Lil Nas X's "Old Town Road," Luis Fonsi and Daddy Yankee's "Despacito," Ed Sheeran's "Shape of You," Mark Ronson and Bruno Mars' "Uptown Funk," Cardi B and Megan Thee Stallion's "WAP," Ariana Grande's "Thank U, Next" and Taylor Swift's "Shake It Off."

The interview, in which Yankovic discusses the anniversary, the new song, and just what makes the accordion a funny instrument, has been edited for clarity and brevity.

AP: Ten years ago, you told the AP that "Mandatory Fun" would be your last album. Does it still feel that way?

Yankovic: It does. You know, I got a pretty good sense 10 years ago of what I wanted to do. It still makes sense to me, in that releasing 12 songs at a time doesn't feel like the best business model for me, because I like to be topical. And if you have to sit around and wait till you have 12 songs, so you can release them all at once, sometimes that means that a few of those tracks are not going to be quite so topical.

AP: And it debuted at No. 1 on the Billboard 200.

Yankovic: I never dreamed it would happen. No. It really took me by surprise, because, as you said, there was no precedent for it. Comedy albums just didn't do that well on the charts. And the fact that I had a couple top 10 albums, I thought, "Oh, well, great. That's amazing." And I saw other comedy artists also have big hit albums, but nobody was making No. 1. Comedy just didn't do that. So, when I was able to pull that off, against all odds, that was a big deal for me. That

was very emotional because I had done something that I just thought was far beyond the realm of possibility.

AP: You're celebrating the 10 years of "Mandatory Fun" with "Polkamanial." Why another polka medley?

Yankovic: Well, it's several things. I wanted to do it because I hadn't released anything in a while and at some point I want to be back on the road and touring, and it would be nice to have some new material to play live.

And also, another reason is that over the last 10 years, there are a lot of songs that have been on the charts that, for whatever reason, I didn't take a shot at. And I just thought that those were missed opportunities. I wanted to circle back and pay tribute to a lot of those big hits over the last 10 years.

AP: How did you select the songs to parody?

Yankovic: I started by limiting it to songs that have been No. 1 on the Billboard charts. That narrowed it down quite a bit to begin with. I didn't do like one song per year, but I wanted it to be pretty spread out over that 10-year period. And (I picked) songs that I thought were iconic and artists who I thought were iconic, with some of the most memorable songs — songs that had a very identifiable, hook to them. And, you know, (there was) a lot of personal preference as well.

AP: Did anyone decline?

Yankovic: We heard back from Taylor Swift people right away, which was amazing. Miley Cyrus and Billie Eilish, both, apparently were delighted that they could be in a polka medley. The one that we never heard back from was SZA. I wanted to use "Kill Bill." She didn't say yes or no. She just never returned our phone calls.

AP: Is polka innately funny?

Yankovic: It just very incongruous. I learned that very early on. When I was a teenager playing the accordion and trying to get into my friend's rock bands, they'd never let me in. They thought it was very funny when I tried to play a rock song on the accordion. To them, everything on the accordion sounds like polka. So, I decided to lean into that idea and start doing polka medleys of rock songs, and people think it's funny. As the polkas evolved, they started taking more inspiration from Spike Jones, the 1940s bandleader who did, like, funny versions of songs. And he would always incorporate, you know, gunshots and slide whistles and tuned cowbells and weird sound effects. And I started incorporating that as well. So, yeah, the polka medleys nowadays are sort of like a cross between traditional polka and old school Spike Jones.

AP: Polka medleys are a feature of many of your albums, starting with "Polkas on 45" from 1984's "In 3-D." That's another anniversary — 40 years of that release, which features your famous Michael Jackson parody, "Eat It."

Yankovic: I was completely surprised that he gave me his blessing. My manager, I guess, talked to Michael's representatives, and we heard back fairly quickly that he was OK with it. At the time, I was virtually unknown. I had one album out that didn't do that great. I couldn't believe that we even got his attention. There's a contract somewhere in the world that has my signature next to Michael Jackson's signature, saying that, you know, we are the co-writers of "Eat It." Prior to that, it was tough to get anybody's permission because nobody knew who this Weird Al was. And then after we got "Eat It," we had that for ammunition. We could say, "Well, you know, Michael Jackson was OK with that. So why are you giving me a hard time?"

If any one song changed my life, that certainly did, because, I've said this many times, but, you know, the day that the "Eat It" video went into rotation on MTV... you hear of overnight fame and it's sort of a myth in most cases, but it really was true for me. Because right after that video hit MTV, all of a sudden people were staring at me in public, which, you know, never happened before.

AP: Will there be more Weird Al music in the future?

Yankovic: Yeah, yeah, that's the thing. I wish I could tell you everything that's in development. I mean, several of them are music related. I'm not going back into the studio in the near future to do a traditional album. There may be some more singles in the future.

AP: And here we're hoping for a reimagining of Sabrina Carpenter's "Espresso."

Yankovic: I have to say "Espresso" almost made the medley. It hadn't hit No. 1, because that was my cutoff. I said, that's got to be all No. 1 songs — even though my daughter was saying, "Dad, it's the song of the summer." It almost made it. And, you know, I actually co-starred with Sabrina Carpenter on "Milo Murphy's Law," so we got to be animated voices together.

A previous version of this story said Al Yankovic's "Mandatory Fun" hit No. 1 on the Billboard Hot 100. It was the Billboard 200. It also said "Mandatory Fun" was the first comedy album to hit No. 1. That is incorrect; it was the first to debut at No. 1.

Variety

**MONTREUX, Switzerland:** At the just concluded iconic Montreux Jazz Festival in Switzerland, British R&B and neo-soul singer **Mahalia** said she dreams of performing in **China** one day and building more cultural bridges with her music.

"Absolutely! My whole life I just wanted to travel and be able to do something that could take me to places, this was my goal. I would love to go to China," Mahalia, who has never been to China, told Xinhua during the festival's 58th edition held on July 5-20.

Mahalia stressed that building cultural bridges with music is a top priority for her. "It's really important. The more I tour and when I go to **Australia** and **America** and parts of **Asia** or **Europe**, I can see that people enjoy the music," she said.

"I'm immensely proud of how far I have come but I'm also excited about how far I can still go. For me, the sky has always been the limit," she added.

Mahalia, a **Leicester** native, is one of the leading lights of the British music scene. At the crossroads of neo-soul, R&B and hip-hop, she has already collaborated with music superstars such as **Burna Boy**, **Stormzy**, **Raye** and **Jacob Collier**.

Mahalia was just 13 years old when she signed to a record label. She performed in Montreux for the first time at age of 20 in 2018. (Xinhua)

**ANKARA:** The Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism said Sunday that 12,139 historical artifacts have been repatriated since 2002 as the country has intensified efforts to recover cultural artifacts.

Since 2018 alone, a total of 7,823 artifacts have been recovered, local newspaper Daily Sabah quoted the ministry as saying.

Many of the recovered artifacts were retrieved from Western countries, including **Britain**, **Italy**, and the **United States**.

Some artifacts were intercepted during commercial transactions. For instance, a bronze emperor statue slated for auction in **New York** in 2011 was deemed illegal and subsequently returned to **Turkiye**.

More recently, a marble torso of a young woman identified as a Turkish historical artifact was recovered from an auction in 2021 and repatriated to the Anadolu Civilizations Museum on January 26, 2024. (Xinhua)

**ROME:** The continued cooperation between **Italy** and **China** to protect and promote world cultural heritages

enhances mutual understanding and fosters learning between civilizations, several Italian professionals told Xinhua in recent interviews.

Italy and China currently hold the largest number of UNESCO World Heritage Sites. Helleni Porfyriou, a former senior researcher at the Institute for Heritage Science of the Italian National Research Council, said that the significant number of heritage sites in both countries lays the foundation for collaboration, with many



Stormzy



Mahalia

sites sharing similar historical significance, architectural styles, or cultural landscapes.

"When world heritage sites with similar characteristics are brought together, it promotes a deeper understanding of each other's history and culture," Porfyriou said.

"Through tourism and digital platforms, audiences can learn about the wisdom of different parts of the world in the same historical periods, facilitating civilizational exchanges across continents." (Xinhua)



## Fruits and whole grains key to lowering blood pressure

## How your diet can reduce blood pressure, dementia risk

KUWAIT CITY, July 22: Recent research highlights the benefits of certain foods in managing high blood pressure and reducing the risk of dementia, according to cardiologist Dr. Yaroslav Ashikhmin.

In an interview with Gazeta.Ru, Dr. Ashikhmin emphasized that several dietary choices are particularly effective.

He noted that fruits are essential, with a weekly intake of 150-200 grams providing the body with necessary antioxidants, reports Al-Rai daily.

Whole grain products such as unprocessed buckwheat, brown rice, whole grain bread, and whole grain pasta are also crucial for maintaining healthy blood pressure levels.

Leafy vegetables, in particular, have been shown to help lower blood pressure and may reduce the risk of neurodegenerative diseases like Parkinson's and Alzheimer's. Adequate fiber intake is also vital.

Dr. Ashikhmin pointed out that the

## Malnutrition remains significant issue in Pacific: UNICEF

SUVA, July 22, (Xinhua): The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) Pacific Representative Jonathan Veitch said while under-5 mortality rates in the Pacific are generally stable, there are concerning trends as malnutrition remains a significant issue among countries.

Veitch made the remarks while addressing the critical issues of malnutrition and health among children in Fiji and the broader Pacific region, reported

Mediterranean diet, rich in fruits, vegetables, whole grains, low-fat dairy, and fatty fish, is one of the healthiest dietary patterns.

Fiji Broadcasting Corporation on Monday.

Children can be vulnerable to early death if they don't get proper nutrition at the early age of life, he said, noting that it is "completely avoidable."

Veitch said UNICEF is working closely with the Fijian Ministry of Health to combat these challenges.

UNICEF Executive Director Catherine Russell said educating parents about proper nutrition and ensuring

that children receive the necessary nutrients are vital steps in addressing this problem.

□ □ □

China on Monday rolled out comprehensive guidelines to combat obesity among primary and secondary school students, emphasizing prevention, early intervention and disease early warning efforts.

The "technical guidelines for consumption.

The cardiologist also discussed the ongoing debate regarding the effects of red meat on public health and blood

pressure. He cautioned that processed meats, such as sausages and other cured foods, are harmful to blood vessels.

preprehensive prevention and control of overweight and obesity in primary and secondary school students" was jointly issued by the National Disease Control and Prevention Administration, the Ministry of Education, the National Health Commission, and the General Administration of Sport of China.

Weight issues and obesity affect the health of primary and secondary school students, necessitating urgent intervention, the guidelines note.

Key recommendations include promoting healthy eating habits with reduced salt, oil and added sugar, providing scientific intervention methods and encouraging schools to hire qualified nutritionists.

The guidelines also call for ensuring daily physical activity with at least one physical education class per day, conducting regular health screenings, and establishing health records for students, with timely feedback to parents.

However, he clarified that cheese, dairy products, and white meat are not detrimental to individuals with high blood pressure.

## China introduces guidelines to tackle student obesity

## 'Screen time vs story time'

## Enhance kids' intellectual growth with audiobooks

By Andrey Vyshedskiy  
Boston University

The Conversation is an independent and nonprofit source of news, analysis and commentary from academic experts.

□ □ □

It's not uncommon today to see children glued to their screens. In fact, 80% of parents with children 11 or younger say their kids watch YouTube videos, according to a 2020 Pew Research Center poll. Half of these parents say their kids watch videos every day - some even several times a day.

But staring at a screen for too long can negatively impact children's well-being - even creating dependency. According to research, kids demonstrate less curiosity, self-control and emotional stability when their screen time surpasses one hour a day. They are also more likely to experience anxiety and depression and suffer from sleep disruptions, obesity and impaired social skills. Even short, fast-paced videos have consequences, impacting the self-regulation and working memory of young children.

I believe it is essential to explore how to use technology in a way that can positively impact children's ability to think and communicate. Audiobooks present a compelling case.

Starting around three and a half years of age, most children can comprehend simple stories and fairy tales. Audiobooks can be particularly useful during car rides, bedtime routine and quiet playtime. For school-aged children, they can engage reluctant readers by providing an alternative way to experience books. And most importantly, they can nurture kids' intellectual growth - much more than videos.

## Imagination

Here are five ways that audiobooks can enhance children's ability to learn:

Unlike videos, which provide visual and auditory stimuli, audiobooks rely solely on listening. This encourages children to visualize the story in their minds, training them to use their voluntary imagination. In contrast, passive videos provide preformed images that require no voluntary imagination.

Unlike involuntary imagination, which happens spontaneously and unintentionally, such as in a dream during sleep, voluntary imagination is the deliberate effort to create new images in the mind. People are not born with

this ability. Rather, it must be actively developed during childhood through conversations and engagement with stories and fairy tales.

Research indicates that voluntary imagination leads to improved problem-solving skills. In fact, training voluntary imagination is crucial for intellectual development.

Listening to audiobooks requires children to focus and pay attention to the spoken word, promoting the development of listening skills. Unlike the passive consumption of videos, where the visual component dominates a child's attention, comprehending an audiobook demands active listening. This can improve a child's ability to concentrate and maintain attention for longer periods.

## Vulnerable

Audiobooks are a valuable tool for expanding a child's vocabulary and enhancing language skills. Exposure to rich and varied language allows children to encounter new words and phrases in context, which aids in understanding and retention.

Compared with print books, audiobooks feature expressive narration, which can model proper pronunciation, intonation and rhythm.

Audiobooks can foster a sense of independence in young children as they create their own unique vision of the scenes and events described in a book. This can cultivate a habit of independent learning as children follow complex narratives, infer meaning and make connections between different parts of the story. This self-directed learning approach can improve self-esteem and study skills and lay a strong foundation for future academic success.

Excessive screen time can strain children's eyes, leading to discomfort and potential long-term vision problems, including nearsightedness. Audiobooks, on the other hand, eliminate the need for screens, giving children's eyes a much-needed break.

Audiobooks are a powerful tool for enhancing a child's cognitive and linguistic development, and many are available for free at local libraries or on apps like LibriVox. As parents and educators seek to nurture smarter and more well-rounded children, audiobooks can play a significant role. (AP)

## Agencies warn of new phishing schemes

## Malicious actors trying to exploit global tech outage for own gain

NEW YORK, July 22, (AP): As the world continues to recover from massive business and travel disruptions caused by a faulty software update from cybersecurity firm CrowdStrike, malicious actors are trying to exploit the situation for their own gain.

Government cybersecurity agencies across the globe and CrowdStrike CEO George Kurtz are warning businesses and individuals about new phishing schemes that involve malicious actors posing as CrowdStrike employees or other tech specialists offering to assist those recovering from the outage.

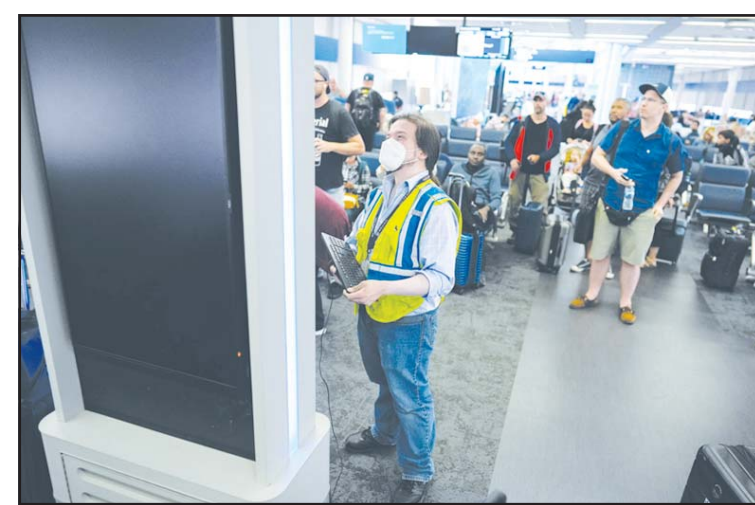
"We know that adversaries and bad actors will try to exploit events like this," Kurtz said in a statement. "I encourage everyone to remain vigilant and ensure that you're engaging with official CrowdStrike representatives."

The UK Cyber Security Center said they have noticed an increase in phishing attempts around this event.

Microsoft said 8.5 million devices running its Windows operating system were affected by the faulty cybersecurity update Friday that led to worldwide disruptions. That's less than 1% of all Windows-based machines, Microsoft cybersecurity executive David Weston said in a blog post on Saturday.

He also said such a significant disturbance is rare but "demonstrates the interconnected nature of our broad ecosystem."

With their tightly timed, interwoven schedules and complex technology



A technician removes software from an information display at Chicago O'Hare International Airport, in Chicago, Friday, July 19, after software issues delayed and canceled flights globally. (AP)

systems, many big airlines struggle to stay on time when everything goes well. It perhaps was not surprising that the industry was among the hardest hit by the outage, with crews and planes caught out of position.

By mid-afternoon Saturday on the US East Coast, airlines around the world had canceled more than 2,000 flights, according to tracking service FlightAware. That was down from 5,100-plus cancellations on Friday.

About 1,600 of Saturday's canceled

flights occurred in the United States, where carriers scrambled to get planes and crews back into position after massive disruptions the day before. According to travel data provider Cirium, US carriers canceled about 3.5% of their scheduled flights for Saturday. Only Australia was hit harder.

Canceled flights were running at about 1% in the United Kingdom, France and Brazil and about 2% in Canada, Italy and India among major air-travel markets.

Robert Mann, a former airline executive and now a consultant in the New York area, said it was unclear exactly why U.S. airlines were suffering disproportionate cancellations, but possible causes include a greater degree of outsourcing of technology and more exposure to Microsoft operating systems that received the faulty upgrade from CrowdStrike.

Delta Air Lines canceled more than 800 flights, or one-fourth of its schedule for Saturday, and that number did not include Delta Connection regional flights. It was followed by United Airlines, which dropped nearly 400 flights.

The worst airport to be, for a second straight day, was Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport, where Delta is the dominant carrier. The Atlanta Journal-Constitution reported that thousands of people spent the night at the airport, many sleeping on the floors.

European airlines and airports appeared to be recovering slowly, although Lufthansa and its affiliates canceled dozens of flights. Its Euroings budget subsidiary said check-in, boarding, booking and rebooking flights were all available again, although "isolated disruptions" were possible.

London's Heathrow Airport said it was busy but operating normally on Saturday and that "all systems are back up and running."

## Millions of children sacrifice education for survival

## Drought spurs hunger, school dropouts in Africa

MUDZI, Zimbabwe, July 22, (AP): It's Tuesday morning, and 5-year-old Talent should be in school. Instead, he's foraging for the fruit that his family is counting on for food now that crops have withered in the heat.

Blame the El Nino phenomenon that altered weather worldwide for over a year, or the larger problem of climate change that's bearing down on the African continent, the region most vulnerable to it. The boy's grandmother, Winnie Chihota, knows she's watching part of a generation slip away.

For many in Zimbabwe's rural northeastern Mudzi district, crops mean survival. When they fail, the future can, too. No income means no way to pay the \$25 for school fees or for school uniforms. Two of Chihota's own children are at risk of leaving school. Little Talent never had a chance to start.

No crops also mean nothing for the children to eat for lunch even if they do make it to class.

"One child fainted recently at the school due to hunger," Chihota said,

as she sorted through the fruit that Talent and other children brought home. The fruit will be dried for future meals. Many families now only eat one solid meal of corn or sorghum a day.

Children are the most at risk after El Nino, a naturally occurring climatic phenomenon, caused some of the hottest days in decades in parts of southern and eastern Africa. It also caused some of the worst flooding in memory.

It destroyed many of the tiny farm plots that keep families going. More than 60% of Zimbabwe's population

of around 15 million reside in rural areas where agriculture is the major source of food and income.

The immediate concern is hunger. In Zimbabwe, 580,000 children are at risk of malnutrition, according to the United Nations children's agency, as the effects of El Nino worsen a humanitarian crisis of economic hardship and outbreaks of diseases such as cholera.

The larger problem is the children's education. School has become a luxury. Children drop out to work.

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## 32 dancers competing for men's and women's gold medals

## Europe, North America, Asia set to lead in Olympic debut

BEIJING, July 22, (Xinhua): The Place de la Concorde in central Paris will host the first-ever breaking competition in Olympic history on August 9 and 10, with 32 dancers from 15 countries and regions competing for men's and women's gold medals.

The lineup for the breaking event at the Paris Olympics consists of continental champions, top-ranked athletes from two Olympic qualifying events, and wildcard entries.

Despite its origins in North American street culture, breaking - also known as breakdancing - has gained global popularity, especially in Europe and Asia, which is reflected in the lineup for the Olympic event - France, Japan and the United States will each have four participants (two men and two women), while China will field three competitors (two women and one man).

Dutch dancer Lee Diouf secured his Olympic spot by finishing first in both qualifying events. America's world champion Victor Montalvo and European champion Danis Civil of France are also top contenders.

Japan's Shigeyuki Nakarai (Shigekix), who won gold at the Hangzhou Asian Games, earned a direct ticket to Paris, while young talent Hiroto Ono (Hiro10) ranked third in the qualifiers and is a strong medal hopeful.

South Korea's Kim Hong-yul (Hongten), 39, advanced by finishing second in the qualifiers. With a career spanning over 20 years and multiple Red Bull BC One titles, Kim's vibrant style has made him a fan favorite.



Victor Montalvo, also known as B-Boy Victor, of the United States, competes in the B-boy Red Bull BC One World Final at Hammerstein Ballroom in New York. (AP)

vorite.

China's sole male participant, 19-year-old Qi Xiangyu (Lithe-ing), has emerged as a rising star. He won the Outbreak event in Slovakia in July 2023, marking the best result for a Chinese male breakdancer. Qi also earned a bronze medal at the 2023 Hangzhou Asian Games and a silver at the Paris Olympic qualifying series in Shanghai.

China's Liu Qingyi (671) known for her powerful and explosive style, won the women's title at the Outbreak street dance competition in August 2022, becoming the first Chinese athlete to win a top international breakdancing event. Two months later, she earned the runner-up at the 2022 World Breaking Championships to clinch China's first-ever medal in this event.

In 2023, Liu clinched the gold in women's breaking at the 19th Hangzhou Asian Games to secure her spot at the Paris Olympics.

## BREAK DANCING

Japanese breakdancers Yuasa Ami (Ami) and Fukushima Ayumi (Ayumi) dominated women's events with their agile and graceful styles. Both have extensive competition experience.

Several young male dancers also make waves. Born in 2007, Dominika Banevic of Lithuania (Nicka) won the 2023 World Breaking Championships. French teenager Sya Dembele (Syssy), also born in 2007, finished fourth in the qualifiers.

Breaking made its debut as a competitive sport at the 2018 Buenos Aires Youth Olympic Games. In 2020, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) Executive Board approved the inclusion of breaking, along with skateboarding, sport climbing and surfing, at the 2024 Paris Olympics.

However, breaking will not feature at the 2028 Los Angeles Olympics, as it was not selected by the organizing committee.

"There was a decision of the [Los Angeles] organizing committee of what we have seen for breaking. And I think what you could not only feel, but experience is that we appreciate breaking very much. We had it in the Youth Olympic Games in 2018, and this was leading the way then to Paris," said IOC President Thomas Bach.

"We hope very much that then Brisbane, 2032 will offer B-boys and B-girls the opportunity to make their Olympic dream come true," Bach added.



French President Emmanuel Macron, (center left), and France's Minister for Sports and Olympics Amelie Oudea-Castera, (fourth right standing), pose with Team France staff as he visits the Olympic Village, at the 2024 Summer Olympics, Monday, July 22, 2024, in Paris, France. (AP)

# Legendary players set for final Olympic showdown

Young stars Alcaraz and Swiatek ready to shine

BEIJING, July 22, (Xinhua): For the first time since Barcelona 1992, the Olympic Games' tennis matches will be played on red clay.

This summer, Paris will witness the final Olympic show of legendary players such as Rafael Nadal and Andy Murray, as well as the rise of young stars including Carlos Alcaraz and Iga Swiatek.

## TENNIS

The tennis competitions of Paris 2024 will take place at Roland Garros from July 27 to August 4. A total of 184 athletes from 41 countries and regions will compete for five golds of men's and women's singles and doubles, as well as mixed doubles.

Paris 2024 will be Nadal's fourth and final Olympic Games. The 22-time major champion and twice Olympic gold medalist announced in May that he would probably finish his career in 2024 due to a lingering hip injury. Last month, he skipped Wimbledon to lessen the strain of switching from clay to grass. It seems that the 38-year-old Spaniard aims to add more icing on the cake of his glittering career with another gold at Roland Garros, where he has claimed a record 14 titles.

Another player to bid adieu to tennis is Britain's Murray, who won back-to-back Olympic gold medals at London 2012 and Rio 2016.

The road to the top of the men's singles podium will not be easy, as 24-time Grand Slam winner Novak Djokovic and rising star Carlos Alcaraz, the youngest man with major titles on hard, grass and clay courts, will both fight hard for their first Olympic gold.

Several high-ranked female athletes, including world No.3 Aryna Sabalenka of Belarus and two-

Serbian president hosts reception for Olympic team

BELGRADE, July 22, (Xinhua): Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic hosted a ceremonial reception on Sunday for the country's Olympic team, presenting them with the national flag they will carry at the upcoming Olympic Games in Paris.

In his address, Vucic expressed his gratitude to the athletes and conveyed his best wishes for their success.

"I am very nervous in front of such great sportspeople. My task is to wish you good luck at the Olympic Games. I also want to thank you and your families for the effort and sacrifices you've made, choosing to train instead of taking vacations, to achieve something great for our country. We will follow every one of your performances with anticipation and hope," he said, according to a press release from the president's office.

Vucic also expressed hope for a significant medal haul at the Olympics. "I think the basketball game in

Lille against the USA will break all viewership records. We are hoping for our biggest medal haul yet, aiming for double digits. Even if we don't achieve that, we will continue to support and love you," he said.

The flag was received by Maja Ognjenovic, captain of the Serbian women's volleyball team, who will be the flag bearer at the opening ceremony of

## OLYMPICS

the Olympic Games in Paris, along with water polo player Dusan Mandic.

Bozidar Maljkovic, President of the Olympic Committee of Serbia (OKS), also wished the team success and good health. "I would love for Paris to be a true celebration for our athletes, a celebration where we win as many medals as possible and celebrate on the spot.

## US face Italy on first day of men's group play

## Hallock eyes elusive Oly medal

WALNUT, Calif., July 22, (AP): Ben Hallock won in high school in Southern California. He won in college at Stanford. He won as a professional at Pro Recco, one of the top water polo clubs in the world.

Hallock has won everywhere he has played except for the Olympics. And the 6-foot-6 center desperately wants to check that box this summer.

"I'd throw every single medal away that I have now for a medal in Paris," Hallock said. "Without a doubt."

Paris has just about arrived for Hallock and a U.S. men's team looking for the program's first medal since it won silver in 2008. The U.S. faces Italy on the first day of men's group play on Sunday.

To get back on the podium, to somehow stay in contention into the final days of the grueling tournament, the U.S. is going to need more from the talented Hallock than it has ever seen before. And perhaps more importantly, more from Hallock's teammates.

"I mean I think it just always goes back to details," said Hallock, 26. "I've played the sport for a long time, and the small details, especially when the Games are only every four years, they'll keep you up longer at night. They'll haunt you a little bit more. So just thinking about the little details and what we can do differently, how we can make up that difference."

Hallock was just 18 when he made his Olympic debut in 2016 in Rio de Janeiro. He played sparingly as the U.S. finished a disappointing 10th.

After taking a redshirt year to train with the national team, Hallock started playing for Stanford when he got back from Brazil. He won two consecutive Cutino Awards - water polo's version of the Heisman Trophy - and helped lead the

Cardinal to the 2019 NCAA title.

When COVID-19 disrupted the U.S. training schedule in California and pushed back the start of the Tokyo Olympics, Hallock was part of a sizeable contingent of American players who joined professional teams in Europe. He has won three Champions League titles with Pro Recco in Northern Italy.

By the time Hallock got to his second Olympics in Tokyo, he was a different player than he was in Rio. He scored 12 times while repeatedly drawing exclusions and causing all sorts of matchup issues.

"He's definitely one of the best centers in the world. ... You see it every day in the water." U.S. attacker Max Irving said. "I mean you talk to the guys on our team, even talk to some Italian guys who he's playing with at Pro Recco, and they all say it: The guy's the real deal."

## WATER POLO

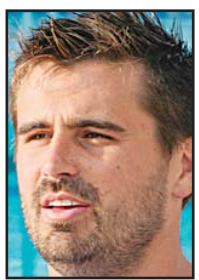
Johnny Hooper, an American attacker who played with Hallock in high school at Harvard-Westlake, said the U.S. captain has been working on every aspect of his game for years. Hallock, he said, "never took a shortcut in every fundamental thing that you could be good at in water polo."

"In terms of center play, he has every single ability on a nine or 10 level," Hooper said. "He can play left-handed. He can play right-handed. He has the best legs in the game. He can turn. He can step out. He can pass. He can shoot."

The U.S. finished sixth in Tokyo for its best result at the Olympics since it lost to Hungary in the 2008 final. Hallock was left wanting more - for himself and his team.

Namely, he wants to finish more of his opportunities in front and play better defense.

"I think when I watch video of myself now, there's still so many things I can pick apart every single play," he said.



Hallock

time Wimbledon runner-up Ons Jabeur of Tunisia, have chosen to withdraw from Paris 2024. However, the women's competition will feature formidable youngsters such as four-time French Open champions Iga Swiatek of Poland and the reigning U.S. Open titleholder Coco Gauff of the United States, who are targeting their first Olympic gold.

In a sport long dominated by Europeans and Americans, Chinese players have long strived to make a breakthrough on the world stage.

This summer, China will send a seven-player squad to Paris, led by women's world No.8 Zheng Qinwen and men's world No. 34 Zhang Zhizhen, who recently made history as the first male Chinese player to secure a seed posi-

tion at Wimbledon.

Although four Olympic first-timers will represent China in the women's singles, they helped make China one of only six squads to have a full quota of players at the event. Among others, Zhang Shuai and Zheng Saisai, who have previously played at an Olympics, will team up with youngsters Yuan Yue and Wang Xinyu, respectively, in the women's doubles.

Chinese tennis players have made progress in recent years, as Zheng finished runner-up in the 2024 Australian Open, and world No.36 Wang Xinyu reached the last 16 at Wimbledon. Paris will also see the first male player from Chinese mainland on court since Beijing 2008, and Zhang Zhizhen, the Asian Games champion, will look to go as far as possible.

The last time China saw gold in an Olympic tennis event was Athens 2004, where Li Ting and Sun Tiantian defeated their Spanish rivals to win the women's doubles competition, which was also China's sole gold medal in tennis at an Olympic Games. China's best record in singles is the fourth place achieved by two-time Grand Slam winner Li Na, at Beijing 2008.



France's Arthur Fils, center, holds the winner's trophy after defeating Germany's Alexander Zverev, right in the men's singles final of the German Open, in Hamburg, Germany. (AP)

Female flagbearer to be revealed in the coming days

## James selected as Team USA male flagbearer for opening ceremony

PARIS, July 22, (AP): LeBron James wasn't totally sure what the opening ceremony was all about when he was picked for his first Olympics in 2004.

This time, he'll be one of the stars of the show.

James has been picked by his fellow U.S. Olympians to serve as the male flagbearer for the Americans in Friday night's opening ceremony for the Paris Games. He becomes the third basketball player - and the first men's player - to carry the U.S. flag at the start of an Olympics, joining Dawn Staley for the Athens Games in 2004 and Sue Bird for the Tokyo Games that happened in 2021.

The 39-year-old James got word of the honor Mon-

day in London, a few hours before the U.S. men's team was scheduled to play its final pre-Olympics exhibition game against World Cup champion Germany.

"There's obviously the utmost respect for who he is as a person and a player and how good he is," fellow U.S. star and first-time Olympian Stephen Curry said earlier this month of James, someone he's faced off against four times in the NBA Finals and is now teaming up with for the first official time.

The female U.S. flagbearer will be revealed in the coming days. The International Olympic Committee decided in 2020 that national delegations would have two flagbearers - one

male, one female - at the opening ceremony at an Olympics, a move to promote gender parity. The U.S. is expected to have nearly 600 athletes in the Paris Games, about 53% of them female.

James - a global icon, a four-time NBA champion and the league's all-time leading scorer set to go into his record-tying 22nd NBA season - is set to play in the Olympics for the fourth time, after he was part of U.S. teams that won bronze in 2004, gold at Beijing in 2008 and gold again in London in 2012. He walked in the opening ceremony at each of his three previous Olympics.

This time, he'll float. This will be an open-

ing ceremony like none other in Olympic history: Thousands of athletes will be part of a flotilla sailing along the River Seine at sunset toward the Eiffel Tower. It's a 6-kilometer (3.7-mile) route, with about 320,000 guests set to watch from the river bank

## OLYMPICS

and about 1 billion more, Olympic officials estimate, watching on televisions around the world.

Not all Olympic athletes take part in the opening ceremony; many skip it for logistical reasons, such as having to compete the following day. James and the four-time defending gold

medalist U.S. men don't open Olympic play until Sunday, when they face Serbia at Lille, France.

James and the U.S. Olympians will be waiting longer than almost any other nation for their trip on the Seine. By IOC custom, Greece - which will have NBA star Giannis Antetokounmpo as one of its two flagbearers - will lead the procession, followed by the Refugee Olympic Team and then about 200 more national delegations. The U.S. is scheduled to go next-to-last in the procession, because Los Angeles will play host to the next Summer Games in 2028.

France, as the host, will be the final nation in the opening ceremony proces-

sion. Its men's basketball team, featuring reigning NBA rookie of the year Victor Wembanyama, opens Olympic play on Saturday and isn't expected to be present for the opening ceremony.

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## Hosts claim series with victory

## Windies collapse as England win 2nd test by 241 runs

NOTTINGHAM, England, July 22, (AP) — West Indies collapsed in the evening session on Sunday as England won the second test by 241 runs with rookie spinner Shoaib Bashir taking 5-41 after hundreds from Joe Root and Harry Brook set up the series-clinching win at Trent Bridge.

Root (122) and Brook (109), the long-reigning king of England's batting unit and his heir apparent, reeled off classy centuries to pave the way for a sprint to victory on the fourth evening of the test. Root hit his 32nd test ton to move only one century behind England great Alastair Cook.

England took an insurmountable 2-0 lead in the three-test series.

Chasing an unlikely target of 385 after England's second-innings 425 all out, the tourists were demolished for 143 in just 36.1 overs as Bashir did the damage.

The 20-year-old, who did not get a single over in the first test at Lord's,

justified the selection gamble that saw him fast-tracked ahead of the established Jack Leach this summer as he took the role of fourth-innings finisher.

Bashir removed Kirk McKenzie, Kavem Hodge and Alick Athanaze in the space of three overs to derail the tourists before cleaning up Jason Holder and last man Shamar Joseph.

## CRICKET

"I think what Bash has done today is to show the world what he can do," England captain Ben Stokes said. "That wicket hardly offered anything for a spinner throughout the whole test match and look at what he was able to do today."

It was a perfect finale for England's first home test without Stuart Broad or James Anderson since 2012. England's attack was in clinical mood as it forced a dramatic West Indies collapse from



England players celebrate the dismissal of West Indies Kirk McKenzie by England's Shoaib Bashir, second right, during day four of the second Test between England and West Indies at Trent Bridge cricket ground, Nottingham, England. (AP)

61 without loss to 91-6.

Chris Woakes got things moving by dismissing both openers, Mark Wood added a dash of raw pace and Gus Atkinson picked up two.

But it was fitting for Bashir, the youngest member of a revamped XI, to apply the killer blow as he clean bowled Joseph.

Captain Kraigg Brathwaite top-scored for West Indies with 47 before he was caught behind off Woakes (2-28). Holder scored 37.

Earlier, England already had a healthy lead of 207 and seven wickets in hand at the start of the fourth day. Yorkshire duo Root and Brook stretched their partnership to 189 as both men progressed to impressive hundreds.

A sprinted single on 99 showed Brook's hunger to experience a first test hundred on home soil. Brook's four previous tons had come at Rawalpindi, Multan, Karachi and Wel-

lington, but his fifth will go down as a special one in front of his own fans.

Root was more measured, scoring with a gentle ease that made the job look remarkably straightforward. The shot that took him to three figures was just his seventh boundary, though he quickly followed with a trademark reverse scoop to remind onlookers of the higher gears at his disposal. By the end of his stay Root had moved up to eighth on the all-time test run-scorers list, just 13 away from West Indies great Brian Lara.

Brook flat-footed on the cut and Root chipped to cover, but they had already done more than enough. The hosts finished on 425, taking a slice of history as the only England side to pass 400 in both innings of a test.

It was an unlucky 13 overs for England with the new ball as the West Indies openers rode their luck to make a bright start to their chase.

## Competing and parenting

## Some athletes are doing double duty at Olympics

PARIS, July 22, (AP) — From training and competing to preparing bottles for feedings and changing diapers, some of the Olympians at the Paris Games will be balancing their roles of athletes and parents.

There is the British rower who raised more than \$4,000 through GoFundMe to go to Paris "as a full-time mom." The American marathon runner who trained with his daughters' support by the track. The New Zealand rowers who sang children's songs to motivate each other after rough nights waking up to take care of their babies.

There will be some help from organizers this time for athletes in Paris juggling the demands of elite sports with the tasks of parenthood.

The International Olympic Committee and Paris organizers set up what they call the first Olympic Village nursery to allow athletes to be closer to their children and have quality time with them during the Games.

"The IOC and IOC Athletes' Commission want to ensure that pregnancy and motherhood do not mean a career end in particular for female athletes," the IOC said. "The nursery forms part of an ongoing commitment from the IOC and IOC AC to ensure parent athletes are cared for and supported at the Games."

## OLYMPICS

Organizers said the space is intended "to reunite competing moms and dads with their children," and that it will provide "more complimentary services and products to athletes than ever before at the Olympic and Paralympic Village" through one of the IOC's partners that sells diapers.

The IOC, which aims to make the 2024 Olympics the first fully gender-equal Games, said it doesn't compile data on how many parents will be competing in Paris, but said it "was seeing good interest in the nursery" ahead of the event.

The nursery is welcome news for parent athletes after restrictions at the Tokyo Olympics caused by the COVID-19 pandemic meant family members weren't allowed to accompany athletes. Canadian basketball player Kim Gaucher complained at the time that the IOC was making athletes choose between the Games and their children, and the IOC eventually allowed breastfeeding mothers to take their children to Japan with them.

Past Games included iconic celebrations by parents with their kids, including American Nia Ali with her young son after winning a silver medal in the 100 meters hurdles at the Rio de Janeiro Olympics.

American Allyson Felix, an 11-time Olympic medalist who often celebrated victories with her children, told CBS that the nursery represents a "shift in culture" and a move in "the right direction."

"I think it really tells women that you can choose motherhood and also be at the top of your game and not have to miss a beat," said Felix, who is on the IOC's athletes' commission.

Among the Olympians who may end up using the nursery in Paris are New Zealand rowers Brooke Francis and Lucy Spoor, who will be in the same boat in Paris, both literally - they are paired in the double sculls category - and because they both

gave birth about two years before the Games.

Before training they often discussed how many times they had to wake up the night before to take care of their babies. And when they were too tired, they sang kids' songs in the boat - those "stuck in our heads," Francis said - to try to cheer themselves up.

American marathon runner Clayton Young had his daughters help him train by yelling power phrases every time he went by through a grass loop section on his training route. When he clinched his spot at the Olympic trials earlier this year, they were among the first to hug and congratulate him at the finish line.

"Kids take a lot of physical effort and exertion," Young told The Associated Press. "Maybe I'm not sleeping or eating or resting as well as some other professional athletes, but from a mental standpoint, I'm way more grounded and way more present and have a much bigger internal perspective than most athletes."

British rower Mathilda Hodgkins-Byrne turned to GoFundMe to take her young son and her partner to competitions as she tried to qualify for the Games.

"The funding I receive is enough to help me pay rent, buy food and support with child care," she said. "However, with the current cost-of-living crisis, it wouldn't be enough to fund Freddie and his dad (or grandparents) with travel, accommodation and food at training camps and competitions."

Dutch table tennis player Britt Eerland also resorted to GoFundMe to raise money to make it to the Paris Games after giving birth in March 2023.

"This campaign aims to show the world that motherhood and elite sports can coexist. By supporting me, we're championing the message that mothers can pursue their dreams and excel at the highest levels," she said on her GoFundMe page. "With your help, I will not only make my dream come true to go to Paris in 2024 but also inspire countless mothers worldwide."

Francis and Spoor will be counting on help from their parents and partners to take care of their kids during the Games. They will all stay at a rented apartment until Francis and Spoor join their teammates at the team hotel and leave the toddlers with their families.

"We're so lucky that we have people that we feel comfortable enough with to have the kids staying with them and know that they're safe and happy," Spoor told the AP. "Basically it has been a lot of planning and there is an element of a lot of logistics to it."

Spoor said motherhood brought extra physical challenges and made them "super conscious of injury and things like that."

"But then obviously the other side of balancing just being a new mom and how to do that and learning what comes with all of that," she said. "Basically we have two goals this year: to aim for a gold medal at the Olympics but also to be the best mom that we can be." Francis said they were "really lucky that we do get to be both moms and sort of have our dream job rowing as well."

"You sort of just realize how much of a privilege it is to be able to represent your country and bring your kids along for the ride," she said.

## Schauffele wins British Open for second major of the year



Xander Schauffele of the United States holds the Claret Jug trophy after winning the British Open Golf Championships at Royal Troon golf club in Troon, Scotland. (AP)

## Wannasaen takes LPGA Tour's Dana Open

TROON, Scotland, July 22, (AP) — Xander Schauffele won the British Open on Sunday for his second major of the year, delivering a masterpiece at Royal Troon with a 6-under 65 to overcome a two-shot deficit and give the Americans a sweep of the four majors for the first time since 1982.

Schauffele, who faced questions at the start of the season whether he could win a major, now has two of them with the brand of golf that hasn't been seen in 90 years of the four majors.

He won the PGA Championship at Valhalla by making a 6-foot birdie putt on the final hole for a 65. In a final round at Royal Troon set up for big drama - six players one shot behind, nine players separated by three

## GOLF

shots - Schauffele made a tense Sunday look like a nice walk along the Irish Sea.

He is the first player to win two majors with closing rounds of 65 in the same year. Jack Nicklaus is the only other player to do it in his career.

He won by two shots over American Billy Horschel (68) and Justin Rose (67), the 43-year-old from England who had to go through 36-hole qualifying just to get into the field.

Chanette Wannasaen won the Dana Open for Children for her second LPGA Tour title, birdieing the final two holes to hold off Haeran Ryu by a stroke.

Three strokes ahead of playing partner Ryu entering the round, Wannasaen closed with a 4-under 67 to finish at 20-under 264 at Highland Meadows. The 20-year-old Thai player won the Portland Classic last year.

Ryu shot 65, also birdieing the final two holes. The South Korean player had six birdies and a bogey on the back nine.

## Sharma returns as ODI skipper

## Yadav to lead India in Sri Lanka for T20s

NEW DELHI, July 22, (AP) — Suryakumar Yadav will lead India on a tour of Sri Lanka as the new Twenty20 captain.

Rohit Sharma, who retired from T20 internationals after leading India to the World Cup triumph in the West Indies last month, returns as the skipper of the one-day international team.

India is in Sri Lanka for three T20s from July 27, all in Pallekele, and three ODIs from Aug. 2, all in Colombo.

Yadav, the No. 2-ranked T20 batter, has previously led India in seven T20s and won five.

Setting out a course for the future, the India selectors ignored Hardik Pandya, who was previously captain whenever Sharma wasn't available. Pandya captained India in 16 T20s from June 2022 until August 2023, and won 10.

The all-rounder is often laid low with fitness issues and not giving him the captaincy is seen as a step to manage his playing workload. Pandya was rested from the ODI series.

Shubman Gill, who led India on the recent five-match T20 tour of Zimbabwe, will be the vice-captain for the ODIs and T20s.

Star batter Virat Kohli, who also retired from T20s after the World

Cup, returns for the ODI leg.

Ace fast bowler Jasprit Bumrah has been rested from the tour.

Key members of India's ODI World Cup campaign in November 2023 have returned, including Shreyas Iyer and Lokesh Rahul, who was designated the first-choice wicketkeeper-batter for ODIs.

Rishabh Pant will be his deputy, but will be the first-choice keeper for the T20s. Sanju Samson is the other

## CRICKET

T20 keeper.

Riyam Parag, who made his T20 debut in Zimbabwe, has also been given an ODI call-up. Left-handed opener Abhishek Sharma, who hit a maiden T20 hundred in Zimbabwe, has been left out.

Batting allrounder Shivam Dube, who played a pivotal role in India's T20 World Cup campaign, was also in the ODI squad. Off-spin all-rounder Washington Sundar was in both squads as well.

Left-arm spin allrounder Ravindra Jadeja, another who retired from T20 internationals after the World Cup, was dropped from the ODI squad. Axar Patel took his spot as the lead-

ing all-round option in both squads.

Unorthodox wrist spinner Kuldeep Yadav, who took 10 wickets in the T20 World Cup, missed out. He will lead the spin attack in the ODIs. Wrist spinner Ravi Bishnoi continues on in the T20s from the Zimbabwe tour.

Mohammed Siraj, Khaleel Ahmed and Arshdeep Singh form the trioka of pace options across both squads, while medium-pace Harshit Rana has been given an ODI call-up.

This will be India's first assignment under new coach Gautam Gambhir.

## India:

**T20:** Suryakumar Yadav (captain), Shubman Gill, Yashasvi Jaiswal, Rinku Singh, Riyan Parag, Rishabh Pant, Sanju Samson, Hardik Pandya, Shivam Dube, Axar Patel, Washington Sundar, Ravi Bishnoi, Arshdeep Singh, Khaleel Ahmed, Mohammed Siraj.

**ODI:** Rohit Sharma (captain), Shubman Gill, Virat Kohli, Lokesh Rahul, Rishabh Pant, Shreyas Iyer, Shivam Dube, Kuldeep Yadav, Mohammed Siraj, Washington Sundar, Arshdeep Singh, Riyan Parag, Axar Patel, Khaleel Ahmed, Harshit Rana.



A worker is seen through Paris 2024 signage surrounding Place de la Concorde, ahead of the 2024 Summer Olympics in Paris, France. (AP)

The 48-year-old Gainey shot 68.

Haruka Kawasaki broke the Japan LPGA's 72-hole scoring record, finishing at 28-under 260 in the Daito Kentaku Eheyant Ladies. The 21-year-old Kawasaki shot 68-65-63-64 for her fourth career title. Miyuu Yamashita was second, four strokes back after a 66. ... England's Frank Kennedy won the Challenge Tour's Euram Bank Open by a stroke in Austria for his first professional victory. The 18-year-old Kennedy is the tour's youngest winner since 2018. He closed with a 1-over 71 to finish at 13 under. ... Jana Melichova won the Dutch Ladies Open for her second Ladies European Tour ti-

tle. The Czech player closed with a 5-under 67 to overcome a six-stroke deficit and win by a stroke. ... Lauren Stephenson closed with a 1-over 72 for a two-stroke victory in the Epson Tour's Twin Bridges Championship at Pinehaven in Gunderland, New York. She finished at 9-under 204. Jessica Porvasnik was second after a 69. ... Ryan Burnett won the Bromont Open at Golf Chateau-Bromont in Quebec for his first PGA Tour Americas title. The 24-year-old former North Carolina player shot an 8-under 62 to finish at 22 under 258, two strokes ahead of David Pastore.





Youssef Al-Shamlan intensifies training for the Olympics.

# Sports

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## Kuwait raises flag in Paris as athletes prepare for Olympics

Fencing star Al-Shamlan eyes Olympic success

**PARIS, July 22, (Agencies):** The Kuwaiti flag was raised at the headquarters of the Kuwaiti delegation in the Olympic Village in Paris as soon as the administrative delegation arrived.

Upon arrival, the administrative and technical delegation immediately began coordinating preparations to welcome the athletes. They reviewed arrival and departure protocols and finalized the schedule for technical meetings and training sessions for each sport.

Kuwaiti athletes are now arriving

in Paris in preparation for the competitions in the six sports Kuwait is participating in: archery, fencing, rowing, swimming, athletics, and sailing.

Kuwait is represented in the 2024 Paris Olympics by nine athletes competing in six sports: Khaled Al-Mudhaf (trap) and Muhammad Al-Daihani (skeet) in archery; Youssef Al-Shamlan (saber) in fencing; Yacoub Al-Yawha (110m hurdles) and Amal Al-Roumi (800m) in athletics; Muhammad Al-Zubaid (100m freestyle) and Lara Dashti (100m breaststroke) in swimming; Souad Al-Faqan in rowing; and Amina Shah in sailing.

President of the Kuwaiti Fencing Association, Abdul Karim Al-Shamlan, highlighted that Youssef

Al-Shamlan's preparations for the Olympics have been ongoing for over a year, including participation in external training camps and intensive training sessions under his Italian coach, Giovanni Maria. Al-Shamlan recently won a bronze medal at the Asian Fencing Championship held in

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Kuwait last June.

Abdul Karim Al-Shamlan further explained that Youssef Al-Shamlan completed his training camp in Blue Scatie, Italy, and has now joined the Kuwaiti delegation in Paris. Competing for the first time in the Olympics, Al-Shamlan will participate in the sa-

ber events, with preliminary rounds starting on the 27th of this month.

Kuwait has participated in 14 previous Summer Olympics, beginning with the 1968 Mexico Olympics with two athletes. The largest Kuwaiti delegation was at the 1980 Moscow Olympics with 56 athletes. The first Kuwaiti women's participation occurred at the 2004 Athens Olympics with Dana Al-Nasrallah in athletics.

Kuwait's first Olympic medal was won by shooting champion Fehaid Al-Daihani, who secured a bronze medal at the Sydney 2000 Olympics and another bronze at the London 2012 Olympics. The 2016 Rio Olympics in Brazil marked Kuwait's most successful participation, with athletes winning one gold and four bronze medals.



Coach Hussein Habib

## 'Burgan target top-three finish'

By Khaled El Anzi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 22: Local training for the Burgan will commence next Thursday in preparation for the 2024-2025 season.

Coach Hussein Habib confirmed that Burgan is set to compete in the upcoming 2024-2025 season with the goal of securing a top-three finish.

He stated, "With the excellent cooperation from the club management and the game staff, and overcoming all obstacles, Burgan is well-positioned to seriously contend for one of the top three spots in the league and cup."

Habib added that Japanese professional Yasuhira and Croatian Stipe have been signed, strengthening the team significantly. The contracts of goalkeeper Mohamed Boyais and Ahmed Mazal have been renewed and new additions include Salman Al-Shamali, Fawaz Abdel-Hadi,

and the return of Ali Al-Badr after a season-long hiatus due to personal reasons. Combined with a talented group of local players, Burgan has the potential to perform at high levels this season.

Habib expressed his sincere gratitude to the club management and the game staff for their trust and for appointing him to lead the first team in the upcoming season. He emphasized his commitment to working with the technical staff and players to achieve an honorable performance in local tournaments.

Notably, Hussein Habib has previously coached the handball teams at Al-Arabi, Sulaibkhat, and Al-Qadisiya clubs.

Meanwhile, the management of Salmiya Club is expected to sign a contract with German professional Valentin Spohn, following the renewal of Tunisian professional Mohamed Al-Soussi's contract for another season.

Chinese VP to attend opening ceremony

## All preparations for the Olympics 'finalized', says French president

PARIS, July 22, (Agencies): France has finalized all preparations for the Olympic Games (Paris 2024), President Emmanuel Macron said on Monday.

Macron's statement came upon his arrival at the Athletes (or Olympic) Village for the Paris competitions in Saint-Denis, in Paris' suburbs, four days ahead of the international tournament launch.

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The president indicated that the relevant authorities had worked for years to prepare for the Olympic games, indicating that the security personnel had also been mobilized to secure the sports event.

The French Presidency, in a statement, affirmed that Macron inaugurated the village on February 29, adding that the steering Olympic and Paralympic Commission had equipped the village to accommodate 14,000 athletes, their companions and 9,000 Paralympic champions. Delegations had been arriving at the site since July 18.

The venue is scheduled to be transformed into "a new environmental region" encompassing 28,000 residential units.

The 13th summer edition of the international tournament is scheduled between July 26 and August 11, with participation of 10,500 athletes representing 206 national sports commissions.

The championship emblem has been branded "the Olympic Phryge," derived from the design of the Phrygian hats, along with symbols alluding to freedoms and the French flag.

The games will include competitions in track and field, gymnastics, hockey, judo, rowing, shooting, surfing, tennis table, taekwondo, weight lifting and wrestling.

At the invitation of the host country France and the International Olympic Committee, Chinese Vice President Han Zheng will travel to France as President Xi Jinping's Special Representative to attend the opening ceremony and other events of the 33rd Olympic Games in Paris on July 26, foreign ministry spokesperson Mao Ning announced on Monday.

Tokyo Olympics tennis silver medalist Marketa Vondrousova withdrew from the Paris Games on Monday because of a hand injury.

The 25-year-old from the Czech Republic won Wimbledon last year despite being unseeded and was the runner-up at the French Open - played at Roland Garros, the same site being used for tennis matches at these Summer Games - in 2019.



The Luxor Obelisk, left, and the Fountain of Rivers at Place de la Concorde are seen behind signage cordoning off the area, ahead of the 2024 Summer Olympics in Paris, France. (AP)

She is coming off a first-round exit at Wimbledon this month, the first woman since 1994 to lose her opening match a year after winning the title at the All England Club.

Vondrousova posted on social media about pulling out of the Olympics, saying that her focus now is on being ready for the U.S. Open, which starts in late August.

She was the runner-up to Belinda Bencic of Switzerland at the Tokyo Olympics three years ago.

Vondrousova is currently ranked No. 18 in the world and would have been seeded No. 12 in Paris. She was replaced on the Czech team by Katerina Siniakova in singles and Linda Noskova in doubles; Noskova will pair with 2023 French Open runner-up Karolina Muchova.

The draw for the Olympics tennis competition is scheduled for Thursday, and matches begin on Saturday.

The Paris Olympics has established new, and elevated existing, international standards in economic, social and environmental sustainability, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) said on Sunday.

"Improving the sustainability of the Olympic Games and ensuring they create lasting, measurable benefits for local populations even before the event are among the IOC's top priorities," IOC's Director of Sustainability Marie Sallois told a press conference.

"Paris 2024, as the first edition of the Games aligned with our strategic road map, Olympic Agenda 2020, is setting new standards for sports events in France and beyond, and providing a pragmatic toolbox for future sports events organizers," she added.



Kuwait players hold their final training for the opening game against Japan.

Blues play Japan

## Kuwait youth team begins campaign in Indonesia

By Khaled El Anzi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

SURABAYA, Indonesia, July 22: The Kuwait youth volleyball team will kick off its campaign in the Asian Under-20 Championship today in Surabaya, Indonesia, which runs until July 31. It will face the Japanese team at 3:00 pm in its opening match of Group C, which also features India and Bahrain. Additionally, Qatar will play Chinese Taipei, Saudi Arabia will take on Australia, Iran will face China, Hong Kong will compete against Indonesia, Thailand will play Kazakhstan, and Vietnam will clash with South Korea.

The Kuwaiti team will play its second match tomorrow against India, and will conclude the preliminary round against Bahrain on July 25.

In preparation for the Asian Championship, the team held an external training camp in Cairo, Egypt, where it played several trial matches against the Egyptian junior national team, Shabab Al-Sharqiya club, and Heliolito club.

The Kuwaiti delegation is led by Jassem Al-Failakawi, a member of the Board of Directors of the Kuwait Volleyball

### VOLLEYBALL

Association. The delegation includes Abdulaziz Al-Failakawi, the national team director, and the technical staff, headed by coach Jassem Al-Tarrawah, assistant coach Osama Madkour, and physiotherapist Moataz Ezzedine. The 14 players on the team are Fawaz Al-Mishaal, Ali Dashti, Barak Al-Nasser, Faisal Al-Sarraj, Hamoud Al-Masoud, Ahmed Al-Hamdan, Abdulaziz Al-Enezi, Khaled Bouaraki, Abdulaziz Al-Hashemi, Ahmed Al-Mutairi, Rashid Abdulkarim, Rashid Al-Nuaimi, Mahdi Hassan, and Ahmed Shaker.

Head coach Jassem Al-Tarrawah expressed his hope that the team will achieve positive results in the Asian

## Ethiopia aim high at Paris Olympics

ADDIS ABABA, July 22, (Xinhua): Ethiopia is well-prepared to win more than four medals at the Paris 2024 Olympics and write a new chapter in the country's athletics history, a senior official of the Ethiopian Olympic Committee said.

Briefing the media on Sunday in Addis Ababa, the capital of Ethiopia, Ashebir Woldegiorgis, president of the Ethiopian Olympic Committee, said top-performing athletes are leaving for Paris to pick up scores of gold medals from the event.

"We are leaving for Paris to grab as many gold medals in marathon, 10,000-meter, 5,000-meter, and 3,000-meter, and in many other competitions. We are not going there to lose," said Woldegiorgis in an interview with Xinhua after the briefing.

Ethiopia will take part in marathon, 10,000-meter and 5,000-meter running events, 3,000-meter steeplechase, swimming, and boxing, among others.

Kenenisa Bekele, former world record holder in both 5,000-meter and 10,000-meter and Olympic gold medalist at Beijing 2008, will represent the East African country at the

### OLYMPICS

upcoming Olympics.

According to the president, the women's marathon event will feature world record-holder Tigist Assefa and three other famous athletes.

Selemon Barea will defend his 10,000-meter title and also compete in the 5,000-meter event, while current women's world record holder for 5,000-meter Gudaf Tsegay will enter both the women's 5,000-meter and 10,000-meter races in Paris.



U.S. Men's Olympic Water Polo team captain Ben Hallock trains for the 2024 Paris Olympics at Mt. San Antonio College in Walnut, Calif., on Wednesday, Jan. 17, 2024. The American captain hopes to lead the U.S. men to the program's first podium finish since it won silver in 2008. (AP) — See Page 14

Under-20 Volleyball Championship. He highlighted that the training camp

in Cairo was essential for improving the players' physical fitness and honing

their skills in preparation for the competition