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KUWAIT CONFIRMS FOOD SUPPLY SAFE, SERVICES UNINTERRUPTED
'No need for panic buying'



Left: This combo made with four satellite image from Planet Labs PBC shows an Iranian missile base near Tabriz, Iran, Wednesday, June 11, 2025, top left, and the same place after an Israeli strike, on Friday, June 13, 2025, top right, and an Iranian missile base near Kermanshah, Iran, Thursday, June 12, 2025, bottom left, and the same missile base after an Israeli strike, on Friday June 13, 2025. Right: Israeli security forces inspect the site of homes destroyed by a missile fired from Iran, in Rishon LeZion, Israel, on Saturday, June 14, 2025. (AP)

Israeli strike on Iran endangers entire region: Kuwait

By Fares Ghaleb, Abulrahman Al-Shammari and Mohammad Al-Enezi
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff and Agencies

KUWAIT CITY, June 14: The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) has affirmed the activation of its emergency plan in coordination with the concerned authorities due to the political developments in the region and the subsequent closure of airspace over Iran, Iraq, Jordan and Syria.

DGCA spokesperson Abdullah Al-Rajhi revealed that the plan is being implemented in cooperation with the Ministry of Interior, Kuwait Fire Force (KFF), Ministry of Health, airlines and other relevant entities. Al-Rajhi said they are focusing on securing incoming, outgoing and transit flights; indicating that all flights to the affected countries were suspended due to the closure of airspace over these countries. He revealed some flights have been diverted to alternative airports until safe navigation routes are secured; stating that Kuwait International Airport caters to a number of rerouted flights and temporary accommodation has been provided for their passengers until alternative flights could be arranged through safe routes. The DGCA had earlier announced the diversion, cancellation and rescheduling of some flights at Kuwait International Airport due to the current situation in the region. In a related development, Kuwait Airways announced that it decided to cancel a number of flights scheduled for Saturday to ensure the safety of passengers in light of the current situation in the region.



KUNA photo
Kuwait's Minister of Information Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi during a meeting with ministry leaders. Kuwait's Information Ministry Friday urged the media to follow 'professional' criteria and objectivity when reporting news amidst accelerated developments regionally and internationally. The Ministry, in a statement, called on media outlets and social media to 'take their information from official sources and avoid rumours or publishing unverified news that might have negative impacts.'

In a press statement, the airline stated that the cancelled flights include flight number KU563 from Kuwait to Amman, flight number KU564 from Amman to Kuwait, flight number KU503 from Kuwait to Beirut, and flight number KU504

from Beirut to Kuwait. The airline explained that the cancellation decision was taken after assessing the security situation according to the flight itinerary, and in coordination with the DGCA and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It stressed that it will continue to study the situation in the affected destinations and announce updates later; adding that travelers will be contacted to reschedule their travel reservations according to the contact information provided in their reservations. It then thanked everyone for their understanding and cooperation. In addition, the Ministry of Social Affairs confirmed the abundance and stability of the strategic stock of goods, food and consumer products in the country; stressing that there is no cause for concern regarding the availability of basic commodities. In a press statement, the ministry disclosed this stability is the result of prior coordination with government agencies within the framework of the approved national emergency plan to ensure sustainable food security. The ministry indicated that it is continuing to monitor the efforts of the cooperative sector, in coordination with the Union of Cooperative Societies, to ensure the smooth flow of supply chains and price stability in the local market. It emphasized the importance of the role of cooperative societies in enhancing market stability and consumer confidence. It reiterated its call to citizens and expatriates not to be swayed by rumors and to rely only on information issued by official sources. It affirmed that the relevant authorities continue to work round the clock to guarantee food security and the uninterrupted provision of goods. Minister of Social, Family and Childhood Affairs Dr. Amthal Al-Huwailah stressed that the cooperative sector, in coordination with the government agencies,

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Mideast crisis fuels oil surge

VIENNA, June 14, (Agencies): An economic and financial expert predicted on Saturday that global oil prices will exceed USD 100 if tensions in the region escalate, following Israeli occupation's attacks on sites in Iran. Economic and financial expert Dr. Bashir Aliya told KUNA that global oil markets reacted quickly and strongly to the Israeli occupation's attacks on Iranian sites. He explained that the strikes pushed crude oil prices up by seven percent, exceeding USD 75 per barrel. He pointed out that approximately 20 percent of global oil revenues pass by sea, which raises serious concerns about supply disruptions through the Hormuz Strait. He also emphasized that continued tensions will keep prices in the USD 78 to USD 80 per barrel range, but warned that a comprehensive escalation could push prices above USD 100 and perhaps higher. Dr. Aliya pointed out that one of the factors keeping prices high is China and India's continued purchases of large quantities of crude oil, as both countries' economies, especially Beijing's, rely on a strategy of sustained growth to avoid recession, especially in light of the trade tensions with the United States. Israel's attack on Iran Friday has catapulted their long-running conflict into what could become a wider, more dangerous regional war and potentially drive prices higher for both businesses and households. Oil and gold surged and the dollar rose as markets retreated, signaling a flight to investments perceived as more safe. After years of sky-high inflation in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, Americans have become increasingly leery about the economy this year due to President Donald Trump's sweeping tariffs, though the impact so far has been muted. The latest escalation in the Middle East has the potential to cause widespread price increases that could set consumers back again. Here's a look at some of the sectors that could face an outsized impact from the escalation in the Middle East, and

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90 dead in Israeli airstrikes

Kuwait's UN envoy Al-Banai urges Gaza blockade lift, calls for justice

NEW YORK, June 14, (KUNA): Representative of the GCC countries at the United Nations called for an end to the Israeli occupation blockade imposed on the Gaza Strip, reaffirming the GCC's firm and supportive position on Palestinian rights. This came in a speech delivered by Kuwait's Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Ambassador Tareq Al-Banai, on behalf of the GCC countries, on Thursday evening, during the resumption of the tenth emergency special session of the UN General Assembly on the illegal Israeli occupation actions in the occupied Palestinian territory. Al-Banai stressed the need for the international community to take a stand and assume its responsibility to stop these practices and preserve regional security and stability in accordance with international law. He expressed the GCC's strongest condemnation of the occupation's aggression on the Gaza Strip, its targeting and displacement of Palestinian civilians, and the blockade imposed on the Strip. He affirmed the GCC's unwavering support for the Palestinian people in



KUNA photo
Ambassador Tareq Al-Banai, Kuwait's Permanent Representative to the United Nations

Gaza and for the UN's humanitarian aid distribution mechanism, stressing the need to hold the occupying entity fully accountable for its ongoing violations. Ambassador Al-Banai emphasized the need to provide the necessary protection for humanitarian workers and reject any attempts to undermine UNRWA's mandate or target its personnel. He praised the efforts made by Qatar, Egypt, and the United States in

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A Palestinian carries a bag containing food and humanitarian aid delivered by the Gaza Humanitarian Foundation, a U.S.-backed organization, in Rafah, southern Gaza Strip, Wednesday, June 11, 2025. (AP)

Economists call for acceleration of 'Northern Economic Zone' project

By Najeh Bilal

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff
KUWAIT CITY, June 14: A general policy titled, "Building a Special International Economic Zone", is listed on the official website 'New Kuwait' - specifically under the section for public policies and supporting projects, and directly beneath it is a single associated project - "Developing the Northern Economic Zone."



Al-Jazzaf



Al-Ghanim



Bouresli

recently, in which the implementation of the project was reportedly tackled. The newspaper interviewed economists to assess the importance of the Northern Economic Zone and the feasibility of completing it by 2026 - particularly given the recent momentum of reform in Kuwait. Experts emphasized that the launching of the project will be beneficial for the national economy in multiple dimensions, including job creation for newly graduated Kuwaiti youths. Its strategic location near Mubarak Port and the Iraqi-Iranian border was also highlighted as a factor that could significantly boost the long-term success of the zone, likening it to a modern economic free zone. Economists indicated that the government, under its current reform-focused approach, has demonstrated genuine commitment to diversify national income sources and address future budget deficits by pursuing ambitious development initiatives such as this one. Analyst and economic expert Sultan Al-Jazzaf believes that the Northern Economic Zone will serve the economy in several areas; specifically in terms of giving a significant role to the local private sector, as well as attracting foreign capital, reducing unemployment rates, and helping the State diversify sources of income, especially with expectations of a large deficit in the general budget of the country this year due to the price of a barrel of oil falling below the \$68 projected in the budget. Al-Jazzaf pointed out this is especially true given that the government estimated the price of a barrel of oil in the current budget at around \$68, and considering that its price recently reached \$64; this matter highlights the need to rely on sources of support for the economy and the budget other than oil. He praised all the efforts currently being exerted by the government to diversify sources of income, including the Northern Economic Zone project. He stated that the advantages of the zone include its proximity to Mubarak Port, as well as its proximity to the

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Prayer Timings			
Fajr	03:13	Asr	15:22
Sunrise ..	04:48	Maghrib ..	18:48
Zohr	11:48	Isha	20:21

Local

Expected weather for next 24 hrs:
By Day: Very hot with light to moderate freshening at times northwesterly wind, with speeds of 12-50 km/h with a chance for rising dust over open areas.

Weather			
By Night: Hot to rather hot with light to moderate northwesterly wind to light variable wind, with speeds of 08-32 km/h.			
Station	Max Exp	Min Rec	
Kuwait City	48	37	
Kuwait Airport	49	29	

Abdaly	50	30
Bubyan	44	28
Jahra	50	32
Failaka Island	49	32
Salmiyah	44	33
Ahmadi	45	31
Nuwaisib	42	29
Wafra	48	38

‘Kuwait-Russia ties based on mutual respect’

Ambassador hails wisdom of Kuwaiti leadership



Russian Ambassador to Kuwait Vladimir Zheltov welcomes Ahmed Al-Jarallah, Editor-in-Chief of Arab Times and Al-Seyassah newspapers.



Russian Ambassador to Kuwait Vladimir Zheltov and Sadiq Marafi at the cake-cutting ceremony.



Russian Ambassador, Assistant Foreign Minister for European Affairs Ambassador Sadiq Marafi and Ahmed Al-Jarallah.

By Fares Ghaleb
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 14: Russian Ambassador to Kuwait Vladimir Zheltov expressed his appreciation for the wisdom of the Kuwaiti leadership, stressing that “relations between the two countries will continue to develop for the benefit of their citizens.”

Zheltov made the statement at a reception organized by the Russian Embassy on the occasion of the National Day of Russia; with Assistant Foreign Minister for European Affairs Ambassador Sadiq Marafi and a number of ambassadors, diplomats and dignitaries in attendance.

He disclosed that “Kuwait was the first Gulf state to establish diplomatic relations with Russia in 1963. Cooperation between the two countries covers a wide range of areas like trade, energy, military, technical and the humanitarian field.”

He said the tourism sector in Russia “is witnessing rapid growth despite its modest beginnings,” as his country has become “a favorite tourist destination for Gulf citizens” in recent years.

On the National Day of Russia, he pointed out “this is a relatively recent holiday, having only been around for 35 years. However, the history of the Russian state spans over a thousand years. We are proud of the achievements of our ancestors, who built a unique civilization with a distinct identity and remarkable Russian culture -- covering the vast expanse of Eurasia and en-



Editor-in-Chief of Arab Times and Al-Seyassah newspapers Ahmed Al-Jarallah with Russian Ambassador to Kuwait Vladimir Zheltov and other diplomats at the event. Mohammad Al-Farhan (extreme right).

compassing 11 time zones. On this holiday, we recall an inextricable link between generations, from ancient Russia (known to historians as Kievan Rus) to the Soviet Union. Modern Russia is the continuation and legitimate heir to

this great historical legacy.”

He asserted that “given Russia’s vast territory, its self-reliance and its sovereignty; its enemies have repeatedly attempted to subjugate it. Even today, these attempts continue with the aim of inflicting a strategic defeat on Russia. Our historical memory still retains the invasions of European invaders, such as Napoleon and Hitler. We know only too well what their fates were. At this historical stage, we once again face a challenge and threat to our national identity -- the Ukrainian crisis, which arose as a result of NATO’s irresponsible expansion eastward, up to the borders of Russia.”

He said “the decline of the Western-centric world order will not happen overnight. We are witnessing ongoing attempts to maintain the hegemony of the collective West through the doctrine of a rules-based international order. Russia, on the other hand, calls for a just and multi-polar world based on true equality and the principle of indivisible security for all.”

He stressed that his country has “always treated the Arab world with respect,” indicating that “our cooperation is based on mutual understanding and consideration of common interests. This applies fully to the State of Kuwait, with which our first ties date back to the early 19th and 20th centuries.”

Meanwhile, Assistant Foreign Minister for European Affairs Ambassador Sadiq Marafi told reporters on the sidelines of the ceremony that “Kuwaiti-Russian relations began in 1963,” hoping for more cooperation between the two countries in the future.

Regarding investment opportunities between the two countries, Marafi revealed a joint committee meeting will be held on the sidelines of the energy summit to discuss these opportunities. He also highlighted the significant growth of tourism between the two countries in recent years.

Other Voices

Practice what you preach!

By Ahmad alsarraf

German manager Marcel Krass (below is the link to his interview) recalls working for a period in the sales department of a major company, which also covered the Middle East region.

One day, a client, who regularly imported large quantities of goods from China to his home country, contacted him, and proposed a deal. He offered Krass a high bonus for sending specific shipments to Germany, where his company would re-label the products as “Made in Germany” before exporting them to his Arab country.

Krass said he declined the offer, despite how tempting it was. What surprised him most was the client’s reaction. The man calmly acknowledged Krass’s concerns about not receiving the promised bonus and tried to reassure him, saying, “You’re dealing with a Muslim who is honest and keeps his word.”

Krass was taken aback, as this declaration came at the very moment the man was proposing a dishonest scheme, seemingly unaware of the ethical contradiction. The client, known for diligently performing his religious duties, appeared not to see the gap between his outward religiosity and his actions. He failed to recognize what it truly means to be a religious person.

Another incident took place at a major trade fair in China, at the booth of a large company I was doing business with. While we were waiting in line, a Gulf merchant was negotiating with the Chinese sales manager to lower the price. Eventually, they reached an agreement. The weight of the merchandise would be slightly reduced, and the price would be lowered by the same percentage, but the printed weight on each package would remain unchanged.

That evening, we all gathered for



alsarraf

dinner. The merchant, unaware of who I was, continued the conversation openly, not realizing that I understood everything, since I had been speaking to everyone in English the entire time.

I was surprised when the Gulf merchant asked the waiter to prepare his meal vegetarian, explaining that, as a Muslim, he avoids meat not slaughtered according to Islamic law and refuses any food containing pork. He seemed to have completely forgotten that just that same morning, he had deliberately and cold-heartedly planned to deceive his customers.

Some of us struggle greatly when it comes to reconciling religious practices with moral obligations and the rights of others. Many don’t think twice about parking their cars irresponsibly, disrupting traffic and daily life, so long as they are heading to perform a religious duty. There are dozens of examples of this.

It came as no surprise when the relevant authorities, in what may be an unprecedented phenomenon in the world, imposed electronic fingerprinting on all government employees. This happened in a country with the highest number of mosques, muezzins, imams, and religious practitioners. The decision reflected the government’s lack of trust in employees’ commitment to work schedules, even when their roles are tied to performing religious duties.

In the capital of a major Arab country, it is common to find taxi drivers blaring Quranic recitations from the radio, but refusing to switch on the taxi meter.

We have said it thousands of times, and we will keep saying it. What we need is not more displays of religiosity, as the religion has endured for over 1,400 years. What we truly need are larger doses of ethics and moral lessons.

Krass’s latest link - <https://www.instagram.com/reel/DGTAtPyCinz/?igsh=MWJZyNl6MWk4MzAyaA%3D%3D>

e-mail: a.alsarraf@alqabas.com.kw

Road repairs now move to Adailiya

KUWAIT CITY, June 14: The Ministry of Public Works continues to implement major maintenance works on the road network in various areas particularly in Adailiya, reports Al-Jarida daily.

The ongoing road maintenance work in Adailiya is part of the new contracts that the ministry signed recently for the maintenance of roads, with the aim of improving the road network in the country in accordance with the highest technical standards.

Sources from the ministry confirmed that field teams are implementing the work as per the timetable that takes into account the smooth flow of traffic, while minimizing inconvenience to the public as much as possible.

Sources revealed that the maintenance works include the complete removal of damaged asphalt layers and rehabilitation of the road infrastructure before covering it with new, high-quality layers to ensure the long-term sustainability of the roads.

They said this is part of a comprehensive road maintenance plan for the entire country, affirming the commitment of the ministry to coordinate with the concerned authorities to guarantee smooth traffic flow and the safety of road users during the implementation period.

The ministry urged the public to fully cooperate and adhere to the temporary traffic guidelines to ensure their safety and the speedy completion of road maintenance works.

US official lauds women in army move

‘Kuwait committed to curb human trafficking’

NEW YORK, June 14, (KUNA): Kuwait Assistant Foreign Minister for Human Rights Sheikh Jawaher Al-Sabah met on Friday with US Deputy Assistant Secretary in the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor Jake McGee.

Both officials, meeting on sidelines of the 18th Conference of States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (COSP18), discussed bilateral cooperation in human rights.



Jake McGee

Sheikha Jawaher talked about the State of Kuwait’s efforts against human trafficking, and affirmed commitment to promoting human rights.

McGee commended Kuwait’s women empowerment efforts, especially enrolling in military service and said it was an achievement that reflected Kuwait’s commitment to promoting women rights.

The meeting was attended by Kuwait permanent representative to the UN Ambassador Tareq Al-Bannai.

Sheikha Jawaher Al-Sabah met on Friday with Executive Director of UN Women Sima Bahous and discussed boosting cooperation between the two sides on human rights.

Both officials, meeting on sidelines of

the 18th Conference of States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (COSP18), underlined importance of contribution of women in all domains, especially those with special needs.

They said women should have a role in negotiations and distribution of aid because of their essential role in building peace and stability.

Sheikha Jawaher said Kuwait was keen on supporting international efforts to achieve gender equality and boost women rights.

Bahous commended Kuwait’s women empowerment efforts and the relevant legislations.

Earlier, Sheikha Jawaher Ibrahim Duaij Al-Sabah chaired a high-level coordination meeting by representatives of the Gulf Cooperation Council member states on human rights.

The meeting, hosted by Kuwait’s Permanent Mission to the UN in New York on Thursday, aimed to enhance cooperation among GCC countries regarding human rights issues.

It discussed recent developments, strategies, and preparations for international events. Attendees included Kuwait’s Permanent Representative to the UN Ambassador Tariq Al-Bannai, as well as representatives from other GCC nations, all of whom were committed to collective action in promoting human rights regionally and globally.



KUNA photo
Kuwait Assistant Foreign Minister for Human Rights Sheikh Jawaher Al-Sabah met Assistant Secretary-General for Peacebuilding Support at the United Nations Elizabeth Spehar on the sidelines of COSP 18.

UAE tops Arab world, stands 38th globally

Kuwait ranks 5th in Gulf in overall skills parameter

KUWAIT CITY, June 14: The Global Skills Index (GSI) 2025, issued by the online learning platform Coursera, showed that Kuwait ranked fifth in the Gulf and 69th globally in terms of overall skills under the ‘Emerging Countries’ category, which includes countries with skill performance score ranging from 25 to 49 percent, reports Al-Rai daily.

Kuwait was ranked among the relatively average performing countries in skills in the fields of Business, Technology and Data Science; but lagged behind in the AI Maturity Index -- a sub-index -- where it ranked 72nd globally.

Comparing Kuwait’s performance with its Gulf counterparts; the United Arab Emirates (UAE) topped the Arab world, ranking 38th globally;

followed by Qatar at 40th, Bahrain at 51st, Saudi Arabia at 54th and Oman at 75th.

Thus, Kuwait surpassed Oman among Gulf countries in the overall skills ranking; but ranked sixth in the Gulf on the AI Maturity Index.

Meanwhile, Switzerland topped the overall ranking; followed by the Netherlands, Sweden, Singapore and Finland in the top five, reflecting their superior mix of technical, business and Data Science skills. In contrast, Yemen, Sudan, Ethiopia, Venezuela and Iraq ranked last -- all these countries are suffering from multiple crises in education and technical infrastructure. The report is based on an analysis of data from more than 170 million learners on the Coursera platform, along with external indicators

from organizations like the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank. The GSI is a global benchmark for measuring workforce readiness for digital market demands. It provides comprehensive rankings for more than 109 countries in three main areas: Business, Technology and Data Science, in addition to the new AI Maturity Index.

The authors indicate that generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) technologies have become the most in-demand skill globally, with enrollment in AI courses increasing by 195 percent in one year. However, the skills gap remains a global challenge, with data from the report confirming that more than two-thirds of employers worldwide consider skills shortages a major barrier to adopting new technologies.

Biometrics, work hours routine stirs confusion

Hiccups at work detrimental to teachers output

By Abdulrahman Al-Shammari
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 14: Head of Kuwait Teachers Association Hamad Al-Houli has confirmed that the association is closely monitoring the administrative and technical issues affecting teachers; including the delay in registering official assignments, tasks and emergency leave for the teaching staff in the electronic system of the Ministry of Education.

Al-Houli pointed out that this delay directly impacts the efficiency assessment of teachers, especially during the current period of annual reports



Al-Houli

seek to address field challenges and improve the edu-

preparation.

The newspaper obtained a copy of the official letter of Al-Houli addressed to acting Assistant Undersecretary for Administrative Affairs and Administrative Development Mansour Al-Dhafiri. He stated in the letter that “within the framework of the ongoing cooperation between the association and the ministry, through which we

cational environment; the association received several comments from teachers regarding the differences between educational districts in the application of the fingerprint mechanism for teachers with reduced working hours, which leads to confusion and affects the accuracy of calculating their daily attendance, thus, negatively impacting their efficiency.”

He called on the ministry to unify the mechanism for dealing with decisions to reduce working hours in all educational districts and align it with the electronic fingerprint system in a manner consistent with the number of actual hours officially approved, to ensure justice and transparency in evaluating the teachers’ performance.

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A DIGEST OF PUBLIC OPINION

Leaders closer to the people can prove better governors

“One thousand years ago, Ibn Al-Saqa was a poor man who served the judges of Cordoba in Andalusia. He managed to conceal his immoral conduct until he rose to the highest ranks, eventually becoming the supervisor of the State Treasury,” columnist **Ahmad Al-Dawas** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

“Once in power, Ibn Al-Saqa embezzled public funds for his personal use until his life ended in assassination. After his death, the judges convened in Cordoba and discovered that Ibn Al-Saqa, despite his apparent poverty, had left behind a large fortune for his heirs. The jurists unanimously ruled to invalidate his will and confiscate all his assets, returning them to the State Treasury, currently known as the Ministry of Finance.

“In doing so, the Islamic state in Andalusia was centuries ahead of the rest of the world in applying the principle of “Where did you get this from?” - a concept that the modern world would not recognize until much later.

“The Arabs were among the first in history to establish principles of financial accountability and to hold corrupt individuals responsible for their actions. One remarkable story highlighting this value comes from a citizen recounting an extraordinary experience:

“He said, “The Irish Prime Minister once invited me to his daughter’s wedding in a village. On our way back, we were stopped by the police for running a red light. Despite knowing he was the Prime Minister, the officers prevented him from continuing to drive. I told them I had a valid driver’s license, so they allowed me to drive the rest of the way.

“The next day, we appeared before a traffic judge. To my astonishment, the judge sentenced the Prime Minister to six months in prison, imposed a fine, and revoked his driver’s license for an entire year. He was referred to the prison administration located next to the presidential palace, even though he could have used his authority to escape accountability.

“I was stunned and asked him how he could govern the country from prison. A prison officer explained that he was required to report to prison from sunset until morning, after which he would return to his official duties during the day, and this continued daily. Curious, I asked where they got such a law. The Prime Minister told me, “We took it from the Arabs, specifically from the book ‘Nahj al-Balagha’ by Ali ibn Abi Talib.”

“By tracing the origins of this law, we found that it has also been applied in countries like France.

“In Norway, former Prime Minister Jens Stoltenberg once disguised himself as a taxi driver and spent several hours driving passengers through the streets of Oslo, undercover, to better understand the concerns and opinions of citizens.

“He believed that connecting directly with people in this way would allow him to better address their needs and problems.

“Similarly, former Uruguayan President José Mujica was widely known as “the world’s poorest president.” He owned a 1987 Volkswagen Beetle, lived in a modest home, and donated nearly 90 percent of his salary to the poor. Just a few days ago, this modest and principled leader passed away.

“Part of the brilliance of a government official lies in staying close to the people and understanding their daily realities. In Italy, when Giuseppe Conte was elected Prime Minister, he traveled to the presidential palace in a taxi to meet the President of the Republic. Similarly, London Mayor Sadiq Khan took a bus to his new office on his first day in office. Former German Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer once said, “The only thing I have is a taxi driver’s license, and I’m proud of that.”

“These examples reflect a commendable level of humility and responsibility, qualities that citizens everywhere long to see in their leaders, whether heads of state or public officials.

“In May 1953, former British Prime Minister Winston Churchill gave this advice in an imperative tone: “Study history to figure out the secrets and art of state rule.”

English writer Aldous Huxley said, “People do not learn much from the lessons of history.”

“These quotes underscore a powerful truth: the success of leadership depends not only on experience and power, but on empathy, humility, and the ability to learn from those who came before.”

Also:

“I would like to commend the legislative achievements of the Council of Ministers, especially at a time when many laws and regulations are in urgent need of amendment and development. However, it is important that any legislative amendments be preceded by thorough and comprehensive studies to avoid unintended negative repercussions that could undermine the government’s credibility”, columnist **Eng. Adel Al-Jarallah Al-Kharafi** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

“For instance, the real estate sector is currently experiencing stagnation in both sales and purchases, not only in residential properties but also in unde-

veloped land and other types of real estate . This downturn stems from certain decisions that have had a significant impact in all sectors, causing many people to hesitate or refrain from purchasing real estate. The negative effects have even extended to affect the overall commercial activity.

“Some of these decisions have led to complications in other sectors as well, though I prefer not to go into specifics.

“All I hope is that decisions and legislative amendments are carefully studied before they are issued, just as is standard practice in countries around the world, to avoid potential negative consequences. Decisions should not be made hastily or without proper evaluation, as this often leads to wasted time and effort trying to fix the problems that arise from poorly planned implementation.

“People have already voiced concerns about many missteps and flawed practices that resulted from decisions made without adequate research. These have had far-reaching negative effects that impacted everyone.

“The Sports Law is yet another example. Kuwait’s decline in the World Cup qualifiers is no surprise, especially considering the fallout from the controversial Kuwait–Iraq match, the dismissal of the Kuwait Football Association’s board, and clear government interference.

“We have also witnessed quarrels and disputes within team sports, which compel me to call on the government to intervene and consider suspending sports activities in Kuwait. However, it is evident that meaningful intervention by the Council of Ministers is difficult, as resolving issues in the sports sector requires expertise and leadership from within the sports community itself.

“It is true that a new Sports Law is expected to be issued soon. I have reviewed a section of the draft related to sports facilities and investment. My hope is that this new law will not produce unintended negative consequences that hinder the progress of sports in Kuwait or return us to square one.

“I also read about the proposed amendment to the law regulating cooperative societies. I hope the Cabinet will take into account the founding principles of these institutions, as joint-shareholding companies owned by citizens, and ensure that government intervention remains as limited as possible.

“Cooperative societies serve as an essential social and economic pillar for citizens, despite the uncovering of some embezzlement cases. Such issues should be resolved through enhanced and precise oversight.

“It would be counterproductive for legislation to dismantle or diminish the impact of cooperative societies. Instead, they need to be developed to fulfill their role as strong economic entities that contribute meaningfully to the national economy.”

□ □ □

“In a time when titles are many, a face from Jahra stands out that carries something different. It is the face of Jahra Governor Hamad Al-Habashi - cheerful, humble, and genuine. He is not merely a senior official performing routine administrative duties. Rather, he upholds the dignity of his office while earning the affection of the people”, Kuwaiti writer **Jaber Al-Tamimi** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

“Since assuming his role, Governor Al-Habashi’s presence has been active and engaged, not limited to official meetings, but extending to the everyday lives of citizens, their needs, and their hopes.

“It is no simple task for an official to remain close to the people without compromising the authority of his position. Yet Hamad Al-Habashi has managed to balance administrative prestige with personal humility.

“Perhaps the most notable trait that sets Al-Habashi apart is his genuine eagerness to visit the governorate’s offices and his constant concern for the well-being of its residents, not as distant constituents, but as brothers. When Al-Habashi listens to people’s concerns, he does so not as a formality or duty, but with a sincere belief that meeting their daily needs is at the heart of his mission.

“Anyone familiar with Al-Habashi’s life knows that these values are not new to him. They were not adopted with the title of Governor of Jahr. Rather, they are part of his character, deeply rooted since childhood.

Al-Habashi’s smile is not mere courtesy, and when he listens, it doesn’t feel like he is simply waiting for you to finish. It feels like listening is part of his responsibility. These qualities reflect an official who views his position not as a symbol of prestige, but as a true duty to serve.

“It is enough to say that under Hamad Al-Habashi’s leadership, Jahra has received greater attention and fairness. It is not the high position that elevates a person’s value, but rather the personal qualities and qualifications that define them. What first stands out about Al-Habashi is his positive attitude before his decisions, and his closeness to the people before his achievements. These qualities are not found in every senior official.

— Compiled by **Mahmoud Attiyeh/Simi K.Kutty**



Kuwait Army and Special Forces before their departure to Jordan.

KUNA photo

Kuwait Army, Special Forces take part in Jordan military contest

KUWAIT CITY, June 14, (KUNA): The participating force from the 25th Commando Brigade of the Kuwaiti Army and the Special Forces from the Ministry of Interior departed from Abdullah Al-Mubarak Air Base on Thursday morning to participate in the 14th International Warrior Competition, held at the King Abdullah II Special Operations Training Center in Jordan.

The Kuwaiti Army’s General Staff said in a statement that the com-

petition is one of the most prominent military competitions, as it witnesses competition between elite special forces from various brotherly and friendly countries through a series of field challenges that simulate realistic combat scenarios.

It added that the competition aims to enhance the efficiency of special units and exchange expertise in the fields of counter-terrorism and special operations.

Drug abuse spread in Kuwaiti society major cause for worry

Crime, drugs interrelated: lawyer Al-Qattan

By **Jaber Al-Hamoud**
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 14: Despite the ongoing ‘internal’ efforts to pursue drug dealers and users, and the introduction of legislative amendments in April stipulating the execution of drug and psychotropic substance dealers; statistics issued by the Public Prosecution for the first quarter of this year revealed the spread of drug abuse in Kuwaiti society.

The newspaper obtained a copy of the statistics, which revealed the number of complaints against children reached 265 from January to April, at a rate of two complaints per day.

It also showed that the number of drug and psychotropic substance cases investigated by the prosecution reached 773; including possession, trafficking, importation and use within the same period, at a rate of six cases per day.

In light of the growing phenomenon and shocking figures, lawyers and experts have warned about the catastrophic repercussions of



Al-Wawan



Al-Qattan

drugs; which go beyond health damage and the destruction of the mind and body to affect societal, economic and family security.

Attorney Enaam Haider asserted that “the scourge of drugs does not distinguish between the rich and poor, educated and illiterate. It destroys the nervous system and plunges people into a cycle of severe depression and psychosis, which results in family disintegration, wasted youthful energy, and crimes alien to society.”

She pointed out the “alarming increase” in the number of people seeking treatment, especially young people; while warning about the spread of new “dangerous and adulterated” types of drugs sold at low prices, thereby, expanding the base of those at risk.

Attorney Ali Al-Wawan described the rela-

tionship between drugs and crime as “an unambiguous causal relationship;” indicating that the vast majority of robbery crimes , pickpocketing, embezzlement and some horrific murders and domestic assaults, are primarily motivated by financing the purchase of the next dose.

He added “in his desperate quest to satisfy his desire, the addict loses any sense of morality or fear of the law.” He stressed the seriousness of the crimes of trafficking, storage and promotion led by organized criminal networks that “generate huge profits at the expense of the destruction of society.”

Attorney Abdul Mohsen Al-Qattan highlighted the human cost hidden behind the numbers, saying: “Behind every drug statistics are tragic human stories and families swept away by the fierce winds of addiction.”

He pointed out the suffering of “families groaning under the burden of debt to treat an addicted child, families losing their breadwinners behind bars, and mothers weeping over children killed by overdose or clashes with drug dealers.”

He cited testimonies from courtrooms showing how the lives of promising young people “turned into hell because of their first step into the world of drugs,” with the darkness of addiction driving them to commit acts that people would have been the most distant from.

MoH worker insulted

Blogger jailed 3 years in false news spread

KUWAIT CITY, June 14: The Court of Appeals sentenced an X platform user – identified only as A.F. – to three years in prison with hard labor for disseminating false information, reports Al-Anba daily.

The Public Prosecution conducted an investigation, during which the accused was questioned on the charges against him due to his posts on his X account.

□ □ □

Woman insulted: A female citizen employed at the Ministry of Health and born in 1981 filed a complaint against another woman – born in 1965 – for allegedly insulting and verbally assaulting her while she was on duty at a clinic, reports Al-Anba daily.

According to the complainant, the accused was visiting the clinic when the incident occurred. She claimed that she was subjected to unprovoked insults and humiliation.

The complainant also stated that the incident was captured by surveillance cameras at the clinic, and that several eyewitnesses have expressed their willingness to testify to support her.

□ □ □

Cell taken from car: A man, in his 40s, filed a report at a police station in Ahmadi Governorate about the burglary in his car while it was parked in a cooperative society’s parking lot, reports Al-Anba daily.

The man stated that he left his car in the parking area; and upon returning, discovered that a side window was smashed and his mobile phone stolen from inside the vehicle.

Authorities registered a case and referred it to the Criminal Investigations Department at the Interior Ministry for investigation in order to identify the perpetrator.

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Activists call on PAHW for transparency amid growing anxiety

Housing law repeal decision leaves hundreds of families in limbo

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

KUWAIT CITY, June 14: The decision of the Cabinet to assign the Minister of State for Housing Affairs to take the necessary measures to repeal the ‘Those Who Sold Their Homes’ Law has generated widespread interest amidst the uncertainty surrounding the fate of hundreds of families who received houses in

the East Taima project, as well as those still on the waiting list for the East Sabah Al-Ahmad housing project. These two projects comprise of around 1,693 housing units. Housing activist Fawaz Al-Maimouni expressed his deep concern about the unclear repercussions of this decision, calling on the Public Authority for Housing Welfare (PAHW) to take a transparent stance

that reassures citizens and officially clarifies their fate. Al-Maimouni told the newspaper that the decision left the fate of 1,693 citizens in limbo; considering the absence of an official clarification from the relevant authorities. He stated that “the 509 residents of East Taima, who are waiting for the East Sabah Al-Ahmad project that consists of 1,184 houses, are shrouded in uncertainty and anxiety; following

the decision to abolish the law on those who sold their homes.” He explained that it is clear in the interpretation of the Cabinet’s statement that the intention is to cancel the East Sabah Al-Ahmad housing distributions, and that the residents of East Taima may be evicted based on the principle of justice mentioned in the statement. “This raises questions about the fate of these families,” he asserted.

He added “we urge the PAHW to fulfill its true media role in reassuring citizens, clarifying its official position on these cases, and providing information with complete transparency and clarity.” He asserted that the negligence, which has become a clear characteristic of the way the authority handles issues concerning citizens, is no longer acceptable; especially in light of the growing housing needs of a large segment of citizens.

He said the ambiguity is not limited to this case, as it extends to a number of projects implemented over the past year. “Many housing projects over the past year were shrouded in mystery, as many questions were neither answered nor clarified. Obtaining accurate information has become an achievement in itself. This reflects weak institutional communication and lack of transparency,” he added.

MoSA’s debt relief initiative eases burden on thousands of Kuwaitis

9,119 cases reviewed under strict eligibility rules

By Fares Ghaleb
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 14: The Ministry of Social Affairs announced that the third national campaign to settle debts has achieved record results; raising more than KD15 million to cover the debts of more than 9,000 cases. The campaign was launched in partnership with government and charitable entities like Zakat House, Kuwait Finance House, Issa Abdullah Al-Othman Endowment, Secretariat General of Awqaf, along with several

charitable and cooperative societies. The ministry confirmed in a press statement that the funds collected were transferred in full to the Execution of Judgments General Department at the Ministry of Justice to handle the settlement of the debts of eligible cases. “These funds were carefully studied according to specific terms and criteria by six technical and legal committees; comprising of representatives from the ministries of Interior, Justice, Social Affairs and Endowments, and Zakat House. A total of 9,119 files have been reviewed since the campaign’s launch, in a meticulous evaluation process that included a separate study of each case to ensure eligibility and prevent any exploitation, in line with the principle of fairness in aid distribution,” it elaborated. The ministry confirmed that the campaign will

only benefit indebted citizens detained in correctional institutions or those with enforcement cases, excluding those who benefited from the first and second campaigns in 2023 and 2024. “This aim is to expand the beneficiary base and reach the most needy groups,” it added. It also emphasized that the campaign embodies Kuwait’s humanitarian approach to support struggling groups and preserve their dignity, and reflects the spirit of national solidarity and cooperation between the government and charitable sectors. It concluded its statement by affirming its commitment to transparency and providing communication channels with citizens by responding to their inquiries through the Sahel application, and enabling applicants to follow up their files and view their details electronically.

Ahmadi steps up inspections on commercial licenses

KUWAIT CITY, June 14: The Public Relations Department at Kuwait Municipality announced that the Municipal Services Audit and Follow-up departments in various governorates continue to verify the validity of health and advertising licenses and to monitor compliance with regulations governing shops and markets, reports Al-Anba daily. Abdullah Al-Ajmi, Director of the Audit and

Follow-up Department at the Ahmadi Governorate Municipality branch, disclosed that the first round of inspections focused on ensuring the commercial establishments have valid shop, advertising and health licenses. He said the campaign was aimed at uncovering violations and taking legal measures to ensure compliance with municipal regulations.

Al-Ajmi emphasized that the supervisory team is committed to monitoring violations within its jurisdiction through regular field visits. He confirmed that a recent inspection resulted in the issuance of 14 violation citations for unauthorized advertisements, expired health licenses, advertisements unrelated to the shop’s licensed activity, and operating without a valid health certificate.

Public Authority for Sports mourns passing of ex-Vice Chairman Asad Taqi

KUWAIT CITY, June 14: The sports community mourned the loss of the former Vice President of the Kuwait Football Association Asad Taqi, who passed away after several days in the Intensive Care Unit. Taqi was a veteran sports figure who made significant contributions to the development of sports both locally and internationally, reports Al-Seyassah daily. Taqi also served as Vice President of the Asian Football Confederation from 1994 until his resignation in 2005. The Public Authority for Sports mourned the passing of its former Vice Chairman Asad Taqi. In a statement, the authority extended to the family of the deceased the condolences of the Minister of Information and Culture and Minister of State for Youth Affairs, Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi, as well as its employees. The statement described Taqi as a prominent figure in national sports, who played a vital role in advancing sports institutions and



Al-Seyassah photo
Asad Taqi, ex-Vice Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Public Authority for Sports.

serving Kuwaiti youth. He held several administrative and organizational roles through which he supported the sports movement, helped develop its institutional structure, contributed to shaping national policies, strengthened institutional efforts, and played a key part in preparing and implementing the national sports strategy.

Government payouts rise 16.4%

State budget for remote areas and shift allowances jump by KD21.6m

By Mohammad Ghanem
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 14: A report on the general budget of the State for the current fiscal year (2025/2026) revealed an increase of KD21.603 million in the estimates for “remote area, screen and shift allowances,” which are granted to employees in ministries and government agencies. The total value of the three allowances is estimated at KD152.976 million, compared to KD131.373 million in the budget for the previous fiscal year

(2024/2025). The report indicated that the estimated amount for remote area allowances reached KD46.579 million, while the estimated amount for the screen allowance reached KD48.565 million and the estimated amount for the shift allowance reached KD57.832 million. These three allowances are paid to employees in accordance with the rules and regulations of the Civil Service Commission (CSC) for employees in ministries and government agencies, and based on the technical and administrative nature of their work.

Move to protect workers’ health

ILO adopts landmark safety accord with Kuwait support

GENEVA, June 14, (KUNA): The International Labor Organization’s (ILO) Conference concluded on Friday and adopted a bundle of resolutions including a global agreement on protection from biological threats in work places, which would form a framework for workers’ safety. Nasser Al-Hain, Kuwait permanent representative to the UN and international organizations in Geneva, said Kuwait fully supported ILO’s efforts to create safe and healthy working environment.

He said the new agreement was an important achievement in international labor standards and would honor needs of growing demands for better health and safety measures at work places. Al-Hain said the agreement included commitment by employers to boost protection against biological threats. He also commended the ILO conferees for giving the State of Palestine an observer non-member status because it would achieve dignity and social justice for the Palestinian people.

Online submission period ends Feb

Higher Education opens registration for distinguished scholarship program plan

By Abdulrahman Al-Shammari
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 14: The Ministry of Higher Education announced the opening of registration for the Distinguished Scholarships Plan for academic year 2025/2026, which started on Thursday and will continue until the end of February 2026. Students wishing to register are invited to visit the website of the ministry to review the conditions and guidelines and complete the application form. The Distinguished Scholarships Plan aims to encourage students to achieve academic excellence and academic competitiveness by providing the opportunity for students accepted by prestigious international universities in their specializations to complete their university studies in accredited scholarship countries, in accordance with international classifications and ministerial decisions issued in this regard. The application steps include logging into the electronic registration system using the civil identification number and authenticating it through

the Kuwait Mobile ID app (if the student has no account, a new one will be created). The application will be submitted to the ministry after authentication through Kuwait Mobile ID app. Once the application is complete, the student will be accepted into the program. The guardian will be asked to sign a pledge through the Kuwait Mobile ID app authentication, while adhering to the academic and financial scholarship provisions. Finally, the necessary information will be completed through the academic system after acceptance. The ministry stated that if a student has custody, a ruling certifying educational guardianship for study outside Kuwait -- issued by the competent court -- must be submitted within 60 days of the announcement of the acceptance results. It urged students wishing to pursue scholarships to prepare well and complete their information accurately, stressing that distinguished opportunities require academic readiness and adherence to the announced conditions to ensure maximum benefit from the program.

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Kuwait’s scorching summer: Trees provide life and shade

KUWAIT CITY, June 14: As Kuwait continues to experience record-high summer temperatures, the importance of trees as providers of shelter and shade has become increasingly evident, reports Al-Jarida daily.

Vegetation, particularly trees, plays a crucial role in moderating the local climate and improving air quality; as their green presence not only cools the environment, but also enhances the visual appeal of public and private spaces.

Trees act as natural air purifiers, absorbing carbon dioxide and releasing oxygen; thereby, helping

to mitigate the effects of global warming.

Aside from offering respite to passersby and shelter to birds, they play a significant role in preventing soil erosion; making them a vital component of environmental strategies aimed at combating climate change.

This is evident in photographs taken by the staff of the daily -- one is that of an individual taking refuge beneath the shade of a tree and another depicts the serene moment of a dove quenching its thirst, a seemingly quiet triumph over the searing heat.

Electricity ministry warns customers against fraudulent refund messages

Load index nears ‘orange zone’

By Mohammad Ghanem
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 14: The temperature soared to 49 degrees Celsius on Saturday, causing a significant surge in electricity consumption -- 16,402 megawatts.

This is 1,961 megawatts higher than Friday’s

peak of 14,441 megawatts, when the highest temperature recorded was 40 degrees Celsius; hence, pushing the electricity load index towards the orange zone.

Sources emphasized the importance of following electricity and water conservation measures to help the Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy manage the summer demand effectively, which is being challenged by high temperatures and increasing consumption.

The ministry has provided energy-saving guidelines in a publicly available conservation guide on its website. This guide includes recommendations for the efficient use of air conditioners and optimal operation of household appliances.

In another development, the ministry has stressed that it has nothing to do with emails sent to consumers with a link for obtaining a refund. It warned customers against clicking such links, as they are fraudulent and could compromise their bank accounts.

Continued from Page 1

‘No need for

is monitoring the availability of goods in local markets. She said the strategic stockpile is stable and that goods are available to meet consumer needs without any obstacles.

In a statement to Kuwait News Agency (KUNA), Al-Huwailah revealed the ministry, Public Authority for Disabled Affairs (PADA), and the Supreme Council for Family Affairs have taken regulatory measures in various sectors to ensure the efficiency and continuity of services, in light of the regional developments.

She stated that the relevant authorities are monitoring their operational and technical works in a coordinated manner, such as ensuring the availability of technical and administrative services and the stability of systems according to the approved work mechanisms and an operational plan that guarantees the quality of services.

She affirmed that the specialized work teams are continuing their tasks as per the timetable; thereby, achieving the highest level of institutional readiness to provide services without interruption.

Also, the Ministry of Commerce and Industry confirmed that the food stock and supply of basic commodities are reassuring, and that food is available in sufficient quantities to meet consumer needs; noting that supply chains are operating normally and without any interruption.

Director of the Commercial Control Department at the ministry Faisal Al-Ansari informed KUNA that the emergency teams of the ministry visited a number of private company warehouses to review the inventory levels and ensure the smooth flow of supply.

He stated this move is part of the strategic food security plan submitted by the Council of Ministers, which the ministry is responsible for implementing and continuous monitoring.

He added the ministry constantly coordinates with the Union of Consumer Cooperative Societies and Kuwait Flour Mills and Bakeries Company; especially in times of crisis or seasonal increase in demand, with the aim of finding plausible solutions that ensure market stability and prevent consumers from being affected by potential shortages of basic commodities. “We are working with the concerned authorities to closely monitor the food stock situation, and strive to secure the consumer needs of citizens and expatriates by ensuring the continuous availability of basic commodities in local markets,” he concluded.

Meanwhile, Chairman of the Union of Consumer Cooperative Societies Abdulaziz Al-Mutairi affirmed that the strategic stock of basic commodities in cooperative societies is sufficient; thereby, meeting the consumers’ needs.

He clarified in a press statement that this availability is not the result of an emergency, as it is rather the result of coordination and prior planning with the relevant government agencies, in line with the national emergency plan, which is aimed at ensuring sustainable food security at all times.

He added that the union is operating in accordance with the directives of the Council of Ministers and Al-Huwailah who stressed the importance of preparedness and securing basic commodities in cooperative societies nationwide.

He pointed out that the union continues to coordinate with suppliers and regulatory authorities to ascertain the smooth flow of supply and price stability, and to take proactive measures that maintain market balance and meet the needs of citizens and expatriates without interruption.

Furthermore, the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research said it is closely monitoring regional developments through daily coordination with the relevant authorities; and that it remains committed to taking all the necessary measures to ensure the safety of students and members of the teaching and administrative staff in various educational institutions.

In a press statement, the ministry disclosed that Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research Dr. Nader Al-Jalal has instructed the relevant authorities to activate emergency plans and raise preparedness levels in all areas. It underscored the importance of close field monitoring of developments to guarantee the safety of the academic community and the continuity of the educational process.

It added that the emergency teams in educational and research institutions are fully prepared and working in coordination with the concerned authorities to ensure immediate intervention and take the necessary precautionary measures according to the developments.

It reassured the students and parents that the summer semester will begin on Sunday according to the approved study plans, and that all educational authorities are fully alert and prepared to ensure a safe and regular education-

al environment.

Moreover, the US Embassy in Kuwait confirmed that “US forces are not involved in the Israeli military operations against Iran.”

In a statement on the X platform Saturday, the embassy said “we are monitoring news reports on the Israeli strike against Iran, and there is no change in the embassy’s position at this time.”

The embassy previously issued a security alert calling for extreme caution in the region. It stated that “due to increased regional tensions, the Department of State advises US citizens to exercise extreme caution. Historically, similar tensions have led to travel disruptions and increased security concerns for US citizens in the region.”

It advised US citizens to enroll in the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP) to receive information and alerts, facilitate their location in an emergency abroad, prepare an emergency plan, and review the traveler’s checklist.

On Friday, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah chaired the meeting of Supreme Defense Council at Bayan Palace.

The Council is following up with latest regional developments and called for uniting efforts and preparations between concerned state bodies as part of approved emergency plans.

Kuwait has strongly condemned the Israeli occupation’s aggression against the Islamic Republic of Iran on Friday, describing it as a blatant breach of all international laws, a violation of Iranian sovereignty, and a threat to regional security.

Kuwait’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs issued a statement reiterating Kuwait’s call on the international community and the United Nation’s Security Council to fulfill their responsibilities in putting an end to such violations, to protect the safety and stability of the region.

Israel’s defense minister warned Saturday that “Tehran will burn” if Iran continues firing missiles, as the two countries traded blows a day after Israel launched a blistering surprise attack on Iranian nuclear and military sites, killing several top generals.

Israel’s military said the strikes also killed nine senior scientists and experts involved in Iran’s nuclear program. Iran’s U.N. ambassador said 78 people were killed and more than 320 wounded.

Iran retaliated by launching waves of drones and ballistic missiles at Israel, where explosions lit the night skies over Jerusalem and Tel Aviv and shook buildings. The Israeli military urged civilians, already rattled by 20 months of war in Gaza sparked by Hamas’ Oct. 7 attack, to head to shelter for hours. Health officials said three people were killed and dozens wounded.

Defense Minister Israel Katz said Iran will pay a heavy price for harming Israeli citizens. “If (Iranian Supreme leader Ayatollah Ali) Khamenei continues to fire missiles at the Israeli home front - Tehran will burn,” Katz said.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Friday that his objective was to eliminate any Iranian threat to Israel, but he also urged Iranians to rise up against their leaders. Israel would welcome the government’s overthrow even if it is not actively seeking it.

Economists call for

Iraqi and Iranian markets. He said this location will stimulate economic and trade activity with neighboring countries.

He is hoping that this project will be implemented as soon as possible, especially since the government has proven, through its proposal, that it is thinking from an economic perspective. “Economic zones, in general, create competitive clusters with the potential to achieve sustainable growth; as they offer many diverse options for good investment opportunities, in addition to their role in trade exchange through the presence of constant activity,” he added.

Economic and real estate expert Qais Al-Ghanim confirmed that the idea of establishing the zone, recently announced by the government, has been delayed significantly. “It should have been implemented in 2003, given its extreme importance to Mubarak Port; taking into consideration it will be a free zone, serving both Kuwait and Iraq, allowing Iraqis to enter the region without a visa -- similar to the region located between Syria and Jordan,” he elaborated.

He pointed out that the zone will serve the Kuwaiti private sector; thereby, increasing sales for factories and commercial companies, indicating the zone will generate many jobs for young Kuwaiti graduates.

Economic expert and former head of

Kuwait Contracting Companies Union Dr. Salah Bouresli said the economic zone is a 100 percent sound idea, as it will enhance private sector activity by attracting a wide variety of investments, which will add new value to the State budget through fees. “Furthermore, it is a major infrastructure project. Its role will not be limited to the economic aspect alone, as it will also create other social benefits, including employing young Kuwaitis and strengthening economic relations between Kuwait and its neighboring countries.”

At the same time, he expressed hope that the government will expand green spaces in the zone to include entertainment and service cities, which will stimulate the contracting market, the engineering sector, and many other private sector projects.

He believes this zone will lead to a tremendous boom for the Kuwaiti banking sector, which will finance small and large projects established in the zone. “This is in addition to its importance for logistics and warehousing services, especially since this economic zone will enjoy attractive investment laws, considering it will attract more global investments, not just local ones. This is especially true given that global economic cities offer a variety of investments; provide integrated service, logistics and residential facilities; create a competitive business environment; increase government-private partnership projects; and offer major facilities that the government will provide to investors.

Kuwait’s UN envoy

this regard, as part of the efforts to reach a comprehensive ceasefire agreement, secure the release of prisoners, and ensure the safe and sustainable flow of humanitarian aid to the Gaza Strip.

He also addressed the high-level international conference for the peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine and the implementation of the two-state solution, co-chaired by Saudi Arabia and France, calling on all member states to participate and recognize the Palestinian state.

The Kuwaiti Ambassador emphasized the need to immediately end the Israeli occupation, which has continued since 1967, halt its arbitrary measures against the Palestinian people in their occupied land, return property to its legitimate owners, and deny the legitimacy of Israeli settlements.

Meanwhile, Israeli occupation airstrikes killed 90 Palestinians and injured 605 others in Gaza Strip over the past 48 hours, Palestinian health authorities said Saturday.

In a press statement, the authorities said this raises the toll to 55,297 deaths and 128,426 injuries since the seventh of October 2023.

The death toll from those who arrived at hospitals while attempting to obtain aid in Gaza over the past 48 hours reached 29 martyrs and 380 wounded, the authorities added.

This brings the total number of victims who arrived at hospitals from areas designated for aid distribution since the end of May to 274 martyrs and 2,532 wounded.

Israeli occupation continues to cut off internet networks in Gaza Strip for the fifth day, in addition to preventing telecommunications company crews from repairing internet supply lines.

A statement by the Palestinian Journalists Syndicate on Saturday said that this occupation measure aims to isolate Gaza Strip from the outside world, particularly preventing journalists and media organizations from covering the ongoing war of genocide.

Mideast crisis

what that might mean for consumers.

Oil prices surged Friday to their biggest gain since the onset of Russia’s war on Ukraine began more than three years ago. If or when Israel’s attack on Iran could impact gas prices, which have been in decline for nearly a year, isn’t entirely clear.

Iran is one of the world’s major producers of oil, though sanctions by Western countries have limited its sales. If a wider war erupts, it could significantly slow or stop the flow of Iran’s oil to its customers. Energy prices have been held in check this year because production has remained relatively high, and demand for it low. A widening conflict could tilt that balance.

“The loss of this export supply would wipe out the surplus that was expected in the fourth quarter of this year,” analysts for ING wrote in a note to clients.

In the past, conflicts in the Middle East have sent energy price soaring for extended periods but in recent years, because of the huge supply of oil, those spikes have been more fleeting.

MoH ensures safe exam environment

KUWAIT CITY, June 14: Director of the School Health Department at the Ministry of Health Dr. Wafaa Al-Kandari said the department ensured the provision of comprehensive health services in high school exam committees through the operation of 163 fully equipped school clinics with trained medical and nursing staff -- 32 doctors and 326 nurses, reports Al-Rai daily.

In a press statement recently, Al-Kandari confirmed that all the necessary preventive measures and health pre-

cautions were taken to guarantee a healthy and safe environment in the exam committees; such as dealing with emergency cases and providing immediate medical support if the need arises, in coordination with the concerned educational authorities.

She added the department remains committed to playing its preventive, therapeutic and awareness-raising roles; while supporting national efforts to take care of the students and guarantee their safety throughout the exam period.

Awqaf notifies 83 teachers of termination

Islamic Affairs ministry moves to replace expats in Islamic Studies

KUWAIT CITY, June 14: As part of the national replacement process and in implementation of the Kuwaitization plan at the Ministry of Islamic Affairs based on the directives of Minister of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Dr. Mohammad Al-Wasmi; the ministry notified some expatriate teachers in the Islamic Studies Sector about the termination of their services within three months, reports Al-Rai daily quoting an official source.

The source pointed out that this move aims to give citizens an opportunity to join the teaching staff of the ministry after determining its manpower needs at the beginning of the next academic year.

The source confirmed that 83 expatriates teachers in various departments at the Islamic Studies and Quranic Sciences Sector have been notified about the termination of their employment contracts effective Sept. 30.

He explained “the ministry is keen on appointing nationals to the available teaching positions, particularly in Islamic Studies and Arabic language.”

The source said the first batch of terminations include 83 teachers in the aforementioned sector -- 18 in Ahmadi and Mubarak Al-Kabeer Governorates, 34 in Farwaniya and Jahra Governorates, and 31 in the Capital and Hawally Governorates.

He revealed “the ministry intends to reduce the number of expatriate teachers in order to control educational quality, rationalize spending, and provide opportunities for citizens wishing to work as teachers under it.” He added the appointments will not be made until the surplus teaching staff is eliminated and a study on the manpower needs of the sector is completed.

He stressed that as per the instruction of Al-Wasmi; the ministry is working hard to rationalize spending and implement the replacement plan, while halting the appointment of expatriates.

He added the concerned authorities have been asked to specify their manpower needs and implement the Kuwaitization policy without disrupting the workflow.

KU summer semester kicks off

By Abdulrahman Al-Shammari
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 14: Kuwait University is starting its 2024/2025 summer semester on Sunday and it has implemented several measures to ensure a smooth experience for students.

These arrangements include collaboration between the Security and Safety Department at the university and the General Traffic Department in the Ministry of Interior to manage campus traffic.


Electric golf carts will be available to facilitate transportation between colleges.

portation between colleges.

In preparation for the summer semester, the university has equipped 21 first aid clinics in Sabah Al-Salem University City with all the necessary supplies.


The university has also verified the operational readiness of safety equipment and security protocols to address emergencies.

The university affirmed its dedication to guarantee the safety of all its community members. Students and staff are encouraged to contact the Security and Safety Department at 24983333 for any concerns, affirming the department is available 24/7.



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Joint Operations (Saudi Arabian Chevron Inc. / Kuwait Gulf Oil Company), announces the under-mentioned Public Tenders for procurement of materials.

Kuwaiti and Saudi Merchants, registered with either Company wishing to participate in any of the under-mentioned Tenders are invited to collect the Tender documents from Purchasing Section, Purchasing & Logistic Division, Administration Building, Ground Floor, Joint Operations, Wafra, during the official working hours from **15 JUN 2025** up to **10 JUL 2025** for a non-refundable fee mentioned against each tender. Tender Fees to be deposited in the National bank of Kuwait (NBK) Account No. 1001132057. Saudi Suppliers can collect the tender documents from Saudi Arabian Chevron office in Al-Khobar Telephone No.: (013) 8645104 - Fax No.: (013) 8985436

The closing date for the following Tenders will be on **Tuesday, 22 JUL 2025 @ 09:00 AM.**

S.NO.	TENDER NO.	MATERIALS	FEES (IN KD)
1	032131-R1	CONTROL VALVES	25
2	037116	METAL PLATES & STRUCTURAL ANGLES	15
3	037117	S/F BAKER HUGHES PROCESS SYSTEM, CAMERON	5
4	037118	S/F HYDROCYCLONE, PETRECO INTERNATIONAL	25
5	037121	PIPE FITTINGS	15
6	037122	CISCO SERVERS AND ACCESSORIES	25
7	037123	ELECTRICAL CABLES	50
8	037124	AIR COMPRESSOR PACKAGE	50
9	137125	S/F ZEECO FLARE SYSTEM	25
10	137126	FLARE SYSTEM SPOOL, ZEECO	25
11	137127	COUPLING MARINE BREAKAWAY (GALL THOMSON - MIB ITALIANA S.p.A.)	25
12	137164	HOSE MARINE SPM (DUNLOP - YOKOHAMA - ALFAGOMMA)	100
13	137165	MISC ELECTRICAL ITEMS	15
14	037347	MISCELLANEOUS VALVES	15
15	037348	PIPES CARBON STEEL, COATED	25
16	BPT# 276/25	BLANKET PURCHASE TENDER S/F CLYDE UNION - UNION PUMPS (CONTRACT PERIOD 3 YRS)	25
17	BPT# 277/25	BLANKET PURCHASE TENDER S/F CLYDE UNION - DAVID BROWN PUMPS (CONTRACT PERIOD 3 YRS)	50
18	BPT# 278/25	BLANKET PURCHASE TENDER S/F CLYDE UNION - GIRDLESTONE PUMPS (CONTRACT PERIOD 3 YRS)	5

Notes: Gate Passes are required for Suppliers entering JO-Wafra Administrative Offices to collect the tender documents and gate pass processing time is 48 hours. Please fill request for gate pass along with legible copies of Authorization letter, Civil ID, Car Registration, Supplier Registration (KGOC or SAC) to e-mail HBJH@chevron.com and CBMS@chevron.com at least 48 hours prior to arrival.

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Officials urge calm, National Guard troops mobilize

Cities brace for large crowds at anti-Trump ‘No Kings’ demonstrations across US

PHILADELPHIA, June 14, (AP): Cities large and small were preparing for major demonstrations Saturday across the U.S. against President Donald Trump, as officials urge calm. National Guard troops mobilize and Trump attends a military parade in Washington to mark the Army’s 250th anniversary.

A flagship “No Kings” march and rally are planned in Philadelphia, but no events are scheduled to take place in Washington, D.C., where the military parade will take place on Trump’s birthday.

The demonstrations come on the heels of protests flaring up around the country over federal immigration enforcement raids that began last week and Trump ordering National Guard troops and Marines to Los Angeles where protesters blocked a freeway and set cars on fire.

Police responded with tear gas, rubber bullets and flash-bang grenades while officials enforced curfews in Los Angeles and Democratic governors called Trump’s Guard deployment “an alarming abuse of power” that “shows the Trump administration does not trust local law enforcement.”

Governors and city officials vowed to protect the right to protest and to show no tolerance for violence.

Republican governors in Virginia,

Texas, Nebraska and Missouri are mobilizing National Guard troops to help law enforcement manage demonstrations.

There will be “zero tolerance” for violence, destruction or disrupting traffic, and “if you violate the law, you’re going to be arrested,” Virginia Gov. Glenn Youngkin told reporters Friday.

In Missouri, Gov. Mike Kehoe issued a similar message, vowing to take a proactive approach and not to “wait for chaos to ensue.”

Nebraska’s governor on Friday also signed an emergency proclamation for activating his state’s National Guard, a step his office called “a precautionary measure in reaction to recent instances of civil unrest across the country.”

Organizers say that one march will go to the gates of Trump’s Mar-a-Lago resort in Florida, where Republican Gov. Ron DeSantis warned demonstrators that the “line is very clear” and not to cross it.

Governors also urged calm.

On social media, Washington state Gov. Bob Ferguson, a Democrat, called for peaceful protests over the weekend, to ensure Trump doesn’t send military to the state.

“Donald Trump wants to be able to say that we cannot handle our own



US Marines work outside of a federal building on June 13 in Los Angeles. (AP)

public safety in Washington state,” Ferguson said.

In a statement Friday, Arizona Gov. Katie Hobbs, a Democrat, urged “protestors to remain peaceful and calm as they exercise their First Amendment right to make their voices heard.”

Pennsylvania Gov. Josh Shapiro, a Democrat, said his administration and state police are working with police in Philadelphia ahead of what organizers

estimate could be a crowd approaching 100,000 people.

Philadelphia’s top prosecutor, District Attorney Larry Krasner, warned that anyone coming to Philadelphia to break the law or immigration agents exceeding their authority will face arrest. He invoked civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr. as a guide for demonstrators.

“If you are doing what Martin Lu-

ther King would have done, you’re going to be fine,” Krasner told a news conference.

Some law enforcement agencies announced they were ramping up efforts for the weekend. In California, state troopers will be on “tactical alert,” which means all days off are canceled for all officers.

The “No Kings” theme was orchestrated by the 50501 Movement, to support democracy and against what they call the authoritarian actions of the Trump administration. The name 50501 stands for 50 states, 50 protests, one movement.

Protests earlier this year have denounced Trump and billionaire adviser Elon Musk. Protesters have called for Trump to be “dethroned” as they compare his actions to that of a king and not a democratically elected president.

The No Kings Day of Defiance has been organized to reject authoritarianism, billionaire-first politics and the militarization of the country’s democracy, according to a statement by organizers.

Organizers intend for the protests to counter the Army’s 250th anniversary celebration - which Trump has ratcheted up to include a military parade, which is estimated to cost \$25 million to \$45 million that the Army expects

to attract as many as 200,000 people.

The event will feature hundreds of military vehicles and aircraft and thousands of soldiers. It also happens to be Trump’s 79th birthday and Flag Day.

“The flag doesn’t belong to President Trump. It belongs to us,” the “No Kings” website says. “On June 14th, we’re showing up everywhere he isn’t - to say no thrones, no crowns, no kings.”

Protests in nearly 2,000 locations are scheduled around the country, from city blocks to small towns, from courthouse steps to community parks, organizers said.

Demonstrations are expected to include speeches and marches, organizers said in a call Wednesday. The group says a core principle behind all “No Kings” events is a commitment to nonviolent action, and participants are expected to seek to de-escalate any confrontation.

No weapons of any kind should be taken to “No Kings” events, according to the website.

The No Kings Day of Defiance is expected to be the largest single-day mobilization since Trump returned to office, organizers said. Organizers said they are preparing for millions of people to take to the streets across all 50 states and commonwealths.



In this image provided by the Alpine Rescue Team, Alpine Rescue Team members take part in helping get two men struck by lightning off Torreys Peak in Colorado, on June 12. (AP)

Men hit by lightning plucked from Colorado mountain

Rescuers fetched two men struck by lightning from a Colorado peak in what they believe were the highest helicopter rescues on record in this mountainous state.

One man remained hospitalized in fair condition Friday while the other was treated at a hospital and released.

The rescues happened near the

summit of Torreys Peak, a 14,300-foot (4,360-meter) mountain about 40 miles (64 kilometers) west of Denver. Torreys Peak is ranked variously as the 11th or 12th highest summit in Colorado and is less than 200 feet (60 meters) shorter than the state’s highest mountain, Mount Elbert.

The men from New York state,

whose identities weren’t released, had decided to summit the mountain during a road trip, Alpine Rescue Team public information officer Jake Smith said.

They first called for help around 5 p.m. after getting off course on their way up a technical route. A different route doesn’t require climbing gear or expertise. (AP)

‘Shocked’, ‘sickened’ Democrats react with fury to video of Padilla’s removal

WASHINGTON, June 14, (AP): When videos first rocketed around the internet Thursday afternoon showing security officers forcibly removing Democratic Sen. Alex Padilla from a news conference with Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem in California, senators in both parties were already gathered together for a long series of votes.

There are strict rules against using cellphones on the Senate floor. But senators immediately shared the video with each other anyway.

“I showed it to as many people as I could,” said Democratic Sen. Lisa Blunt Rochester of Delaware. That included Senate Majority Leader John Thune, R-SD, who she said seemed “as shocked as we were.”

The videos, which showed officers aggressively pushing Padilla out of Noem’s news conference and eventually restraining him on the floor outside the room, shook Senate Democrats to the core.

Beaten down politically for months as President Donald Trump has returned to power and ruled Washington with a united Republican Congress, the Democrats’ anger exploded as they skipped their traditional Thursday flights home and stayed on the floor to speak out against the episode, calling it the latest and most inflammatory example of what they say is Trump’s gradual assault on democracy.

The altercation came just days after



US Sen Alex Padilla, D-Calif, is pushed out of the room as Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem holds a news conference regarding the recent protests in Los Angeles on June 12. (AP)

US Rep LaMonica McIver was indicted on federal charges alleging she assaulted and interfered with immigration officers outside a detention center in New Jersey.

“What was really hard for me to see was that a member of this body was driven to his knees and made to kneel before authorities,” said New Jersey Sen. Cory Booker, his raised voice booming through the Senate chamber walls. “This is a test. This is a cross-

roads. This is a day in which the character of this body will be defined.”

Washington Sen Patty Murray said it was the closest she had come to tearing up on the floor in her 32 years in the Senate. Maryland Sen Angela Alsobrooks said she was so angry she was shaking. Virginia Sen. Tim Kaine waved around a pocket Constitution and said the administration is trying to make Padilla and others “afraid to exercise their rights.”

Ukraine repatriates more bodies of fallen soldiers

KYIV, Ukraine, June 14, (AP): Ukraine has repatriated more bodies of fallen soldiers in line with an agreement reached during peace talks in Istanbul between Russian and Ukrainian delegations, Ukrainian officials said Friday.

Ukraine’s Coordination Headquarters for the Treatment of Prisoners of War said in a statement that Russia returned 1,200 bodies, and “according to the Russian side, the bodies belong to Ukrainian citizens, in particular military personnel.”

The repatriation of the bodies was carried out with the help of Ukraine’s Armed Forces, the country’s Security Service, the Interior Ministry and other government agencies. Forensic experts will now work to identify the remains, the statement said.

The repatriation of the bodies marks one of the largest returns of remains since Russia launched a full-scale invasion of Ukraine more than three years ago. Earlier this week, Russia returned 1,212 bodies of Ukrainian soldiers and received 27 bodies of its own killed troops.

The agreement to exchange prisoners of war and the bodies of fallen soldiers was the only tangible outcome of the talks in Istanbul that took place June 2.

Russia and Ukraine conducted a POW swap on Thursday that included severely wounded and gravely ill captives, although the sides did not



A man holds a photograph of Dmytro Shapovalov, a Ukrainian serviceman, during his funeral ceremony in Yosypivka village, Vinnytsia region, Ukraine, on Friday, June 13, 2025. (AP)

report the numbers.

In addition to agreeing to exchange POWs and bodies of fallen soldiers, the two sides traded memorandums at the talks that set out conditions for a ceasefire. However, the inclusion of clauses that both sides see as nonstarters make any quick deal unlikely.

Despite discussions of a potential truce in the war, Moscow’s forces in recent days have launched waves of drones and missiles at Ukraine, with a record bombardment of almost 500 drones on Monday and a wave

of 315 drones and seven missiles overnight on Tuesday.

Ukraine’s air force said Friday that Russia fired 55 Shahed and decoy drones and four ballistic missiles at Ukraine overnight. The air force said air defenses neutralized 43 drones. There were no immediate reports of casualties or damage from the attack.

Russia’s Defense Ministry said Friday that its air defenses downed 125 Ukrainian drones over several Russian regions and the annexed Crimea late Thursday and early Friday.

King Charles marks Air India tragedy with moment of silence during birthday parade

LONDON, June 14, (AP): King Charles III and other members of the royal family in uniform wore black armbands and observed a moment of silence during his annual birthday parade Saturday as the monarch commemorated those who died in this week’s Air India plane crash.

Charles requested the symbolic moves “as a mark of respect for the lives lost, the families in mourning and all the communities affected by this awful tragedy,” Buckingham Palace said.

An Air India flight from the northwestern city of Ahmedabad to London crashed shortly after takeoff on Thursday, killing 241 people on board and at least 29 on the ground. The plane was carrying 169 Indians, 53 Britons, seven Portuguese and one Canadian. One man survived.

In addition to being Britain’s head of state, Charles is the head of the Commonwealth, an organization of independent states that includes India and Canada.

The monarch’s annual birthday parade, known as Trooping the Colour, is a historic ceremony filled with pageantry and military bands in which the king reviews his troops on Horse Guards Parade adjacent to St. James’ Park in central London.

The military ceremony dates back



From left: Queen Camilla, King Charles III, Prince Louis, Prince William, Prince George, Kate Princess of Wales and Princess Charlotte on the balcony of Buckingham Palace, London, to view the flypast following the Trooping the Colour ceremony in central London, as King Charles III celebrates his official birthday on June 14. (AP)

to a time when flags of the battalion, known as colours, were “trooped,” or shown, to soldiers in the ranks so they could recognize them.

All members of the royal family in uniform wore black armbands. The moment of silence occurred while the king was on the dais after reviewing

the troops.

Charles’ mother, Queen Elizabeth II, held a similar moment of silence in 2017 when Trooping the Colour took place three days after a fire ripped through the Grenfell Tower apartment bloc in west London, killing 72 people.

Sweden, Netherlands to spend 5% of GDP on defense

BRUSSELS, June 14, (AP): Less than two weeks before a NATO summit, Sweden and the Netherlands said Friday that they intend to increase defense spending to 5% of their gross domestic product, in line with US President Donald Trump’s demands.

Trump and his NATO counterparts meet for a summit in the Netherlands on June 24-25, where they’re due to agree a new defense spending target. He insists that Europe must look after its own security, while Washington focuses on China and its own borders.

Swedish Prime Minister Ulf Kristersson said that “Sweden will reach a new NATO spending target to 5% of GDP, where at least 3.5% of GDP will be allocated towards core defense requirements to fulfill NATO’s new capability targets.”

“We are in a specific geographical situation where we need to meet the future threats from Russia,” Kristersson told reporters in Stockholm, standing alongside NATO Secretary-General Mark Rutte.

After Russia launched its full-scale invasion of Ukraine on Feb. 24, 2022, NATO’s 32 allies agreed to spend at least 2% of GDP on their military budgets. But NATO’s new plans for defending Europe and North America against a Russian attack require investment of at least 3%.

The aim now is to raise the bar to 3.5% for core defense spending on tanks, warplanes, air defense, missiles and hiring extra troops. A further 1.5% would be spent on things



Swedish Prime Minister Ulf Kristersson, right, and NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte hold a joint press conference in Stockholm, Sweden on June 13. (AP)

like roads, bridges, ports and airfields so armies can deploy more quickly, as well as preparing societies for possible attack.

According to the most recent NATO figures, Sweden was estimated to have spent 2.25% of its GDP on defense last year. The Netherlands spent 2.06%, among 22 of the 32 allies who reached NATO’s old benchmark.

Europe

American man detained in Greece: Greek authorities detained an American man on Friday on the Greek island of Skiathos suspected of killing an infant found over the weekend in a Rome park and of having a role in the death of a woman believed to be the infant’s mother, whose body was found nearby.

The American, who wasn’t identified, was detained on a European arrest warrant issued in Italy, citing “strong evidence” of his suspected involvement in the death of the baby girl, chief Rome prosecutor **Franco Lo Voi** told a news conference in Rome.

Italian investigators said that the cause of the woman’s death wasn’t known, “but there is a reasonable suspicion that it is a double murder,” deputy prosecutor Giuseppe Cascini said.

The bodies of the baby girl and mother, also believed to be American, were found in Rome’s Villa Pamphili park on Saturday. The mother’s body was under a black bag, having been killed several days before the infant, who was found several hundred meters away in undergrowth.

Both were naked, and without any identification, Lo Voi



Lo Voi

said. The suspect, who witnesses had seen in the presence of a woman and infant, fled Italy for Skiathos on Wednesday, Lo Voi said.

He will be formally arrested when the warrant is forwarded to Greek officials, and will appear for an extradition hearing next week, Greek police told The Associated Press. (AP)

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‘Senior crew involved in damaging cables’: Finnish authorities have accused senior officers of a Russia-linked vessel that damaged undersea cables last year between Finland and Estonia of criminal offenses related to the wreck-age.

They say the oil tanker, the Eagle S, dragged its anchor to damage the Estlink-2 power cable and communication links between Finland and Estonia on Dec. 25. The Kremlin previously denied involvement in damaging the infrastructure, which provides power and communication for thousands of Europeans.

The Eagle S is flagged in the Cook Islands, but has been described by Finnish customs officials and the European Union’s executive commission as part of Russia’s shadow fleet of fuel tankers. Those are aging vessels with obscure ownership, acquired to evade Western sanctions amid the war in Ukraine and operating without Western-regulated insurance.

Russia’s use of the vessels has raised environmental concerns about accidents given their age and uncertain insurance coverage. (AP)

Asia

Australian man shot to death in Bali: An Australian man was shot and killed and a second Australian tourist suffered injuries at a villa on the Indonesian tourist island of Bali, police said.

Police Chief **Arif Batubara** said the shooting Saturday at Villa Casa Santisya near Munggu Beach in Badung regency is under investigation and police are looking for witnesses.

The victims were rushed to Sanglah Hospital in Denpasar, the provincial capital.

Batubara identified the deceased victim as Zivan Radmanovic, 32, from Melbourne. The second victim suffered injuries from being punched, he said.

“We cannot yet determine the motive for this shooting and also who the perpetrator is until our investigation is complete,” Batubara said. (AP)



Batubara

Cambodia, Thailand start talks: A Cambodia-Thailand Joint Boundary Commission (JBC) meeting was held in the capital of Cambodia on Saturday to talk over border issues following a recent military clash. The meeting was co-chaired by Lam Chea, minister in charge of Cambodia’s State Secretariat of Border Affairs, and Prasas Prasasvinitchai, a former Thai ambassador to Cambodia and border affairs advisor to Thailand’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Press members were allowed to take photos and videos of the meeting for a few minutes before being asked to leave the room.

The meeting was convened after soldiers of both countries briefly exchanged gunfire at the Mom Bei area, or the Emerald Triangle, on May 28, resulting in the death of a Cambodian soldier. Mom Bei, or the Emerald Triangle, is an area sharing the border among Cambodia, Thailand and Laos. Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Manet said in a post on his official Facebook page Friday night that it was the first JBC meeting after a 12-year hiatus. He said that during the JBC meeting, Cambodia will invite Thailand to bring four disputed border areas, namely Mom Bei, Ta Moan Thom Temple, Ta Moan Tauch Temple, and Ta Krabei Temple, to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in The Hague.

“I would like to reconfirm to my compatriots that even if the Thai side refuses or remains silent, Cambodia will proceed it unilaterally,” Hun Manet said. “The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation will send an official letter to the ICJ on Sunday, June 15, 2025, regarding the disputes in these four areas,” he added. (Xinhua)

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‘Rumors of July earthquake a hoax’: The head of Japan’s meteorological agency on Friday dismissed widespread rumors of a major earthquake in Japan this summer as unscientific and a “hoax,” urging people not to worry because even the most advanced science still cannot predict any quake or tsunami.

“At the moment, it is still impossible to predict an earthquake with specific timing, location or its magnitude,” Japan Meteorological Agency Director General Ryoichi Nomura told reporters. “Any such prediction is a hoax, and there is absolutely no need to worry about such disinformation.”

Nomura was referring to rumors in Hong Kong and other Asian cities of a major earthquake or a tsunami in July in Japan have led to flight cancellations and reductions in service, affecting tourism.

He said it was “unfortunate” that many people are affected by the disinformation, though he sympathized with the sense of unease that the people tend to develop toward something invisible.

The rumor originates from a 2022 Japanese comic book “The future I saw,” which features a dream foreseeing a tsunami and is also available in Chinese. The chatter began spreading earlier this year through social media, mainly in Hong Kong.

The author previously gained attention for allegedly predicting the 2011 quake and tsunami in northern Japan, which killed more than 18,000 people.

Japan, which sits on the Pacific “ring of fire,” is one of the world’s most quake-prone countries.

Last summer, a panel of seismologists noted a slight increase in the probability of a megaquake on Japan’s Pacific coasts. The government organized an awareness-raising week but only triggered panic buying, beach closures and other overreactions and complaints.

While it is important to inform people about the science, Nomura said, it is also necessary for everyone in this quake-prone country to take early precautions.

“In Japan, an earthquake can occur anytime, anywhere,” Nomura said. “So I ask everyone to take this opportunity to ensure your preparedness for a major quake.” (AP)



Strong winds and rough waves seen at the Dadonghai sea area in Sanya, south China’s Hainan Province on June 13. (Xinhua)

China’s Hainan lifts emergency response as Typhoon Wutip weakens

China’s Hainan Province has terminated its emergency response as Typhoon Wutip continues to weaken and move northward, posing a diminishing threat to the island.

The provincial committee for disaster prevention, reduction and relief announced the decision to lift the Level III typhoon warning and terminate the corresponding flood and typhoon control emergency response as of 5 pm on Saturday. The decision was made based on the latest meteorological forecasts, which indicated the storm’s reduced intensity.

Multiple cities and counties lifted their typhoon warnings throughout Saturday afternoon. Dongfang City, where the typhoon made landfall, has already downgraded its warning to blue.

Transportation services are resuming. Airports in Haikou and Sanya have begun restoring flights. High-speed railway and suburban trains gradually resumed operations starting Saturday noon.

Meanwhile, Typhoon Wutip has caused severe flooding in central Vietnam, leaving three people dead, Vietnam News Agency reported on Saturday. Two victims died in Trieu Phong district of Quang Tri province during flood prevention efforts, while another was drowned in Hai Lang district, the report said. In neighboring Quang Binh province, four people remain missing as search and rescue teams continue to expand operations under improving weather conditions. Floodwaters have submerged more than 21,000 hectares of rice fields, along with thousands of hectares of vegetables and aquaculture ponds, while tens of thousands of poultry have been killed, according to the report. (Xinhua)

Mongolia’s new prime minister pledges to address economic demands of protesters

ULAANBAATAR, Mongolia, June 14, (AP): The new prime minister of Mongolia has pledged to address the economic demands of protesters after their daily rallies led to the fall of his predecessor.

Lawmakers approved former parliament speaker Zandanshatar Gombojav as prime minister by an overwhelming majority in a vote late Thursday night.

His election appeared to mark the end of several weeks of political uncertainty in a still-young democracy of 3.4 million people that is sandwiched between much larger China and Russia. The new leader faces multiple challenges including high inflation, a looming government budget deficit and fears of power shortages this winter.

Speaking ahead of the vote in parliament, Zandanshatar said this year’s government spending needs to be reduced by about \$640 million to avoid a significant revenue shortfall.

“Revision of the budget has become inevitable,” the former banker said, saying he would submit a revised budget to parliament next week.

Zandanshatar, 45, studied economics at university in Russia and was vice director of one of the largest commercial banks in Mongolia.

He was parliament speaker from 2020 to 2024 and was named head of the president’s office after he lost his seat in an election last year. From



Then-speaker of the Mongolian Parliament, Zandanshatar Gombojav, looks on during a meeting with Speaker of the Hungarian Parliament, Laszlo Kover, in the parliament building in Budapest, Hungary on March 6. (AP)

2014-16, he was a visiting scholar at Stanford University in California.

His predecessor, Oyun-Erdene Luvsannamsrai, resigned 10 days ago after losing a vote of confidence in parliament.

The protests against Oyun-Erdene’s rule were sparked by reports of lavish spending by his son. Many Mongolians feel the nation’s mineral wealth has benefited politicians and their business friends rather than the general

population. The poverty rate remains high in the sparsely-populated country.

Zandanshatar said he would ensure that economic growth is inclusive and reached all Mongolians. He promised to launch a tax reform to reduce the burden on the middle class and increase taxes on luxury consumption and those with ultra-high incomes.

He won election by a vote of 108 to 9 in the 126-member parliament. The other nine members were absent.

North Korea says damaged destroyer repaired and relaunched successfully

SEOUL, South Korea, June 14, (AP): North Korea said it has repaired its damaged second naval destroyer and launched the ship into the water in the presence of leader Kim Jong Un, about three weeks after it capsized during a botched launch ceremony.

In a lavish ceremony, Kim boarded the warship and told troops that nothing can block his country’s push to bolster its naval combat power in the face of U.S.-led hostilities, the Korean Central News Agency said Friday. The country’s extremely secretive nature makes it virtually impossible to independently confirm the announcement on the ship’s repair. Outside observers doubt whether the ship’s engine, weapons systems and other electronic equipment can function normally, as parts of the warship were submerged for about two weeks.

North Korea’s failed launch May 21 sparked fury from Kim, who has vowed to build a stronger navy to cope with what he calls escalating U.S.-led threats against his country.

Kim said the incident was caused by criminal negligence and ordered officials to repair the warship before a ruling Workers’ Party meeting in late June. North Korean authorities later detained four officials including the vice director of the Workers’ Party’s munitions industry department over



This photo provided by the North Korean government shows a destroyer named Kang Kon during its launch ceremony at the Rajin shipyard in Rason, North Korea on June 12. (AP)

the botched launch. In his Thursday speech, Kim said the country’s two destroyers will play a big role in improving the navy’s operational capabilities, according to KCNA.

Kim reiterated previous claims that his naval buildup is a justified response to perceived threats posed by the U.S. and South Korea, which in recent years have expanded their combined military exercises and updated their deterrence strategies to counter Kim’s advancing nuclear program. He said the North will respond to such external threats with “overwhelming military action.”

“It will not be long before the enemy nations themselves experience just how provoking and unpleasant it is to sit back and watch as our warships freely move near the edges of their sovereign waters,” Kim said. Kim said a North Korean shipyard worker died during the repairs and offered his “deepest condolences” to his family, including his wife and son who were present at the launch event.

Death toll in Indian plane crash climbs to 270 as search teams find more bodies

AHMEDABAD, India, June 14, (AP): Search and recovery teams continued scouring the site of one of India’s worst aviation disasters for a third day after the Air India flight fell from the sky and killed at least 270 people in Gujarat state, officials said Saturday.

The London-bound Boeing 787 struck a medical college hostel in a residential area of the northwestern city of Ahmedabad minutes after takeoff Thursday, killing 241 people on board and at least 29 on the ground. One passenger survived.

Recovery teams working until late Friday found at least 25 more bodies in the debris, officials said.

Dr. Dhaval Gameti at the Civil Hospital in Ahmedabad told The Associated Press the facility had received 270 bodies, adding that the lone surviving passenger was still under observation for some of his wounds.

“He is doing very well and will be ready to be discharged anytime soon,” Gameti said Saturday.

Hundreds of relatives of the crash victims have provided DNA samples at the hospital. Most bodies were charred or mutilated, making them unrecognizable.

Some relatives expressed frustration Saturday that the process was taking too long. Authorities say it normally takes up to 72 hours to complete DNA matching and they are expediting the process.

“Where are my children? Did you recover them?” asked

Rafiq Abdullah, whose nephew, daughter-in-law and two grandchildren were on the flight. “I will have to ask questions. Government is not answering these questions.”

Another relative persistently asked hospital staff when his relative’s body would be handed over to the family for last rites.

“Give us the body,” the relative insisted.

Alongside the formal investigation, the Indian government says it has formed a high-level, multi-disciplinary committee to examine the causes leading to the crash.

The committee will focus on formulating procedures to prevent and handle aircraft emergencies in the future and “will not be a substitute to other enquiries being conducted by relevant organisations,” the Ministry of Civil Aviation said in a statement.

Investigators on Friday recovered the plane’s digital flight data recorder, or the black box, which was recovered from a rooftop near the crash site and likely will lead to clues about the cause of the accident.

India’s Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau said it had started working with “full force” to extract the data.

The device is expected to reveal information about the engine and control settings, while the voice recorder will provide cockpit conversations, said Paul Fromme, a mechanical engineer with the U.K.-based Institution of Mechanical Engineers.



A crew prepares to remove parts of an Air India plane, which crashed on Thursday, from the roof of a building in Ahmedabad, India on June 14. (Inset): A relative of a victim of Thursday’s Air India plane crash is comforted as she breaks down at a hospital in Ahmedabad, India on Saturday. (AP)

South Africa president visits flood sites with death toll at 78, expected to climb

CAPE TOWN, South Africa, June 14, (AP): South Africa’s leader visited the region where devastating floods have left at least 78 people dead in the country’s southeast as searches continued Friday for a fourth day and authorities said they expected the death toll to rise.

President Cyril Ramaphosa traveled to the town of Mthatha in Eastern Cape province, where the floods hit hardest when they began early Tuesday.

Ramaphosa attended a briefing by officials from the National Disaster Management Center and also visited a bridge where a school bus was washed away by flooding. Six students, the bus driver and another adult onboard were confirmed dead, while four other schoolchildren were among the missing.

Ramaphosa’s visit came amid questions over authorities’ response to the disaster, which was caused by an extreme weather front that brought heavy rain, strong winds and snow to parts of the province. Forecasters warned about the bad weather last week.

The head of the provincial government said that the rescue effort was “paralyzed” in the first few hours of the floods, because of a lack of resources like specialized search and rescue teams, divers and K-9 dog units in one of the country’s poorest regions.



South African President Cyril Ramaphosa addresses victims of this week’s floods in Mthatha, South Africa on June 13. (AP)

Eastern Cape Premier Oscar Mabuzyane said that the province of 7.2 million people has just one official rescue helicopter, which had to be brought from another city more than 500 kilometers (310 miles) away.

Lat/Am

Mexico reaffirms commitment to human rights: Mexican President **Claudia Sheinbaum** on Friday reiterated that her government will always seek “respect for the human rights” of Mexicans abroad, following the death of a Mexican citizen in custody at a US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) detention center.

“All investigations have to be done and we will always seek respect for the human rights of Mexicans abroad,” said the president at her daily press conference in Mexico City. The Foreign Ministry of Mexico on Thursday expressed regret over the death of the Mexican citizen on June 7 while in custody at the ICE detention center in the state of Georgia.

The ministry added that the Mexican Consulate in Atlanta had been notified and consular personnel had established communication with local authorities, the ICE, as well as with the deceased’s family, to clarify the facts and provide legal advice and support to the family. (Xinhua)

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Dominican club owner, sister held: The owner of an iconic nightclub in the Dominican Republic whose roof collapsed in April and killed 236 people was arrested Thursday



Sheinbaum

along with his sister.

Antonio Espallat and Maribel Espallat have not been charged in the case, although authorities have 48 hours to present any charges before a judge.

“Both defendants displayed immense irresponsibility and negligence by failing to physically intervene to prevent the club’s roof from collapsing, as it ultimately did, causing 236 deaths and more than 180 injuries,” the Dominican Republic’s Attorney General’s Office said in a statement.

Prosecutors accused the Espallats of trying to intimidate or manipulate company employees, adding that they could serve as witnesses in the case. Antonio Espallat is considered a powerful businessman in the Dominican Republic; he owns upscale entertainment centers and dozens of local radio stations.

Miguel Valerio, the Espallats’ attorney, told reporters that he expects to have access to the prosecutors’ evidence in upcoming days.

“This is an involuntary homicide,” he said. “Nobody wanted that to happen.” The Espallats were arrested after being interrogated for several hours.

Altanto TV, a local digital news channel, posted an interview with a man they identified as former Jet Set employee Gregory Adamés. The channel said he gave prosecutors videos and conversations with Antonio Espallat in which he warned that the April 7 party shouldn’t be held because the roof could collapse.

Adamés said in a video posted on Instagram that he would hold the Espallat family responsible if he disappears or is shot or involved in an accident. (AP)

Kuwait oil price up USD 3.98 pb to USD 73.19

KUWAIT CITY, June 14, (KUNA): Kuwaiti oil price rose by USD 3.98 to reach USD 73.19 per barrel on Friday, compared to Thursday's USD 69.21 pb, as reported by Kuwait Petro-

leum Corporation (KPC) on Saturday.

In global markets, Brent crude increased USD 4.87 to USD 74.23 pb as West Texas Intermedi-ate increased USD 4.94 to USD 72.98 pb.

Business

Group companies reunite to support lives through blood donation

KIPCO, Kamco Invest, URC & UFM collaborate with Kuwait Central Blood Bank to organize ‘Be the Reason’ campaign



KUWAIT CITY, June 14: For the second consecutive year, Kuwait Projects Company (Holding) - KIPCO, Kamco Invest, United Real Estate Company (URC), and United Facilities Management (UFM) came together to organize a blood donation drive in collaboration with the Kuwait Central Blood Bank, under the theme “Be the Reason”. The campaign reflects a powerful message that by choosing to donate blood, each individual has the power to be the reason someone heals, survives, or finds renewed hope. This initiative was held in occasion of World Blood Donor Day, which takes place annually on the 14th of June.

Building on the success of last year’s campaign, this initiative reflects the group’s continued dedication to corporate social responsibility and collective action that delivers sustainable community



Top and above: The employees who took part in the blood donation campaign.



impact.

Hosted at the Chairman’s Club on the 54th floor of KIPCO Tower, the drive witnessed strong engagement from employees across all participating companies, reinforcing a shared culture of collaboration and social solidarity.

The initiative aligns with the strategic direction of KIPCO Group companies in integrating Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) principles into their operations. By actively supporting public health through meaningful initiatives, the group demonstrates its ongoing commitment to sustainability and community well-being. This campaign reaffirms the power of unified efforts between sister companies and healthcare partners in driving real, lasting change.

Event held under the umbrella of its flagship initiative, ‘Empower Her’

Burgan Bank organizes event in appreciation of its female workforce – ‘Burgan Bank Women’s Day’

KUWAIT CITY, June 14: As part of its steadfast commitment to women’s empowerment and promoting it as a societal value, Burgan Bank proudly organized an event for its female workforce under the umbrella of its flagship initiative, ‘Empower Her.’ This landmark event reaffirmed the Bank’s dedication to engaging and inspiring its female employees across all departments and career levels – recognizing their unwavering commitment and vital contributions to the Bank’s journey and success.

This celebration is a key element of Burgan Bank’s comprehensive human capital development strategy and aligns with its rigorous adherence to leading Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) standards. It also reinforces the Bank’s overarching goal of being an employer of choice in the Kuwaiti banking sector.

The Empower Her initiative embodies Burgan Bank’s mission to deliver an excellent customer experience, lead with innovation, contribute to the community, and create meaningful growth opportunities. By nurturing an inclusive and supportive work culture, the Bank translates its fundamental institutional attributes – trust, commitment, excellence, and progression – into practice, ensuring that empowerment becomes a lived experience across all levels of the organization. This is further aligned with the Bank’s vision to be the most modern and progressive bank in Kuwait, driven by its employees, customers, and community.

“We are proud of our female colleagues who serve as essential pillars of Burgan Bank’s achievements. This day is more than just a celebration – it is a heartfelt message of appreciation for every woman who has shaped our jour-



Ms. Fatma Ahmad, Senior Manager – Learning and Development at Burgan Bank.

ney of progress,” commented **Ms. Zahra Boarki**, Senior Manager – Culture and Employee Engagement at Burgan Bank.

“The event was warmly received by our female employees, who expressed their joy and gratitude for this thoughtful gesture. It truly reflects our inclusive internal culture, which has earned us certification as a Great Place to Work®. At Burgan Bank, we believe that empowering women is not a luxury, but a necessity – critical to achieving balance and sustainability in the workplace.”

From her perspective, **Ms. Fatma Ahmad**, Senior Manager – Learning and Development at Burgan Bank, added: “Burgan Bank Women’s Day aims to celebrate our female employees under the Empower Her initiative. This day forms part of a broader series of programs rolled out throughout the



Burgan Bank’s female workforce gathered for a group photo during the Burgan Bank Women’s Day celebration.

year to support and empower women, ensuring a flexible, enriching, and motivating work environment tailored to their aspirations and needs.”

“The event featured engaging workshops and dialogue panels, where prominent female leaders shared their experiences and insights on professional growth, personal development, and mental wellness.”

Held at Burgan Bank’s headquarters, Burgan Bank Women’s Day encompassed a diverse array of activities, including workshops, panel discussions, wellness experiences, and a dedicated showcase for female employees to promote their entrepreneurial businesses.

The first panel discussion delved into “Economic Empowerment of Kuwaiti Women,” featuring insights from distinguished speakers: Dr. Al Anoud AlSharekh, Director of Ibtakar Strategic Consultancy and Associate Fellow at

Chatham House MENA Program and the Arab Gulf States Institute in Washington, and Ms. Danah Faisal AlJasem, General Manager – Corporate Communications at Burgan Bank.

The second panel, titled “You Are the Source of Your Strength: Mental Wellness and Overcoming Challenges,” featured: Dr. Elham Hamdan, medical doctor and senior healthcare executive, and Ms. Bibi Al-Banai, Branch Manager at Burgan Bank.

As part of the Bank’s holistic approach to women’s empowerment, the day also featured a Lean-In Circle workshop led by Ms. Fatma Ahmad, titled “Facilitating Change: What Needs to Shift in Workplaces to Support Women?” The workshop invited women to reflect on key structural and cultural transformations required to foster inclusive workplaces.

To address topics of pressing rel-

evance to women’s health, the event included informative sessions such as: “Empower to Prevent: Cervical Cancer Awareness for Every Woman,” led by Dr. Nourah Al-Ibrahim, MD, FRCS, specialist in Obstetrics and Gynecology, Gynecologic Oncology, certified by the Canadian Board, and Assistant Professor and Gynecologic Oncologist at Kuwait University.

“Vitality at Every Stage: Enhancing Immunity and Easing Menopause Symptoms,” delivered by Dr. Nada Al Ibrahim, specialist in Obstetrics and Gynecology, Urogynecology, and female Pelvic Medicine & Reconstructive surgery.

The day concluded with personalized consultations offering expert support in wellness and health:

Ms. Huda Al Medlej, wellness life coach and founder of Vitarights GCC, offered individualized sessions focused



Ms. Zahra Boarki, Senior Manager – Culture and Employee Engagement at Burgan Bank.

on deep healing through biophotonic information medicine utilizing advanced German technologies.

Ms. Rola Aranky, dietitian, diabetes educator, and certified personal trainer, provided guidance on achieving holistic physical wellbeing.

It is worth noting that Burgan Bank, proudly certified as a Great Place to Work®, remains a vocal and active advocate for women in leadership – paving the way not only within the Bank but also across the financial industry and broader society. Previous initiatives under the ‘Empower Her’ umbrella include a summer internship program that welcomed 18 young women and a powerful seminar featuring female role models from various sectors in Kuwait – aimed at inspiring and equipping the next generation of leaders.

Real estate market in Kuwait cools sharply as vacation season kicks off

Only 96 property deals registered in early June, down 40.3%

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

KUWAIT CITY, June 14: As the start of the summer vacation coincides with the anticipated seasonal decline in real estate transactions, the value of transactions in the first week of June decreased by 48.6 percent or about KD70.37 million; while the number of transactions also declined by 40.3 percent (96 transactions) – a decrease of 56 transactions compared to the previous week.

The newspaper obtained a copy of the weekly report on real estate transactions by the Real Estate Registration and Documentation Departments at the Ministry of Justice covering the period from June 1-4. It showed the registration of 96 real estate transactions worth KD74.457 million, compared to 161 transactions worth KD144.827 million in the last week of

May.

Private real estate transactions recorded a 31.8 percent decrease in number (35 transactions) and a 29.8 percent decrease in value (KD12.357 million) compared to last week. The number of private transactions in the current week reached 75 transactions worth KD29.174 million, compared to 110 transactions worth KD41.531 million last week. Investment real estate transactions witnessed a sharp decline in the quantity and value of transactions compared to other real estate categories. The decline reached 66 percent in the number of transactions (29 transactions) and 59.1 percent in trading value (KD52.86 million), with a total of 15 transactions worth KD36.52 million, compared to 44 transactions worth KD89.39 million the previous week.

In contrast, the market value of commercial transactions witnessed a growth of 16.3 percent (KD530,000) as the trading value reached KD3.25 million per transaction, compared to KD2.72 million per transaction during the previous week.

Meanwhile, craft real estate transactions witnessed a 30 percent decrease in liquidity (KD175,000) compared to last week’s transactions. Despite recording five craft transactions this week – an increase of one transaction compared to last week, the value of real estate transactions this week reached KD5.51 million, compared to KD5.68 million last week.

them, foremost of which was a review of the latest developments in the negotiations for the FTA, according to press release by the GCC Secretariat.

The two sides affirmed their aspiration to strengthen joint work and efforts to complete the rounds of negotiations for the free trade agreement, it noted.

On his part, Al-Budaiwi said that he discussed with the Secretary of State for Business and Trade the outstanding issues in these negotiations, and

exchanged views on the opportunities available to remove these obstacles in a way that preserves the common interests of both sides.

He said that the GCC countries are always seeking to strengthen their investment and trade relations by creating joint opportunities and signing free trade agreements with a number of countries and organizations in the world, in a way that benefits their people with development and prosperity.

Other Voices

Shale oil declines as OPEC boosts production

By Kamel Al-Harami
Independent Oil Analyst

SHALE oil production in the United States is projected to decline starting next year. From its peak of 13.5 million barrels per day in 2024, output is expected to drop by 200,000 barrels per day from 2026. This certainly comes as disappointing news for the current U.S. administration, which had hoped to maintain the country’s dominance in the global oil market and retain its status as a top producer for years to come, especially amid competition from major producers like Russia and Saudi Arabia.

Adding to the administration’s challenges is its failure to achieve a key objective: lowering domestic oil prices. With U.S. production set to decline, the country will become increasingly reliant on foreign imports, even as domestic consumption continues to rise. The U.S. currently consumes approximately 20.5 million barrels per day and imports about 6.1 million barrels, with about 60% coming from Canada, 7% from Mexico, and the remainder from Saudi Aramco, Iraq, and other OPEC nations.

The administration will also be disappointed by its continued failure in achieving its objective of reducing oil prices. The US will face a growing reliance on foreign imports, even as domestic consumption rises. Currently, the United States consumes approximately 20.5 million barrels of oil per day and imports about 6.1 million barrels daily, roughly 60 percent from Canada, seven percent from Mexico, and the remainder from Saudi Aramco, Iraq, and other OPEC countries.

The current U.S. administration appears to be leaning toward continued reliance on fossil fuels, rather than fully committing to alternative energy sources, and encouraging further investment in oil and gas, without focusing on new alternatives. It perhaps is of the opin-



Kamel Al-Harami

ion that it is still too early to search for replacements for fossil fuels, especially given the goal of keeping energy prices low and avoiding the higher costs often associated with alternative energy. The United States still holds substantial oil and gas reserves, and there is a growing push to ease permitting processes and open more federal land for exploration. The aim is to become a dominant force in global energy and reduce dependence on foreign oil, while keeping oil prices low as a cornerstone of U.S. energy policy.

Meanwhile, OPEC countries must begin thinking seriously about developing a long-term strategy that goes beyond oil. Some member states cannot continue relying on oil as their primary source of income, especially when more than 90 percent of their national revenue depends on it. With current low oil prices, many countries are being forced to borrow from international banks or consider monetizing parts of their oil assets, such as selling stakes in national oil companies, as Saudi Aramco has done. There is no harm in selling a small share, whether 5 percent or 15 percent, and it will not affect our “jewel in the crown,” as long as the country retains full control over its wealth and oil resources.

Perhaps the choice could be selling assets, divesting ownership stakes, selling shares in international companies, issuing bonds, or simply borrowing. The final decision depends on overall economic factors, expected returns on investment, and the best financial strategies.

Fortunately, there are multiple options, and Kuwait can certainly pick and choose the path that it considers is the best.

Recently, the conflict involving Iran caused global oil prices to surge above \$75 per barrel in no time. This raises the question - how fragile are oil prices?

In this context, OPEC may not need to take immediate action. Let the political situation take over. However, it is likely that the surge in oil prices is only temporary.

□ □ □

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Award highlights bank’s achievements in delivering cutting-edge financial institution services

Kuwait Finance House named ‘Best Bank for Financial Institutions in the Middle East’ by Global Finance

KUWAIT CITY, June 14: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) has been recognized as the “Best Bank for Financial Institutions in the Middle East for 2025” by Global Finance. This prestigious award is part of Global Finance’s 25th annual Best Treasury & Cash Management Banks awards for 2025.

Abdullah Al Marzouq, General Manager Financial Institutions at KFH, expressed his gratitude for the recognition, stating, “We are honored to receive this esteemed award from Global Finance. This award highlights our achievements in delivering cutting-edge financial institution services regionally. KFH’s Financial Institutions Department (FI) has played a pivotal role in advancing cross-border banking capabilities and strengthening correspondent banking networks.”

He added that this achievement is a testament to the unwavering commitment to excellence, innovation, and the highest standards of service in the financial sector, while reflecting the leadership in providing top-tier treasury and cash management solutions.”

Al Marzouq continued, “the award of Best Bank for Financial Institutions in the Middle East highlights KFH’s strategic vision, robust financial performance, and its role as a trusted partner for financial institutions across the region.

He indicated KFH has strong connections with 148 banks worldwide, showing its influence in both regional and global markets and making KFH a key link between regional and international banking. This broad network supports KFH’s focus on specialized Islamic finance products and helps connect local markets with global financial opportunities.

Al Marzouq pointed out that KFH introduced several digital enhancements and innovations that improved processing speed and compliance integrity, such as:

- Integrated SWIFT GPI capabilities to improve payment transparency and tracking.
- Automated nostro reconciliation tools, reducing manual errors and operational risk.
- Implementation of automatic compliance screening tools to enhance onboarding and transaction filtering efficiency.

Al Marzouq reiterated that KFH remains committed to delivering exceptional value to its clients and stakeholders, indicating the award serves as an impetus to continue pushing the boundaries and pursuing excellence in the financial industry.”

Criteria and mechanism



Abdullah Al Marzouq

Global Finance’s annual awards are highly regarded in the industry, recognizing banks and financial institutions that demonstrate excellence in treasury and cash management. The selection process involves a rigorous assessment of various criteria, including market share, customer service, product innovation, and the ability to meet the evolving needs of clients.

Global Finance used a multi-tiered assessment process—which included entries from banks and providers and input from industry analysts, corporate executives, technology experts and independent research—to select the best providers of treasury and cash management services. A variety of subjective and objective criteria were considered, including profitability, market share and reach, customer service, competitive pricing, product innovation and the extent to which treasury and cash management providers have successfully differentiated themselves from their competitors around core service provision.

Joseph Giarraputo

“Driven by digital advancements and demand for visibility, the Treasury and Cash Management sector is rapidly evolving,” said Joseph Giarraputo, founder and editorial director of Global Finance. “Corporations seek integrated platforms with automation and AI, while financial institutions offer innovative solutions for efficiency and transparency. The Treasury and Cash Management Awards recognize those excelling in this changing landscape.”

Global Finance

Global Finance, founded in 1987, has a circulation of 50,000 and readers in 188 countries, territories and



KFH headquarters.

districts. Global Finance’s audience includes senior corporate and financial officers responsible for making investment and strategic decisions at multinational companies and financial institutions. Its website — GFMag.com — offers analysis and articles that are the legacy of 38 years of experience in international financial markets. Global Finance is headquartered in New York, with offices around the world.

Kuwait’s automotive refinish industry transforms with the installation of Axalta Iruis Mix machines at ALSAYER Group



L-R: Photos from the event

KUWAIT CITY, June 14: Axalta, a global leader in coatings and colour solutions, has announced the installation of its first three Axalta Iruis Mix machines in Kuwait at the ALSAYER Group. Founded in 1954, ALSAYER recently commemorated its 70th anniversary and continues to lead the automotive service industry in Kuwait.

The state-of-the-art Iruis Mix machines, recognized as the fastest fully automated and hands-free paint mixing systems in the automotive refinish sector, have been installed at three key ALSAYER Group Mega Bodyshop locations: two at the Toyota Bodyshop in Al Rai and Ahmadi, and one at the Lexus Centre in Shuwaikh. Serving the entire Kuwaiti market, the ALSAYER Group’s facilities

has a total throughput that surpass competitors.

Mubarak Naser Al Sayer, CEO of ALSAYER Group, added, “Since the installation of Axalta Iruis Mix at our three sites, we have already observed numerous advantages. Our refinishers are experiencing improved stock management and can dedicate more time to high-value tasks instead of manual paint mixing. We are also proud of our commitment to sustainability – something the Iruis Mix enhances through waste reduction and eco-friendly design, aligning perfectly with our environmental principles.”

Fadi Medlej, Business Director for CEEMEA at Axalta Refinish, commented, “It is no surprise that ALSAYER,

a valued Axalta partner since 2017, is among the first in the Middle East to adopt the Iruis Mix. This system offers significant time savings and environmental benefits. Both ALSAYER and Axalta are committed to innovation and sustainability, making this partnership a perfect fit.”

Designed with sustainability in mind, Axalta Iruis Mix utilizes a proven bottle system that eliminates the need for decanting or refilling. The bottles, made from 50% recycled plastic, feature precise dosing lids that ensure accurate color matching, minimizing waste. With four different bottle sizes tailored to popular tint formulations, the system also helps reduce inventory costs for ALSAYER.

The Iruis Mix system enables bodyshops to operate more sustainably and cost-effectively while reducing bottlenecks and enhancing operational efficiency. It also frees up skilled refinishers to focus on more value-added tasks.

Medlej highlighted, “We estimate that bodyshops can save more than 60% on labor time compared to manual mixing and maintenance, dramatically improving productivity.”

This installation marks a significant milestone in Kuwait’s automotive refinish industry, positioning ALSAYER as a leader in technological innovation and sustainable practices.

Bank believes such campaigns play an effective role in providing support for the ill and in need

NBK organizes blood donation campaign for its employees

KUWAIT CITY, June 14: In line with World Blood Donor Day and as part of its social responsibility and community service, National Bank of Kuwait organized a successful blood donation campaign for its employees at the bank’s headquarters where employees from different departments and sectors showed strong participation and desire to contribute to this noble act, further highlighting NBK’s belief that such campaigns play an effective role in providing support for the ill and in need.

Such campaigns are part and parcel of NBK’s strategy, as it aims to raise society’s awareness about the importance of donating blood, as well as highlight how this act can save many lives and further enhance Kuwait’s blood bank inventory.

Moreover, NBK strives to instill acts of social responsibility at the core of its strategy, as it stands as an effective partner in social development through its various campaigns as well as the educational, environmental and healthcare initiatives that have become a true embodiment of the bank’s deep commitment towards serving all society’s segments.

On their part, the Blood Bank team commended this benevolent initiative and applauded NBK’s humanitarian endeavors that have always strived to serve the nation and society in the best way possible.

NBK has always organized blood donations in support of Kuwait’s Blood Bank and as an expression of social solidarity. Furthermore, NBK is committed to providing support for all healthcare institutions by organizing relevant events and campaigns to raise awareness and promote healthy lifestyles.

It should be noted that NBK’s record is filled with pioneering social and humanitarian initiatives across different sectors, including health awareness and illness prevention campaigns. At the forefront of these campaigns comes breast cancer awareness and early detection, diabetes, prostate cancer and many others.



Some of the workers donating blood during the campaign.





Minister of Health Dr. Ahmed Al-Awadhi inaugurates the blood donation campaign, accompanied by the Ambassador of the Republic of India.

Indian community-led campaign highlights compassion and solidarity

MoH committed to developing blood transfusion system

KUWAIT CITY, June 14, (KUNA): Minister of Health Dr. Ahmad Al-Awadhi reiterated the ministry’s commitment to continue developing the blood transfusion system by modernizing the infrastructure, training medical and technical cadres, and expanding the donor base.

“We believe that blood donation is not only a medical procedure, but rather a noble expression of belonging and compassion, and an indicator of the maturity and solidarity of societies in facing health challenges,” Al-Awadhi told reporters after inaugurating a blood donation campaign for the Indian community coinciding with the World Donor Day, at the blood donation center in Adan area.

He added that June 14 of each year is dedicated to honoring donors who voluntarily donate their blood without compensation, thus contributing to saving lives and improving the health of patients.

He noted that the campaign is organized by the Indian Doctors Forum in Kuwait, in the presence of the Indian Ambassador to Kuwait, to shed light on this noble humanitarian act and promote the culture of blood donation as a noble societal duty.

He commended the efforts of the blood bank, which



KUNA photos

last year received more than 90,000 donors and provided nearly 150,000 blood units. The bank also produced more than 190,000 blood products.

The Minister of Health expressed his gratitude to every donor and volunteer who contributed to saving a patient’s life, stressing that Kuwait will always remain

at the forefront of countries that sponsor humanity and health.

For his part, the Indian Ambassador Dr. Adarsh Swaika expressed keenness on organizing the blood donation campaign on World Donor Day in cooperation with the Indian Doctors Forum with the aim of instilling the value of blood donation and its importance in saving lives.

He praised the role of the Minister of Health, Dr. Ahmad Al-Awadhi, in supporting humanitarian and health issues and strengthening bilateral relations between the two countries.

The Ambassador pointed out that the Indian community is one of the largest communities in Kuwait and they are keen to contribute effectively to various activities.

For her part, the Supervisor of Medical Services and Acting Director of the Blood Transfusion Services Department, Dr. Hanan Al-Awadhi, said in a similar statement that this is the second time an event like this is organized, and they are expecting more than 200 donors.

She stressed that these campaigns contribute to strengthening the strategic bloodstock, noting that as long as there are patients in hospitals, there is a continuous need for blood donations.

Bridging education and opportunity through language proficiency

British Council opens new English centre in Abu Fatira

KUWAIT CITY, June 14: The British Council has marked a new milestone in Kuwait’s educational landscape with the grand opening of its latest English language centre in Abu Fatira, Mubarak Al Kabeer Governorate. This new modern facility aims to meet the rising demand for quality English education and equip learners with the language skills essential for success in a rapidly globalizing world.

The inauguration ceremony was graced by His Excellency Belinda Lewis, the UK Ambassador to Kuwait, alongside Tony Skinner, Director of the British Council in Kuwait, and Alison Ball, Regional English Director. The event brought together leading educators, government officials, and community stakeholders, all united in their commitment to advancing educational opportunities in Kuwait.

“As the world becomes ever more connected, proficiency in English unlocks doors to international collaboration, higher education and career advancement,” said Ambassador Belinda Lewis. “This new centre is more than just a building; it is a vibrant hub where learners of all ages can develop skills, confidence and cultural understanding. The British Council’s continued investment here



underscores the strength of the UK-Kuwait partnership and our shared vision to help empower Kuwait’s future generations.”

The Abu Fatira centre is the British Council’s third dedicated off-site English teaching facility in the region, complementing its main centre and a recently opened branch at the College of Science and Technology in Doha. Designed with modern classrooms and cutting-edge learning tools, the centre offers a comprehensive range of courses tailored to all ages and proficiency levels.

Tony Skinner, British Council Cluster Lead, emphasized, “Our mission is to make quality English education accessible to every corner of Kuwait. Through innovative teaching methods and expert staff, we help learners gain the skills they need to thrive academically and professionally while fostering cultural exchange and lifelong learning.”

From English language learning and communication skills to soft skills programmes for young children and adults, as well as exam preparation and workplace English courses for adults, the British Council brings over 90 years of global expertise to learners in Kuwait. Students also benefit from personalized progress tracking and access to a dynamic digital learning platform, ensuring an engaging and effective learning experience.

This expansion represents a significant step in supporting Kuwait’s national goals for education and international engagement, reflecting the British Council’s ongoing dedication to nurturing talent and building bridges between cultures.



Photos during the grand opening of new English language centre in Abu Fatira, Mubarak Al Kabeer Governorate.

Bangladeshi expats take charge of Kuwait beach cleanup



Bangladeshi expatriates in Kuwait organized a ‘Beach Clean Campaign’.

KUWAIT CITY, June 14: Under the motto “Our Beach, Our Responsibility,” a group of young Bangladeshi expatriates in Kuwait organized a ‘Beach Clean Campaign’ on the morning of Friday, June 13, at the Kuwait Towers Beach and Salmiya Marina Beach, with support from the Bangladesh Community Kuwait President Muradul Houque Choudury. Belal Hossain, Kamal Hossain, Abdul

Ha Tohidul Alam, Zakir Khan Sazzad Miyazi, Saiful Islam, Jalal Ahsan, Sobuz Mehed and several members of Bangladesh community attended the program.

During this cleanup effort, participants removed trash from various areas of the beach and aimed to educate fellow expatriates about properly disposing of waste and maintaining a clean environment.



College mental health shows nuanced shifts, not just crisis

The CONVERSATION is an independent and nonprofit source of news, analysis and commentary from academic experts.

By Jeffrey A. Hayes
Penn State

The word “crisis” is used frequently and, I would argue, inaccurately, to depict the psychological well-being of today’s college students.

It is true that college students’ mental health has deteriorated in many regards during the past two decades.

The Healthy Minds Study, which gathers national survey data on tens of thousands of students annually, has found that the percentage who considered suicide in the prior year rose

from 6% in 2007 to 13% in 2024. The percentage of students who made a specific suicide plan tripled during that period.

While some news reports portray the current state of student mental health as an unprecedented crisis, the full picture is more nuanced. As a psychologist who has been researching college student mental health for more than 20 years, as summarized in my recent book, “College Student Mental Health and Wellness: Coping on Campus,” I believe recent data suggests a turning of the tide.

The 2024 Health Minds Study found a slight decrease over the previous two years in the percentage of students contemplating suicide.

Data also reveals a similar decline in the percentage of students dealing with severe anxiety from 2022 to 2024.

The study marks the first time since data collection began on suicide or severe anxiety that there has been a two-year decrease in either area.

To be clear, there is reason for concern about the psychological well-being of college students.

Healthy Minds Study researchers found that in 2007, 9% of college students were taking psychotropic medication such as antidepressants. In 2024, that number had grown to 26%.

A 2024 national survey conducted by the American College Health Association found that more than a third of students received mental health care in the previous year.

The demand for psychological services at college and university counseling centers has outpaced growth in undergraduate enrollment more than fourfold.

From 2013 to 2021, suicidal thoughts, depression and anxiety worsened, particularly among Native American and Alaskan Native students and other students of color.

During that same time, there was a 13% increase in students who were at risk for developing an eating disorder.

Findings from another national dataset gathered by the Center for Collegiate Mental Health, an international network of more than 800 college and university counseling centers, indicate that from 2010 to 2024, depression symptoms increased 18% among students receiving psychological services, general anxiety symptoms rose more than 25%, and social anxiety symptoms climbed more than 30%.

In addition, students’ family-related distress steadily increased during the past decade. (AP)

Rap legend proves hip-hop storytelling still reigns

Slick Rick returns after 26 years with ‘Victory’ album

LOS ANGELES, June 14, (AP): Hip-hop legend Slick Rick is proving his creative spark is far from fading.

The English-born rapper - known for his signature eye patch and masterful storytelling - returned to the booth with his first new project in nearly three decades. He’s reminding the world of his timeless rap prowess on his visual album, “Victory,” released Friday.

It marks Slick Rick’s first album since 1999’s “The Art of Storytelling.” This new project is largely self-produced, with the rapper handling 95% of the production and sharing executive producer duties with Emmy-nominated actor and occasional rapper-DJ Idris Elba, who appears on the album alongside Nas, Giggs and Estelle.

“You was a young adult, then a middled aged man and now you’re an older man, so my mentality has to grow with it,” said Slick Rick, known for his rap classics such as “Children’s Story,” “La Di Da Di” with Doug E. Fresh and “Mona Lisa.” His debut album, “The Great Adventures of Slick Rick,” in 1988 hit No. 1 on the Billboard R&B/hip-hop charts.

“Victory” was four years in the making, with Slick Rick, now 60, writing and recording the album between his birthplace of London then France, while the visuals were filmed in the United States, United Kingdom and Africa.

Slick Rick believes his voice still resonates in hip-hop. He said the subjects he tackles have grown with him.

“Can’t always be children all the time,” he said. “We

grow and talk about things that interest us at this age.”

In a recent interview, Slick Rick spoke with The Associated Press about how storytelling plays a role in today’s rap, his relationship with Elba and how hip-hop has no limitations.

Remarks have been edited for clarity and brevity.

AP: How did you and Idris hook up?

Slick Rick: We met at a party and then we clicked. His people reached out to me, and they wanted to make an album. They flew me to England and France. I hung out with Idris at his cribs, and we just did what we do. We just had fun. And then when we was finished, we said, “Yeah, we’re ready to bring it to the marketplace.”

AP: Did you ever feel hesitant stepping back into the spotlight, or did this album feel like destiny?

Slick Rick: It might’ve been a little hesitation, but you’re just having fun. We just bringing it to the marketplace and see what happens. There’s no pressure or nothing. We’re bringing it to the people to see if they like it. Feed them.

AP: When did you feel like this project was ready for public consumption?

Slick Rick: When we were in the studio with Idris doing our thing, I checked the reactions of people. But then I saw people in their happy place. Once I saw that, I’m good. I see him and his people’s happy. A little dancing. Popped a little Moet. We were having a good time.

AP: You blended hip-hop melodies with various sounds including reggae and house music. What was

your vision behind this musical approach?

Slick Rick: It’s what Black people like. We’re not just hip-hop. We like reggae. We like house music. Let’s say like the Beatles or Barry Manilow. We go all over the place. Dionne Warwick, Diana Ross. We go places. We try to entertain ourselves in different areas of existence.

AP: What made you go the visual album route?

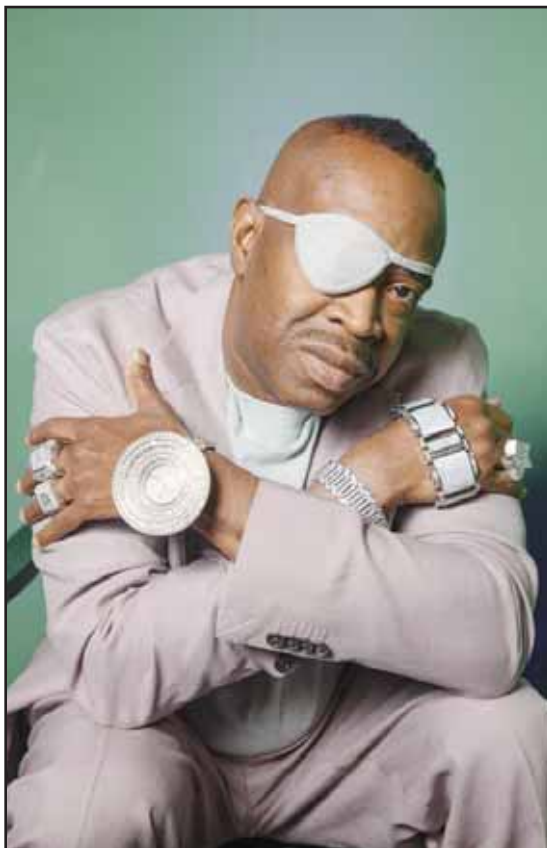
Slick Rick: It was saving time. People make songs and do videos anyway. So why not just speed this up real quick? Video and rap both at the same time. Boom, let’s keep it moving. ... This is like watching a movie. You want to expand the picture. Not only do you hear my voice and the music, which is the essence. You get ... visual picture as well.

AP: You produced the bulk of the album. Why did you decide to go that route instead of enlisting other producers?

Slick Rick: In my creative process, I need to have a lot of input or it’s not going to be authentic Rick. Too many hands, it’s not going to pop. So many hands is going to distort stuff. I do my own music most of the time.

AP: What’s the importance of rap storytelling in 2025?

Slick Rick: It’s an open space. It hasn’t been filled, the whole storytelling thing. Before it gets too lost back into braggadocios, one frequency. Expand your horizons. You don’t always have to be rough. Be romantic. Be humorous. Be vulnerable. Go all over. Be a politician. Use your imagination. Go places, so we can take stories and give to our people’s imagination.



Slick Rick poses for a portrait on Friday, June 13, 2025, in New York. (AP)

Obit

Cancer advocate

Ananda Lewis, MTV, BET host, dies at 52

LOS ANGELES, June 14, (AP): Ananda Lewis, the former MTV and BET host who became a beloved television personality in the 1990s with her warmth and authenticity, has died. She was 52.

Her sister, Lakshmi Emory, confirmed Lewis’ death in a Facebook post Wednesday. Lewis had been battling breast cancer.

“She’s free, and in His heavenly arms,” Emory wrote. “Lord, rest her soul.”

Lewis, a San Diego native, made a name for herself as a host on BET’s “Teen Summit,” which tackled issues facing Black youth and featured community leaders, entertainers and politicians. She landed big interviews with Kobe Bryant, Tupac Shakur and Louis Farrakhan and then-first lady Hillary Clinton, which earned her an NAACP Image Award.

After a few seasons, Lewis took her talents over to MTV in 1997. She was a host and veejay on “MTV Live,” “Hot Zone” and “Total Request Live,” a daily top 10 video countdown show.

Lewis told The Associated Press that she felt some backlash after moving from BET to MTV.

“I wouldn’t say in a strong way because I think most people who were in my fan base at ‘Teen Summit’ understand that growth is necessary,” she said. “One of the main things we dealt with on a consistent basis, like the underlying theme of all the shows is you’ve got to get out there and live your life. The bottom line is this is about you, so how do you want to grow and whom do you want to develop into? My justification is that I say to kids: ‘be your best and take advantage of every opportunity,’ so I couldn’t sit in a place of not taking advantage of an opportunity.”

In 2001, Lewis told the AP that she wasn’t trying to reinvent daytime talk with her new syndicated series, “The Ananda Lewis Show.”

“There’s only so much different you can do in daytime, which is what I’m learning. There’s a certain way, I guess, people are used to doing things and that way’s not going to change for a while,” she said. “I think there’s a formula, and some cases have proven that formula works. So the objective isn’t to reinvent the wheel but to make it spin a little more smoothly.”

Lewis’ show lasted only one season. But a few years later, she became a correspondent for “The Insider,” a spinoff of “Entertainment Tonight.”

Lewis was open about her cancer journey since she publicly shared her diagnosis in 2020. At that time, the disease was initially stage 3 before it advanced to stage 4 last year. She had been living with breast cancer for six years.

Lewis said doctors recommended a double mastectomy, but she opted for alternative methods. She eventually realized that was the wrong measure, becoming an advocate for being up-to-date with mammogram checkups.



Ananda Lewis arrives at the 5th Annual TV Guide Emmy Party in Los Angeles, Sunday, Sept. 16, 2007. (AP)

Music



Gracie Abrams performs during the 54th annual Songwriters Hall of Fame induction and awards gala on Thursday, June 12, at the Marriott Marquis Hotel in New York. (AP)



Mike Love, left, and John Stamos perform during the 54th annual Songwriters Hall of Fame induction and awards gala. (AP)



George Clinton performs during the 54th annual Songwriters Hall of Fame induction and awards gala. (AP)

Abrams wins Hal David Starlight Award

Love celebrates Wilson and Clinton shines at Songwriters Hall of Fame

NEW YORK, June 14, (AP): The Beach Boys’ Mike Love was inducted into the 2025 Songwriters Hall of Fame on Thursday night, just one day after it was announced that his inimitable bandmate Brian Wilson had died.

The actor - and lifelong Beach Boys fan - John Stamos introduced him. “There are songs that don’t just play on the radio,” Stamos said in his speech. “Mike Love is a songwriter’s songwriter.”

Stamos recalled asking Love, “Which songs did you write, again?” Love’s response: “I only wrote the hits.”

Love’s speech was filled with gratitude, with one of his greatest thanks reserved for “my cousin, Brian Wilson,” he said. “My first cousin by blood and my brother in music.”

Stamos then joined Love for a few Beach Boys’ classics: “California Girl,” “I Get Around,” “Kokomo,” and “Good Vibrations.”

It was a notable moment in an evening full of them: The funk rock group Living Colour opened the energetic gala with a cover of Funkadelic’s “Cosmic Slop” to honor new inductee George Clinton.

The annual event, held at the Marriott Marquis Hotel in New York City Thursday night, also featured inductees spanning genre, an inspiring mix of funk, rock, R&B, country and beyond: George Clinton, The Doobie Brothers, Ashley Gorley, Rodney “Darkchild” Jerkins and Tony Macaulay.

“What an incredible honor this is,” Clinton said in his speech. He talked about his

early days in the legendary Brill Building song factory, which he described like going “into Oz.” Being a songwriter, to him, required “consistent effort.”

He then jumped into a performance of his own: The Parliaments’ “(I Wanna) Testify.”

Country legend Garth Brooks introduced the Doobie Brothers with a raucous rendition of “Long Train Runnin’” into “China Grove.” When it was time for the inducted members - Tom Johnston, Michael McDonald and Patrick Simmons - to take the stage, they brought their rootsy rock ‘n’ roll, kicking off with “Black Water.”

Impression

Teddy Riley introduced the groundbreaking producer Rodney “Darkchild” Jerkins, whose touch is heard across countless R&B and pop hits. His speech included an animated impression of Clive Davis and a story about Jerkins’ father borrowing \$1,200 against his life insurance to get him an ‘80s sampler, the MPC3000, so he could follow his dreams.

“I didn’t grow up chasing fame,” he said. “I grew up chasing feeling ... Creativity has no limitations.”

His four children, R.J., Heavenly, Hannah Joy and Royal Jerkins, performed one of his best-known hits, Brandy and Monica’s “The Boy Is Mine.”

It was a night for families: Country songwriter superstar Ashley Gorley’s daughter also performed one of her dad’s originals, Trace Adkins’ “You’re Gonna Miss This.” Dan + Shay also performed a medley of Gorley’s hits in his honor, including Morgan Wallen’s “Last Night,” Carrie Underwood’s

“All-American Girl” and Post Malone and Wallen’s 2024 summertime smash “I Had Some Help.”

When Gorley took the stage for his speech, he said he felt like he was in a “fever dream” or that he has “crashed a royal wedding.”

Legendary English songwriter Tony Macaulay was also honored. He is best known for such classics as The Foundations’ “Baby Now That I’ve Found You” and “Build Me Up Buttercup,” the latter of which was performed for Macaulay by a spirited Debbie Gibson.

Musical theater composer Stephen Schwartz was the recipient of the esteemed Johnny Mercer Award; Kristin Chenoweth performed “For Good” from “Wicked” in his honor.

Gracie Abrams received the eminent Hal David Starlight Award.

Last year’s inductees included Steely Dan, R.E.M., Timbaland, Hillary Lindsey and Dean Pitchford. At the induction ceremony last summer, R.E.M. stunned attendees by reuniting for an acoustic version of their alt-rock hit, “Losing My Religion.”

The Songwriters Hall of Fame was established in 1969 to honor those creating popular music. A songwriter with a notable catalog of songs qualifies for induction 20 years after the first commercial release of a song. Some already in the hall include Gloria Estefan, Carole King, Paul Simon, Billy Joel, Jon Bon Jovi and Richie Sambora, Elton John and Bernie Taupin, Brian Wilson, James Taylor, Bruce Springsteen, Tom Petty, Lionel Richie, Bill Withers, Neil Diamond and Phil Collins.

Variety

SUNRISE, Fla.: There was bad blood at Game 4 of the Stanley Cup Final between the Edmonton Oilers and Florida Panthers.

Not just on the ice.

Pop superstar Taylor Swift and boyfriend Travis Kelce were among the celebrities that flocked to Amerant Bank Arena on Thursday to watch Game 4 of the final - with the “Bad Blood” singer seen holding hands with Kelce as they headed to their seats.

And they were in attendance for a thrilling game. Edmonton came from down three goals in the first period to win it 5-4 in overtime, tying the series 2-2.

Kelce, a Super Bowl-winning tight end for the Kansas City Chiefs, is a known hockey fan along with his brother Jason Kelce. And ever since Swift and Kelce began their high-profile romance in 2023, the 14-time Grammy Award winning singer has been known to pop in on big sporting events - including the last two Super Bowls - and cause an excited frenzy for fans.

There were rumblings ahead of Thursday’s game that the couple might attend the final, and the pair was shown on the television broadcast during the first period of the game. (AP)

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NEW YORK: Ye, the rapper formerly known as Kanye West, briefly showed up to the New York sex trafficking trial of Sean “Diddy” Combs on Friday to support the hip-hop mogul, a longtime friend. But he wasn’t allowed into the courtroom and left after briefly watching the trial on a video monitor in another room.

Ye, dressed in white, arrived at Manhattan federal court before noon while the trial was on a break and spent about 40 minutes in the building.

After emerging from an airport-style security screening, Ye was asked if he was at the courthouse to support Combs.

“Yes,” he responded with a nod. He then hustled to an elevator and did not respond when asked if he might testify on Combs’ behalf when the defense begins its presentation as early as next week.

Courthouse security did not take him to the 26th floor where the trial occurs in one of the building’s largest courtrooms. Admittance there is strictly controlled, with seats reserved for Combs’ family and legal team, the media and spectators who wait in line for hours to get a coveted seat. (AP)

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LONDON: Dua Lipa has confirmed her engagement to the English actor Callum Turner, months after speculation began.

She went on the record about the engagement in a cover story for British Vogue’s July issue, published Thursday, calling it “very exciting.” The 29-year-old said she was obsessed with the ring Turner had made for her.

“It’s so me. It’s nice to know the person that you’re going to spend the rest of your life with knows you very well,” she told the magazine.

Fans had theorized the ring Lipa began sporting in photos at the end of December signaled an engagement, but the pair did not publicly confirm the rumor for months, even after appearing together at last month’s Met Gala. Lipa says they haven’t set wedding plans yet - she’s still on tour and Turner is filming, “so we’re just enjoying this period,” she told British Vogue, adding that they try not to spend more than 2 ½ weeks apart. (AP)

□ □ □

PHILADELPHIA: And the Emmy goes to ... Philadelphia Phillies shortstop Trea Turner?

Turner already won an NL batting title and a World Series championship ring in his 11-year MLB career.

How about adding an Emmy Award to that trophy case?

“Trea Turner’s an Emmy winner, absolutely,” sports documentary producer Kyle Thrash said. “He definitely held it up like he owned it.”

Turner may not actually have the award in hand to keep for good, but he got to hoist the real deal ahead of Friday’s game against Toronto in a short celebration for the Emmy won for a best sports short documentary produced on the 2023 standing ovation credited with turning around his season.

“The Turnaround” won a sports Emmy in May and Thrash and Phillies fan Jon McCann - whose personal struggles with mental health and kinship with Turner were the heart of the film - attended the game to show off their new bling to Turner. (AP)

Local firms to add artisanal touches to high-profile celebration

Bezos, Sanchez to spotlight Venice’s heritage at their wedding

VENICE, Italy, June 14, (AP): Jeff Bezos and Lauren Sanchez have invited celebrity friends like fellow space traveler Katy Perry, Oprah Winfrey, Mick Jagger and Ivanka Trump for their Venice nuptials later this month, but the couple hopes to put a spotlight on Venice’s traditions during the celebrations.

They are sourcing some 80% of their wedding provisions from Venetian vendors, according to people close to the couple, as a way to share their appreciation for the romantic lagoon city. The wedding will take place over three days in late June, with events for the some 200 invited guests kept private.

Two historic Venetian companies will add artisanal touches to the celebration: Rosa Salva, the city’s oldest pastry maker that has been crafting donut-shaped fishermen’s biscuits since 1876, and Laguna B, a design studio known for its distinctive handblown Murano glass prized by fashion and design clients.

Antonio Rosa Salva, the 6th generation in his family to run the business, said the wedding order of a selection of surprises for goody bags was impor-



St. Mark’s Square, in Venice, Italy, Thursday, June 12, 2025. (AP)

tant recognition of his family’s long tradition of baking Venetian specialties dating back nearly 150 years.

They include the bussola buttery biscuit that was long a fisherman’s staple, and small zaletti cookies, made from the Veneto region’s corn meal, flavored with raisins and lemon zest.

“We try to maintain the old recipes,” said Rosa Salva, whose family business includes a catering service and four locations in Venice’s historic center and one on the mainland. “We do everything with love. It’s a pleasure and a privilege.”

Rosa Salva, whose business regu-

larly caters large events for 1,000 or more people in Venice, is perplexed by posters that have gone up around the historic center protesting the use of the city as a venue for the Bezos-Sanchez wedding.

“Events like this bring quality tourism to Venice,” he said. “I don’t see how an event with 200 people can create disruptions. It’s responsible tourism. It’s prestigious that a couple like this, who can go anywhere in the world, are getting married in the city.”

Laguna B was founded by Marie Brandolini, who became known as the glass countess, in 1994, and the company is now being guided by her son, Marcantonio Brandolini, from the family’s palazzo overlooking the Grand Canal.

The younger Brandolini said his vision is to restore the Venetian tradition of running creative enterprises out of Venice’s grand palazzi, which historically dedicated the ground floor to work spaces for the merchant nobility. His is a good example. The company employs 14 people under 30 out of offices in the courtyard and a boutique in an adja-

cent alleyway, in a sector, he underlined, “not related to tourism.”

His upstairs neighbors are Diane von Furstenberg and Barry Diller - close friends of Bezos and Sanchez, but he doesn’t think that is why the wedding planner picked his company, which is well known among a small network of collectors.

Laguna B won’t disclose what its master glassblowers on Murano have created for the wedding, but the company is known for distinctive glassware that at times feature an undulating lip - no two alike.

“I hope they like what we did for them,” Brandolini said. “For us, it’s a great opportunity, it gives extra support for our growth.”

While the business thrives on such important orders, Brandolini said he is equally gratified by young, discerning customers who seek out the shop because they admire Laguna B’s commitment to community building, reviving Venice’s artisanal heritage and projects to help protect the fragile lagoon. They might buy just a single drinking glass.

His is a message of inclusivity, which he also applies to the Bezos-

Sanchez choice of wedding venue. “The world is for everybody. Whoever wants to do something, should be able to do it, following the law,” he said.

Unsurprisingly in a city whose future is fiercely debated at every turn, the wedding has attracted the attention of protesters, who on Thursday hung a banner on St. Mark’s bell tower with Bezos’ name crossed out. They cite the risk of disruptions in a city so overrun with mass tourism that officials are for a second year requiring day-trippers to pay a tax to enter on key summer days.

City officials have pledged that services will function normally during the wedding, and issued a denial in late March to reports that the wedding organizers had booked half the city’s water taxis and blocked out rooms at luxury hotels.

“We are very proud,” Mayor Luigi Brugnaro told The Associated Press this week in St. Mark’s Square, saying he hoped he would get the chance to meet Bezos. “I don’t know if I will have time, or if he will, to meet and shake hands, but it’s an honor that they chose Venice. Venice once again reveals itself to be a global stage.”

Music



Pitbull performs in concert on Monday, June 9, in London. (AP)

Singer on life, music, and his fans’ devotion

I’m here to make fans happy: Pitbull

LONDON, June 14, (AP): Is Pitbull the penguin of music?

It’s been said that it’s hard to look at a penguin and feel sad. And likewise, it’s tough to listen to one of Mr. Worldwide’s party anthems and feel bad.

That’s always been his aim.

“They’re there for when you’re feeling a certain way in life,” Pitbull explains. “It can help pick you up or it can take you to the next level.”

“When I’m making those records, that what it’s about,” he distills. “I make sure that the beats are something that I know people could dance to. I know that it’s not complicated.”

His party vibe has been well and truly adopted by audiences, well, worldwide who dress up like Pitbull, wearing bald caps, suits and sunglasses. And like him, they have a drink or two.

“If they come to the show, having a, how can I say, already feeling good, then it’s my job to make them feel better,” he says.

The day after Monday’s “Party After Dark” concert at the O2 Arena in London, Pitbull sat down with The Associated Press to discuss what it’s like to stand onstage and see a crowd of look-alikes staring back. This conversation has been edited for clarity and brevity.

AP: How do you feel now, because that show is very high energy?

Pitbull: Look, to be able to be over here in London and get that kind of love and that kind of energy and being in the game for 25 years, it is - now I’m going to tell you how I really feel - phenomenal, spectacular, amazing, extra, how is it? Supercalifragilisticexpialidocious. Just don’t ask me to spell it, but everything feels good.

AP: And where do you get your stamina and energy from? Because you’re jumping so much.

Pitbull: The music gets me going and when I’m making those records we are making those records in a way where we program those parts in, in the song and in the shows so we know we’re going to jump. We know where they’re going to scream. We know what the chants are going to be at. We know when they’re going to dance. So I look forward to perform it. And just think of it like me going crazy in my own club on stage.

AP: And then do you need to lie down or sit in an ice bath or something like that?

Pitbull: No, nothing like that. I do actually need to decompress. It takes me about an hour and a half after the show to just come down from that amazing high, let’s just say.

AP: On the tube home, everyone’s taken their bald caps off, and they’re all just flaked out. It’s



Fans gather in front of the O2 Arena prior to a performance by Pitbull on Monday, June 9, in London. (AP)

like they’ve had the time of their life and now they’ve got to get home.

Pitbull: (Laughs) That’s what it’s about. You get them up there and make sure that they, like I always say, get off the chain, off the glass, off the flip, off the rip, and bottom line, have a good time. So we wear them out, we did our job.

AP: When did you first notice fans were dressing up as you?

Pitbull: I want to say that started around 2021 when we came out of the, you know, when the world came out the shutdown. That was the tour, it was called “I Feel Good.” And you started to see it, I want to say maybe out of 20,000 people coming to the show, 30,000 coming to show, you’ll see a thousand. But then when we came over, we jumped the pond and we ended up in London and it was just something else. It was definitely a whole new movement, took it to a whole new level and it’s flattering.

AP: Can you remember when you looked out and noticed that they were all wearing the caps?

Pitbull: If they only knew, as much as they are fans of mine, I am fans of them. So when I watch the fans on the way to the show, I see them all. I see them all walking down the block. I see all playing certain songs, just having a great time getting each other, what we call, boost up, ready for the concert...

It touches my heart because who would have known, you know, somebody from Miami and all the things that I’ve been through in life, and that’s why I would say from a negative to a positive, to have people out here feeling that good dressed up as me - man, unbelievable.

AP: You seem to take moments on the stage as

well to appreciate it. Is that important for you?

Pitbull: I appreciate the opportunity. I appreciate the love, I appreciate the support. I just don’t say it, I live it. It’s the truth, it’s real. And to be able to feel that on stage, I want them to feel what I feel. Because not only that, I want them know that I appreciate that love that they’re giving me and they can relate and when they leave there, they’re not only fans but they’re connected at another level.

They sent me a picture of a woman that was pregnant and had the globe around her belly and it said, “Baby Worldwide.” When you see those kinds of things, it’s a blessing, like I said before, and if she happens to be watching this, I want to say congratulations and thank you, because that was a priceless picture.

AP: Did you notice that it’s more women dressed up than men?

Pitbull: Yes, yes, yes. Well, you know, I was raised by a single mother. A woman made me a man. The most powerful people in my life have been women...

And so to have more women in the crowd, it just goes to show you that they are feeling what the most powerful women in my life has taught me on stage, which is a gentleman that knows how to have a good time. Sometimes a little naughty, sometimes a little nice, but more than anything, a good person that will do the right thing to the best of my ability. Perfect - I’m not, angel - I am not, but definitely here and move the way that I do due to the powerful women in my life that raised me.

AP: Would you ever dress up for a concert of somebody else?

Pitbull: I definitely would, but it would be artists from back in the day. I love to have fun, I love to enjoy, and I love to make fun of myself, to be honest with you. I think one of the most beautiful things a human being can have is a sense of humor and not take themselves too seriously. But if back in a day I could go to, I don’t know, a Prince concert, or I mean, I love Earth, Wind, and Fire. Jimmy Buffett was a good friend, may he rest in paradise.

AP: At the moment it seems to be that people go to Beyoncé dressed as a cowboy, Taylor Swift obviously had lots of dressed up people going to hers. Tyler, The Creator has everyone wearing green and then everyone comes to you in costumes.

Pitbull: Well, it’s an honor to be able to be mentioned with those kind of names that have worked very hard to be able to be where they’re at and to be able to have the fans that are, let’s just say, relating at a whole ‘nother level.

AI training data expands

Old library ‘stacks’ fuel next wave of AI growth

CAMBRIDGE, Mass., June 14, (AP): Everything ever said on the internet was just the start of teaching artificial intelligence about humanity. Tech companies are now tapping into an older repository of knowledge: the library stacks.

Nearly one million books published as early as the 15th century - and in 254 languages - are part of a Harvard University collection being released to AI researchers Thursday. Also coming soon are troves of old newspapers and government documents held by Boston’s public library.

Cracking open the vaults to centuries-old tomes could be a data bonanza for tech companies battling lawsuits from living novelists, visual artists and others whose creative works have been scooped up without their consent to train AI chatbots.

“It is a prudent decision to start with public domain data because that’s less controversial right now than content that’s still under copyright,” said Burton Davis, a deputy general counsel at Microsoft.

Davis said libraries also hold “significant amounts of interesting cultural, historical and language data” that’s missing from the past few decades of online commentary that AI chatbots have mostly learned from.

Collections

Supported by “unrestricted gifts” from Microsoft and ChatGPT maker OpenAI, the Harvard-based Institutional Data Initiative is working with libraries around the world on how to make their historic collections AI-ready in a way that also benefits libraries and the communities they serve.

“We’re trying to move some of the power from this current AI moment back to these institutions,” said Aristana Scourtas, who manages research at Harvard Law School’s Library Innovation Lab. “Librarians have always been the stewards of data and the stewards of information.”

Harvard’s newly released dataset, Institutional Books 1.0, contains more than 394 million scanned pages of paper. One of the earlier works is from the 1400s - a Korean painter’s

handwritten thoughts about cultivating flowers and trees. The largest concentration of works is from the 19th century, on subjects such as literature, philosophy, law and agriculture, all of it meticulously preserved and organized by generations of librarians.

It promises to be a boon for AI developers trying to improve the accuracy and reliability of their systems.

“A lot of the data that’s been used in AI training has not come from original sources,” said the data initiative’s executive director, Greg Leppert, who is also chief technologist at Harvard’s Berkman Klein Center for Internet & Society. This book collection goes “all the way back to the physical copy that was scanned by the institutions that actually collected those items,” he said.

Pirated

Before ChatGPT sparked a commercial AI frenzy, most AI researchers didn’t think much about the provenance of the passages of text they pulled from Wikipedia, from social media forums like Reddit and sometimes from deep repositories of pirated books. They just needed lots of what computer scientists call tokens - units of data, each of which can represent a piece of a word.

Harvard’s new AI training collection has an estimated 242 billion tokens, an amount that’s hard for humans to fathom but it’s still just a drop of what’s being fed into the most advanced AI systems. Facebook parent company Meta, for instance, has said the latest version of its AI large language model was trained on more than 30 trillion tokens pulled from text, images and videos.

Meta is also battling a lawsuit from comedian Sarah Silverman and other published authors who accuse the company of stealing their books from “shadow libraries” of pirated works.

Now, with some reservations, the real libraries are standing up.

OpenAI, which is also fighting a string of copyright lawsuits, donated \$50 million this year to a group of research institutions including Oxford University’s 400-year-old Bodleian Library, which is digitizing rare texts and using AI to help transcribe them.



Greg Leppert, executive director at the Institutional Data Initiative, poses at Langdell Hall, which houses the Harvard Law School library, Feb. 26, 2025, in Cambridge, Mass. (AP)

Variety

LONDON: Arise Sir David, Sir Gary and Sir Roger. And Dame Elaine, Dame Pat and Dame Penny.

Former England soccer captain David Beckham, Oscar-winning actor Gary Oldman and The Who’s frontman Roger Daltrey were knighted in King Charles III’s birthday honors list released late Friday.

Elaine Paige, the renowned musicals singer, Booker Prize-winning novelist Pat Barker and former Conservative government minister Penny Mordaunt were given damehoods, the female equivalent of a knighthood.

The honors, which aim to reward individuals for their contributions to British life, are awarded twice a



Paige

year to celebrities and public figures as well as ordinary people: Once at New Year’s, and then in June to mark the king’s birthday.

The winners are chosen by civil servants’ committees based on nominations from the government and the public. The awards are usually given out by the king or a senior royal acting in his place at Buckingham Palace.

Beckham, 50, was widely expected to be knighted following speculation last week that appeared to be based on a conversation he had with the monarch at the Chelsea Flower Show last month. As well as representing England 115 times, including 59 times as captain, Beckham played for some of Europe’s most venerable clubs, most notably Manchester United and Real Madrid.

He has been knighted for his services to sport and to charity, having partnered with UNICEF, the UN’s children’s fund, for two decades and campaigned with a charity working to eradicate malaria. Beckham also played a pivotal role in London being awarded the 2012 Summer Olympic Games. (AP)

Study links adolescent tobacco use to emotional health struggles

Teens who vape or smoke see coping benefits over risks

By Adriana Espinosa and Lesia M. Ruglass
City College of New York

The Conversation is an independent and nonprofit source of news, analysis and commentary from academic experts.

Tobacco use in a variety of forms is common in adolescent life today, with over 2.25 million youth using. Huge progress has been made over the past few decades in reducing cigarette use among young people. But tobacco use - primarily through e-cigarettes, also known as vapes - remains a complex problem for public health and policy. In 2024, just over 8% of US middle and high school students reported having used a tobacco product. Among tobacco users, nearly 6% used e-cigarettes, more than a quarter of whom used an e-cigarette product daily. We are behavioral health researchers. Our team’s ongoing research examines the factors associated with adolescent tobacco product use in the US. According to our research, many adolescents who smoke and use vapes are aware of the health risks associated with tobacco use, which demonstrates http://192.168.221.4/newspress/backup/files/images/2025/06/14/1067850.jpg?tmp=1749908476 the effectiveness of public health education campaigns. But our research has also found that some adolescents also view tobacco use as helpful in relieving emotional distress. These perceived benefits increase the likelihood of initiating



In this Jan. 31, 2020 photo, a woman holds a flavored disposable vape device in New York. (AP)

and continuing tobacco use. When combined with factors such as easy access to tobacco products or living with someone who uses them, the risk of adolescent use more than doubles, which sets the stage for harmful physical and mental health effects. As a mother of a teenager, one of us, Adriana, has experienced this firsthand. For months, my 14-year-old son was vaping in his room, and I had no idea. When he finally told me that he turned to vaping whenever he felt upset, it was like coming face-to-face with the very issues we study.

This scenario illustrates both the compelling reasons why adolescents may use tobacco and nicotine products and the reality that many parents don’t realize their kids are smoking or vaping. Since 2022, our team has been examining the factors associated with tobacco use among more than 8,000 adolescents ages 12 to 17 from the Population Assessment of Tobacco and Health, or PATH, study - the largest multiyear, nationally representative study of tobacco use in the US. We looked at the use of cigarettes, electronic products, traditional or filtered cigars, cigarillos, pipes, hookahs, smokeless or dissolvable tobacco and more. We found that emotional distress, along with the belief that tobacco products help manage negative emotions, are significant factors driving adolescent tobacco use. This highlights the complexity of the issue - that even when teens recognize the health risks of tobacco use, vaping and other forms of tobacco use may function as a coping strategy, albeit an unhealthy one, for the wide range of emotional challenges that come with adolescence. Research has shown that adolescents may perceive e-cigarettes as a more appealing and less harmful alternative to traditional cigarettes. The availability of flavored options further increases the appeal of these products and can contribute to the progression from occasional to regular use and ultimately the development of nicotine dependence. A growing body of research continues to reveal the harmful effects of tobacco use, including vaping, on developing brains and lungs. Exposure to nicotine during adolescence

can interfere with brain development, impair attention and learning, and increase the risk of use and dependence on other substances later in life. What makes vaping especially difficult to manage is its stealth. Unlike combustible products, many vaping devices are small, odorless and very easy to conceal. As a result, parents, teachers and school administrators are struggling to detect and curb vaping among teens. In our view, policy efforts that focus primarily on raising awareness about health risks, restricting access to tobacco products or reducing the appeal of e-cigarettes or vapes will reach only a subset of youth who use them, and not those who may use for emotional reasons. And while such bans may limit access to tobacco products in formal settings, the availability of these products from friends and social networks, online platforms or unregulated markets will not likely be reduced solely through that type of health messaging. As our findings show, these efforts may miss a stronger, even more enduring driver of youth tobacco use: the pervasive belief that tobacco use helps manage stress, anger and other difficult emotions. Our research highlights that emotional distress and the perception that tobacco use can help them cope with stress are central to why many adolescents begin and continue using these products, even when they are aware of the health risks. In this context, simply limiting access to tobacco products or repeating well-known health warnings will do little to address the underlying emotional motivations to use. (AP)

Thankfulness trains brain to see the positive

How expressing gratitude can transform your work and life

NEW YORK, June 14, (AP): The first thing Alison C. Jones does when she wakes up is to name three things she’s grateful for. It can be as simple as the breeze from a fan or as meaningful as the way a friend showed up for her emotionally. Jones, an organizational development consultant, said the daily practice has helped her through hardships and the anxiety and vulnerability of starting her own business as a single mom. “When you practice gratitude, you train your brain to always look for the positive in anything. It just completely shifts everything you’re going through,” she said. “You start to see the lessons in the pain. You start to see the beauty in the very difficult times because you realize, ‘Hey, I’m growing stronger.’” Practicing and encouraging gratitude can be a simple way to boost morale at a time when layoffs and economic uncertainty are causing stress and anxiety. Some employers have found that workers who receive expressions of gratitude show more engagement and willingness to help others. Other proponents say expressing and receiving appreciation can help reduce stress, as well as improve a person’s mood and outlook. But despite its benefits, promoting gratefulness is often overlooked as a valuable way to spend time and resources in the workplace. Experts in organizational change shared ways to incorporate more gratitude into the workplace. If you’re new to practicing gratitude, you can start at home with a routine such as Jones’ custom of expressing gratitude before getting out of bed. She made her gratitude practice easy so it would become a sustainable habit. Her one rule is avoiding repetition and stretching her mind to find new things to be grateful for each day.

Recommendations

Jones also recommends finding a “gratitude buddy” to share with. A buddy may be a friend from work or your social circles, and ideas can be exchanged in person, by text or email, or during a phone call. Many people find it helpful to list what they’re grateful for in a journal. At work, a team leader can begin a staff meeting by expressing gratitude for what went well in the last week, suggested Peter Bonanno, a consultant who helps companies design mindfulness-based programs. As humans, we often have a bias toward negativity, but gratitude “just does an enormous amount to shift people’s mindsets and the way they engage with each other,” he said. “Gratitude is especially powerful in that way. It doesn’t take a long time for people to notice an impact.” O.C. Tanner Institute, a software and service company, helps organizations find effective ways to show appreciation to their employees, such as managers giving handwritten notes of thanks. The company helped

American Airlines develop a system for managers and colleagues to recognize good work with points that can be applied to a catalog order. It also helped Amway create gift boxes to celebrate workers’ accomplishments and important personal milestones, such as buying a home or adopting a child. “Recognition impacts so many facets of the employee experience. And when you do it well, it connects people back to a deep sense of purpose and meaning,” said Meghan Stettler, a director at O.C. Tanner. Some companies donate their own products to thank nurses, doctors, police officers, firefighters and other workers who serve their communities. Frontline Builders, a nonprofit organization launched during the pandemic, connects donors of snacks, drinks and personal care items with recipients.

Recognitions

“We’ve all worked in that job where we weren’t shown gratitude and realized how much that stinks,” said Jason Lalak, partnership director at Frontline Builders. “Showing someone gratitude or showing appreciation doesn’t really cost anything, and shouldn’t be that difficult of a thing, and yet it’s rarer than it should be.” Registered nurse Denise Wittsell remembers how quiet the hospital where she works became during the pandemic. The hallways of Denver Health, typically busy with families and guests, were suddenly empty as visits from outsiders were curtailed and patients battled illnesses alone. Once in a while, someone from the community would deliver gifts of gratitude: tasty snacks or handmade cards from schoolchildren. “Those spontaneous recognitions were really sweet,” Wittsell said. “It just felt really kind, and it felt like there was a lot of wrapping around us, a very supportive feeling.” Wittsell is part of a team of volunteers at Denver Health’s RESTORE program, which connects front-line hospital workers with trained peer responders for confidential emotional support. The hospital started the program as a way to improve and sustain the emotional well-being of its workforce, said Tia Henry, the program’s director. Volunteers take shifts so someone is available around-the-clock to answer calls from hospital personnel who are struggling with stressful events such as losing a patient or witnessing violence. Volunteers and staff regularly express gratitude for the program, Henry said. “I’ve had calls on my way to work: ‘I’m having a hard time and I need to talk with somebody who gets it,’” Wittsell said. “It’s a good way to give back to the people that I work with.” Aside from peer support, RESTORE also provides training and education to employees about stress, burnout and techniques to deescalate violence, Henry said.

Cholera outbreak claimed 239 lives

WHO launches cholera vaccination campaign targeting 2.6m in Sudan

GENEVA, June 14, (Agencies): Director-General of the World Health Organization Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus announced that an emergency oral cholera vaccination campaign has been launched in Sudan’s (Khartoum State) aiming to protect more than 2.6 million additional people. The 10-day campaign is being jointly supported by WHO and the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) to help contain the rapid spread of cholera in the region, he wrote on his X account on Thursday. In a separate statement WHO confirmed that the campaign began on June 10 and is being implemented in five of (Khartoum State’s) worst affected localities (Jebel Awalia) (Sharg Elneel) (Omdurman) (Karrari) and (Umbada) using both mobile and fixed vaccination teams.



A health volunteer administers cholera vaccine to a woman during a vaccination campaign in Omdurman city, north of Khartoum, Sudan, on June 11. (Xinhua)

The campaign targets all residents aged one year and older aiming to interrupt transmission and reduce the impact of an outbreak that has already resulted in 239 deaths and over 16,000 reported cases in seven localities of Khartoum State since May 2025. According to WHO figures Sudan has been facing a cholera outbreak since July 2024 which has now spread to 92 localities across 13 of the country’s 18 states infecting more than 74,000 people and causing 1,826

deaths. WHO warned of the risk of cross-border spread due to population movement and displacement underscoring the need for strengthened regional cooperation in response efforts. WHO noted that the ongoing conflict which began in April 2023 has led to a collapse of health infrastructure disrupted surveillance systems and limited access to clean water and sanitation factors that have significantly

contributed to the outbreak’s spread. In addition to vaccination WHO emphasized the importance of a comprehensive response including case management water and sanitation services risk communication and community engagement. WHO reaffirmed its commitment to staying and delivering life-saving assistance to Sudan’s most vulnerable communities despite the challenges posed by the conflict.

Bipolar disorder and kidney disease concerns

Bitterness sensitivity tied to health risks

SYDNEY, June 14, (Xinhua): A gene that makes people especially sensitive to bitter tastes has been linked to a higher risk of bipolar disorder, a mental illness causing severe mood swings and chronic kidney disease, according to Australian researchers. The University of Queensland (UQ) said in a news release on Thursday that the new research focused on the TAS2R38 gene, which determines how strongly people perceive bitterness in foods like broccoli and Brussels sprouts, said a release from the university. About 70 percent of people carry at least one copy of this gene, with those inheriting two copies experiencing the most intense bitterness, it said, adding the “supertaster gene” is believed to have evolved to help early humans avoid poisonous plants by detecting bitterness. Researchers analyzed data

from nearly half a million participants in the UK Biobank, a large-scale biomedical database and research resource, examining both dietary preferences and health outcomes. They found that people with the TAS2R38 gene variant tend to avoid bitter foods such as horseradish, grapefruit, and alcohol, but prefer milder options like cucumber and melon, and, despite using less added salt, actually consume more salt overall, a factor that may impact kidney health, said the study’s lead researcher Daniel Hwang from UQ’s Institute for Molecular Bioscience. The study, published in the European Journal of Nutrition, identified a genetic link between the TAS2R38 variant and increased odds of developing bipolar disorder, a condition marked by dramatic shifts between high and low moods.

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Chiefs reach 3rd consecutive Super Rugby final

Hamilton-based team sets up Crusaders clash

HAMILTON, New Zealand, June 14, (AP): The Hamilton-based Chiefs will travel to Christchurch to play the Crusaders in next weekend’s Super Rugby final after beating the ACT Brumbies 37-17 on Saturday to reach the title match for the third-straight year.

Winger Emoni Narawa scored two tries for the Chiefs, and Corey Toole scored a double for the Brumbies as each side scored three tries.

Chiefs flyhalf Damian McKenzie separated the teams, kicking six penalties and two conversions for 22 points to surpass 200 points for the season.

Fullback Josh Jacomb scored the Chiefs’ third try in the 64th minute to establish a 20-point margin, and McKenzie’s try-saving tackle on Tom Wright two minutes later snuffed out a potential Brumbies rally.

“The Brumbies came out of the blocks fast as we knew they would, and I just love the way we were really composed and stuck to our game,” McKenzie



Las Vegas Aces center Kiah Stokes (41) and Dallas Wings center Luisa Geiselsoder (18) fight for a rebound during the first half of a WNBA basketball game in Las Vegas. (AP)

Atlanta overcomes Chicago

Young, Loyd ignite late surge as Aces edge Wings in thriller

LAS VEGAS, June 14, (AP): Jackie Young scored 28 points, including 8-for-8 shooting on free throws in a game-closing 17-2 run, to lead the Las Vegas Aces to an 88-84 win over the Dallas on Friday night to hand the struggling Wings their seventh straight loss.

Jewell Loyd added 21 points, including the go-ahead 3-pointer with 28.3 seconds left, and Chelsea Gray had 13 for the Aces (5-4), who were without MVP A’ja Wilson. Wilson, who averages 20.9 points and 9.5 rebounds, was hit in the head on Wednesday and is in concussion protocol.

Arike Ogunbowale scored 26 points and Paige Bueckers had her second straight game after missing four, scoring 16 points for the Wings (1-11). Dijonai Carrington added 15 points and Luisa Geiselsoder had 13.

Geiselsoder’s basket made it 82-71 with 3:55 to play but Dallas didn’t score again until Bueckers made two free throws with 8.1 seconds left pulled the Wings to 86-84. Young made two free throws to seal the win.

Las Vegas scored 10 straight points from the foul line, using four turnovers and four offensive rebounds to set up the free throws. After Bueckers missed with a minute to go, Gray rebounded her own miss and found Loyd in the left corner.

The Wings used an 18-0 run to open the third quarter to turn a nine-point halftime deficit into a 58-49 lead. Las Vegas cut the gap to 70-64 after three quarters but had 10 turno-

vers Dallas turned into 14 points.

The Aces were 26 of 28 from the foul line to 10 of 11 for Dallas.

Rhyné Howard made a career-high nine 3-pointers and finished with a season-high 36 points. Brittney Griner moved into second place on the WNBA career blocks list, and the Atlanta Dream beat the Chicago Sky 88-70 on Friday night.

Howard broke the franchise record for 3-pointers in a game, topping Renee Montgomery’s eight in 2018.

Griner blocked a shot by Elizabeth Williams late in the third quarter to move into a tie with Lisa Leslie (822). Griner added another in the fourth to sit alone in second, trailing Margo Dydek’s record 877.

Howard, who was scoreless in the first quarter, had 11 points in the third quarter to help Atlanta take a 58-54 lead. She ended the third with a jumper from the free-throw line and began the fourth with a 3-pointer for a seven-point lead. Howard added another 3-pointer with 8:18 remaining for the first double-digit lead of the game at 66-56.

Howard also scored 11 points during Atlanta’s 18-3 run in the fourth to take a 79-59 lead.

Allisha Gray had 15 points, seven rebounds and five assists for Atlanta (7-3). Brionna Jones added 13 points and 11 rebounds, and Jordyn Canada scored 12 to go with eight assists.

Kamilla Cardoso led Chicago (2-7) with 15 points and nine rebounds. Angel Reese added 12 points and nine boards, and Ariel Atkins also scored 12.

Best of the Rest

Brighton signs Kostoulas: Brighton has signed teenage forward Charalampos Kostoulas, who gave up a Champions League season with Olympiakos to play in the Premier League.

The 18-year-old Kostoulas signed a five-year contract, Brighton said, with the transfer fee reportedly set at an initial 35 million euros (\$40.4 million).

“It is a dream for everybody to come here and play football,” the Greece Under-21 striker said in an interview published Friday by Brighton.

He scored seven goals in 22 games in the Greek league as Olympiakos won a record-extending 48th title and completed a trophy double in the domestic cup.

Olympiakos was elevated directly into the lucrative Champions League opening phase - because title-holder Paris Saint-Germain already secured a place by winning the French league - and will play eight games in the single-standings league.

Brighton finished eighth in the Premier League and did not qualify for European soccer.

Kostoulas was the central striker in Olympiakos’ Under-19 team that won the 2024 UEFA Youth League, one month before the senior team won the Conference League. (AP)

West Ham payment held up: Millions of dollars due to soccer club CSKA Moscow from West Ham will stay unpaid while financial sanctions are imposed by the British government during the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

CSKA said on Friday it could file an appeal with Switzerland’s supreme court in the three-year financial dispute over the 26.7 million euros (\$30.8 million) transfer deal for Croatia midfielder Nikola Vlašić.

A Court of Arbitration for Sport ruling in the case, further stalling payments owed by West Ham, is “essentially an indefinite deferment plan for the English club,” CSKA Moscow said in a statement.

West Ham must pay the outstanding money only when it can get a license from the British government or the sanctions regime is amended, the CAS judges ruled. They also overturned a FIFA order that West Ham should be liable for 5% interest since 2022 on the money.

West Ham appealed to CAS challenging a FIFA order in 2023 to pay CSKA a second contracted part of the transfer fee or face a ban on registering newly signed players.

The Premier League club signed Vlašić in 2021 and a second payment of 8.55 million euros (\$9.9 million) was due in July 2022.

That was five months after Russia’s full invasion of Ukraine led the British government to impose financial sanctions including against CSKA’s then-owner, the VEB bank, and the club’s account holder.

West Ham has argued since 2022 it was “faced with the impossibility” of sending money to Russia without committing a crime. (AP)

said. “We put the ball in front of our forwards, and our set piece was great tonight.”

The Brumbies were Australia’s last hope in the playoffs as they attempted to win the Super Rugby title for the first time since 2004. Their defeat means Australian teams are now 0-21 in Super Rugby matches in New Zealand.

The Brumbies suffered a major blow when Wallabies fly-half Noah Lolesio failed a head injury assessment in the 11th minute. The kicking game was integral to the Brumbies’ plan, and while they used it to keep pressure on the Chiefs and to gain field position, Lolesio’s early departure was a turning point.

The Brumbies had the Chiefs under defensive pressure for long periods in both halves but while hooker Billy Pollard opened the scoring with a try from a lineout drive in the 15th minute the Chiefs were later able to neutralize that threat.

Pollard’s early try followed his double in the Brumbies’ quarterfinal win over the Wellington-based Hurricanes. He finishes with 11 tries for the season,

as does Toole, who scored his tries on either side of halftime.

Narawa scored his first try in the 20th minute, picking the ball up from the base of an attacking ruck and scything through the Brumbies’ defense.

Toole scored off a precise cross-kick from replacement fly-half Jack De-breczeni, who previously played for the Chiefs. But penalties to McKenzie gave the Chiefs a 19-12 lead at halftime.

Toole scored three minutes after the restart after a lone dash down the left-wing touch. The Brumbies were right in the match at that point, trailing 19-17.

But Narawa scored his second four minutes later to begin a run of 18 unanswered points by the Chiefs.

The Chiefs will now attempt to go one step further after losing in the final to the Crusaders and the Blues in each of the last two years. They will try to win their third Super Rugby title and first since 2013 in Christchurch next Saturday, a feat the Crusaders are seeking to achieve for their 13th championship.

‘We have a 10% chance of winning this tournament’

Palmeiras faces tough road in quest for maiden FIFA Club World Cup title

SAO PAULO, June 14, (AP): Brazil will have four teams, more than any other country, in the expanded Club World Cup kicking off this weekend in the United States. But for Palmeiras, the competition holds a special meaning: winning it would provide some redemption.

Under coach Abel Ferreira since 2020, Palmeiras lifted two Copa Libertadores titles, plus Brazilian league, cup, and state championships. Even before Ferreira, it boasted another South American crown and 11 league titles.

The only major trophy missing is a world champions’ title.

Other Brazilian clubs like Fluminense and Botafogo, also in the tournament, have never won it either. But the problem for Palmeiras and its 16 million fans stems from its three local rivals, Corinthians, Sao Paulo, and Santos, having all won it at least twice.

That has led to over two decades of memes, jokes, and insults. It could all come back for the third time in five years for Palmeiras.

“It’s true that we have a 10% chance of winning this tournament,” Ferreira said in early May. “So we’ll fight for these 10% starting with our first goal, getting through the group stage. We deserve to be there.”

Palmeiras qualified as 2021 Copa Libertadores winners. Its group stage rivals are Portugal’s Porto, Egypt’s Al Ahly, and Lionel Messi’s Inter Miami.

Fans like Matheus Flor sees a better chance of “ending the world title curse” later this year in the FIFA Intercontinental Cup, a shorter format with fewer teams, if Palmeiras wins its fourth Copa Libertadores title.



In this file photo, players of Brazil’s Palmeiras pose for a team photo before a Copa Libertadores Group G soccer match against Paraguay’s Cerro Porteno at La Nueva Olla stadium in Asuncion, Paraguay. (AP)

“The shortened version is more feasible; playing a European team just once in a final gives us more hope,” Flor said. “I’d spend money to go to Dubai, Tokyo, wherever, if I saw a chance of winning. This time, I think we’re not too excited because we know the joke will likely continue.”

Key Palmeiras players, like 18-year-old winger Estêvão, midfielder Raphael Veiga, and defender Gustavo Gómez, might not remain after the tournament.

Palmeiras has had three earlier shots at a world title. In 1999, they lost the Intercontinental Cup 1-0

to Manchester United. Twenty-two years later, they suffered a 1-0 semifinal defeat to Mexico’s Tigres in the Club World Cup, finishing fourth. A year later, more heart-break came with a 2-1 extra time loss to Chelsea.

Many Palmeiras fans cling to the 1951 Copa Rio title as world champion status, though FIFA doesn’t officially equate it with the Intercontinental Cup and modern Club World Cup. That tournament saw Palmeiras beat Juventus 3-2 on aggregate.

Palmeiras finished the current Copa Libertadores group stage with

Derek acknowledges comments were ill-advised

FIA suspends steward over Verstappen penalty comments

MONTREAL, June 14, (AP): Formula 1’s governing body has suspended a driver steward for this weekend’s Canadian Grand Prix over comments he made regarding a penalty Max Verstappen received two weeks ago.

The FIA said Friday that Derek Warwick’s comments were not authorized and he will be replaced by Enrique Bernoldi, who will officiate from the Remote Operations Centre in Geneva for the remainder of the weekend.

“After discussion, Derek acknowledges that his comments were ill-advised in his role as an FIA steward and has apologized,” the FIA said in a statement. “Derek will resume his duties as a steward in the forthcoming Austrian Grand Prix.”

Verstappen received a three-point penalty for running George Russell off track at the Spanish Grand Prix. The penalty put the four-time reigning F1 champion just one point away from an automatic one-race suspension.

Warwick did an interview with a gambling publication in which he defended the penalty levied to Verstappen as the “perfect” punish-



Red Bull Racing driver Max Verstappen, of the Netherlands, drives during the first practice session at the F1 Canadian Grand Prix auto race in Montreal. (AP)

ment because the Dutchman was “absolutely wrong” in the contact with Russell.

It is the second time this year the FIA has penalized a race steward.

sion was made “with regret.”

Herbert at the end of the 2024 season gave several interviews to gambling sites, some related to high-profile decisions he was involved with in his role as a steward. He even had a public argument with Jos Verstappen, father of the four-time champion, after Verstappen was penalized in Mexico City for an incident with Lando Norris.

Jos Verstappen alleged Herbert was biased and said “the FIA should take a good look at the staffing of the stewards, who they put there and whether there is no appearance of a conflict of interest.”

Herbert in turn criticized Verstappen’s driving and called it “over the top.” He also said Verstappen had developed “a horrible mindset of trying to gain advantage by taking a fellow driver off the race track.”

The FIA determined Herbert had displayed impartiality and could no longer be a steward.

Warwick, meanwhile, has apologized and the FIA has indicated his punishment is only for this weekend.

Medicals expected in the coming days

‘Liverpool agrees to pay record fee of \$157 million for Wirtz’

LIVERPOOL, England, June 14, (AP): Liverpool has agreed to pay a transfer fee of 116 million pounds (\$157 million) for attacking midfielder Florian Wirtz from Bayer Leverkusen, British media reported.

The deal for the 22-year-old German international includes a guaranteed 100 million pounds plus 16 million pounds in add-ons, which if achieved would make it a British record.

The Premier League record for

an initial fee was set when Chelsea signed Enzo Fernandez from Benfica for 106.7 million pounds (\$131.4 million at the time) in 2023.

Later that summer, Chelsea then agreed to pay up to 115 million pounds (\$146 million at the time) - with 100 million pounds up front - for midfielder Moises Caicedo from Brighton.

British media including the BBC reported the Wirtz fee - which would be a Liverpool record - without citing a source. Sky Sports re-

ported the fee to be 116.5 million pounds.

Wirtz’s move has been expected for several weeks and the player has seemed to confirm it himself on his Instagram account, dismissing reports he asked for the No. 10 shirt held by Liverpool midfielder Alexis Mac Allister.

Wirtz is expected to undergo a medical in the coming days ahead of the signing.

Liverpool is aiming to build a dynasty after winning the Premier

League title this season.

Wirtz would reunite with former Leverkusen teammate Jeremie Frimpong after the Dutch right back signed for Liverpool for a reported 35 to 40 million euros (\$39.7 million to \$45.4 million) last month.

Wirtz only turned 22 last month but has been a key first-team player for Leverkusen since he was 17. He was the star attacking player in the team that won the Bundesliga and German Cup in 2023-24 without losing a game.

Bronze glory on the world stage

Dr. Manimara Chozhan shines at World Masters Badminton Championship

KUWAIT CITY, June 14: The chairman of Indian Badminton Association-Kuwait (IBAK), Dr. Manimara Chozhan, a distinguished orthopedic doctor and passionate athlete, has added another accolade to his impressive portfolio by winning the bronze medal in the Men's Singles 55+ category at the World Masters Badminton Games 2025, held in Taipei, Taiwan.

Balancing a demanding medical profession with competitive sports, Dr. Chozhan's achievement highlights his unwavering dedication, discipline, and commitment to excellence – both in the operating room and on the badminton court. At this prestigious international event, Dr. Chozhan showcased outstanding skill and determination throughout the tournament, securing a place on the podium among seasoned global competitors. Dr. Chozhan

did, both his home country India and adopted second home Kuwait proud by winning bronze medal. Dr. Chozhan is a very passionate badminton player and in his first appearance in at the world masters managed to beat strong players from Taipei, Singapore, Malaysia, China and Australia to win bronze medal in the 55+ category of the Men's Singles event.

"This victory is deeply meaningful for me," said Dr. Chozhan. "Not just as a personal milestone, but as a reminder that age is never a barrier to pursuing passion and staying active. I hope it inspires others to embrace sports and fitness at any stage of life."

A well-known figure in the orthopedic community, Dr. Chozhan is celebrated for his contributions to patient care and advancements in orthopedic surgery. His recent success in badminton reflects the same precision, focus, and resilience he brings to his medical practice. Dr. Chozhan has participated in many international tournaments across the world which included UAE, Bahrain, Qatar, Uganda, Finland, USA, Switzerland, Russia, Vienna and Maldives. Dr. Chozhan has very special thanks for his IBAK FAMILY who have



Dr. Manimara Chozhan celebrates on the podium with other winners.

ience he brings to his medical practice. Dr. Chozhan has participated in many international tournaments across the world which included UAE, Bahrain, Qatar, Uganda, Finland, USA, Switzerland, Russia, Vienna and Maldives. Dr. Chozhan has very special thanks for his IBAK FAMILY who have

stood by him and helped him in his vision of promoting badminton in Kuwait.

Some of the accolades won by Dr. Chozhan in the past 14 months are as follows:

1. World Master's 55+ Singles Bronze Medalist (Taipei, May 2025)



Dr. Manimara Chozhan carries Indian national flag after winning the bronze.

2. IBAK Diamond League 35+ Men's Doubles Silver & 45+ Men's Doubles Silver Medalist

(Kuwait, April 2025)

3. 47th ISC-APEX BWF Badminton Tournament 80+ Men's Doubles & 90+ Men's Doubles Bronze Medalist (Abu Dhabi, February 2025)
4. IBAK SLAM 50+ Singles & Men's Doubles Silver Medalist ; Team Gold Captain of IBAK ALLSTARS (Kuwait, December 2024)
5. Canadian Masters 50+ Mixed Doubles Bronze Medalist (Canada, April 2024)

The World Masters Badminton Games is a highly respected event that draws veteran players from around the world, offering them a platform to compete at a high level while promoting healthy, active lifestyles.

For those interested in Badminton please look up <https://ibakwt.org> and for coaching please contact ibakcoaching@gmail.com or ibakcommittee@gmail.com.

Gilgeous-Alexander goes wild in 4th, OKC rallies past Pacers to tie Finals



Indiana Pacers guard Tyrese Haliburton (0) shoots under Oklahoma City Thunder guard Shai Gilgeous-Alexander during the second half of Game 4 of the NBA Finals basketball series in Indianapolis. (AP)

Thunder reclaim home-court advantage

INDIANAPOLIS, June 14, (AP): Game on the line, season quite possibly on the line, the Oklahoma City Thunder had only one place to turn.

They went to the MVP.

And Shai Gilgeous-Alexander delivered, scoring 15 of his 35 points in the final 4:38, capping Oklahoma City's rally from a 10-point, second-half deficit and sealing a 111-104 win over the Indiana Pacers 111-104 on Friday night to tie the NBA Finals at two games apiece.

"He definitely showed who he is tonight," Thunder coach Mark Daigneault said.

It was all SGA for OKC down the stretch. The Thunder closed the game on a 16-7 run; he had all but one of those points.

"We played with desperation to end the game," Gilgeous-Alexander said, "and that's why we won."

Jalen Williams added 27, Alex Caruso had 20 and Chet Holmgren finished with 14 points and 15 rebounds for the Thunder. They did it the hard way - with a season-low three 3-pointers, and no assists from Gilgeous-Alexander for the first



Oklahoma City Thunder forward Jalen Williams (8) drives as Indiana Pacers forward Aaron Nesmith (23) defends during the second half of Game 4 of the NBA Finals basketball series in Indianapolis. (AP)

time all season.

Pascal Siakam scored 20 for Indiana, which got 18 from Tyrese Haliburton and 17 from Obi Toppin.

Game 5 of the series - now essentially a best-of-three - is at Oklahoma City on Monday night, with the Thunder now having reclaimed home-court advantage.

"This kind of a challenge is going to have extreme highs and extreme lows," Pacers coach Rick Carlisle said. "This is a low right now and we're going

to have to bounce back from it."

The Thunder basically saved their realistic chance at winning the title. Teams with a 3-1 series lead in the NBA Finals have gone on to win the championship 37 times in 38 past chances. The Pacers looked well on their way to being the 39th team with such an edge, before Gilgeous-Alexander saved the day.

"We knew it when we woke up this morning; 3-1 is a lot different than 2-2 going back home," Gilgeous-Alexander said.

The Pacers came out flying,

scoring 20 points in the first 4:59 - only the second time all season the Thunder gave up so many so quickly. They led by as many as nine early, but were unable to pull away.

And things got chippy for the first time in the series: Toppin was called for a Flagrant 1 on Caruso midway through the second quarter, then Toppin was the recipient of a Flagrant 1 from Lu Dort just before the half. The Pacers closed on a 15-6 run, taking a 60-57 lead into the break.

Toppin's baseline dunk late in the third put Indiana up 86-76, its first double-digit lead of the series coming late in the 15th quarter of the series. Back came OKC: A 13-3 run tied the game early in the fourth at 89, the first of a handful of those down the stretch.

Tied at 91. Tied at 95. Tied at 97. And, finally, the lead: Gilgeous-Alexander's step-back with 2:23 left put the Thunder up 104-103, their first lead of the second half.

They kept it the rest of the way.

"We wanted to win," Siakam said. "I thought we played well enough for some stretches ... but unfortunately, it didn't happen."

Premier League record in sight

Milner gets Brighton extension for 24th season

BRIGHTON, England, June 14, (AP): James Milner will get another chance to become the player with the most appearances in the Premier League era.

The 39-year-old midfielder, who is 15 appearances short of Gareth Barry's record (653), has signed a one-year contract extension with Brighton.

Milner sustained a serious knee injury that limited him to just four league games last season. He made his 638th appearance on the last day of the season, coming off the

bench in a 4-1 victory over Tottenham.

"Last season he wasn't able to help the team on the pitch as much as he would have liked, but around the squad his experience is invaluable, especially for the younger players," Brighton manager Fabian Hurler said in the team's announcement Friday.

"He's a great guy to have in our environment, who is always there for me and the team," said Hurler, who is seven years younger than Milner. "I'm looking forward

to working with him again."

Milner, who will turn 40 in January, made his debut at age 16 for Leeds in November 2002.

He's entering his record-extending 24th season overall and third at Brighton - he made 15 league appearances in the 2023-24 season - after eight years at Liverpool. Milner has also played for Manchester City, Aston Villa and Newcastle.

Milner made 61 international appearances for England from 2009-16.

Kuwait sets sights on West Asian Volleyball Championship with Tunisia training camp

By Khaled El-Anzi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 14: Nayef Al-Khamili, Assistant Secretary-General of the Bahrain Volleyball Federation, has revealed Kuwait's detailed preparation plan ahead of the inaugural West Asian Men's Volleyball Championship, set to take place in Manama, Bahrain from July 17 to 27.

Al-Khamili confirmed that following the domestic training phase, the Board of Directors of the Kuwait Volleyball Federation approved an external training camp in Tunisia, scheduled from July 4 to 16. The "Blue Volleyball Team" will head directly from Tunisia to Bahrain to compete in the regional tournament.

Al-Khamili praised the Federation's efforts in supporting the national team, stating: "All available resources have been allocated to ensure the Blue Team is fully prepared to compete strongly in the first edition of the championship."

He emphasized the role of the national team's technical staff, led by Argentinian head coach Julian and assistant coach Zaid Al-Kazemi, who have laid out an intensive training program aimed at enhancing players' physical and tactical readiness. This program will continue up to the team's departure for



Nayef Al-Khamili

Tunisia and will focus heavily on game strategies and friendly matches during the camp.

The squad features a blend of youth and experience, and Al-Khamili expressed full confidence in the team's ability to deliver a performance that reflects the progress of Kuwaiti volleyball. He wished all players success as they prepare for this important regional event.

Best of the Rest

Raducanu to miss Berlin Open: Emma Raducanu will miss next week's Berlin Open because of a back problem, as she tries to get ready for Wimbledon.

The 37th-ranked Raducanu has been dealing with the back issue since before the French Open last month. She took an off-court medical timeout during her quarterfinal loss at Queen's Club to Olympic champion Zheng Qinwen on Friday.

Afterward, the 22-year-old Raducanu said she needs rest.

"I'm not overly concerned that it's something serious," the 2021 U.S. Open champion said, "but I know it's something that's very annoying and needs proper and careful management."

Nine of the top 10 women's players are set to compete in Berlin, a grass-court event players use to prepare for Wimbledon, which starts on June 30. (AP)

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India coach Gambhir returns home: India coach Gautam Gambhir returned home on Friday because of a family emergency, a week out from the opening cricket test against England.

Gambhir's mother was hospitalized in New Delhi, according to the Press Trust of India.

It was not known how long Gambhir will be away, and there was no certainty he will be on hand when India starts the first test against England at Leeds in a week.

In his absence, assistant coaches Sitanshu Kotak, Ryan ten Doeschate and Morne Morkel were taking charge of India for a four-day intra-squad match against India A that started on Friday in Beckenham.

Gambhir and new captain Shubman Gill were facing a number of selection decisions going into the five-match series with England after the retirements of Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma opened spots in the batting order. (AP)

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NEWS



South Africa's Tristan Stubbs plays a shot on day four of the World Test Championship final between South Africa and Australia at Lord's cricket ground in London. (AP)

Sports

South Africa wins first major cricket trophy in 27 years

Chokers no more

LONDON, June 14, (AP): Chokers no more. The South Africans consigned the word to history when they ripped the World Test Championship mace from Australia's callused grip inside four days of a riveting final at Lord's.

South Africa wore a new label Saturday - champion - by claiming its first major cricket trophy in 27 years when it wrapped up a five-wicket win.

The last 69 runs required on day four were confidently knocked off by the Proteas in just over two hours - only three boundaries - with Australia typically fighting all the way to the inevitable end.

South Africa moved from a portentous 213-2 overnight to a winning 285-5, the second highest successful run chase in the 141-year test history at the home of cricket.

Victory laid to rest ghosts of heartbreaking losses on big ICC stages that have haunted South Africa for decades. The venues and dates are infamous in South Africa cricket, among them Birmingham 1999, Dhaka 2011, Auckland 2015, Kolkata 2023 and Bridgetown 2024.

But London 2025 will go down as one of the greatest days in South Africa sports, when its cricket underdogs grabbed the advantage and didn't let go against a red-hot Australia.

"Whilst we were batting, we could hear the Aussies using that dreaded word, choke," Proteas captain Temba Bavuma said. "It's been years since we've overcome a final. We've been etched in history, we're part of something that has never been done. It's special in a lot of ways. Also, it's a chance for South Africa to be united. We've got a cause where we can put aside our differences and enjoy. We just have to embrace it."

The stunning result also bodes well for South Africa's preparations for its home ODI World Cup in 2027. It's a different format, but the Proteas' mind-sets won't be burdened by not having won a global trophy since the Champions Trophy's precursor in 1998.

Australia didn't give up the WTC mace easily, relentlessly attacking the stumps and trying to prey on any South Africa butterflies. The desperate Australians used up their three reviews in vain within the first 90 minutes and fought to the end. But the serial champions lost an ICC final for only a fourth time in 14 chances.

"They were fantastic in that fourth innings," Australia captain Pat Cummins said. "There wasn't a lot in the wicket but they didn't give us a chance."

The Proteas were staunch, losing only three wickets on Saturday. One of them was Aiden Markram, the colossus Australia could not topple until it was too late.

He resumed the day on 102 and was out for 136 when only six runs from victory. He spent six hours, 23 minutes in the middle. Australia didn't celebrate his wicket. Instead, players slapped Markram on the back and congratulated him on his match-winning knock as the Lord's crowd stood and applauded.

"Growing up, Lord's was the one venue I wanted to play at," Markram said. "To do it at a final and win is something really special."

About 15 minutes later, Kyle Verreynne hit the winning run, a drive into the covers.



South Africa's captain Temba Bavuma holds the winner's trophy and celebrates with teammates on the podium after their win in the World Test Championship final against Australia at Lord's cricket ground in London. (AP)

Markram and an injured Bavuma set up the victory the day before with an unbeaten partnership of 143 runs. They could not finish what they started, adding only four runs together before Bavuma edged Cummins behind for 66, one more than he had overnight.

Markram was named man of the match. He also took two vital wickets, that of Steve Smith on 66 in Australia's first innings, when Smith became the highest foreign test run-scorer at Lord's, and Josh Hazlewood to end Australia's second innings. Kagiso Rabada had nine-for in the match.

South Africa's target was set at 282, considered too far. But in a batting unit far less experienced than Australia's and considered a weak point, Markram and Bavuma chanced on ideal batting conditions on day three Friday and exploited them mercilessly. The turning point was Bavuma

dropped in the slips on 2 by Smith, who broke his finger and didn't return to the match.

South Africa was criticized by some before the final for its supposedly easier road in the 2023-25 WTC cycle - it didn't face Australia or England in a series - but it has won eight straight tests, its second longest streak in history.

"We've come a long way as a team, as a country," emotional spinner Keshav Maharaj said. "We always say we want to be good people and play good. We're moving in the right direction as a cricketing nation."

"After 25 years of pain, to finally get over the line is super emotional. We're so grateful to have Temba to get us over the line. Diversity is our strength, so to see the crowd, they stand for the meaning of our rainbow nation. To lift the trophy is going to unite the nation even more."

Saudi Super Cup to be held in Hong Kong from Aug 19 to 23

RIYADH, June 14: The Saudi Arabian Football Federation (SAFF) has officially announced that the 2025 Saudi Super Cup will be hosted in Hong Kong from August 19 to 23, featuring four top clubs: Al-Ittihad, Al-Qadisiyah, Al-Hilal, and Al-Nassr.

In a statement published on its official website, the SAFF emphasized that holding the Saudi Super Cup abroad aligns with the tournament's strategic vision to expand internationally and build global partnerships that strengthen the global presence of Saudi football.

The matches will take place at the 40,000-capacity Hong Kong Stadium, the national stadium of Hong Kong, which was originally constructed in 1953 and underwent major renovations in 1994.

The SAFF also confirmed that the draw for the Super Cup fixtures will be conducted in the near future to determine the match schedule.



Saudi Super Cup trophy

Best of the Rest

Earthquakes draw with Timbers: Preston Judd scored a shorthanded goal in the third minute of second-half stoppage time to rally the San Jose Earthquakes to a 1-1 draw with the Portland Timbers on Friday night.

Judd subbed into the match for Beau Leroux in the 75th minute and scored for the second time this season and the sixth of his career when Portland goalkeeper Daniel De Sousa Britto stopped but couldn't wrap up a shot by Ousseni Bouda. Judd was there to tap the deflection in for the equalizer.

San Jose (6-7-5) earned a point despite being forced to play a man down from the 52nd minute on after midfielder Ian Harkes was tagged with a second yellow card.

Portland (8-4-6) took a 1-0 lead in the 71st minute on a goal by defender Juan Mosquera. It was his first goal this season and his fourth in his 80th career appearance - all with the Timbers. Felipe Mora notched his third assist of the campaign.

James Pantemis finished with six saves in goal for the Timbers.

Daniel De Sousa Britto saved four shots for the Earthquakes.

Portland is 14-0-5 all time at home against San Jose.

The Earthquakes beat the visiting Timbers 1-0 in May.

The Earthquakes travel to play FC Dallas on June 25. The Timbers return to league play on June 28 at Toronto FC. (AP)

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Mertens eliminates Alexandrova: Belgian tennis player Elise Mertens saved 11 match points before beating Ekaterina Alexandrova to reach the final of the Libema Open on Saturday.

The WTA said that was the most match points saved in a main draw women's match this decade.

After repeatedly fending off defeat, the 20th-ranked Mertens won 2-6, 7-6 (7), 6-4 on the grass court in 's-Hertogenbosch.

"I didn't even know it was 11, after one or two I lost count," the third-seeded Mertens said. "I was very focused on the game, which, of course, I like that about me, that I just keep going."

Mertens will face qualifier Elena-Gabriela Ruse of Romania in the final. (AP)

USF rallies to win 1,600 relay

USC, Texas A&M share NCAA track & field title

EUGENE, Ore., June 14, (AP): South Florida ran a brilliant 1,600-meter relay to close the NCAA men's outdoor track and field championships, leaving Southern California and Texas A&M tied for the team title.

The Trojans, who won the indoor title earlier this year but hadn't won an outdoor title in 49 years, and the Aggies, both finished with 41 points, one ahead of Arkansas.

That came after a late surge by the USF anchor to edge Texas A&M in the final race, winning in 3 minutes, 42 seconds. Arkansas was third with the Trojans a disappointing eighth to earn just one team point. The Aggies earned eight points in the relay - a win would have been worth 10 points - and the Razorbacks got six.

Arkansas protested after the race that a USF runner hindered a Razorback but the protest was denied. If successful, Texas A&M would have won the title and Arkansas and USC would have tied for second.

The women's title will be decided Saturday at Hayward Field on the Oregon campus.

Sam Whitmarsh of Texas A&M, runner-up a year

ago, beat indoor champion Matthew Erickson of Oregon to capture the 800 in 1:45.86, the second-fastest in school history.

Jordan Anthony of Arkansas, the NCAA champion in the indoor 60, added an outdoor title, winning the 100 in 10.07 from Lane 9.

Ja'Kobe Tharp, who won the 60r hurdles at the indoor championships for Auburn, added the 110 hurdle title to his resume with a personal-best time of 13.05. Tharp ran the fifth-fastest time in NCAA history, only 0.07 off of Grant Holloway's record.

Auburn also won the 400 relay in a time of 38.33.

Samuel Ogazi of Alabama raced to a dominant win in the 400 with a time of 44.84, more than six-tenths faster than the runner-up. The sophomore, who made the Olympic finals in Paris, became the first Nigerian athlete to win the 400 NCAA title in 26 years.

James Corrigan of BYU, a 2024 Olympian, won the 3,000 steeplechase in 8:16.41, grabbing the lead at the last water jump. His time is the fourth fastest in college history.

Nathan Green of Washington, the 2023 champion, won the 1,500 meters in 3:47.26 with the top 11 fin-

ishing within 0.68 of Green.

Brian Masau on Oklahoma State added the outdoor title in the 5,000 to the indoor title he won earlier this year, finishing in 13:20.59.

Ezekiel Nathaniel of Baylor lowered his Nigerian record to 47.49 in the 400 hurdles, the second-fastest time in the world this year.

Carli Makarawu of Kentucky took the 400 in 19.84 seconds, a Zimbabwe national record, edging countryman Makenakaisha Charamba of Auburn, who ran 19.92.

Oklahoma's Ralford Mullings, who returned to the championship for the second time in his career, took the discus title by launching a meet-record and person-best 227 feet, 4 inches.

Brandon Green Jr. and Floyd Whitaker gave Oklahoma a 1-2 finish in the triple jump with Green soaring 55-2 to win by more than a foot. Green led from the first jump and had it wrapped up after five rounds and then had his best leap to end it.

Arvesta Troupe of Mississippi cleared 7-5 1/4 to win the high jump.

Record transfer for Argentine soccer

Real to sign teenager from River after Club World Cup

MADRID, June 14, (AP): Real Madrid struck a deal to sign River Plate midfielder Franco Mastantuono for the next six seasons, the Spanish club said, in what will be a record transfer for Argentine soccer.

Madrid said that the 17-year-old Mastantuono will join in August, meaning he will play for River at the Club World Cup. Madrid is also set to play the tournament in the United States.

Mastantuono is Madrid's third signing of the off-season after adding defenders Trent Alexander-Arnold and Dean Huijsen.

Mastantuono, who was a promising tennis player before he committed to soccer, became Argentina's youngest debutant when he came off the bench last week in the national team's 1-0 victory over Chile in a



In this file photo, Franco Mastantuono of Argentina's River Plate celebrates after scoring from the penalty spot his side's third goal against Ecuador's Independiente del Valle during a Copa Libertadores Group B soccer match at the Monumental stadium in Buenos Aires, Argentina. (AP)

2026 World Cup qualifier.

He scored four goals and provided two assists for River in the first part of the Argentinian league this season, including a goal from a free kick to help beat fierce rival Boca Juniors.

River said that Madrid triggered Mastantuono's buyout clause of 63 million euros (\$72 million), making it the most expensive transfer in the history of Argentine soccer. River will earn 45 million euros, with the rest going to taxes and fees.

Madrid is trying to reload under new coach Xabi Alonso after losing their Spanish and Champions League titles last season.

That includes moving on without midfield great Luka Modric, who will leave Madrid after the Club World Cup.

'Westbrook won't exercise option for next season'

DENVER, June 14, (AP): Russell Westbrook will not be exercising his \$3.5 million player option with the Denver Nuggets for next season and will instead become a free agent, a person with knowledge of the decision told The Associated Press.

The decision doesn't necessarily mean that Westbrook won't be back

with the Nuggets, said the person, who spoke on condition of anonymity because neither side revealed the decision publicly.

NBA reporter Marc Stein first reported Westbrook's decision, which was later confirmed by ESPN and The Denver Post, among others.

Westbrook averaged 13.3 points,

4.9 rebounds and 6.1 assists for the Nuggets this season - his 17th in the NBA - and helped Denver reach the second round of the playoffs, falling in seven games to eventual Western Conference champion Oklahoma City.

He underwent surgery after the season to repair multiple ligament tears in his right hand, an issue he played

through during the season. At that time, Westbrook posted in his newsletter that he was "grateful for everyone's support all year and I can't wait to be back out there at 100% soon. The comeback is already in motion."

That would indicate that he is planning to play somewhere next season.