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Sanitation, housing in focus

PM chairs meetings on tires, cleaning contracts, residential plans, infrastructure



KUWAIT: HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Al-Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah chairs meetings on discarded tires and public cleaning contracts (left) and housing plans and infrastructure development (right) on Aug 20, 2025. — KUNA photos

NEWS IN BRIEF

Pope Leo to visit Lebanon

VATICAN CITY: Pope Leo plans to visit Lebanon, the country's senior Catholic official announced on Wednesday, in what could be the first visit outside Italy by the new leader of the global Church. The pope will travel to Lebanon "by December", Cardinal Bechara Rai, leader of the 3.5-million-member Maronite Catholic Church, told Al-Arabiya television channel. — Reuters (See Page 5)

India eyes online gambling ban

MUMBAI: India's government introduced a parliamentary bill on Wednesday to ban online gambling, citing concerns over addiction, financial harm and potential links to money laundering and terrorism financing. If passed, the law would impose jail terms or fines on individuals and companies offering online money gaming services. The move could threaten a multibillion-dollar industry that includes online poker platforms to fantasy sports, as well as India's wildly popular homegrown fantasy cricket apps — some of which sponsor the Indian Premier League (IPL) and the national team. — AFP

Denmark to end book tax

COPENHAGEN: Worried by a "reading crisis", Denmark's government will eliminate its sales tax on books, looking to get more citizens buying them, the culture minister said Wednesday. The Scandinavian country's 25-percent tax on books is currently the highest in Europe. An OECD report raised alarm when it found 24 percent of Danish 15-year-olds cannot understand a simple text. — AFP

White House now on TikTok

WASHINGTON: The White House launched a TikTok account on Tuesday, as President Donald Trump continues to permit the Chinese-owned platform to operate in the United States despite a law requiring its sale. The new account, @whitehouse, went live on Tuesday evening with an initial 27-second video showing footage of Trump as he declares: "I am your voice." "America we are BACK! What's up TikTok?" the caption read. — Agencies

KUWAIT: HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Al-Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah chaired a meeting at Bayan Palace to review a plan for handling damaged and used tires, in the presence of Minister of State for Municipal Affairs and Minister of State for Housing Affairs Abdullatif Al-Meshari. The meeting discussed plans by relevant authorities to make optimal use of the waste through coordination between Kuwait Municipality, Environment Public Authority and the Public Authority for Industry, focusing on

Zionists approve Gaza City conquest, W Bank settlement

GAZA/JERUSALEM: The Zionist defense minister approved a plan on Wednesday for the conquest of Gaza City and authorized the call-up of around 60,000 reservists, piling pressure on Hamas as mediators push for a ceasefire. Defense Minister Israel Katz's move, confirmed to AFP by a spokesperson, came as mediators awaited an official Zionist response on their latest proposal in ceasefire talks. While mediator Qatar had expressed guarded optimism over the latest proposal, a senior Zionist official

recycling, environmental protection and creating new revenue streams for the state budget. The meeting also reviewed the execution of new public cleaning contracts to ensure higher levels of public hygiene and safeguard public interest. Chairman of the Prime Minister's Diwan Abdulaziz Dakhil Al-Dakhil attended the meeting, along with senior officials from Kuwait Municipality and other relevant authorities. HH the Prime Minister chaired another meeting at

Bayan Palace on Wednesday with Al-Meshari. The meeting discussed the Public Authority for Housing Welfare's work in infrastructure upgrades, improving government services and expanding housing programs, while pushing forward new housing cities and future projects to meet citizens' needs. HH the Prime Minister reaffirmed the government's commitment to providing housing for citizens as well as completing all pending housing files in future meetings. Al-Dakhil also attended the meeting, along with senior officials from PAHW. — KUNA

Fiery Afghanistan bus crash kills 79

KABUL: The death toll from a collision between a bus carrying Afghan migrants returning from Iran and two other vehicles in western Afghanistan has risen to 79, provincial officials said on Wednesday. Seventy-six people died in the accident in Herat province's Guzara district on Tuesday night when the passenger bus hit a motorcycle and a truck transporting fuel, causing an explosive fire, officials and eyewitnesses said. Two of the three survivors later died of their injuries, officials said on Wednesday. Abdul Mateen Qanee, spokesperson for the ministry of interior, said on Wednesday the death toll was 79. Seventeen children were among those killed, according to army spokesman Mujeebullah Ansar, though a provincial police source put the number at 19. Many of the bodies were "unidentifiable", said Mohammad Janan Moqadas, chief physician at the military hospital. "There was a lot of fire... There was a lot of screaming, but we couldn't even get within 50 meters to rescue anyone," 34-year-old eyewitness Akbar Tawakoli told AFP. "Only three people were saved from the bus. They were also on fire and their clothes were burnt." Clean-up teams worked to remove the torched shell of the bus and twisted wreckage of another vehicle on the roadside early on Wednesday, an AFP journalist saw. "I was very saddened that most of the



GUZARA, Afghanistan: The wreckage of a bus is towed at the site of a crash in Herat province on Aug 20, 2025. — AFP

passengers on the bus were children and women," another eyewitness, 25-year-old Abdullah, who like many Afghans only uses one last name, told AFP. The bus was carrying Afghans recently returned from Iran to the capital Kabul, Herat provincial government spokesman Mohammad Yousuf Saeedi told AFP. The central Taliban government called for an investigation into the accident. "It is with deep sorrow that we mourn the loss of numerous Afghan lives and the injuries sustained in a tragic bus collision and subsequent fire in Herat province last night," it said in a statement. Video footage from the scene showed bright flames engulfing the bus, with a fire truck trying to douse the flames. A charred metal skeleton remained of the bus afterwards, pictures showed.

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GAZA: A Palestinian boy mourns by the body of a child killed in a Zionist strike at Al-Awda Hospital in the central Gaza Strip on Aug 20, 2025. — AFP

Syrian, Zionist diplomats meet in Paris for talks

DAMASCUS: Syria's foreign minister met with a Zionist delegation in Paris to discuss de-escalation and the situation in Druze-majority Sweida province after deadly sectarian violence last month, state media reported Wednesday. Syria's Foreign Minister Asaad Al-Shaibani and Zionist Strategic Affairs Minister Ron Dermer attended the meeting on Tuesday, along with Syria's intelligence chief, Syrian state television said, citing an unnamed government source. The meeting discussed "de-escalation and non-interference in Syria's internal affairs" and addressed monitoring the Sweida ceasefire announced by the United States last month, state news agency SANA said. "Both sides affirmed their commitment to the unity of Syrian territory, their rejection of any projects aiming to divide it," and emphasized that Sweida and its Druze citizens are an integral part of Syria, the broadcaster reported the source as saying.

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