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## KUWAIT ARMY QUASHES MISSILE PANIC; NO SKY OPS, SAYS K.N.G.



### Opinion

■ Ahmed Al-Jarallah

Editor-in-Chief, the Arab Times

## Iran needs to gain its neighbors' trust

SINCE the regime change in 1979, Iran's relations with its neighbors have been tense, especially after enshrining the principle of "exporting the revolution" in its constitution.

It is well known that when a country undergoes a regime change, the new leadership typically focuses on domestic reconstruction and easing tensions with neighboring states.

However, the Tehran regime did not follow this rule, which raised concerns among its neighbors. It began establishing versions of "Hezbollah" in several countries, based on political objectives and a sectarian combat doctrine. The Iranian regime went further, applying pressure on neighboring countries through subversive and terrorist acts.

Iran was expected to take advantage of the end of the eight-year war with Iraq as an opportunity to reconsider its overall regional political attitude, given that the region represents its natural strategic depth and an important industrial and commercial market. Instead, Iran chose to escalate tensions.

For example, after the fall of the Ba'ath regime in Baghdad, Iran forcefully entered the Iraqi arena through sectarian militias, raising the slogan - "Our strategic borders extend to the Mediterranean Sea." Iran continued its provocative strategy, boasting of influence over four Arab capitals. Iran also supported the Houthis, and supplied them with missiles used to bomb Saudi Arabia and attack other Gulf states.

The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries have repeatedly sought to establish good neighborly relations with Iran. However, each attempt was met with

a wall of Iranian arrogance and ultimately failed. Despite this, the GCC's patience did not run out, driven by the belief that any regional tension undermines stability and carries severe negative consequences.

Moreover, since 1998, Iran has heightened its neighbors' suspicions by reviving its nuclear program. Although Iran claims its program is for peaceful purposes, its enrichment of uranium to high levels suggests an indirect pursuit of a nuclear bomb. This behavior has drawn international condemnation and led to crippling sanctions that have severely impacted Iran's people and economy.

On the other hand, Israel, despite being widely regarded as the "mother of all evils", has possessed a military nuclear program since 1965 and maintains an ambiguous stance regarding its arsenal of weapons of mass destruction. Nevertheless, Israel has succeeded in establishing positive relations with countries around the world, including major powers.

Despite its limited size and resources, Israel has built a massive economy. In 2023, Israel's GDP reached approximately \$513 billion, while Iran, despite its vast natural wealth, large geographic area, and significant human potential, had a GDP of only about \$191 billion.

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■ @Ahmedaljarallah

■ Ahmed aljarallah

■ ahmed@aljarallah.com



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### Israeli attacks kill 68

## Kuwait decries starvation in Gaza, calls for accountability at UNHRC

GENEVA, June 16, (Agencies): The United Nations Human Rights Council opened its 59th regular session in Geneva on Monday, with Kuwait participating by its Permanent Representative to the UN and other international organizations in Geneva Ambassador Nasser Al-Hayen.

In a statement to KUNA, Ambassador Al-Hayen, who also chairs the delegation of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) member states, emphasized that Kuwait's participation reaffirms its unwavering commitment to the promotion and protection of human rights.

He stressed Kuwait's call for the respect of international law and its strong opposition to all forms of human rights violations, particularly in conflict zones.

Ambassador Al-Hayen expressed deep concern over the worsening humanitarian crisis in Gaza, calling for immediate international action to halt Israeli aggression and ensure unimpeded humanitarian aid delivery.

"The systematic starvation and direct targeting of civilians in Gaza is a clear violation of international and humanitarian law," he said, underscoring Kuwait's leadership in calling for an end to the aggression and urging the international community to respond decisively.

He also condemned the recent Israeli military assault on Iran, describing it



Ambassador Nasser Al-Hayen, Permanent Representative of Kuwait to the UN and other international organizations in Geneva.

as a dangerous escalation that threatens international peace and security, destabilizing the region. He called for accountability in accordance with the UN Charter.

Kuwait is also hosting a side event titled "Humanitarian Access and Protection of Aid Workers as a Cornerstone for Promoting Human Rights," with participation from UN experts and humanitarian organizations. The event will address challenges in aid delivery during conflicts and explore strategies to protect humanitarian workers.

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A Palestinian man walks across the rubble of a building destroyed by an Israeli strike in Deir al-Balah, central Gaza Strip, Monday, June 16, 2025. (AP)

# Kuwait Fire Force 'crisis-ready' 24/7



Smoke rises from an oil storage facility after it appeared to have been struck by an Israeli strike on Saturday, in Tehran, Iran, Monday, June 16, 2025. (AP)

## Truth-tellers key to national stability: Minister Al-Mutairi

By Munif Naif and Fares Ghaleb

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff and Agencies

**KUWAIT CITY, June 16: The General Staff of Kuwait Army on Monday clarified reports circulating on social media about missiles flying over the country.**

In a press statement, the General Staff stressed that these "ballistic missiles were flying at very high altitudes and outside Kuwaiti airspace. They do not pose any threat to Kuwaiti territory."

Meanwhile, the National Guard confirmed on the same day that there is no truth to the reports circulating on social media about its forces carrying out missions in Kuwaiti skies.

The Moral Guidance Directorate at the National Guard clarified in a press release that the forces are carrying out their defense and security duties, in addition to supporting State agencies in cooperation with the ministries of Defense and Interior. It urged everyone to obtain information from official sources only in order to prevent the spread of rumors.

The spokesperson of a state body or institution plays a significant role towards news credibility and



Photo by Rezk Tawfiq  
Iranian Ambassador to Kuwait Mohammad To-tonji addresses the media at a press conference held Monday morning at the embassy.

transparency, Kuwait's information minister said on Monday, describing such an official as a shield against fallible information.

- Gulf states tackle 'food threats' head-on at Kuwait-led meeting
- Iran envoy thanks Kuwait for stance against Zionist attacks
- IAEA warns of radiological fallout over targeted nuclear sites

The role of these officials is tantamount to a "national obligation" to convey the messages of state bodies to Kuwaiti nationals, Abulrahman Al-Mutairi told a gathering of official spokespersons, in which he underlined their pivotal responsibilities.

As the public face of a state body, spokespersons communicate messages to the public in an accurate and prompt manner, subsequently stopping the spread of misinformation, added the minister.

At a time of increasing volatility around the wider

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## Jahra hits 52°C amid widespread heatwave; relief later this week

KUWAIT CITY, June 16, (KUNA): Kuwait's Meteorological Department reported record-high temperatures on Monday, with Jahra registering the nation's peak at 52 degrees Celsius. Other areas also sweltered, as Rabia, Abdali, and Kuwait Airport each recorded 51 degrees, while Nuwaisib reached 50 degrees.

Dirar Al-Ali, Director of the Meteorological De-

partment, told the Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) that the country is currently experiencing the effects of India's seasonal depression, which is bringing an extremely hot air mass and resulting in very hot daytime conditions and persistently warm nights until Tuesday.

Al-Ali noted that light to moderate northwesterly

winds, occasionally becoming active, are contributing to dusty conditions that began Monday morning and are expected to persist until after Wednesday. He forecasted that wind activity will peak on Thursday and continue through Saturday.

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### Newswatch

**KUALA LUMPUR:** The Southeast Asian bloc ASEAN will transform into a "strategic" hub for future energy demand, OPEC's secretary general **Haitham Al-Ghaith** said on Monday.

The Southeast Asian region should lead global energy demand moving forward, accounting for almost half of global consumption and 70 percent of energy growth by the year 2050, the OPEC chief told the Energy Asia 2025 conference in the Malaysian capital, which highlights the region's growing importance in shaping the future of energy.

On the role of ASEAN member states, he predicted that "Asia will add over 800 million vehicles to the car fleet by 2050," while OPEC member states, as energy exporters, share a "good collaboration" with importers like southeast Asian countries, added the OPEC chief.

Looking ahead to the year 2030, he said that around "half a billion people will move into new cities," which was equal to the creation of 50 new cities the size of the Malaysian capital in just five years, causing global energy demand to soar, he said.

As the world moves forward with the transition to cleaner energy sources, he called for the need of a "balanced approach" that doesn't compromise energy security or affordability, saying that renewables alone "would not meet the world's needs." (KUNA)

## Kuwait's electricity demand hits 17,534 MW, power cuts possible

By Mohammad Ghanem

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 16: The electricity load index continued to rise Monday — approaching the red zone — as it recorded 17,534 megawatts at noon due to the temperature exceeding 50 degrees Celsius in many parts of the country.

This is just 106 megawatts lower than last year's record of 17,640 megawatts on Aug 27.

Sources from the ministry stressed that the current electricity situation requires everyone to work together — citizens, expatriates, and governmental and non-governmental entities — by implementing the rationalization mechanisms announced by the ministry until

the end of the summer peak in September.

Sources confirmed the commitment of the ministry to avoid the planned power outages unless it is extremely necessary. They said the ministry has taken several measures to regulate the electricity situation; such as importing the necessary quantities of energy from the Gulf Cooperation Council Interconnection Authority (GCCIA), indicating that the imported quantity for the current month reached 800 megawatts.

In a related development, the ministry announced Monday that it might be forced to cut off power in some industrial areas (Mina Abdullah, Subhan, Sulaibiya, Al-Rai and Shuwaikh) and agricultural areas (Rawdatayn, Wafra

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### Day by Day

THE Argentine revolutionary Ernesto Che Guevara once said, "O you who seek eternity in temples, you should rather search for the hungry in the streets and feed them. One cannot be a true human being and turn a blind eye to the misery of others, all the while seeking purity in temples made of stone."

Late Iraqi intellectual Ali Al-Wardi once said, "People seek paradise in mosques. However, with a little effort, they would see that the faces of the poor are closer than anything else and a shorter path to Heaven."

... Yet tomorrow is another day.

Zahed Matar



**Burgan Bank raises financial awareness and digital innovation initiatives by collaborating with AUK to empower the next generation of Kuwaiti talents**



**NBK showcases digital leadership and commitment to 'Let's Be Aware' campaign**

Prayer Timings			
Fajr .....	03:13	Asr .....	15:23
Sunrise ..	04:49	Maghrib ..	18:49
Zohr .....	11:48	Isha .....	20:21

# Local

**Weather**  
**Expected weather for next 24 hrs:**  
**By Day:** Very hot with light to moderate freshening at times northwesterly wind, with speeds of 12-45 km/h causing rising dust over open areas.

Station	Max Exp	Min Rec
Kuwait City	51	37
Kuwait Airport	51	29

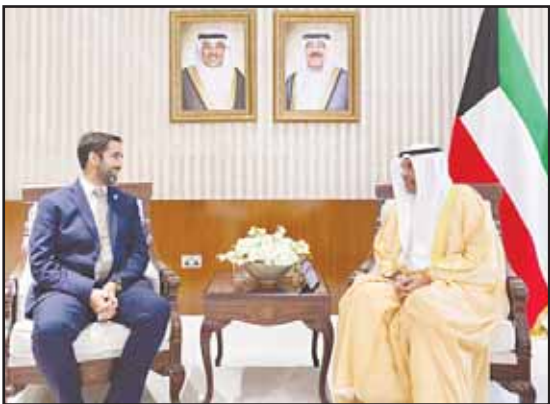
Bubyan	41	29
Jahra	52	33
Falaka Island	44	32
Salmiyah	46	34
Ahmadi	45	31
Nuwaisib	50	29
Salmi	49	31
Managish	52	32



FM meets Maldives envoy.



FM meets Belarussia envoy.



FM meets Panama envoy.



FM meets Tuvalu envoy.

KUNA photos

## Foreign Minister receives credentials of four new ambassadors to Kuwait

KUWAIT CITY, June 16, (KUNA): Kuwaiti Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Al-Yahya received on Sunday a copy of the credentials of new non-resident Belarus Ambassador to Kuwait, who is Belarus Ambassador in Abu Dhabi, Igor Bely, during the meeting that took place at the ministry.

Al-Yahya wished the new ambassador success in his duties and further progress and prosperity to the bilateral relations.

### Tuvalu Ambassador

Kuwaiti Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Al-Yahya received on Sunday the credentials of Ambassador Tauiasi Taupo, the non-resident Ambassador of Tu-

valu to Kuwait, based in Abu Dhabi.

The meeting took place at the Ministry, where Minister Al-Yahya welcomed the ambassador and wished him success in his diplomatic mission, and extended his best wishes for the ambassador's success in his duties, expressing hope for further growth and prosperity in Kuwait-Tuvalu relations.

### Panama Ambassador

Kuwaiti Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Al-Yahya received on Sunday a copy of the credentials of new non-resident Panama Ambassador to Kuwait, who is Panama Ambassador in Doha, during a meeting at the ministry.

Al-Yahya wished the new ambassador success in his duties and further progress and prosperity to the bilateral relations.

### Maldivian Ambassador

Kuwaiti Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Al-Yahya received on Sunday a copy of the credentials of new non-resident Maldivian Ambassador to Kuwait, who is Maldivian Ambassador in Riyadh, Ahmad Sarir, during the meeting that took place at the ministry.

Al-Yahya wished the new ambassador success in his duties and further progress and prosperity to the bilateral relations.

# MoE to rectify glitches in lightning response

Teams formed to hear teachers grievances

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

KUWAIT CITY, June 16: In a swift response to the report that the newspaper published Monday about the problems and complaints of teachers regarding fingerprinting and out-of-office assignments, as well as the job performance evaluations affected by delays and salary deductions among a number of educational sector employees Minister of Education Sayyed Jalal Al-Tabtabaei issued a directive on taking urgent measures to immediately address the leave and attendance issues to ensure administrative and functional stability in school administrations.



Al-Tabtabaei

In this context, the Ministry of Education confirmed the formation of field teams to support the administrative affairs departments in educational districts. These teams will assist school administrations in monitoring the attendance and leave status of teaching and administrative staff based on the regulations and bylaws of the ministry and the Civil Service Commission (CSC). The ministry confirmed that these teams will receive ap-

plications from schools, verify the data, and guarantee the entry of these data into the integrated system of the CSC to ensure electronic documentation and prompt action.

It explained that this measure is part of the efforts of the ministry to expedite the administrative cycle and achieve the highest levels of transparency and job discipline. It stated that it has adopted a timetable for school administrations to review the administrative affairs departments in the districts, according to the distribution of educational levels, with two days allocated for each level.

It emphasized that this step aims to enable educational districts to address the conditions of their employees promptly and effectively to ascertain that all procedures are completed within the deadline, while ensuring that each person is entitled to their rights in accordance with the legal frameworks.

It reiterated its commitment to implement job fairness standards and protect workers' rights, considering the improvement of the work environment and motivation of educational and administrative staff as priorities for the next phase.

It urged the school administrations to fully cooperate with the teams and provide the required data and documents accurately and on time to avoid delays or backlogs in procedures and ensure smooth processing of transactions.

It clarified that it continues to periodically evaluate the progress of work in educational districts, indicating that follow-up teams will monitor any field observations and address them in coordination with the relevant sectors, ensuring quality administrative performance and enhancing the efficiency of services provided to educational workers.

It then announced the school administration review schedule as follows:

- Kindergarten: June 17-18
- Primary: June 19-22
- Intermediate: June 23-24
- Secondary: June 25-26



Farwaniya Governorate photo  
Farwaniya Governor Sheikh Athbi Nasser Al-Athbi Al-Sabah meets new members of Farwaniya Governorate Council.

### Plan to enhance key public services

## Farwaniya governorate council new members all set to commence duty

KUWAIT CITY, June 16: Farwaniya Governor Sheikh Athbi Nasser Al-Athbi Al-Sabah received the newly appointed members of the Farwaniya Governorate Council, in preparation for the commencement of their duties and the activation of the council's responsibilities.

According to a press release issued by Farwaniya Governorate, the meeting was attended by several council members and officials, including:

- Brigadier General Mohammad Mutlaq Al-Mutairi, Farwaniya Security Director
- Eng. Sarah Mohammad Al-Mutairi, Director of the Chemical Works Department and the Water Facilities Operation and Maintenance Department
- Falah Mubarak Al-Enezi, Director of the Engineering Services Department at the Public Authority for Agriculture Affairs and Fish Resources (PAAAFR)
- Eng. Fawaz Ghazi Al-Shammari, Acting Assistant Undersecretary for the Maintenance Affairs Sector at the Ministry of Public

Works

- Eng. Jamal Al-Aiban, Maintenance Supervisor at the Farwaniya Education Department
  - Hanan Hassan Al-Gharib, Director of the Family Care Department at the Ministry of Social Affairs, Family and Childhood Affairs
  - Dr. Aziza Mutlaq Al-Musailem, Director of the Legal Affairs Department at the Public Authority for Housing Welfare
  - Eng. Nawaf Abdullah Al-Kandari, Deputy Director General for Farwaniya and Mubarak Al-Kabeer Governorates Affairs at Kuwait Municipality
  - Eng. Ali Abdul Aziz Karam, Director of the Implementation Department at the Public Authority for Roads and Transportation
  - Hessa Abdullah Al-Mutawa
  - Lieutenant General Engineer Ali Abdul Hadi Al-Shanfa
  - Saad Al-Hadba
- The governor welcomed the Chairman and members of the Farwaniya Governorate Council, congratulated them on their appointments and commended their roles

in representing the various entities that serve the citizens.

During the meeting, key topics were discussed for enhancing public services and improving their overall quality. The discussions were in line with the implementation of Kuwait's general policy, the activation of the Governorate Council's mandate, and the pursuit of its strategic objectives.

The meeting also discussed the framework for collaboration between the Chairman, council members, and relevant committees for fulfilling the aspirations of citizens and serving the residents of Farwaniya Governorate.

At the end of the meeting, the council members expressed their appreciation for the confidence placed in them by the political leadership.

They affirmed their commitment to fulfilling their responsibilities and working diligently to serve Kuwait to the best of their abilities.

The Chairman and members also extended their gratitude to the governor for his warm welcome and continued support.

### No change in travel advisory: Australian embassy

## EU envoy expresses deep concern over escalation in Mideast region

KUWAIT CITY, June 16: European Union (EU) Ambassador to Kuwait Anne Koistinen expressed the deep concern of the union over the recent escalation in the region, emphasizing the EU's consistent call for restraint and de-escalation, reports Al-Rai daily.

Asked about the current developments; Koistinen confirmed that EU leaders unanimously urged all parties to exercise maximum restraint, avoid retaliation, and take immediate steps to reduce tensions.

She said this unified stance has been clearly conveyed by key EU figures, including European Council President António Costa, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, Commission Vice-President and High

Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Kaja Kallas, and Commissioner for the Mediterranean Dubravka Suica. "They have collectively warned that any further military escalation risks could plunge the region into more instability, underlining the importance of diplomatic efforts to restore calm," she added.

### Australia

The Australian Embassy in Kuwait confirmed that it continues to monitor developments in the region; stressing there has been no change in its travel advisory, reports Al-Qabas daily.

In a post on its Instagram page, the embassy urged Australian citizens in Kuwait to follow the Smarttraveller website and subscribe to updates; as well as monitor local media and adhere to the instructions of the Kuwaiti authorities. It also recommended exercising a high level of caution while in the country.

## Info minister cancels his Japan visit

KUWAIT CITY, June 16: Minister of Information Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi has canceled his scheduled visit to Japan, where he was set to represent His Highness the Prime Minister at Expo Osaka 2025. The decision comes in light of ongoing regional tensions resulting from the Israeli-Iranian conflict, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

It is worth noting that Kuwait is participating in Expo Osaka 2025 with its own dedicated pavilion, which features rich, multi-dimensional content reflecting the country's future aspirations and celebrating its cultural heritage. The pavilion's design embraces creativity and innovation, showcasing the Kuwaiti identity with a blend of cultural openness and steadfast national values.

## My friend Abbas ... and Iran-Israel conflict

By Ahmad alsarraaf

Recently, Iran and Israel have dealt a blow to analysts and experts who long denied the existence of genuine hostility between them. Through their actions, both countries have disproved the claims that their apparent disputes and exchanged threats were merely tactics designed to mask behind-the-scenes cooperation and strategic harmony. These analysts had argued that Iran and Israel shared a common goal, which is to intimidate and manipulate the Arab world.

\* \* \*

Israel not only destroyed the majority of Iran's nuclear facilities, but, for the second time in history, it eliminated the entire top echelon of a hostile state's leadership without deploying a single soldier and without incurring any significant material losses to date.

The first time was during its war against Hezbollah in Lebanon. Neutral observers believe that the situation is unlikely to conclude with any form of Iranian surrender. However, the loss of Iran's military, revolutionary, nuclear, and intelligence leadership may compel the regime to reconsider its strategic calculations, shift focus inward, and employ various methods to silence the opposition.

The outcome we have reached was entirely predictable, and I have said so repeatedly. Weapons, no matter how advanced, dangerous, or effective, are meaningless without the human capacity to operate them. That human capacity must be grounded in the same freedoms, self-respect, and critical thinking enjoyed by citizens in the West. It must also be free from extremism and guided by the belief that the weapon of knowledge is the most powerful when placed in strong, educated hands.

If I were in the place of Iran's adversaries, I would not have hesitated to do exactly what they did, which is to eliminate its ambitions to acquire a nuclear weapon. I simply do not trust Iran's intentions in this regard, especially given that it is the most extremist religious state in the region.

The eight-year Iran-Iraq war stands as the clearest evidence that Iran is largely indifferent to the scale of losses that might result from the use of nuclear weapons. This isn't to suggest that I sympathize with Israel, as quite the opposite may be

true. I am simply speaking from the perspective of a devil's advocate.

My friend Abbas often says, "Iran possesses all the elements of survival, resilience, resistance, and retaliation. We must recognize that Iran has, throughout its history, absorbed the patience of chess players and the precision of carpet weavers. We must support it. Iran is the last line of defense against Israel's growing ambitions to reshape the Middle East into a region completely loyal to its vision. Israel will use its military, financial, and technological power to bring everyone under the umbrella of the Abraham Accords. That would be a disaster for Arabs and Muslims. If that happens, we will lose all sense of identity and dignity, and become captives to Israel's agenda."

I told my friend Abbas that I fully understand his fears, as preserving our dignity is indeed our ultimate goal. But has the Iranian way of life become our ideal? Is Iran truly prepared to treat us as equals, respect our minds, and grant us the freedoms of expression, thought, and belief that we so deeply need? If Iran defeats its enemies, will it free us from one real or virtual prison only to place us in another?

I have no doubt that the Israeli government is deeply extremist, and arguably the most brutal and criminal in the region's modern history. But it does not behave that way toward its own citizens, and that is the true source of its strength.

Intelligence agencies in many of our countries struggle to find even a handful of citizens willing to collaborate as spies. In contrast, Israel receives a steady stream of applications from individuals eager to work with Mossad. Some of them even come from within the intelligence services of Arab states themselves, seeking to become agents, advocates of Israeli narratives, and defenders of its positions.

One cannot give what they do not possess. A lack of dignity, humanity, and an educational system shaped by rigid ideology has left many among us feeling little guilt when cooperating with the enemies of our own nations.

This war could end at any moment, and most likely, we will learn nothing from it. We will simply return to our old ways of life, unchanged and unaffected. It seems we have become almost entirely immune to any form of meaningful human development. Unfortunately, we have yet to learn this crucial lesson, even from our enemies.



email: a.alsarraaf@alqabas.com.kw

# diwaniya



A DIGEST OF PUBLIC OPINION

## It's Kuwait turn to stand with Kurds in crises time

"ONE. of my brothers, a Kuwaiti of Kurdish origin, once told me a story from 1961. At that time, Iraqi Prime Minister Abdul Karim Qasim claimed that Kuwait was merely a "Qaim-Maqam" (governorate) of Iraq, and went so far as to appoint the late Amir, His Highness Sheikh Abdullah Al-Salem, as its governor." Kuwaiti journalist **Hassan Ali Karam** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.



Hassan Ali Karam

"Sensing the seriousness of the crisis, his father advised Kuwaiti officials to travel to Iraqi Kurdistan and meet with Kurdish leader Mustafa Barzani to mobilize the Peshmerga forces toward Baghdad, thereby forcing Iraq to divert its attention and halt its plans to occupy Kuwait.

"He recounted that his father indeed traveled to Kurdistan and met with Kurdish leaders, who were already engaged in conflict with the central government in Baghdad. This played a pivotal role in pressuring Abdul Karim Qasim to withdraw his forces and abandon the plan to invade Kuwait.

"There is another claim, perhaps more credible, that the Shiite religious authority in Najaf, Ayatollah Mohsen Al-Hakim, intervened and dissuaded Abdul Karim Qasim from the reckless act of occupying Kuwait, describing such an occupation as tantamount to a sexual violation.

"In my view, this version is closer to reality. Since that time, the Al-Hakim family has maintained a history of correspondence and mutual visits with the Kuwaiti ruling family. Our late friend, the writer and poet Abdulaziz Al-Andalib, who worked as a secretary in the office of the Amir, Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad, once told me that Ayatollah Al-Hakim used to correspond with Sheikh Jaber, addressing him affectionately as "my son, Sheikh Jaber."

"This is what happened in Najaf and Erbil, and this is what we have suffered from the rulers of Baghdad for over 75 years, beginning in 1936 with the reign of the foolish and alcoholic King Ghazi, followed by the failed communist-led coup of Bakr Sidqi, and then Rashid Ali al-Gaylani's attempted coup and his escape to Berlin, where he threw himself into Hitler's arms and kissed his hand.

"Thus, Kuwait's tragedy with Baghdad has unfolded in endless chapters. The players may change, but the hostility remains. They are divided among themselves.

"The latest flare-up in the ongoing crisis between Kuwait and Baghdad centers around the so-called Khor Abdullah. Iraqis now claim that the khor, its history, waters, fish, waterway, and borders, rightfully belong to Iraq. Some even assert that the name "Abdullah" refers to a fisherman named Abdullah Al-Tamimi, who they claim once fished in the khor.

"In my view, it matters little whether this "Abdullah" was an Iraqi or Kuwaiti. What truly matters is that the two neighboring peoples live in peace, free from incitement, hatred, and the sowing of suspicion. These two nations share deep historical, cultural, and social ties that should unite them, not divide them.

"Unfortunately, it appears that a group of rabble-rousers and the uninformed have appointed themselves as defenders of Iraq, posing as politicians and representatives of the people. In reality, they are little more than hired hands, motivated not by patriotism, but by the lure of the dollar.

"The Khor Abdullah crisis should not be allowed to fade away with the upcoming Iraqi parliamentary elections. Iraq is grappling with numerous internal crises, and too often, its leaders choose to export those problems abroad.

"Kuwait has long maintained strong and historically rooted relations with our Iraqi Kurdish brothers. History bears witness to the deep fraternal bond between Kuwaitis and Kurds.

"At present, tensions are rising over the salary crisis between Baghdad and Erbil. The Kurdish leadership is increasingly determined to escalate the issue to the United Nations Security Council, in response to Baghdad's ongoing refusal to disburse salaries to employees of the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG), as stipulated by federal agreements between the two sides.

"Hoshiyar Zebari, a prominent politician and leader in the KRG, stated in a live television interview that the regional government may be forced to escalate the crisis further if Baghdad persists in its intransigence.

"Kuwait has long-standing friendships with the leaders of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, beginning with the late leader Mustafa Barzani, his son Masoud Barzani, and his uncle Hoshiyar Zebari.

"For decades, both the Kurds and Kuwait have remained an endless challenge to Baghdad's ambitions. Today, the Khor Abdullah dispute and the Kurdish salary crisis form a shared concern that unites Kuwait and the Kurds once again.

"History stands as a witness to Kuwait's support for the Kurds, which has often served as a strategic outlet in our ongoing struggles with Baghdad.

"The Kuwait-Kurdish relationship continues to be a vital path of stability and solidarity that helps us rise above the chaos fueled by the quasi-political thugs in Baghdad. In 1961, the Kurds stood with Kuwait. Now, in turn, our shared history and mutual interests call upon us to stand with the Kurds in their current crisis with the Baghdad government."

### Also:

"This question often comes to mind for those unfamiliar with the law - "Why is the accused acquitted despite the presence of circumstantial evidence or even physical proof of the crime?" Yes, it is true. There are many such cases reported in courts and newspapers. However, the full picture is often not available to the average observer," columnist **Saqr Muhammad Al-Majim** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

"One of the qualities of a successful lawyer is the ability to investigate the legality of the procedures surrounding the arrest before delving into the details of the charges. If the lawyer can prove that the arrest was conducted improperly or in violation of legal protocols, the charges may be dismissed, regardless of the evidence presented.

"Although the legal principle states that there is no crime and no punishment without law, we must not overlook the general principle that anything built on falsehood is itself false.

"The Court of Cassation has ruled that "Justice is not harmed by a criminal escaping punishment as much as it is harmed by an assault on people's freedoms." This underscores the vital role of the court in protecting human rights and upholding freedom based on the Constitution.

"In one notable case, the Court of Cassation overturned a previous ruling that had imprisoned a citizen on drug charges, and acquitted him due to the invalidity of the legal procedures, applying the principle that "what is built on falsehood is false."

"I invite the dear reader to reflect and share their opinion - Should punishment come before freedom?"



"Iranian diplomacy often uses the commemoration of Khomeini's anniversary as an opportunity to export the illusions of the "revolution" and promote its claims of supporting the "oppressed" around the world," columnist **Dr Khalid Ahmad Al-Tarrah** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

"The Iranian Ambassador to Kuwait, Mohammad Totonji, published an article in a Kuwaiti daily commemorating the "revolution" and glorifying the myth of "Imam Khomeini ... the beacon of freedom and independence."

"Of course, Iran has no civil liberties to boast about. It is a repressive religious state that does not separate religion from the state. Iran has committed crimes involving arrests, executions, and the suppression of freedoms - as seen in the case of Mahsa Amini and many others. Furthermore, Iran continuously interferes in the affairs of other countries, supporting terrorist groups such as Hezbollah, the Houthis, and the Iraqi Popular Mobilization Forces.

"Perhaps due to Iranian Ambassador Mohammad Totonji's lack of awareness of Kuwait's history of terrorism, he overlooked the 1985 bombings of popular cafes and the assassination attempt targeting the late Amir, Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad. We have not forgotten these terrorist acts, nor have we forgotten Iran's claims regarding the Dorra offshore gas field. Yet, it seems the Kuwaiti newspaper has. This may reflect a troubling decline in the experience and political acumen of some official bodies.

"Certainly, Kuwait's downgraded representation at the Arab League summit in Baghdad did not occur by chance. It is the inevitable result of the close relationship between the Iraqi government and Iran's mullah regime, which are closely tied to disputes over Khor Abdullah and the Dorra gas field. Iraq's stance on these issues clearly reflects Iran's deep penetration into the core of the Iraqi state.

"Colleague Faiq Al-Sheikh Nasr openly expressed his views on his X account regarding Iran's role in Khor Abdullah, the Dorra gas field, and its plans to destabilize Iraq.

"Has political and journalistic memory forgotten the so-called Abdali cell and the Iranian embassy's interference, as revealed in its official statement during the legal investigations into that terrorist cell?"

"The absence of deep historical and political analysis of Iran's diplomatic objectives has allowed Iranian Ambassador Mohammad Totonji to spread the illusion of "Khomeinism." However, Kuwait's firm stance against the brutal exploitation of freedom of expression may ultimately influence what is published.

"I would like to draw attention to the concerning issue of the Iranian school complex in Kuwait being under the influence of the Iranian embassy, specifically in regard to its curricula and the involvement of an Iranian diplomat in the administration of these schools.

"This Iranian agenda has also been echoed by a so-called lecturer at Kuwait University, Samir Arshadi, who has provided notable services to the Iranian embassy in Kuwait. Arshadi recently conducted a survey about Iran, distributed within Kuwait not for scientific or academic purposes, but rather for political objectives.

"One of the survey questions was particularly revealing, "What is the first thing that comes to mind when you hear the name Iran?"

— Compiled by Mahmoud Attiyeh/Simi K. Kutty



Al-Anba photo

A kid fiddling with the stove knobs.

## 'Kids major cause of domestic fires'

Parents be on lookout: Al-Gharib

**KUWAIT CITY, June 16: Brigadier General Mohammad Al-Gharib, Director of Public Relations at the General Fire Force, announced the launch of a public awareness campaign aimed at enhancing preventive safety awareness across the community. In an exclusive statement to Al Anbaa, Al-Gharib emphasized that the initiative is part of efforts to ensure a "safe summer" free from accidents, to bolster public safety, and to promote a culture of prevention as a means to minimize fire hazards and other seasonal incidents.**



Al-Gharib

Al-Gharib underscored the impor-

ance of citizens and residents strictly following safety guidelines—both at home and in public spaces. He urged people to take practical precautions such as avoiding the overloading of electrical outlets, inspecting electrical connections regularly, and disconnecting non-essential devices like exhaust fans, televisions, and computers before leaving the house.

He also stressed the importance of regular vehicle maintenance, including timely oil changes and coolant checks, and warned against leaving flammable items such as lighters, chargers, power banks, and electronic devices inside vehicles during hot weather. Furthermore, he advised drivers to refrain from smoking in their vehicles to reduce fire risk.

Brigadier Al-Gharib issued a special warning regarding children's behavior, noting that unsupervised play near heat sources or electrical appliances—especially in kitchens—poses a significant fire hazard. He identified children's mischief as a major cause of domestic fires and called on parents and guardians to maintain close supervision at all times.

This campaign reflects the Fire Force's ongoing commitment to public safety and its proactive approach to preventing accidents before they happen.

### Youth caught doing drugs

## Drugs with scared, confused expat

**KUWAIT CITY, June 16: Officers from Farwaniya Security Directorate referred an expatriate to the Drug Control General Department (DCGD) at the Interior Ministry after apprehending him for driving under the influence of drugs and in possession of narcotics in Ardiya Industrial Area, reports Al-Anba daily.**

A source disclosed that the officers were manning a checkpoint at the entrance to Ardiya Industrial Area when they noticed a car driven by an expatriate who appeared to be scared and confused. When he was asked to step out of the car, it became clear that he was under the influence of drugs. The offi-

cers then conducted a thorough search, leading to the discovery of narcotics and a hashish cigarette in his possession. He was referred to DCGD, along with the contraband.

In addition, officers from Hawally Security Directorate referred a young man, in his 30s, to the DCGD after catching him under the influence of drugs in Salmiya.

While conducting a security tour in Salmiya, the officers got suspicious of a car. They signaled for the driver to stop, and then found out that the driver was under the influence of drugs. They also uncovered narcotics and drug paraphernalia in his possession.



A makeshift 'baqala' is carried away by the municipality.

## Abandoned cars, mobile trucks lifted in campaign

**KUWAIT CITY, June 16: In a coordinated campaign led by the Al-Ahmadi Municipality and the Security Directorate of Al-Ahmadi Governorate, several neglected and obstructive items were removed from key areas across the governorate. The operation targeted abandoned vehicles and unauthorized structures in locations such as the Fahahel and Mangaf industrial zones, as well as open areas situated between residential neighborhoods, reports Al-Anba daily.**

According to a security source, the campaign was carried out under the directives of the head of the Al-Ahmadi Municipality sector, with on-site supervision by Muhammad Qunais Al-Hajri, Supervisor of the Al-Ahmadi Center.

The campaign's outcomes included the removal of two neglected chalets, a food truck, and eight abandoned vehicles. Additionally, authorities issued two official reports, affixed 27 violation stickers to abandoned cars and non-compliant facilities, and delivered three warnings along with four written pledges to rectify violations.

### Tinkering with 112 illegal

By Munif Naif

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

**KUWAIT CITY, June 16: The Ministry of Interior arrested a young man who called the Operations Unit through emergency number 112, causing a stir and laughter with his friends regarding the war between Iran and Israel.**

According to a security source, a video circulating on social media shows a young man calling 112; claiming to be afraid of the war between Iran and Israel. He then posted the video on social media.

Security forces apprehended the accused, a young man from a Gulf country. The necessary measures are being taken against him. The source pointed out that the emergency number -- 112 -- receives all reports with professionalism and high efficiency. He said the concerned employees have the ability to receive reports, deal with them quickly and respond to all calls made through this number.

### Court Cases

Jail, fine for embezzler

## Doctor fined for stealing KD3.5 drug from hospital

By Jaber Al-Hamoud

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

**KUWAIT CITY, June 16: The Criminal and Cassation courts issued a series of deterrent rulings in cases related to the embezzlement of public funds, professional negligence, and crimes against professional honor.**

In the first case, the Criminal Court sentenced a government employee to five years in prison, ordered permanent removal from his job and fined him KD35,000 for embezzling more than KD11,000 as underserved salaries while he was in pretrial detention in a drug case.

The penalty also extended to his direct supervisor, as the court ruled to dismiss him from his position and fined him KD3,000 for neglecting his duties and failing to inform the competent authorities about the employee's absence from work.

In a similarly stringent ruling, the Court of Cassation -- headed by Counselor Sultan Bouresli -- upheld a previous ruling fining a psychiatric assistant doctor KD500 after he admitted to stealing antidepressant medication worth KD3.5 from Amiri Hospital.

Investigations revealed that the doctor wore a mask to conceal his features while committing the crime, which he repeated several times to obtain medications not normally dispensed to non-psychiatric patients.

During the investigations, the doctor explained that he suffered from anxiety and depression for years and paid the price for the stolen medications.

Moreover, the Lawyers Disciplinary Chamber at the Court of First Instance issued disciplinary rulings against several lawyers for professional negligence. One lawyer was suspended for one year, another for three months, and a third for one month for missing crucial appeals in their clients' cases. A fourth lawyer was suspended for eight months for failing to attend with his client during the investigation into a complaint related to a bounced check and a seizure.

In a separate case, also headed by Bouresli, the Court of Cassation upheld a three-year prison sentence imposed on a citizen after it was proven that he attempted to leave illegally through the Salmi border using a Saudi identification card despite a travel ban imposed on him.

These rulings confirm the Kuwaiti judiciary's strict oversight of public funds, its commitment to professional duties and ethics, and keenness to implement the principle of accountability and to prevent impunity.

## Expat attempts suicide, faces likely deportation

**KUWAIT CITY, June 16: An expatriate narrowly escaped certain death after he was rushed to Sabah Al-Salem Clinic and later to Al-Adan Hospital following a suicide attempt by drinking a cleaning substance. According to a security source, security authorities received a report from Sabah Al-Salem Clinic about the arrival of a 25-year-old expatriate in critical condition.**

Upon examination, it was found that his body was full of toxins after consuming a cleaning substance, and he underwent a gastric lavage.

A security source said that the expatriate admitted that he attempted suicide by consuming a cleaning substance.

The source continued, "After providing the necessary medical care and stabilizing the expatriate's health, a suicide attempt report was registered, in preparation for investigation and determining the motives to take legal action."

A security source did not rule out the possibility of the expatriate being referred to administrative deportation, with his name being added to the list of those not permitted to re-enter the country.

33 centers to host Quranic, educational and cultural activities for students

Ministry of Islamic Affairs opens enriching summer clubs for youth

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

KUWAIT CITY, June 16: The Islamic Studies and Holy Quran Sciences Sector in the Ministry of Islamic Affairs announced the opening of summer clubs this year under the theme, “Our Summer: Constants and Values,” from June 22 to July 24.

Assistant Undersecretary for the Islamic Studies and Holy Quran Sciences Sector Dr. Bandar Al-Nusafi disclosed that “the ministry organizes a summer program

for students every year, based on its belief in the necessity of summer clubs as educational incubators that provide their members with everything enjoyable and beneficial to hone their skills, energies and creativity in a beneficial summer environment that is religious, educational and entertaining.”

He confirmed that the sector is keen on opening summer clubs every year to accommodate the students, indicating 33 centers in various governorates have been allocated for this year’s summer program. He pointed

out that the summer clubs organize their activities in a diverse and comprehensive manner; encompassing educational, cultural and recreational aspects.

He cited the faith-based and Quranic aspect; including memorizing and reciting the Holy Quran, lessons on the Prophet’s biography, and learning some simplified Islamic jurisprudence.

He affirmed that with regard to the educational and guidance aspect, the ministry works hard to instill positive values and behaviors by developing com-

munication and cooperation skills, not to mention the educational lessons.

He added the cultural and entertainment aspect includes mental and recreational games, all of which aim to instill and strengthen loyalty and the sense of belonging to Kuwait.

He called on parents to quickly seize the opportunity to register their children in these summer clubs, so that the benefits can spread in light of the positive atmosphere provided by the ministry.

CSC affirms Kuwait’s drive for government excellence

Arab states unite for better governance

KUWAIT CITY, June 16, (KUNA): The Civil Service Commission (CSC) affirmed on Monday Kuwait’s commitment and firm belief in the importance of excellence as a tool to enhance government performance, improve service efficiency, and reinforce the principles of quality.

Assistant Undersecretary for Administrative Development at CSC, Mohammad Al-Ahmad, told KUNA – on the occasion of Kuwait hosting the introductory workshop for the Arab Government Excellence Award – that the meeting marks the launch of the fourth edition of the award. The initiative is a joint effort between the Arab League and the UAE government and is held under the patronage of UAE Vice President and Prime Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al-Maktoum.

Al-Ahmad added that the award aims to promote excellence and leadership in government work across the Arab world, recognizing outstanding institutional and individual achievements and best practices.

He explained that Kuwait, through its participa-



KUNA photo  
Mohammad Al-Ahmad, Assistant Undersecretary for Administrative Development at the Civil Service Bureau.

tion, looks forward to achieving qualitative leaps in institutional performance that will positively impact quality of life and citizen services. It will also help build institutional capacities to meet future challenges and ambitions.

For his part, Advisor to the Sheikh Khalifa Government Excellence Program, Fahad Al-Su-

waidi, told KUNA that the award is open to all Arab countries. Its goal is to spread a culture of institutional excellence, promote pioneering practices, and encourage leadership thinking focused on excellence within Arab government entities.

He added that the award also seeks to enhance overall performance, drive continuous development in Arab government institutions, and provide a platform to exchange best practices and successful experiences for broader regional benefit.

Al-Suwaidi stated that the award’s vision is centered on promoting excellence across Arab governments by facilitating experience-sharing, ultimately serving societies and enhancing global competitiveness.

He noted that the award aspires to expand participation and spread the culture of government excellence across the Arab world, highlighting that GCC countries are among the most distinguished in terms of projects and achievements at the Arab level.

He concluded by stating that the award aims to showcase and honor exemplary government practices and celebrate distinguished efforts through a grand ceremony held at the League of Arab States, with the goal of improving government performance, quality of life, and the global competitiveness of Arab nations.

Commission cancels interim posts

CSC sanctions new ministry structures

KUWAIT CITY, June 16: The Civil Service Commission (CSC) has approved the new organizational structures of the Finance, Social Affairs and Public Works ministries; which will be uploaded on its integrated system, reports Al-Jarida daily quoting sources.

Sources confirmed the cancellation of the assignment of assistant undersecretaries in most government agencies that have amended their organizational structures, while retaining only those for whom appointment decrees have been issued. “This move is intended to restart the process of appointing directors-general and department heads in these agencies within a maximum period of one month,” they added.

Regarding the Ministry of Social Affairs, sources stated that the new structure of the ministry includes the creation of the director general position; with five directors distributed for Planning (three departments), Finance (four departments), Cooperatives (three departments), Development (five

departments), and Social Welfare (four departments).

Sources indicated that these directors will supervise and follow up the aforementioned departments, each according to their specializations. They noted that the directors general will be selected by the minister after they pass an interview with the Personnel Affairs Committee, headed by the undersecretary of the ministry and two assistant undersecretaries who will be appointed later.

Last month, the Civil Service Commission (CSC) approved the new administrative structure of the ministry, which includes 25 departments -- fewer by 10 compared to the old structure; while the following departments were abolished: Technical, Councils and Committees, Research and Statistics, Psychological Counseling, Activities and Media, Legal Studies, Membership Affairs and Publicity of Cooperative Societies and Unions, Citizens Service, Administrative Affairs, and Women and Children.

KD100 charge eyed for civil groups

MoSA reviews registration fee for public benefit associations

KUWAIT CITY, June 16: The Ministry of Social Affairs is currently considering the possibility of imposing a fee for the registration of public benefit associations, reports Al-Jarida daily.

The ministry cited two main reasons behind such a move -- first is to maximize its revenues and second is to ensure the seriousness of registration applications.

Following the issuance of Decree-Law No. 1/2025 regarding fees for the use of public facilities and services, which mandates each entity to determine these fees after obtaining Cabinet approval; sources told the daily that the Civil Society Organizations Department is considering imposing fee on new public benefit association registration applications. The ministry revealed that the proposed amount is KD100, which may increase or decrease depending on the Ministry of Finance, once the proposal is submitted to it for review.

Sources explained that if the aforementioned proposal is approved and the fee is set at KD100, those wishing to register will pay KD50 upon submitting the application. “The remaining KD50 will be paid after the Public Benefit Associations and Charities Advertising, Evaluation and Dissolution Committee approves the application and studies and reviews their bylaws. The first installment is non-refunda-



Dr. Al-Huwailah

ble, while the second installment will be refunded if the committee rejects the application. The ministry seeks to maximize its revenues and strengthen its financial resources, gradually transforming itself from a mere donor of funds to a revenue generator. This is in implementation of Cabinet directives aimed at reducing the burden on the State treasury by rationalizing spending and increasing revenues,” sources added.

Sources said the ministry also intends to ensure the seriousness of declaration applications and that those in charge are truly striving to provide effective services to the community, not for the sake of “social prestige,” especially in light of dozens of dissolution decisions recently issued by the ministry against associations that have been “dormant” for years or that fail to comply with the regulations, controls and requirements governing their work and do not achieve the objectives for which they were declared.

It is worth noting that eight associations have received their third and final warning. After the legal period has passed without any response to the repeated appeals of the ministry, a memorandum listing their names will be submitted to Minister of Social Affairs Dr. Amthal Al-Huwailah to take the necessary legal action against them, including dissolution and liquidation of their assets. If dissolution decisions are issued against these associations, the total number of dissolved associations will rise to 29, reducing the number of public benefit associations to 178 -- down from 207 previously.

App covers all areas during renovation

Rawda, Hawally Co-op launches 24/7 delivery

KUWAIT CITY, June 16: In a pioneering move for Kuwait’s cooperative sector, Rawda and Hawally Cooperative Society has launched a 24-hour online delivery service through its dedicated mobile application, reports Al-Rai daily.

The new service covers all areas of Kuwait, including chalets and farms, marking a significant milestone in the digital transformation efforts of the cooperative.

Omar Ahmed Al-Ansari, Vice Chairman of the Board of Directors and Head of the Technical Committee and Investor Branches at the cooperative, pointed out that this initiative reflects the commitment of the cooperative to providing a seamless and modern shopping experience that meets the expectations of Rawda and Hawally residents. “The service is accessible to all consumers -- shareholders and non-shareholders -- with an option to enter their cooperative fund number when placing an order,” he revealed.

Al-Ansari explained that the application offers access to a variety of departments, including the Perfumes and Beauty Center, Rawda Pharmacy, Rawda Café and Bakery, as well as the main cooperative market, allowing users to shop conveniently from multiple sections. “This digital leap comes as part of our innovative response to the temporary closure of the central market for renovations, which will continue until Oct 15. Our goal is to maintain uninterrupted

service and ensure that our community continues to receive the highest level of support without disruption,” he asserted.

He added that while the central market undergoes renovation, all spare parts branches and central markets in Hawally will remain operational around the clock to ensure the continued presence and accessibility of the cooperative. “Achievement is a mindset. We are committed to advancing on all fronts through projects and initiatives that strengthen our leadership in the cooperative sector, always striving to deliver the best for the people of Rawda and Hawally,” he stressed.

He reaffirmed the Board of Directors’ commitment to food security and the sustainable provision of strategic stock; noting that this remains a key pillar of the long-term strategy of the cooperative, implemented under the direct supervision of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor.

He expressed his sincere appreciation to Minister of Social Affairs and Labor Dr. Amthal Al-Huwailah for her continuous support for cooperative development, her encouragement of innovative initiatives, and her dedication to empowering young leaders in the sector. He also extended gratitude to the board members and the hardworking national staff at the cooperative, whose tireless efforts and strong sense of responsibility have been instrumental in the success of this national cooperative project.



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Kuwait champions energy transition and green technology

Gulf Vision 2025 conference to boost French-Gulf strategic partnership

PARIS, June 16, (KUNA): Regional Managing Director for Near and Middle East at Business Insider, Axel Baroux, stated that the Gulf Vision 2025 conference, to be held in Paris, would be a platform boosting strategic partnership between Gulf States and France.

The conference, to take place on June 17 and 18, is held under the patronage of French President Emmanuel Macron.

Speaking to Kuwait News Agency (KUNA), Baroux stated that the conference will explore key themes including bolstering sustainable economic development through energy transition, AI and innovation, healthcare, agriculture, transportation, education, and tourism.

The conference also sets out to translate ambitious projects into tangible agreements supporting economic diversity, facilitating investments and supporting sustainable innovation.

Kuwait's vision 2035 and France 2030 are in alignment, commented Baroux adding that the conference over previous editions included notable Kuwaiti personalities, which reflects clear interest in developing relations.

The 2025 edition marks a turning point in French-Gulf economic relations, he added, as it translate strategic ambitions into tangible, collaborative projects, as well as allow direct connection between French companies

and gulf decision makers, to build long-term relations.

France is the number one European investor in Kuwait, and eighth global, with a focal role in energy sector, infrastructure, transportation, he explained.

More than 50 percent of European companies in Kuwait are French, Baroux expounded, adding that they are providing more than 2,100 job opportunities.

He took note of the growth in cooperation between the two in health, education, services, green tech, especially as they come in line with Kuwait's policy of economic diversity.

France is represented by 89 companies in Kuwait, has

the confidence of Kuwaiti market especially in luxury, healthcare, cosmetics, infrastructure and food, commented Baroux.

Business France, explained Baroux, keeps up with some 2,000 French companies in the gulf providing field support, organizing B2B meetings, as well as conducting market survey and services for emerging companies, and youthful talents.

Baroux called on Kuwaiti investors to take part in Gulf Vision 2025 conference in Paris, and extended his invitation to decision makers and entrepreneurs to engage in fruitful economic dialogue.

4-stage plan to turn ideas into ventures

Youth Authority, Boeing introduce startup ‘Pre-Accelerator’ program

KUWAIT CITY, June 16, (KUNA): The Public Authority for Youth (PAY), in partnership with Boeing, launched the “Pre-Accelerator” program on Sunday as part of the Kuwait Technical Complex for Entrepreneurship project. The program includes four main stages that will take place both inside and outside Kuwait over several months.

Acting Director General of PAY, Abdullah Al-Adwani, said during the opening ceremony that the program is an integrated training platform aimed at honing the skills of young entrepreneurs and enabling them to transform their ideas into scalable projects. This initiative aligns with the goals of Kuwait's development vision (New Kuwait 2035) and contributes to economic diversification and enhancing the role of the private sector.

Al-Adwani affirmed PAY's commitment to creating a supportive incubator environment for entrepreneurs and offering quality programs that keep pace with rapid developments in technology and entrepreneurship. He highlighted their role in building a knowledge-based and innovation-driven economy. He also praised the fruitful cooperation with Boeing and the Public Authority for Investment Promotion (PAIP), which is supervising the project.

He stated that the program will provide professional training, foster interaction with global entrepreneurial ecosystems, and serve as a real starting point for launching impactful ideas that contribute to sustainable development. He also praised the enthusiasm of Kuwaiti youth for joining this pioneering program.

Al-Adwani explained that the Youth Authority's cooperation with Boeing in launching this initiative reflects the importance of activating partnerships with both international and local institutions. These collaborations are essential for building youth capacities

and expanding their horizons of creativity and excellence to support community development.

He expressed deep appreciation for the support of the Minister of Information and Culture and Minister of State for Youth Affairs, Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi, in achieving this milestone. He emphasized the program's vital role in nurturing youth preparing to enter technological and technical fields, and extended his gratitude to all those who contributed to the launch.

For his part, Managing Director of Boeing in Kuwait, Musaed Al-Hawli, said that the partnership reflects a shared vision of the importance of building a knowledge-based and sustainable economy, while enabling Kuwaiti entrepreneurs to grow and lead in an environment that fosters creativity and innovation.

Al-Hawli explained that the program represents a significant step in equipping young people with the tools, guidance, and knowledge to accelerate their entrepreneurial success, thereby contributing to strengthening the national economy. He reaffirmed Boeing's commitment to continue supporting young innovators on their journey.

He added that Boeing aims to deepen its partnerships with government institutions and the private sector to support development in Kuwait—particularly by investing in people, especially youth. He expressed pride in supporting this initiative with the Public Authority for Youth and the Public Authority for Investment Promotion, to empower outstanding youth and help them realize their ambitions.

The launch event also featured a detailed presentation by program officials outlining the program's stages, which begin with working sessions and discussion panels at the National Library over a two-week period, followed by additional phases conducted sequentially.

Municipal Council pushes Metro oversight, accessibility measures

Minister Al-Mishari's objections overruled

By Inaas Awadh  
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 16: The Municipal Council, under the chairmanship of Abdullah Al-Muhari, held its first regular session in the fourth legislative term on Monday.

During the session, the council decided to implement Article 25 of the relevant law against the objections raised by Minister of State for Municipal Affairs Abdullatif Al-Mishari regarding the minutes of the council meeting held on April 28, 2025.



Photo by Mohammad Morsi  
Under Abdullah Al-Muhari's chairmanship, the council addresses Metro project oversight, accessibility code updates, and infrastructure proposals in line with New Kuwait Vision.

The council also approved the proposal of member Farah Al-Roumi to define the scope of responsibility for monitoring the implementation and regular updating of the Kuwait Accessibility Code in accordance with the design. It contacted the relevant authorities to designate a liaison officer to facilitate communication with them. This will fall within the jurisdiction

allocation of a walkway in Block Seven in Kaifan;

■ Request of the Green Urban Development Initiatives Committee to replace the memorial located at the intersection of Riyadh Street and the First Ring Road;

■ Three requests of the Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy: first is to change the location of the secondary substation allocated in Block Two in Adailiya, second is to allocate a secondary substation site in Block Six in Kaifan and third is to amend the decision of the council dated April 1, 2013 regarding the Mubarakiya suburb division project, which includes amending the dimensions and area of 15 sites for secondary substations.

In addition, the council retained on its agenda the letter of Capital Governor Sheikh Abdullah Salem Al-Ali Al-Sabah about the proposal to establish a mechanism to oblige restaurants and cafés to adhere to the calorie count rule.

It referred to the executive body the proposal of member Sharifa Al-Shalfan to add a new item to Table One in the regulations governing construction work to provide parking spaces, and the proposal of member Fahd Musaed Al-Abdul Jader to establish regulations to develop the construction and design of bus stops.

Continued from Page 1

Iran needs

This comparison between Israel and Iran highlights the profound divergence in the visions of the two regimes. While Israel strives to strengthen its relations with the world and reassure its neighbors, Iran focuses on militarizing the state. As a result, Iran has spent billions on armaments and forming sectarian militias, even as its people live in severe poverty.

The ongoing war has exposed the true balance of power and revealed Tehran's vulnerabilities. None of Iran's neighbors wish to see it remain trapped in such dire economic and developmental conditions.

The only way out of this impasse is through the language of reason, as recently demonstrated between Pakistan and India. Both countries possess nuclear weapons, meaning that any escalation between them could lead to catastrophic consequences engulfing all of South Asia.

Today, there are serious calls and efforts to defuse tensions between Iran and Israel. If Tehran does not intend to build a nuclear bomb, it must reassure its neighbors and the international community. Likewise, if Tel Aviv does not seek to change the regime in Iran, it must also reassure the world and be willing to compromise. Otherwise, the path forward risks more violence, destruction, and potentially nuclear attacks and mass genocide.

Kuwait Fire

region, the role of a spokesperson has become all the more significant to ensure that they continue to perform their duties more efficiently," he said.

In addition, Kuwait Fire Force (KFF) affirmed its full readiness and the availability of its teams and equipment round the clock to deal with any emergency.

Director of the Public Relations and Media Department at KFF Brigadier General Mohammad Al-Gharib told Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) that all the land, naval and airport centers of KFF are ready to deal with emergency situations. He stressed that KFF is always prepared — 24 hours a day, 365 days a year — to receive and deal with all reports, whether serious or minor, through the emergency number 112, which receives all calls and ensures rapid response.

He disclosed KFF possesses a sophisticated system of modern mechanisms and technologies; including an advanced reconnaissance mechanism capable of detecting hazardous chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear materials, in addition to the ability to remotely detect gases and radioactive materials.

He added the mechanism includes an internal laboratory for analyzing gases and liquids, with the ability to take and

analyze samples inside the vehicle; thereby, allowing rapid identification of the type of hazard and efficiently deal with it.

He stated that KFF has “special personal protection suits for field personnel” that enable them to safely handle various types of hazardous materials, as well as a robot for remote detection and reconnaissance in areas that are difficult to access or that may pose a threat to personnel.

He confirmed that KFF uses an advanced system to inquire about weather conditions at the scene of an accident, which contributes to enhancing the accuracy of assessments and speeding up decision-making during field operations.

He called on everyone to cooperate and report any emergency situation immediately; stressing that KFF pays attention to all reports, regardless of their degree of seriousness.

Also on Monday, Kuwait Public Authority for Agriculture and Fish Resources organized on Monday extraordinary meeting of the agencies concerned with agriculture and food security in GCC countries, to discuss administrative, financial and strategic aspects of the Gulf food security.

During the opening speech, the Authority's Director General Salem Al-Hai said that this extraordinary meeting is being held in light of the accelerating challenges that threaten food and water security globally and in the Gulf region in particular.

Al-Hai stressed that the meeting will identify a common path that reflects the collective will to secure the future of GCC citizens, by ensuring food security and achieving sustainable self-sufficiency through strategic visions and implementable projects.

He added many topics will be addressed such as strengthening institutional and technical cooperation among member states, exchanging expertise and experiences in agriculture, production and food processing fields, accelerating implementing joint Gulf strategies, studying innovative solutions based on smart agriculture and modern technologies, identifying obstacles that hinder achieving food security, and developing collective mechanisms to address them.

Moreover, Iranian Ambassador to Kuwait Mohammad Totonji confirmed that Kuwaiti citizens in Iran do not face any problem traveling to and from Iran. He said the entry through land ports is available, and that communication with the Kuwaiti and Iraqi foreign ministries is ongoing to coordinate on this matter.

In a press conference held Monday morning at the embassy, he stated “we appreciate Kuwait's positive stances, especially the position of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, and the contacts made by Kuwaiti Foreign Minister Abdullah Al-Yahya to stop the Zionist aggression against the Islamic Republic of Iran and condemn the brutal attacks on residential areas, which have led to the martyr-

dom of dozens of people.”

Regarding Iran's assessment of the repercussions of this escalation on the security and overall stability of the Gulf region, he pointed out that “Iran did not initiate this conflict. What happened constitutes a blatant violation of international law and an act of aggression carried out by a rogue entity.” He asserted that this time, the Zionist entity committed a grave miscalculation and chose the wrong country.

He added “we have always respected the territorial integrity of neighboring countries, particularly the security and sovereignty of our brothers and sisters in the Gulf states. We will continue to implement the policy of good neighborliness and strengthen relations with the countries in this region, including the friendly and sisterly State of Kuwait. The doctrine of the Islamic Republic is based on respecting the sovereignty of states on one hand; and on the other hand, on strengthening a comprehensive defensive doctrine and protecting national interests through all available means. We will continue to adhere to this firm vision. Anyone who dares to encroach on Iran's territorial integrity will receive a decisive response that deters them.”

He stressed that “90 million Iranians, regardless of their political affiliations, have united today to stand against this criminal war and this child-killing entity. The entire world is watching the scene. Its support for the resistance and Iran's victory is growing day by day. Iran will not collapse or surrender. If it is — hypothetically — forced into a corner or pushed toward the abyss, it will not be alone. The Iranian people, just as they will always remember the aggressor, will also never forget their friends and supporters.”

He said Israel deliberately targeted civilian sites in Tehran and other cities, leading to the martyrdom of a number of civilians, including women and children; in addition to the assassination of military leaders, scientists and academics. He added that the attack targeted nuclear facilities under the supervision of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), posing the threat of a radiological disaster at the regional and international levels.

He stated that the Israeli attacks happened while diplomatic channels were still open, clearly aimed to undermine peace efforts and escalate tension in the region. He considers the incident not only an armed aggression, but a deliberate attempt to drag the region into a comprehensive confrontation.

He pointed out that the United States bears responsibility for this aggression, as the main supporter of Israel. He regards the attack as an indirect declaration of war on the Islamic Republic of Iran. He asserted “we did not want this war, but it was imposed on us. We will not expand it unless it is imposed on us.”

On the position of Iran towards its neighbors, Totonji emphasized that

Iran remains committed to dialogue and openness; but it will continue to defend its interests and sovereignty with all its might. He called on the international community to condemn the targeting of nuclear facilities and hold Israel accountable for what he described as a “criminal aggression” that crossed all red lines.

He stressed that “solidarity with Iran is a moral duty before it is a political one, because it is the only country calling for the liberation of Palestine from the sea to the river.” He explained that America wants to assert its hegemony over the entire region and will not accept the existence of a state outside its control that threatens its ambitions.

He added the Zionists do not differentiate between Sunnis and Shiites, or between Arabs and Persians; as they are rather hostile to the rising Islamic nation and all liberated and independent peoples, and that it is not permissible for a free and proud person to stand with Israel.

Elsewhere, the head of the U.N. nuclear watchdog agency said Monday that there is a possibility of both radiological and chemical contamination within Iran's main nuclear enrichment facility in Natanz following Israeli strikes, although radiation levels outside the complex are presently normal.

The radiation poses a significant danger if uranium is inhaled or ingested, International Atomic Energy Agency Director-General Rafael Mariano Grossi said.

The risk can be effectively managed with appropriate protective measures, such as using respiratory protection devices while inside the facilities, Grossi said.

“The level of radioactivity outside the Natanz site has remained unchanged and at normal levels, indicating no external radiological impact to the population or the environment from this event,” he said.

Grossi was addressing an urgent session of the IAEA's board in Vienna that was convened at the request of Russia to discuss Israeli attacks against Iranian nuclear facilities. He said that there apparently was no additional damage at Natanz and the Isfahan nuclear research site since Saturday.

He said that the main concern inside the Natanz facility is the chemical toxicity of a gas called uranium hexafluoride, which is the result of fluorine mixed with the uranium during enrichment. It's extremely volatile, will quickly corrode, can burn the skin and is especially deadly if inhaled, experts say.

“Amid these challenging and complex circumstances, it is crucial that the IAEA receives timely and regular technical information about the facilities and their respective sites,” Grossi said.

Without information, the U.N. agency “cannot accurately assess the radiological conditions and potential impacts on the population and the environment and cannot provide the necessary assis-

stance.”

Grossi said that U.N. inspectors would remain present in Iran and inspect the nuclear facilities “as soon as safety conditions allow.”

He warned that “military escalation threatens lives, increases the chance of a radiological release with serious consequences for people and the environment and delays indispensable work towards a diplomatic solution for the long-term assurance that Iran does not acquire a nuclear weapon.”

Jahra hits

According to Al-Ali, these north-westerly winds will become moderate to brisk on Tuesday, causing further dust, especially in open areas, and are expected to strengthen on Wednesday and Thursday, reaching speeds of 22 to 65 kilometers per hour. This will likely result in widespread dusty weather and sea waves exceeding seven feet in height.

He added that maximum temperatures are expected to decrease slightly by 3 to 4 degrees starting Tuesday due to increased wind and dust activity, with highs forecasted to range between 46 and 48 degrees Celsius.

Kuwait's electricity

and Abdali) due to increased loads caused by high temperatures; in addition to the shutdown of three power generation units at Doha Power Plant.

Meanwhile, Minister of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy Dr. Subaih Al-Mukhaizeem held a coordination meeting on Monday afternoon at the headquarters of the ministry to follow up regional developments and review preparedness to address potential environmental repercussions.

During the meeting, a number of experts from Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research (KISR) conducted visual presentations on the latest simulation systems and related scientific studies prepared by the institute as part of its research efforts to monitor and analyze potential environmental impacts.

Those present at the meeting affirmed continuous coordination between relevant authorities and the implementation of all preventive measures to preserve the vital resources of the country and mitigate negative impacts that may result from the current regional situation.

Undersecretary of the ministry Dr. Adel Mohammed Al-Zamel, a number of ministry leaders, Director General of KISR Dr. Faisal Salman Al-Humaidan, several experts from the institute, Assistant Undersecretary for Public Health Affairs at the Ministry of Health Dr. Munther Al-Hasawi, Director of the Radiation Protection Department Dr. Nasser Al-Juwaisri attended the meeting.



In this image provided by the Wheeling West Virginia Fire Department, cars sit submerged in floodwaters on June 14 in Wheeling, West Virginia. (AP)

West Virginia flash flooding kills 5

Flash flooding caused by torrential rains killed five people in northern West Virginia and rescue crews were searching for three other people who were missing Sunday as authorities assessed damage to roads, bridges, natural gas lines and other infrastructure. Officials said 2.5 to 4 inches (6 to 10 centimeters) of rain fell in parts of Wheeling and Ohio County within about a half hour on Saturday night. “We almost immediately started getting 911 calls for rescue of people being trapped,” Lou Vargo, Ohio County’s emergency management director, said at a news confer-

ence Sunday. “During this time, we had major infrastructure damage to roads, bridges, and highways where we couldn’t respond to a lot of incidents. So we were delayed in getting there because there was just so much damage.” Vargo added: “It happened so quickly and so fast. ... I’ve been doing this for 35 years. I’ve seen major floods here in the city and the county. I’ve never seen anything like this.” Authorities said vehicles were swept into swollen creeks, some people sought safety in trees and a mobile home caught fire. (AP)

Smith contemplates increased security

Man suspected of shooting two Minnesota lawmakers arrested

BELLE PLAINE, Minn., June 16, (AP): The man suspected of killing a Minnesota lawmaker and wounding another crawled to officers in surrender Sunday after they located him in the woods near his home, bringing an end to a massive, nearly two-day search that put the entire state on edge. Vance Boelter was arrested and charged with two counts of murder and two of attempted murder. He is accused of posing as a police officer and fatally shooting former Democratic House Speaker Melissa Hortman and her husband, Mark, in their home early Saturday in the northern Minneapolis suburbs. Authorities say he also shot Sen. John Hoffman, a Democrat, and his wife, Yvette. They were injured at their residence about 9 miles (about 15 kilometers) away. “One man’s unthinkable actions have altered the state of Minnesota,” Democratic Gov. Tim Walz said at a news conference after Boelter’s arrest. The search for Boelter was the “largest manhunt in the state’s history,” Brooklyn Park Police Chief Mark Bruley said. It began when Brooklyn Park officers went to check on Hortman’s home and saw her husband gunned down before the shooter fled. Authorities on Sunday located a vehicle Boelter was using abandoned in rural Sibley County, where he lived, and a police officer reported that he



This photo made available by the Ramsey County Sheriff’s Office shows Vance Luther Boelter, the man accused of assassinating the top Democrat in the Minnesota House, as he was arrested on June 15. (AP)

believed he saw Boelter running into the woods, Bruley said. Police set up a large perimeter and called in 20 different tactical teams, divvying up the area and searching for him. During the search, police said they received information confirming someone was in the woods and searched for

hours, using a helicopter and officers on foot, until they found Boelter. He surrendered to police, crawling out to officers in the woods before he was handcuffed and taken into custody in a field, authorities said. Jail records show Boelter was booked into the Hennepin County Jail

at 1:02 a.m. Central Time Monday and include two mug shots, one from the front and one from the side, of Boelter wearing an orange prison shirt. Meanwhile, lawmakers on Sunday continued to reel from the shooting of two Democratic Minnesota state legislators in their homes that led to the death of one and her husband, contemplating a previously world where democratically-elected representatives need full-time security details to protect them from the public. “I don’t want to think that I have to a personal security detail everywhere I go, but I think we really have to look at the situation that we’re in,” Democratic Minnesota Sen. Tina Smith said Sunday on NBC News. “This is no way for our government to work when people, any number of us, feel this kind of threat.” The state’s other US Senator, Amy Klobuchar, directly addressed the increasingly toxic atmosphere around politics as she remembered Hortman, who was killed in the attack. “These are real people, and before you start ascribing motives or going after them online maybe you should think about Melissa Hortman’s life,” Klobuchar, a Democrat, said on CNN. “This is a person that did everything for the right reasons. Regardless of political parties, look at her face before you send out your next post.”

Protester shot and killed at ‘No Kings’ rally in Utah: police

Trump directs ICE to expand deportations in Democratic-run cities, undeterred by protests

WASHINGTON, June 16, (AP): US President Donald Trump has directed federal immigration officials to prioritize deportations from Democratic-run cities, a move that comes after large protests erupted in Los Angeles and other major cities against the Trump administration’s immigration policies. Trump in a social media posting called on US Immigration and Customs Enforcement officials “to do all in their power to achieve the very important goal of delivering the single largest Mass Deportation Program in History.” He added that to reach the goal officials “must expand efforts to detain and deport Illegal Aliens in America’s largest Cities, such as Los Angeles, Chicago, and New York, where Millions upon Millions of Illegal Aliens reside.” Trump’s declaration comes after weeks of increased enforcement, and after Stephen Miller, White House deputy chief of staff and main architect of Trump’s immigration policies, said ICE officers would target at least 3,000 arrests a day, up from about 650 a day during the first five months of Trump’s second term. At the same time, the Trump administration has directed immigration officers to pause arrests at farms, restaurants and hotels, after Trump expressed alarm about the impact aggressive enforcement is having on those industries, according to a U.S. official familiar with the matter who spoke

only on condition of anonymity. Protests over federal immigration enforcement raids have been flaring up around the country. Opponents of Trump’s immigration policies took to the streets as part of the “no kings” demonstrations Saturday that came as Trump held a massive parade in Washington for the 250th anniversary of the U.S. Army. Saturday’s protests were mostly peaceful. But police in Los Angeles used tear gas and crowd-control munitions to clear out protesters after the event ended. Officers in Portland, Oregon, also fired tear gas and projectiles to disperse a crowd that protested in front of a US Immigration and Customs Enforcement building well into the evening. Trump made the call for stepped up enforcement in Democratic-controlled cities on social media as he was making his way to the Group of Seven economic summit in Alberta, Canada. He suggested to reporters as he departed the White House for the G7 on Sunday evening that his decision to deploy National Guard troops to Los Angeles was the reason the protests in that city went peacefully. “If we didn’t have the National Guard on call and ready, they would rip Los Angeles apart,” Trump said. The shift also came as Trump is grappling with the impact his mass deportation effort is having on key indus-



tries that rely on workers in the country illegally. Trump posted on his Truth Social site Thursday that he heard from hotel, agriculture and leisure industries that his “very aggressive policy on immigration is taking very good, long time workers away from them” and promised that changes would be made. That same day Tatum King, an official with ICE’s Homeland Security Investigations unit, wrote to regional leaders telling them to halt investigations of the agriculture industry,

including meatpackers, as well as of restaurants and hotels, according to the U.S. official. Meanwhile, a man who was believed to be part of a peacekeeping team for the “No Kings” protest in Salt Lake City shot at a person who was brandishing a rifle at demonstrators, striking both the rifleman and a bystander who later died at the hospital, authorities said Sunday. Police took the alleged rifleman, Arturo Gamboa, 24, into custody Saturday evening on a murder charge,

Salt Lake City Police Chief Brian Redd said at a Sunday news conference. The bystander was Arthur Folas Ah Loo, 39, a fashion designer from Samoa. Detectives don’t yet know why Gamboa pulled out a rifle or ran from the peacekeepers, but they accused him of creating the dangerous situation that led to Ah Loo’s death. The Associated Press did not immediately find an attorney listed for Gamboa or contact information for his family in public records. Redd said the man believed to be part of the peacekeeping team, dressed in a neon green vest, fired three shots from a handgun at Gamboa, inflicting a relatively minor injury but fatally shooting Ah Loo. Redd did not share the man’s name. Volunteer peacekeeping teams are common for protests, said Sarah Parker, a national coordinator for 50501 Movement, which was a partner in the “No Kings” protest. But the organizers ask attendees, including the peacekeepers, not to bring weapons, she said. Still, Parker said they stopped what could’ve been a larger mass casualty event. “Our safety team did as best as they could in a situation that is extremely sad and extremely scary,” said Parker. Ah Loo, known as Afa, was a husband and father to two children and a fashion designer who leaned into his Samoan heritage, according to a Go-

FundMe page organized to support his family. Ah Loo founded Creative Pacific, an event celebrating the diversity of the Pacific Islands, with workshops, artists and a fashion runway. He was on Season 17 of the fashion design reality TV show “Project Runway.” The gunshots sent hundreds of protesters running, some hiding behind barriers and fleeing into parking garages and nearby businesses, police said in a statement. “That’s a gun. Come on, come on, get out,” someone can be heard saying in a video posted to social media that appears to show the events. “No Kings” protests swept across the country on Saturday, and organizers said millions rallied against what they described as President Donald Trump’s authoritarian tendencies. Confrontations were largely isolated. In Riverside, California, authorities said a driver of an SUV struck a woman who was participating in a demonstration and sped away. The woman had “significant injuries” but was stable, police said, adding that they were still searching for the driver. Outside the Arizona statehouse, a social media video showed protesters Saturday jeering at and then skirmishing with a masked man, who eventually pulled out a handgun, causing the crowd to scatter. Another video showed Arizona Department of Public Safety officers taking the man into custody.



People march during a protest against overtourism in the Balearic island of Mallorca, Spain on June 15. Signs read in mallorquin, ‘For Sale’. (AP)

Spaniards turn water guns on visitors in Barcelona, Mallorca to protest mass tourism

BARCELONA, Spain, June 16, (AP): Protesters used water guns against unsuspecting tourists in Barcelona and on the Spanish island of Mallorca on Sunday as demonstrators marched to demand a rethink of an economic model they believe is fueling a housing crunch and erasing the character of their hometowns. The marches were part of the first coordinated effort by activists concerned with the ills of overtourism across southern Europe’s top destinations. While several thousands rallied in Mal-

lorca in the biggest gathering of the day, hundreds more gathered in other Spanish cities, as well as in Venice, Italy, and Portugal’s capital, Lisbon. “The squirt guns are to bother the tourists a bit,” Andreu Martínez said in Barcelona with a chuckle after spritzing a couple seated at an outdoor café. “Barcelona has been handed to the tourists. This is a fight to give Barcelona back to its residents.” Martínez, a 42-year-old administrative assistant, is one of a growing number of residents who are convinced that

tourism has gone too far in the city of 1.7 million people. Barcelona hosted 15.5 million visitors last year eager to see Antoni Gaudí’s La Sagrada Família basilica and the Las Ramblas promenade. Martínez says his rent has risen over 30% as more apartments in his neighborhood are rented to tourists for short-term stays. He said there is a knock-on effect of traditional stores being replaced by businesses catering to tourists, like souvenir shops, burger joints and “bubble tea” spots.

Greenland ‘not to be sold’ nor ‘to be taken’: Macron

NUUK, Greenland, June 16, (AP): French President Emmanuel Macron warned that Greenland is “not to be sold” nor “to be taken” in a key visit Sunday to the strategic Arctic territory coveted by U.S. President Donald Trump, saying he’s conveying a message of French and European solidarity. Macron expressed strong criticism of Trump’s intention to take control of the territory. “In a few words: everybody in France, the European Union thinks that Greenland is not to be sold, not to be taken,” he said during a news conference, applauded by the local crowd. “The situation in Greenland is clear-

ly a wake-up call for all Europeans. Let me tell you very directly that you’re not alone,” Macron added. S u n d a y ’ s symbolic stop to Greenland comes as the French leader is on his way to a summit of the Group of Seven leading industrialized nations in Canada that will be also attended by Trump. Macron was greeted in Nuuk, the ter-



Macron

First trip since Russia’s full-scale invasion

Ukraine’s President Zelenskyy visits Austria

VIENNA, June 16, (AP): Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy is visiting Austria on Monday in his first trip to the European Union member country since Russia’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022. Austria is famously neutral - a stance it declared in 1955 after World War II - and Vienna has come under heavy criticism since the start of the Russia-Ukraine war for maintaining ties with Moscow. Ukraine’s air force said Russia fired 138 strike and decoy drones at Ukraine overnight, mainly at the eastern Donetsk region. Of those, 125 were either intercepted or jammed, while 10 reached their targets. Eight others caused damage as falling debris. Zelenskyy was scheduled to meet with Austrian President Alexander Van der Bellen and Chancellor Christian Stocker, and the two presidents were set to hold a news conference later Monday. This is Stocker’s first high-profile visit from a foreign dignitary since he took office in March at the head of a previously untied three-party coalition after a record five-month wait for a new administration. Zelenskyy’s wife, First Lady Olena Zelenska, and Doris Schmidauer, Van der Bellen’s spouse, will also host a discussion about the role of women in



promoting peace and security during the trip. Austria, which was annexed by Nazi Germany in the run-up to World War II, declared neutrality after the war under pressure from Western allies and the Soviet Union. It sought a role as a mediator between East and West, developing ties with Moscow that outlasted the Cold War. The Austrian government has condemned Russia’s invasion of Ukraine

but also stressed the need to maintain diplomatic relations with Moscow. Vienna has sent humanitarian aid to Ukraine but no weapons. Former Chancellor Karl Nehammer was the first EU leader to meet Russian President Vladimir Putin face-to-face after the war started. Nehammer traveled to Moscow in April 2022 in a fruitless attempt to persuade the Russian leader to end the invasion.

Britain’s MI6 gets first female chief

OTTAWA, Ontario, June 16, (AP): Britain’s real-life spies have finally caught up with James Bond. MI6 has appointed its first female chief. Prime Minister Keir Starmer announced Sunday that Blaise Metreweli will be the next head of the U.K.’s foreign intelligence agency, and the first woman to hold the post since its founding in 1909. She is currently the MI6 director of technology and innovation - the real-world equivalent of Bond gadget-master Q. A career intelligence officer, Metreweli, 47, steps from the shadows into the light as the only MI6 employee whose name is made public. She said “I am proud and honored to be asked to lead my Service.”



A general view of the headquarters of the Secret Intelligence Service, MI6, in London on March 18. (AP)

Xi arrives in Astana for China-Central Asia Summit

## China welcomes Vietnam to join as BRICS partner country, says FM spokesperson

BEIJING, June 16, (Agencies): China welcomes Vietnam to join as a BRICS partner country, a Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson said on Monday.

Spokesperson Guo Jiakun made the remarks at a regular news briefing when asked to comment on the news that the BRICS chair Brazil announced the formal admission of Vietnam as a partner country of the group on Friday.

China welcomes Vietnam to join the BRICS as a partner country, Guo said, noting that Vietnam’s participation in BRICS cooperation will not only benefit its own development but also align with the common interests of BRICS and the Global South.

“We believe that Vietnam will make positive contributions to the BRICS mechanism,” the spokesperson added.

A new partner to the BRICS family marks a further expansion of the mechanism’s representativeness and highlights its appeal and influence, Guo said, noting that China stands ready to work with other member and partner countries to build a more comprehensive, close, practical, and inclusive partnership, advance the high-quality development of “BRICS Plus” cooperation, and make greater contributions to upholding multilateralism, defending fairness, and promoting shared development.

Also:

**ASTANA:** Chinese President **Xi Jinping** landed Monday to attend the second China-Central Asia Summit.

Xi was welcomed by Kazakh President **Kassym-Jomart Tokayev** and other senior officials at the airport.

After Xi’s plane entered Kazakh airspace, fighter jets of Kazakhstan’s air defense forces took off to escort it.

Kazakh teenagers and children, holding the national flags of **China** and **Kazakhstan**, warmly welcomed Xi’s visit.

Accompanied by Tokayev, Xi watched the march-past performed by the guard of honor, as helicopters bearing the flags of both countries flew over the airport. Inside the airport VIP lounge, the two heads of state also enjoyed performances by Kazakh teenagers and children.



In this photo released by Kazakhstan’s Presidential Press Office, Chinese President Xi Jinping, (left), walks with Kazakh President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev upon his arrival at the international airport outside Astana, Kazakhstan, on June 16. (AP)

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**HONG KONG:** China’s national security authorities in Hong Kong and the city’s police launched their first publicly known joint operation, raiding the homes of

six people on suspicion of colluding with foreign forces to endanger national security.

The police’s statement did not disclose the identity of the six people suspected of breaking the 2020 Beijing-imposed national security law between November 2020 and June 2024. Beyond their homes, officers searched the office of the organization involved and seized exhibits such as bank documents and devices for further investigation, according to the statement. The six people were required to surrender their travel documents.

Beijing’s national security arm in Hong Kong also had requested assistance from the city’s national security police, including in arranging interviews with the people in the case, the police said. But the local force did not elaborate details of their accusations and which organization it was, saying the investigation was still underway.

Since the 2020 security law took effect, many leading activists have been prosecuted or jailed for national security offenses . Last week, prominent young activist Joshua Wong, who was already convicted and sentenced over a subversion case last year, was charged for the second time under the law. He faces up to life in prison over the fresh charge of conspiracy to collude with foreign forces to endanger national security.

The Beijing and Hong Kong governments insist the law was necessary for returning stability to the city following massive anti-government protests in 2019.

In May, Hong Kong enacted subsidiary legislation for a separate, homegrown national security law, which was passed last year.

The subsidiary legislation requires public servants, if requested, to provide all necessary and reasonable assistance to Beijing’s national security office in Hong Kong. Local public servants must offer such help if the office needs to ascertain whether a case involves a special circumstance that could allow it to have jurisdiction over the case.

Over the past week, the Hong Kong authorities have stepped up their national security work as the fifth anniversary of the enactment of the Beijing-imposed law neared, including targeting a mobile game application which they accused of advocating armed revolution and promoting secessionist agendas.

### Asia

**Sydney shooting injures 3:** Three people have been injured in a shooting in Sydney’s western suburbs on Monday.

Police in the state of New South Wales (NSW) said in a statement that emergency services were called to a public place shooting in Auburn, 17 km west of central Sydney, about 1:15 pm local time on Monday.

It said that three people with gunshot wounds were being treated at the scene by ambulance paramedics. A crime scene has been established and surrounding streets have been closed. (Xinhua)

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**Police officer killed in Australia shooting:** A police officer has been killed in a shooting in the Australian island state of Tasmania, local police reported on Monday.

Tasmania Police said in a statement that an officer was approaching a house in the state’s northwest on Monday morning in relation to routine duties when they were allegedly shot by a member of the public.

The police officer was critically injured and died at the scene. (Xinhua)

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**‘49 dead in fire accidents during 5 months’:** A total of 49 people were killed and 67 others injured in fire-related incidents across Myanmar during the first five months of 2025, state-owned Myanmar Radio and Television reported on Sunday.



A person takes an evening walk on the shores of Geopraphe Bay of Indian Ocean, at Busselton town in western Australia on June 15. (AP)

From January to May, 610 fire accidents were reported, a decrease from 751 incidents during the same period last year, which resulted in 59 deaths and 62 injuries, the report said.

The fire outbreaks during this period caused damage worth over 570 million kyats (about 270,000 U.S. dollars), it added.

The main causes of the fires included negligence, faulty electrical wiring, and forest fires, it added.

To reduce fire accidents, Myanmar’s Fire Services Department is conducting an awareness campaign in schools and factories, the report said. (Xinhua)

### Hun Sen threatens Thailand fruits ban

## Thai PM denies border closure with Cambodia

BANGKOK, June 16, (Agencies): Thai Prime Minister Paetongtarn Shinawatra said Monday that Thailand has not closed its border with Cambodia but only taken some border control measures based on the evolving situation and security requirements, while stressing that Thailand will not accept any form of threat.

Speaking to the media, Paetongtarn clarified that the Thai-Cambodian border remains open, but the opening hours at crossings have been adjusted based on security assessment and the Thai side has communicated with the Cambodian side. Commenting on remarks and public messaging by the Cambodian side, Paetongtarn stated that such actions do not fall within the framework of official bilateral mechanisms and are unhelpful in resolving disputes, warning that they could lead to unnecessary misunderstandings.

To facilitate further dialogue, Paetongtarn said Thailand has proposed a meeting between the two countries’ military to discuss future cooperation and joint response mechanisms. Hun Sen on Monday said it would stop importing Thai fruits and vegetables if Thailand refused to lift border restrictions imposed following a deadly clash in one of the disputed areas between the two countries.

An armed confrontation at the bor-



Thai Border Affairs Advisor to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Prasas Prasavinitchai, second from left, attends a meeting of the Cambodian-Thai joint commission on demarcation for land boundary in Phnom Penh, Cambodia on June 14. (AP)

der on May 28 left one Cambodian soldier dead. The incident, which each side blamed on the other, reportedly took place in a relatively small “no man’s land” along their border that both countries claim as their own.

Cambodian and Thai authorities have engaged in saber-rattling since last week, and continue to implement or threaten measures short of armed force, keeping tensions high. Thailand has added restrictions at border crossings, and Cambodia has banned Thai movies and TV shows and implemented a boycott of the neighboring country’s international internet links.

## India and Cyprus to step up defense and maritime cooperation: PM Modi

NICOSIA, Cyprus, June 16, (AP): India will step up its defense ties with Cyprus through collaboration between the two countries’ respective defense industries, the Indian prime minister said Monday.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi didn’t offer details, but he said talks would begin on boosting bilateral maritime and cybersecurity cooperation. He said after talks with Cypriot President Nikos Christodoulides that the two countries would also set up an information exchange mechanism geared toward combatting the threat of terrorism.

Modi’s two-day visit to Cyprus, ahead of his trip to Canada for the G7 summit, is the first by an Indian prime minister in more than two decades.

In a joint declaration, the two countries also pledged to expand maritime cooperation through more frequent Indian navy calls to Cypriot ports and looking at enhancing joint maritime training and search and rescue operations. Modi underscored the role of the envisioned India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC) as a means to usher peace and prosperity in the Middle East.

Cyprus figures to act as the linchpin between India, the Middle East and Europe in the trade, energy and digital connectivity corridor, given the island nation’s geographical location as the nearest European Union country to the



India’s Prime Minister Narendra Modi, (left), and Cyprus’ President Nikos Christodoulides attend a news conference during their meeting at the Presidential Palace in Nicosia, Cyprus on June 16. (AP)

Middle East and India.

**Also:**

**HONG KONG:** An Air India flight returned to **Hong Kong** on Monday shortly after takeoff due to a midair technical issue, days after another of the airline’s flights crashed and killed at least 270 people.

Air India said in a statement that the **New Delhi**-bound plane landed in Hong Kong safely and was undergoing checks “as a matter of abundant

precaution.” Airport Authority Hong Kong said in a separate statement that Flight AI 315 returned to the southern Chinese city’s airport around 1 pm.

The plane was a Boeing 787 Dreamliner, the same model as the **London**-bound flight that struck a medical college hostel in a residential area of the northwestern Indian city of Ahmedabad minutes after takeoff on Thursday. The crash killed 241 people on board and at least 29 on the ground. One passenger survived.

## 45 minutes to pack up a lifetime as Pakistan’s foreigner crackdown sends Afghans scrambling

TORKHAM, Afghanistan, June 16, (AP): The order was clear and indisputable, the timeline startling. You have 45 minutes to pack up and leave Pakistan forever.

Sher Khan, a 42-year-old Afghan, had returned home from his job in a brick factory. He stared at the plain-clothes policeman on the doorstep, his mind reeling. How could he pack up his whole life and leave the country of his birth in under an hour?

In the blink of an eye, the life he had built was taken away from him. He and his wife grabbed a few kitchen items and whatever clothes they could for themselves and their nine children. They left everything else behind at their home in Pakistan-controlled Kashmir.

Born in Pakistan to parents who fled the 1979 Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and the ensuing war, Khan is one of hundreds of thousands of Afghans who have now been expelled.

The nationwide crackdown, launched in October 2023, on foreigners Pakistan says are living in the country illegally has led to the departures of almost 1 million Afghans already.

Pakistan says millions more remain. It wants them gone.

“All our belongings were left behind,” Khan said as he stood in a dusty, windswept refugee camp just across the Afghan border in Torkham, the first stop for expelled refugees. “We tried so hard (over the years) to collect the things that we had with honor.”

Pakistan set several deadlines earlier this year for Afghans to leave or face deportation. Afghan Citizen Card holders had to leave the capital Islamabad and Rawalpindi city by March 31, while those with Proof of Registration



Repatriated Afghan refugees arrive at a camp after crossing the Pakistan-Afghanistan border, in Torkham, Afghanistan on May 31. (AP)

could stay until June 30. No specific deadlines were set for Afghans living elsewhere in Pakistan.

Khan feared that delaying his departure beyond the deadline might have resulted in his wife and children being hauled off to a police station along with him a blow to his family’s dignity.

“We are happy that we came (to Afghanistan) with modesty and honor,” he said. As for his lost belongings, “God may provide for them here, as He did there.”

At the Torkham camp, run by Afghanistan’s Taliban government, each family receives a SIM card and 10,000 Afghanis (\$145) in aid. They can spend up to three days there before having to move on.

The camp’s director, Molvi Hashim Maiwandwal, said some 150

families were arriving daily from Pakistan - far fewer than the roughly 1,200 families who were arriving about two months ago. But he said another surge was expected after the three-day Islamic holiday of Eid Al-Adha that started June 7.

Aid organizations inside the camp help with basic needs, including healthcare. Local charity Aseel provides hygiene kits and helps with food. It has also set up a food package delivery system for families once they arrive at their final destination elsewhere in Afghanistan.

Aseel’s Najibullah Ghiasi said they expected a surge in arrivals “by a significant number” after Eid. “We cannot handle all of them, because the number is so huge,” he said, adding the organization was trying to boost fundraising so it could support more people.

### Lat/Am

**One dead, 5 injured after quake rocks Peru:** A 5.6 magnitude earthquake that struck off Peru’s central coast Sunday, rattling Lima, has left one person dead and five injured, authorities said.

The earthquake happened at 11:35 am local time in the Pacific Ocean, according to the United States Geological Survey. Its epicenter was located 23 kilometers (14 miles) southwest of Callao, west of the capital Lima.

A 36-year-old man died in northern Lima while “standing outside his vehicle waiting for a passenger” when a wall from the fourth floor of a building under construction detached and fell on his head, Police Col. Ramiro Clauco told RPP radio.

The five people injured are being treated in hospitals, the Emergency Operations Center said. The agency also reported damage to roads and educational centers.

President Dina Boluarte is heading to Callao to monitor developments, the Peruvian presidency said on X.

Footage shared by local media also showed cars hit by falling debris, damaged houses and collapsed billboards.

All of Lima’s districts felt the earthquake, Hernando Tavera, executive president of the Geophysical Institute of Peru, told local TV channel N.

Local radio stations reported that a professional football match at Lima’s Alberto Gallardo Stadium was paused for several minutes.

A mass at Lima’s cathedral was also interrupted, after frightened worshippers fled the scene.

Peru is located along the Ring of Fire, a path along the Pacific Ocean characterized by frequent earthquakes and active volcanoes. (AP)

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Iguazu water falls in Foz do Iguazu, Brazil on June 15. (AP)

**1 dead, 10 hurt in Brazil hot air balloon crash:** An unlicensed hot air balloon carrying tourists crashed Sunday in southeast Brazil’s Sao Paulo state, killing one person and injuring 10 others, the military police said.

Some 35 people were on board the balloon when it crashed in a rural part of Capela do Alto, a town near Ipero, from where it had taken off.

The dead victim was a 26-year-old woman.

Brazilian news channel GloboNews reported that the balloon was not licensed to fly for recreational or tourism purposes, and the pilot was arrest following the crash.

The Brazilian Balloon Confederation, based in the city of Boituva, also said the aircraft was not registered with the organization. (Xinhua)

### Sri Lanka ruling party nominee elected mayor of Colombo

COLOMBO, June 16, (Xinhua): Vraie Cally Balthazaar of the ruling National People’s Power (NPP) was elected mayor of the Colombo Municipal Council (CMC), which governs Sri Lanka’s commercial capital, on Monday after a secret ballot among council members.

Balthazaar received 61 votes, while her opponent, Riza Zarook of the main opposition Samagi Jana Balawegaya (SJB), received 54 votes. Two ballots were rejected.

The vote was overseen by Sarangika Jayasundara, commissioner of the Department of Local Government of the Western Province. Monday’s meeting marked the first time the CMC had convened since the local government election held on May 6.

The NPP won the most seats in the CMC election but did not secure an outright majority. As a result, both the NPP and SJB nominated candidates for mayor. The NPP secured a victory in the 2025 local government elections in May, winning 43.26 percent of votes and claiming 3,927 council seats, according to final results released by the elections commission.



Anura Kumara Dissanayake, (rear left), President of Sri Lanka, is greeted by German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier, (rear right), with military honors in front of Bellevue Palace in Berlin on June 11. (AP)

## CBK Bonds and related Tawarruq

The Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) announced the most recent issues of CBK Bonds and related Tawarruq at a total value of KWD (200) million for (3) months with Rate of Return (4.125%).

# Business

Initiative step toward creating financial awareness,fostering innovation to equip students for demands of banking industry

## Burgan Bank raises financial awareness and digital innovation initiatives by collaborating with AUK to empower the next generation of Kuwaiti talents

KUWAIT CITY, June 16: Burgan Bank recently hosted a field visit at its headquarters for students from the American University of Kuwait (AUK), under the umbrella of the Bank's comprehensive social responsibility and sustainability strategy, centered on nurturing and investing in Kuwait's national youth talents from an early age.

A total of 15 AUK male and female students were guided on a tour across the Bank's various departments as well as Burgan Lab, the Bank's dedicated innovation hub. By engaging the younger generation in real-world experiences, the Bank reinforces its vision to be the most progressive bank in Kuwait, driven by its employees, customers, and community. It also confirms Burgan Bank's commitment to being an innovative financial service provider, while translating its exemplary attributes of trust, commitment, excellence, and progression into meaningful action.

Commenting on the visit, Mr. Bashar Al-Qattan, Executive Manager – Learning and Talent Development at Burgan Bank, said: "It was a delight to host the AUK students at our HQ and introduce them to the latest banking innovations and technologies. Under the



Mr. Bashar Al-Qattan, Executive Manager – Learning and Talent Development at Burgan Bank.

"Teach Them Young" campaign, a primary factor of our robust learning and talent development program's success is that we acknowledge the importance of preparing talents at an early stage through visits such as this one, which opens them up to the real professional world, how it operates, and the technologies that continue to shape it. This



A group photo of AUK students with Burgan Bank representatives during a field visit to the Bank's headquarters.

enables them to make informed decisions as they embark on their career journeys."

For her part, Ms. May Al-Qabandi, Senior Manager – Innovation Department at Burgan Bank, highlighted the importance and long-term impact of exposing students to the real-life applications of digital transformation

and engaging them in conversations around approaching problem-solving with an innovative mindset. She emphasized that instilling innovation early supports Burgan Bank's vision to remain agile and future-ready in a rapidly evolving financial landscape.

Throughout the field visit, the students were introduced to Burgan



Ms. May Al-Qabandi, Senior Manager – Innovation Department at Burgan Bank.

Bank's adoption of the agile methodology across its operations, reflecting its collaborative, flexible, and efficient working style. They also participated in several interactive sessions and attended presentations that helped them gain a more comprehensive understanding of digital transformation, recognizing that it must begin with a

cultural shift before any enhancements to digital infrastructure can take place – a shift that empowers teams to adapt quickly to change, deliver innovative solutions faster, and meet evolving customer needs efficiently.

Finally, Burgan Bank representatives discussed some of the most vital banking awareness and financial literacy topics with the students, as part of the Bank's ongoing support of the "Let's Be Aware" (Diraya) banking awareness campaign, led by the Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) and the Kuwait Banking Association (KBA), with the support of Kuwaiti banks. This included tips about safe online banking, precautions against fraud and theft, as well as the importance of the savings culture and adopting a sound financial plan.

This initiative is one of many ways in which Burgan Bank delivers on its commitment to national development, social responsibility, and sustainable impact. The Bank regularly opens its doors to school and university students, participates in major career fairs, and curates immersive learning experiences aimed at equipping Kuwait's youth with the skills, awareness, and mindset needed for long-term career success in the financial sector.

## Kuwait Central Bank tightens rules on E-payment providers to boost oversight

Directive is part of a series of measures to strengthen public trust

KUWAIT CITY, June 16. The Central Bank of Kuwait has issued a circular reinforcing the regulatory framework for all electronic payment service providers, electronic money institutions and payment system operators, reports Al-Anba daily.

The circular mandates strict compliance with regulations governing the use of the Electronic Payment Services Gateway System, as part of the Central Bank's ongoing efforts to enhance governance, operational oversight, and risk mitigation in the digital payments sector.

This directive is part of a series of measures aimed at safeguarding the country's digital financial infrastructure integrity and strengthening public trust in electronic payment systems amid their rapid expansion.

The circular stipulates the obligations of service providers as follows:

■ Bear full legal responsibility for the accuracy and validity of all documents and data uploaded through the Gateway System. Violations may re-

sult in the enforcement of Article 85 of Law No. 32/1968 concerning Currency and the Regulation of the Banking Profession.

■ Documents must be submitted only by the legal representative of the company (Chief Executive Officer or General Manager) or an officially authorized employee (Compliance Officer or designated staff member). The Central Bank must be formally notified of all authorizations and any amendments in advance, through the prescribed mechanism.

■ Must promptly inform the Central Bank about resignations involving authorized system users and immediately request the revocation of their access rights.

■ Must retain original copies of all documents, especially the official documents issued by government entities, including criminal record certificates related to partners and leadership candidates. These must be submitted to the Central Bank upon request.

The circular reflects the commitment of the Central Bank to intensify digital oversight and ensure legal accountability. It aims to improve internal controls within service providers, protect against unauthorized actions, and reduce operational and reputational risks. For consumers, it reinforces

trust in the security and integrity of the national e-payment system.

The circular also cited the following regulatory tools:

■ Article 33 of the Central Bank's Instructions for Regulating Electronic Payment Business (May 14, 2023) requires firms to establish governance policies, procedures, and oversight mechanisms.

■ Article 27 of the same instructions requires compliance with Anti-Money Laundering and Counter-Terrorist Financing (AML/CTF) obligations under Law No. 106/2013 and relevant FATF standards.

■ Central Bank Circular (July 5, 2023) on leadership appointment regulations.

■ Central Bank Circular (Oct 20, 2024) on documentation requirements for registration of partners and board members.

Service providers must conduct an annual review to ensure board members and key employees meet the required solvency, integrity, and technical competence standards. Any changes affecting these standards must be addressed immediately and reported to the Central Bank in writing. They must also retain documentation evidencing the completion of these reviews.

### Card can be issued via KFHOnline app

## KFH introduces virtual prepaid card for secure payments

KUWAIT CITY, June 16: In a move to meet the evolving needs and lifestyles of its customers, Kuwait Finance House (KFH) has unveiled the Virtual Rewards Prepaid Card. Deputy General Manager Cards at KFH, Talal AlArbeed revealed that this new virtual card provides a distinguished and seamless payment experience that is both easy and secure. Notably, it can be instantly issued 24/7 through KFHOnline app, bringing convenience to KFH's digital-savvy clientele.

AlArbeed added that these cards offer a faster and a more flexible digital banking experience, enabling customers to manage their online purchases with ease. Customers can issue the card through the mobile app and add it directly to their digital wallets. Accordingly, they will have control and security for both local and international online and point-of-sale shopping. "The card is fully digital, consisting of 16 digits similar



Talal AlArbeed

to regular cards, along with a CVV security code and an expiration date," he explained.

**Environmentally friendly**  
Highlighting the advantages of the virtual card, AlArbeed mentioned that it provides customers with flexible payment options customized according to



KFH new cards

their needs, whether for online shopping, bill payments, or in-store purchases. He stressed the broader environmental and social impact of the card. These include reducing plastic waste and eliminating paper usage. It also contributes to lower carbon emissions by reducing in-person card delivery.

### AlArbeed:

- KFH card offers convenience and security
- KFH cards are environmentally friendly and offer new rewards and benefits

### New design

AlArbeed also touched on the latest card developments in terms of design, benefits and services, saying that the new design of the ATM, credit and prepaid cards reflects the Bank's commitment to offering distinguished customers experience. He added that these cards boast a modern and attractive aesthetic, with carefully selected color scheme that reflects the specific card categories. These cards also represent a step towards sustainability through their environmentally friendly materials, reflecting KFH's commitment to environmental responsibility and the provision of more sustain-

Store offers a full range of Apple products

## Gait opens standalone 'APP' store in Shuwaikh

KUWAIT CITY, June 16: Gait proudly announced the opening of its second Apple Premium Partner (APP) store in Shuwaikh, marking a new milestone in Apple's retail presence in Kuwait. This standalone APP store offers an elevated, premium Apple shopping experience closer to the heart of the city. With this expansion, Gait continues to lead as the only Apple Premium Partner in Kuwait.

The Shuwaikh store offers a full range of Apple products, including Mac, iPhone, iPad, Apple Watch, and accessories, in addition to exclusive Apple services such as consulting with Apple-trained experts, in-store setup support, repairs, trade-in services, and hands-on demos to explore the best of Apple. The store is also equipped with extended warranty plans through GaitCare and GaitCare+, giving customers added assurance with repair



Exterior shot of the Shuwaikh store.

coverage.

Flexible payment options, exclusive promotions, and business services further enhance the experience for individuals and corporate clients alike.

A subsidiary of Trafalgar Luxury Group, Gait was launched in 2018 in Kuwait as the first and only Apple

Premium Reseller in the country, offering customers access to Apple's innovative products and solutions through its flagship store at The Avenues. Since then, the company has expanded with four additional locations across Kuwait: Al Kout Mall, 360 Mall, Assima Mall, and

Shuwaikh. Regionally, Gait has also grown its footprint with two branches in Qatar – at Place Vendôme Mall and Printemps Doha. Customers can also shop Gait's full range online via [www.gait.com.kw](http://www.gait.com.kw), [www.gait.com.qa](http://www.gait.com.qa), and the brand's dedicated e-commerce platform.



An interior view of the Gait retail location.

## Boursa Kuwait closed higher

KUWAIT CITY, June 16, (KUNA): Boursa Kuwait closed higher on Monday, with the general index climbing 114.63 points, or 1.46%, to finish at 7,958.02. Trading activity was robust, as 422.5 million shares changed hands in 26,322 transactions, with a total value of 103.2 million Kuwaiti dinars (approximately \$315.7 million).

The Main Market Index advanced 119.08 points, or 1.77%, to 6,855.12, supported by the trading of 205.2 million shares across 12,234 transactions, amounting to 25 million dinars (about \$76.5 million).

Meanwhile, the Premier Market Index gained 119.20 points, or 1.40%, closing at 8,626.37. A total of 217.2 million shares were traded in 14,088 transactions, with a turnover of 78.2 million dinars (around \$239.2 million).

The Main 50 Index also posted gains, rising 112.94 points, or 1.68%, to reach 6,839.83. Trading volume for this index stood at 170.9 million shares through 7,302 transactions, with a value of 15.7 million dinars (approximately \$48 million).

ICAEW issues report for Q2

## GCC economies expected to grow despite trade shifts

ABU DHABI, June 16: GCC economies are poised for stronger-than-expected growth this year, despite mounting global trade tensions and depressed oil prices, according to the latest ICAEW Economic Insight report for Q2, prepared by Oxford Economics. The report highlights upgraded regional forecasts, with GCC GDP now expected to expand by 4.4% in 2025, up from an earlier estimate of 4.0%.

GCC: Growth outlook firm despite tariff headwinds

While global GDP growth has been downgraded to 2.4% - the slowest pace since 2020 - the GCC is bucking the trend. This is being driven by a quicker roll-back of OPEC+ production cuts, lifting oil-sector growth forecasts from 3.2% in March to 4.5%.

However, with Brent crude expected to average \$67.3 p/b in 2025, the region faces mounting fiscal pressure. Only Qatar and the UAE are projected to maintain fiscal surpluses in 2025, highlighting the challenge of balancing growth ambitions with budget constraints.

The impact of the US 10% tariff on imports from GCC countries is expected to be limited given the region's low US export exposure and the exemption of energy products.

Non-oil sectors in the GCC are forecast to grow 4.1% this year, supported by strong domestic demand, investment momentum, and diversification initiatives. The region is also favourably positioned to absorb any trade rebalances resulting from tariff headwinds and geopolitical tensions.

Saudi Arabia: Non-oil dynamism and higher output lift growth

Saudi Arabia's oil economy is now forecast to grow by 5.2% in 2025, up sharply from the 1.9% forecast in March, reflecting increased oil output and momentum. Production is averaging 9.7mn barrels per day, while non-oil sectors, led by construction and trade, continue to expand. In Q1 growth reached 3.4% y/y, driven by 4.9% expansion in non-oil activities in line with full year non-oil growth projection of 5.3%.

The rebasing of national accounts boosted the non-oil sector's share of GDP, reinforcing the Kingdom's diversification drive. However, weaker oil prices are expected to widen the fiscal deficit to 3.4% of GDP. With oil revenues down 18% y/y in Q1 and spending still rising, Saudi Arabia's debt-to-GDP ratio is forecast to edge above 30% in 2025. Despite the risks, investor sentiment remains positive, with S&P recently upgrading the Kingdom's credit rating to A+.

UAE: Investment and diversification power growth momentum

The UAE economy is forecast to grow 5.1% in 2025, driven by a recovery in oil output, a 4.7% rise in non-oil GDP, as well as deepening trade ties and enhanced market access. Tourism remains a key growth driver, with international visitor spending expected to contribute nearly 13% of GDP in 2025. In Q1, Dubai welcomed 5.3mn international visitors, up 3% y/y, consolidating its position as a leading tourism hub in line with the D33 agenda.

## Malaysia warns Strait of Hormuz closure, sees no oil price impact

KUALA LUMPUR, June 16, (KUNA): Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim warned Monday of real concerns that the escalation in the Middle East could close the Strait of Hormuz -- a key artery for oil and liquefied natural gas (LNG) exports -- though he said the dispute does not automatically affect oil pricing mechanisms.

He spoke after meeting Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) Secretary General Haitham Al-Ghais and other industry leaders on the opening day of the Energy Asia Conference 2025 in Kuala Lumpur on June 16-18.

On his side, Malaysian Foreign Minister Mohamad Hasan said that Malaysia will soon urge Iran not to shut the strait, stressing that closure would disrupt supply chains and raise global energy prices.

In his keynote, Anwar said Asia's energy transition must be rooted in justice, calling immediate abandonment of fossil fuels absurd when they still supply roughly 80 percent of global energy.

He urged a coherent financing framework to draw more renewable investment, noting Southeast Asia receives only 2 percent of global energy funding, and cited Malaysia's corporate renewable-supply scheme, third-party access model and green-finance mechanisms.

Anwar also announced major Malaysian investments by France's Total, Italy's Eni and Saudi Aramco, with several key agreements to be signed during the conference.

Meanwhile, Charlotte Wolff-Bye, Petronas vice-president and chief sustainability, said Asia is pivotal to the global energy shift and that cross-sector, cross-border cooperation is essential.

She noted Petronas is balancing local production with imports to meet rising regional demand.

The conference, themed "Powering Asia," brings together more than 180 speakers and 4,000 participants--CEOs and leaders from oil, energy, technology and finance--to craft a unified roadmap for investment and technology adoption, including a closed-door session for industry chiefs.

‘Good Evening Kuwait’ hosts Al-Rushaid and Al-Dakhil

## NBK showcases digital leadership and commitment to ‘Let’s Be Aware’ campaign

KUWAIT CITY, June 16: Mr. Abdulmohsen Al-Rushaid, Senior Vice President -Head of Digital Communications at National Bank of Kuwait (NBK), emphasized the bank’s integral role in supporting the nationwide banking awareness campaign “Let’s Be Aware” (Diraya), launched by the Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) in collaboration with local banks and Kuwait Banking Association. The campaign aims to foster financial literacy, promote financial inclusion, and educate customers across all segments of society.

Speaking during an interview on the Kuwait TV show “Good Evening Kuwait”, Al-Rushaid stated: “At NBK, we operate around the clock to track the latest fraud schemes, raise customer awareness, and provide guidance on how to avoid falling victim to these scams through educational content shared across our social media platforms.”

He also underscored the importance of the Virtual Central Room, launched jointly by Kuwait Banking Association, local banks, and relevant authorities including the Ministry of Interior and the Public Prosecution, under the direction of CBK. Al-Rushaid described this initiative as the first line of defense against cyber fraud, noting that it operates 24/7 to receive fraud reports and monitor suspicious activity – enhancing customer safety and reinforcing confidence in the banking sector.

Al-Rushaid further noted that the “Let’s Be Aware” campaign is the largest of its kind in the region, significantly contributing to improved financial awareness among the public.

He urged the public to remain vigilant, follow the bank’s security guidelines shared across all digital platforms, and refrain from disclosing any personal or banking information to unauthorized parties. He also cautioned against responding to messages or calls that falsely claim to be from the bank and request sensitive data.

He explained that the bank will never request personal information via email, text messages, or phone calls, warning that any such communication is likely a fraud attempt designed to steal banking credentials, sensitive data, or funds.

Furthermore, He reiterated NBK’s strong commitment to promoting banking awareness, especially among older generations who are more vulnerable to scams due to the advanced technologies and artificial intelligence tools used by fraudsters.

Al-Rushaid also warned against booking accommodations through unverified websites or brokers. He advised verifying the legitimacy of any company or platform by inspecting properties in person before making payments, to avoid fraud.

In cases of suspicious activity, customers are encouraged to contact the bank immediately and activate transaction alerts via the NBK Mobile App to receive real-time notifications.

Leveraging its robust communication infrastructure and leading digital presence among Kuwaiti banks, NBK aims to ensure maximum reach and



Abdulmohsen Al-Rushaid and Mohammad Al-Dakhil during the TV interview.

**Al-Rushaid:**

- Vigilant Around the Clock to Detect Fraud and Educate Customers
- NBK Reinforces Its Commitment to Promoting Banking Awareness Across All Segments
- Leading Digital Engagement Among Kuwaiti Banks to Maximize Public Outreach

**Al-Dakhil:**

- Advancing Digital Excellence Through Innovation and Service Enhancement
- NBK Empowers Customers to Suspend Cards Instantly via the NBK Mobile Banking App in Case of Suspicious Activity
- First Bank in Kuwait to Offer Fully Digital Account Opening Through the NBK Mobile Banking App.

effectiveness for the campaign’s educational messages.

**Digital Excellence**

Mr. Mohammad Al-Dakhil, Assistant Vice President – Digital Business at NBK, confirmed that customers can now temporarily suspend their bank cards through the NBK Mobile Banking App if they suspect any unusual account activity.

During the interview, Al-Dakhil stated: “At NBK, we are committed to advancing our digital leadership through the services offered on our Mobile Banking App, which is a key platform for customers conducting their day-to-day banking. We continually strive to introduce new features and enhancements that deliver a superior digital banking experience – one that not only meets, but exceeds, customer expectations.”

He added that the bank is consistently innovating to enrich the digital journey, citing the recent launch of the full account opening service via NBK BankingMobile App – making NBK the first bank in Kuwait to offer this function digitally.

The NBK Mobile Banking App also allows customers to issue digital pre-paid gift cards. These virtual cards can be easily created, loaded, and sent to friends or family for use in stores or online, both within Kuwait and abroad. The recipient can instantly add the card to their digital wallet and begin using it for purchases.

Al-Dakhil also highlighted the success of the WAMD service, developed in partnership with KNET. The service allows for fast, seamless money transfers at any time of day, offering users a streamlined transfer process with just a few steps.

In the meantime, Al-Dakhil further spotlighted the cutting-edge services offered by Weyay Bank – the first digital bank in Kuwait. Among its key innovations is the introduction of a fully digital loan application process for both personal and housing loans, allowing customers to submit documents, receive approvals, and sign contracts entirely through the app.

Weyay has also launched Jeel, a first-of-its-kind digital experience in Kuwait tailored for children aged 8 to 14. The service enables young users to manage their spending under parental supervision, fostering early financial literacy through a dedicated child-friendly app interface.

Thanks to its pioneering digital services, Weyay Bank has earned several prestigious accolades, most notably being named Best Digital Bank in Kuwait by Euromoney at the 2025 Middle East Excellence Awards. The recognition affirms Weyay’s leadership in delivering innovative digital banking solutions tailored to evolving customer needs.

Since its launch, Weyay Bank has transformed the digital banking landscape in Kuwait by offering a comprehensive suite of services – from account opening and savings management to local and international transfers, and digital loan access – empowering customers to manage their finances flexibly and efficiently.

### ‘Metro expansion to have massive real estate effect, shape Dubai’s future as global, liveable, and investable city’

## Blue Line to transform Dubai’s urban economy, turn infrastructure into ‘wealth generator’

DUBAI, UAE, June 16: The Dubai Metro Blue Line will transform Dubai’s urban economy, as connectivity becomes the new currency of real estate in the city, turning infrastructure into a wealth generator, a leading property expert says.

Firas Al Msaadi, CEO of fam Properties, said the Blue Line expansion will advance Dubai’s future as a global, liveable, and investable city, bringing massive implications for real estate.

“This is not just a metro expansion, this is a game-changer for Dubai’s urban economy,” says Al Msaadi. “The moment you cut commute time you raise the productivity of the entire city.

“Transportation is not about movement - it’s about time, opportunity, and value creation. With the Blue Line, Dubai is not only connecting nine key

districts, it’s connecting people to possibilities.

“Property values in and around the Blue Line - especially Dubai Creek Harbour, Academic City, and Dubai Silicon Oasis - are bound to see a clear upward shift. Connectivity is the new currency of real estate.

“But the impact will be city-wide, even for those who never use the metro. Less traffic, smarter logistics, higher efficiency - that’s how infrastructure becomes a wealth generator.

Construction on the mega project began last week with the laying of the foundation stone for the first station at Dubai Creek Harbour, and Al Msaddi said: “Once completed, this will be one of the most advanced, modern, and high-impact transportation networks in the world.

“But it’s not just about stations - it’s

about shaping the future of Dubai as a global, liveable, and investable city. The Blue Line is the foundation of a faster, more productive, more connected Dubai, and the implications for real estate are massive.”

Metro and other transit projects have had a positive impact on residential properties in many major cities. “Dubai will be no different,” says Al Msaadi. “In fact, it may see an even greater impact, because its productivity is impacted by traffic like any global megacity.

“When you reduce commute times, you unlock economic output. People arrive earlier, businesses operate smoother, areas become liveable. You expand the map of investable zones.”

Among the consequences he identifies are:

- More demand for housing in connected districts

- More investor attention to undervalued areas like Academic City, Dubai Silicon Oasis, and International City
- Premium uplift in prime projects near metro lines, with Creek Harbour already in motion
- Higher rental yields for units within walking distance to stations
- Developers will rethink their masterplans with ‘metro-first’ logic

“Transportation is the one thing that benefits everyone, even those not using the metro,” says Al Msaadi. “When others take the train, you drive with less traffic. When a city becomes more fluid, your asset appreciates.

“This is how global capital flows follow infrastructure, and this is exactly the type of move that positions Dubai for long-term competitiveness in global liveability and investment benchmarks.”



The Blue Line expansion can advance Dubai’s future as a global, liveable, and investable city, bringing massive implications for real estate.

### External uncertainties regardless

## China’s economy maintained steady momentum in May

BEIJING, June 16, (Xinhua): China’s economy continued to expand steadily in May, supported by ongoing policy measures that helped sustain recovery amid global uncertainties, official data showed on Monday.

Key economic indicators -- industrial production, retail sales, investment and services -- extended gains last month, while employment continued its stable trend, according to the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS).

Noting “a rapidly changing international environment,” NBS spokesperson Fu Linghui said that China’s economy has demonstrated strong resilience and vitality, backed by government efforts to expand domestic demand and maintain the stability of employment, businesses, markets and expectations.

China’s consumer spending in May posted its strongest growth in nearly 18 months, with retail sales of consumer goods expanding 6.4 percent year on year in May, a 1.3-percentage-point increase from April.

The services sector accelerated, with the services production index climbing 6.2 percent last month, accelerating from the 6 percent growth recorded in April. “Growing domestic consumption and holiday travel drove faster services growth,” Fu noted.

Industrial production rose 5.8 percent year on year in May, NBS data shows, with equipment and high-tech manufacturing leading with 9 percent and 8.6 percent respective growth figures.

Fixed-asset investment increased 3.7 percent year on year in the first five months of 2025.

On the job front, the average surveyed urban unemployment rate in China stood at 5 percent in May, down 0.1 percentage points from April.

“The unemployment rate among the main working population remained stable, with the youth unemployment rate declining for a third consecutive month, reflecting continued stability in the overall job market,” Fu revealed.

He told press that May’s stable economic performance was built on sustained macro policy efforts, which facilitated demand expansion, production growth and improved expectations, and unleashed economic vitality.

“The country’s trade-in policies significantly accelerated relevant consumer goods sales,” he noted in particular. Retail sales of household appliances and audio-visual equipment, communication devices, furniture, and cultural and office supplies grew between 25.6 percent and 53 percent year on year last month.

“Together, these categories contributed 1.9 percentage points to the overall growth of retail sales of consumer goods,” Fu said.

China launched a consumer goods trade-in program last year to boost consumer spending, subsidizing trade-ins of automobiles, home appliances and home decoration products. It expanded the scope of the program earlier this year.

**KANANASKIS, Alberta, June 16, (AP): When U.S. President Donald Trump last came to Canada for a Group of Seven summit, the enduring image was of him seated with his arms folded defiantly as then-German Chancellor Angela Merkel stared daggers at him.**

If there is a shared mission at this year’s G7 summit, which begins Monday in Canada’s Rocky Mountains, it is a desire to minimize any fireworks at a moment of combustible tensions.

The 2018 summit ended with Trump assailing his Canadian hosts on social media as he departed on Air Force One, saying he had instructed the U.S. officials who remained in Quebec to oppose the G7 joint statement endorsed by the leaders of Japan, France, the United Kingdom, Italy, Germany and, of course, Canada.

“I have instructed our U.S. Reps not to endorse the Communiqué as we look at Tariffs on automobiles flooding the U.S. Market!” Trump posted on the site then known as Twitter.

This time, Trump already has hit several dozen nations with severe tariffs that risk a global economic slowdown. There is little progress on



President Donald Trump arrives on Air Force One at Calgary International Airport, Sunday, June 15, 2025, in Calgary, Canada, ahead of the G7 Summit. (AP)

settling the wars in Ukraine and Gaza and now a new and escalating conflict between Israel and Iran over Tehran’s nuclear program.

Add to all of that the problems of climate change, immigration, drug trafficking, new technologies such as artificial intelligence and China’s continued manufacturing superiority and chokehold on key supply chains.

Asked if he planned to announce any trade agreements at the G7 as he left the White House on Sunday, Trump said:

“We have our trade deals. All we have to do is send a letter. ‘This is what you’re going to have to pay.’ But I think we’ll have a few, few new trade deals.”

At stake might be the survival of the G7 itself at a time when the Trump administration has sent mixed signals about whether the president will attend the November Group of 20 summit in South Africa.

What Trump opposed at the 2018 summit in Quebec wasn’t just tariffs, but a focus on having alliances with

a shared set of standards seeking to shape policies.

“The big dispute in Quebec were the references to the rules-based international order and that’s where that famous photo comes from,” said Peter Boehm, Canada’s counselor at the 2018 G7 summit in Quebec and a veteran of six G7 summits. “I think it gave everyone the idea that G7s were maybe not business as usual.”

The German, U.K., Japanese and Italian governments have each signaled a belief that a friendly relationship with Trump this year can reduce the likelihood of outbursts.

“Well, I have got a good relationship with President Trump, and that’s important,” U.K. Prime Minister Keir Starmer said Saturday as he flew to Canada.

There is no plan for a joint statement this year from the G7, a sign that the Trump administration sees no need to build a shared consensus with fellow democracies if it views such a statement as contrary to its goals of new tariffs, more fossil fuel production and a Europe that is less dependent on the U.S. military.

“The Trump administration almost certainly believes that no deal is better than a bad deal,” said Caitlin Welsh, a director at the Center for Strategic and International Studies think tank who was part of Trump’s team for the G7 in Trump’s first term.

Dow Jones Industrial Average up 0.5%.

## Global shares gain while oil prices ease on Day 4 of latest Israel-Iran crisis

HONG KONG, June 16, (AP): Global shares have advanced and oil prices have fallen back slightly as Iran unleashed a fresh wave of missile attacks on Israel early Monday.

Israel’s attack on Iranian nuclear and military targets caused the price of oil to surge more than 7% on Friday since Iran is one of the world’s major producers of oil, though sanctions by Western countries have limited its sales.

A wider war could slow the flow of Iranian oil to its customers and keep prices of crude and gasoline higher for everyone worldwide. But early Monday, those concerns appeared to abate slightly.

U.S. benchmark crude oil lost 73 cents to \$72.25 per barrel. Brent crude, the international standard, gave up 73 cents to \$73.50 per barrel. They are trading at their highest levels so far this year.

In share trading, the futures for the S&P 500 and the Dow Jones Industrial Average were up 0.5%.

Germany’s DAX gained 0.2% to 23,572.39 and the CAC 40 in Paris edged 0.6% higher to 7,728.66. Britain’s FTSE 100 inched up 0.3% to 8,876.26.

During Asian trading, Tokyo’s Nikkei 225 added 1.3% to 38,311.33, while the Kospi in Seoul gained 1.8% to 2,946.66.

Chinese markets gained after data for May showed stronger consumer spending but slower growth in factory activity and investment. A 6.1% year-on-year jump in retail sales was offset by lower than expected growth in industrial output, which rose 5.8% from a year earlier.

Hong Kong’s Hang Seng surged 0.7% to 24,060.99 and the Shanghai Composite Index added 0.4% to 3,388.73.

CALGARY, Alberta, June 16, (AP): President Donald Trump would have unique influence over the operations of U.S. Steel under the terms of what the White House calls an “investment” being made by Japan-based Nippon Steel in the iconic American steelmaker.

Administration officials over the past few days provided additional insight into the “golden share” arrangement that the federal government made as a condition for supporting the deal.

The Pittsburgh-based steel maker and Nippon Steel plan \$11 billion in new investments by 2028 after indicating that they plan to move forward with the deal under the terms of a national

security agreement that has the White House’s approval.

The White House has described the deal as a “partnership” and an “investment” by Nippon Steel in U.S. Steel, although Nippon Steel has never backed off its stated intention of buying and controlling U.S. Steel as a wholly owned subsidiary in a nearly \$15 billion offer it originally made in late 2023.

Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick posted on social media on Saturday how the “golden share” to be held by the president would operate, revealing that the White House is willing to insert itself aggressively into a

private company’s affairs even as it has simultaneously pledged to strip away government regulations so businesses can expand.

Under the government’s terms, it would be impossible without Trump’s consent to relocate U.S. Steel’s headquarters from Pittsburgh, change the name of the company, “transfer production or jobs outside the United States,” shutter factories, or reincorporate the business overseas, among other powers held by the president.

Lutnick also said it would require presidential approval to reduce or delay \$14 billion in planned investments.

Roses, avocados and essential oils win over Chinese buyers

# China-Africa Expo opens wider doors to African products



An exhibitor (left) communicates with visitors during the fourth China-Africa Economic and Trade Expo at Changsha International Convention and Exhibition Center in Changsha, central China's Hunan Province, June 13, 2025. (Xinhua)

‘ Vibrant colors filled every corner, offering visitors a sensory journey through Africa’s rich soil, artisanal craftsmanship, and growing economic potential. ’

CHANGSHA, June 16, (Xinhua): For Huang Zinan, an ideal day begins with a blooming Kenyan rose, the aroma of Ethiopian coffee brewing and Tanzanian fish gliding through her living room tank, a lifestyle she’s striving to introduce to more Chinese households.

At the ongoing China-Africa Economic and Trade Expo in Changsha, capital of central China’s Hunan Province, Huang, chairwoman of Hunan Xiyue International Trade Co., Ltd., unveiled her latest offerings, with three booths featuring fresh-cut roses and avocados from Kenya, alongside ornamental fish from Tanzania.

Her company is among thousands of firms from China and across Africa taking part in the expo, all aiming to bring the continent’s goods to China’s vast and increasingly globally minded consumer market.

Huang currently works with seven flower farms in Kenya, shipping freshly cut blooms to more than a dozen Chinese cities. Her imported avocados are also gaining traction,

recently featured in a trial run at a popular fruit tea chain in Changsha.

“Kenyan flowers are known for their large blooms, rich variety, and long vase life, and they’ve become increasingly popular among Chinese consumers,” Huang said. “As for avocados, the market potential in China is enormous. They appeal to health-conscious buyers and fit perfectly into beverages, salads, and fitness diets.”

Huang’s efforts have blossomed as the world’s largest developing country continues to open its markets wider to Africa -- the continent with the largest number of developing nations -- fostering mutual growth amid rising global protectionism and a slowdown in traditional markets.

China had been Africa’s largest trading partner for 16 consecutive years by the end of 2024. China’s total trade value with Africa increased from less than 100 billion yuan (about 14 billion U.S. dollars) in 2000 to 2.1 trillion yuan in 2024, registering an average annual growth

rate of 14.2 percent.

**Expanding purchase list**

Across the exhibition hall, the aroma of roasted Ethiopian coffee mingled with the pungency of Rwandan chili sauce. Vibrant colors filled every corner, offering visitors a sensory journey through Africa’s rich soil, artisanal craftsmanship, and growing economic potential.

For Chahalane Houdadi Charif, director of Mayecha Corporation, a Comorian company specializing in clove, vanilla, and ylang-ylang essential oils, the journey to China proved rewarding.

Worried at first that his small business might be overlooked, Charif found unexpected support from the expo organizers, who helped him connect with interested Chinese companies and entrepreneurs.

One of them was Yang Daiyu, a businessman who operates a chain of traditional Chinese medicine clinics. Yang and Charif quickly reached a preliminary cooperation agreement.

“Our clinics focus on traditional

Chinese massage and use around a tonne of therapeutic essential oils annually, so we’re interested in sourcing plant-based oils from Africa,” Yang said. “We hope the cooperation can also help bring our traditional Chinese massage to the African market.”

“In Africa, we may not have the world’s most advanced technology, but we are blessed with abundant natural resources. What we need is partnership,” Charif said. “Win-win cooperation is the true path to a better life.”

As China advances its high-level opening-up, a growing number of African products are entering the Chinese market, especially appealing to the country’s more than 400 million middle-income consumers seeking organic, globally sourced goods.

China imported 15.83 billion yuan worth of agricultural goods from Africa in the first five months of 2025. Imports of coffee, cocoa beans and frozen strawberries surged by

145.7 percent, 88.6 percent, and 82 percent, respectively, according to Chinese customs data.

“Over the past few years, both the variety and volume of African imports have steadily increased,” said Che Dong with Shandong-based Weihai Huatan Supply Chain Management Co., Ltd. The company will soon receive its first batch of Tanzanian honey, about 10 tonnes, which will enter China duty-free and be sold in local stores.

“We started with wine, then expanded to coffee, honey, and we’re now eyeing seafood,” he said.

**Promotion of African goods**

Addressing the opening ceremony of the expo, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi pledged China’s efforts to further open up to Africa by signing more deals of economic partnerships and encouraging the import of more African goods.

Starting from last December, China gave zero-tariff treatment for 100 percent tariff lines to all the least developed countries, including 33 countries in Africa, that have established diplomatic relations with China.

Ahead of the expo, China signaled its readiness to extend this policy to all 53 African nations with which it has diplomatic ties.

Apart from favorable tariffs, Chinese officials and companies are also going all-out to promote African products and boost their popularity among Chinese consumers.

In Hunan, a trailblazer in China-Africa cooperation, local authorities are combining offline engagement with e-commerce, a widely popular promotional approach in a country where 974 million people were shopping online by the end of 2024.

Over 200 African products, including food, daily necessities, and trendy cultural goods, are now featured in a shopping season campaign launched in April and running through June, according to the provincial department of commerce. The campaign is expected to reach millions of online consumers.

Wang Yaohua, chairman of Hunan Shea Biotechnology Co., Ltd., said China’s manufacturing prowess also boosts the competitiveness of African products in the Chinese market.

His company purchases nearly 2 million yuan worth of plant and food ingredients, from ylang-ylang to shea butter, every year from Africa to produce a variety of products such as hand creams and facial masks.

“In Africa, there is mostly primary processing of plants,” Wang said. “Our industrial strength, therefore, comes in handy to improve their market value.”

Speaking about the future plans, Huang Zinan said she plans to expand into processing as well, turning avocados into cooking oil and flowers into essential oils and personal care products. “Through us, I hope more Chinese consumers can come to know African products and better understand the continent,” Huang added.

Visa-free access revives Silk Road travel

# Tourism boom deepens exchange between China, Central Asian countries

‘ We are working to train skilled Chinese-language talent into guides who can provide in-depth introductions to the Silk Road history and the cultural ties between China and Central Asian countries ’

BEIJING, June 16, (Xinhua): After a 13-day drive through Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, Lu Zhonghe became part of a growing wave of Chinese tourists discovering Central Asia’s accessible routes, rich history, and tourism resources.

A native of Guangdong Province in south China, Lu traveled as part of a group with 10 other tourists from different parts of the country. After assembling in the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, they were led by a professional driving tour guide and exited through a land port en route to Central Asia.

“The journey was smooth and convenient, and the locals were impressively warm and welcoming,” he said, recalling the bustling streets in Almaty and the grand madrasahs in the ancient city of Samarkand.

Lu is among an increasing number of Chinese travelers who are rediscovering the ancient Silk Road, not as merchants or envoys, but as modern-day tourists seeking adventure, culture, and connection in Central Asia. With its proximity, affordability, and exotic charm, Central Asia is becoming an increasingly popular getaway for Chinese tourists, boosted by a wave of supportive measures.

According to Chen Zhenhua,

manager of the Urumqi branch of Xinjiang Xiyu International Travel Agency, their popular packages include a six-day tour of Almaty and a world heritage-themed trip across several Central Asian countries.

Most travelers heading to Central Asia nowadays typically come from metropolises such as Beijing, Shanghai, as well as Guangzhou and Shenzhen in Guangdong Province, Chen said, noting that an increasing number of tourists are traveling to Central Asia through land ports in Xinjiang.

The Takixken road port, for example, had recorded over 18,000 inbound and outbound travelers as of May 21 this year, a year-on-year increase of nearly 30 percent. Located on the Chinese-Mongolian border, Takixken serves as a convenient transit point for travelers heading through Mongolia to Central Asian countries.

The newly implemented mutual visa exemption agreement between China and Uzbekistan is expected to further boost tourism. Starting June 1, citizens of both countries can travel to each other’s territory without a visa for stays of up to 30 days per visit. Previously, visa-free entry for Chinese tourists to Uzbekistan was limited to 10 days and required

a valid outbound flight ticket.

The Embassy of Uzbekistan in China said this move would undoubtedly boost bilateral tourism and drive growth in visitor numbers.

In 2024, Uzbekistan received 74,304 Chinese tourist arrivals, a 75 percent surge from the previous year. Currently, Chinese and Uzbek airlines operate 58 flights each week, covering Beijing, Urumqi, Xi’an, Chengdu and Hangzhou in China, and Tashkent, Samarkand and Fergana in Uzbekistan.

In April, the Sixth China-Central Asia Foreign Ministers’ Meeting was held in Almaty. A communique released after the meeting pledged joint measures, including simplifying visa procedures, aimed at facilitating the mutual travel for citizens and cooperation among small and medium-sized enterprises between China and Central Asian countries.

“As China’s cooperation with Central Asian countries deepens across various fields, Chinese people are gaining a greater understanding of their Central Asian neighbors,” said Hu Feng, who manages a travel agency based in Uzbekistan.

In addition to the usual travelers drawn by curiosity, Hu noticed a rise in business tourism. Many Chinese companies are exploring

opportunities in Central Asia under the Belt and Road Initiative. He also noted that a growing number of Uzbek businesspeople and tourists have been entering China via Xinjiang since the implementation of the mutual visa exemption agreement.

“We are working to train skilled Chinese-language talent into guides who can provide in-depth introductions to the Silk Road history and the cultural ties between China and Central Asian countries,” he said.

Deng Hao, a professor with Xinjiang Normal University, believes that tourism cooperation is poised to become a new growth engine in subnational cooperation between China and Central Asia.

“Since ancient times, China has maintained close trade and cultural exchanges with Central Asian countries through the Silk Road, laying a deep and enduring foundation for modern-day cooperation,” he said.

Today, the Belt and Road Initiative, proposed by China, has received active participation from Central Asian countries, and the first China-Central Asia Summit in 2023 has further aligned the initiative with their regional development strategies, Deng noted. On May 29, a tourist train departed from China’s northwestern city of Xi’an for

Almaty, the largest city of Kazakhstan, marking the inaugural run of the China-Central Asia International Cultural Tourism Train.

This is one of the key outcomes of the first China-Central Asia Summit held in Xi’an, which stressed the importance of further tourism cooperation and the development of a joint tourist route. The second summit is set to take place this week in Astana, the capital of Kazakhstan.

In 2024, the number of Chinese tourists visiting Kazakhstan reached 655,000, an increase of 78 percent from 2023, making China the second-largest source of inbound tourists to Kazakhstan.

Lu Fei, general manager of Xi’an Tourism Co., Ltd., said the cooperation agreement signed with the company’s Kazakh counterpart in the railway and tourism sectors would help ensure that the benefits of bilateral collaboration reach everyday people and strengthen people-to-people ties.

“When Chinese travelers enjoy Almaty’s famous apples, and Central Asian tourists touch the thousand-year-old walls of Xi’an, these shared experiences become the most vivid expressions of the dialogue between different civilizations,” Lu said.

editor’s choice



## Live-action adaptation delivers on the promise

## ‘How to Train Your Dragon’ soars in box office debut

LOS ANGELES, June 16, (AP): “How to Train Your Dragon” took flight at the box office this weekend, proving that some remakes still have teeth.

The Universal live-action adaptation of the beloved animated franchise soared to a strong \$83.7 million debut in North American theaters, according to Comscore estimates Sunday. The film, directed by franchise veteran Dean DeBlois, follows the unlikely friendship between a young Viking named Hiccup (Mason Thames) and a dragon called Toothless.

The reboot easily outpaced 2019’s “How to Train Your Dragon: The Hidden World,” which opened with \$55 million. The latest film earned more than \$114.1 million internationally, bringing the global total to \$197.8 million.

“This is yet another example of a live-action remake really delivering on the promise of the marketing,” said Paul Dergarabedian, the senior media analyst for Comscore. “I think the longevity and playability of some of these films particularly in the summer has been nothing short of miraculous.”

“How to Train” also claimed the No. 1 spot ahead of Disney’s “Lilo & Stitch,” which slipped to second place after

topping the charts for three weekends. That hybrid live-action remake added another \$15 million, pushing its domestic total past \$386.3 million.

“Materialists,” a modern-day New York love story starring Dakota Johnson, Pedro Pascal, and Chris Evans, rounded out the top three films of the week with a \$12 million debut. The romantic dramedy features Johnson as a savvy matchmaker caught between two suitors: a broke, struggling actor who happens to be her ex, and a wealthy “unicorn” who seems too good to be true.

“Mission: Impossible - The Final Reckoning” slid to fourth place, taking in \$10.3 million and avoiding a dip into single-digit territory.

The John Wick spinoff “Ballerina” fell to fifth place with \$9.4 million, despite strong reviews from both critics and audiences. Directed by Len Wiseman, the action film stars Ana de Armas and features Keanu Reeves reprising his role in a supporting turn.

Dergarabedian said “Ballerina” could have a surge later down the line similar to 2014’s “John Wick.”

“It took a while for that franchise to really catch on,” he said. “You saw a huge outpouring of interest for the first ‘John Wick’ when it hit home video or streaming, I should say, and I think the same will happen here.”

In sixth place, “Karate Kid: Legends” earned \$5 million followed by “Final Destination: Bloodlines” at seventh with \$3.9 million. Wes Anderson’s latest “The Phoenician Scheme” brought in \$3 million eighth place. “The Life of Chuck,” based on a Stephen King story, placed ninth with \$2.1 million.

Rounding out the top 10 was “Sinners.” The Ryan Coogler film starring Michael B. Jordan, drew \$1.4 million - which is impressive since the movie is available to watch at home through online and digital platforms after being released two months ago.

Overall, the box office is up 23% from this point in 2024. Dergarabedian said he’s looking forward to films in the coming weeks that could have a positive presence at the box office, such as “Elio,” “F1,” “Superman” and “28 Days Later.”



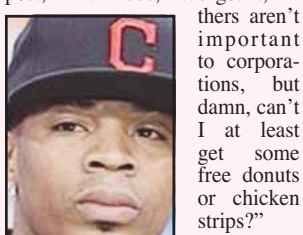
This image released by Universal Pictures shows Nick Frost as Gobber in a scene from ‘How to Train Your Dragon.’ (AP)

## Variety

**NEW YORK:** Is Father’s Day starting to get a little more attention as a holiday?

Not if you check some social media. In an expletive-filled post on TikTok and X, rapper **Plies**, best known for his collaborations with T-Pain and DJ Khaled on hits “Shawty” and “I’m So Hood,” complains about how Father’s Day on Sunday carries about as much clout as Groundhog Day, saying it might as well be removed from the calendar.

“The disrespect to Father’s Day is real,” declares a separate Reddit post, which adds, “We get it, fathers aren’t important to corporations, but damn, can’t I at least get some free donuts or chicken strips?”



Plies

on Mother’s Day.

But the spending disparity with Mother’s Day may be narrowing, according to the National Retail Federation and Prosper Insights & Analytics. The organizations forecast that a record-breaking \$24 billion will be spent on Father’s Day this year, surpassing the previous mark of \$22.9 billion in 2023. They say consumers plan to spend an average of \$199.38 on their dads and father figures this year. (AP)

**LOS ANGELES:** Faraday Future Intelligent Electric Inc., a California-based global shared intelligent electric mobility ecosystem company, has announced that award-winning, best-selling female artist of all time and global top music legend Mariah Carey will become the next FF 91 2.0 Futurist Alliance owner. Mariah Carey will take delivery of her FF 91 2.0 soon and just released her new official music video Type Dangerous featuring the FF 91 and FFZERO1 concept car.

The synergy between FF’s spire (Ultimate AI Luxury) brand positioning and iconic users continues to grow. This marks the formation of a high-recognition, high-loyalty brand influence loop, and signals that FF has officially entered a new phase of global cultural co-creation. (AP)

**KABUL:** Around 200,000 tourists visited the picturesque and popular tourist destination of Bamiyan province in central Afghanistan during the Eid al-Adha holidays, provincial government spokesman Saboor Farzan Saighani said.

“A total of 197,352 domestic and foreign tourists visited Bamiyan during the Eid holidays,” the local media outlet Tolonews quoted Saighani on Sunday as saying.

Popular for housing giant Buddhas, historical castles and natural lakes of Band-e-Amir, the picturesque Bamiyan attracts thousands of tourists annually.

During the Eid al-Adha holidays, tourists visited Band-e-Amir National Park, Gholghola City, Zuhak City, Qazan Amusement Park, and other recreational sites in Bamiyan. (Xinhua)

## Film



This image released by Sony Pictures shows Ben Wang in a scene from ‘Karate Kid: Legends.’ (AP)

## ‘Legends’ lacks heart and grit of earlier films

## Mr. Miyagi’s absence felt in new ‘Karate Kid’

LOS ANGELES, June 16, (AP): Mr. Miyagi was known for waxing poetic. So the fact that “Karate Kid: Legends” has nothing to say is all the more disappointing.

One of the most interesting aspects of the original “The Karate Kid” and its early sequels is Mr. Miyagi’s radical proclivity for mercy, often mistaken for cowardice by those around him. He doesn’t just teach Daniel (Ralph Macchio) how to fight. He teaches him a subversive way of living, and, in doing so, becomes a kind of father figure to the fatherless boy.

As is often the case, it seems the spirit of the franchise was lost somewhere in the creation of an entire universe - including six films and six seasons of “Cobra Kai.” Although “Karate Kid: Legends” does eventually allude to this philosophy of compassion, it lacks both the heart and grit of those earlier films. It’s neither entertaining, nor thought-provoking, which makes one wonder whether this was solely a means of capitalizing on the renewed audience the franchise boasts thanks to “Cobra Kai.”

In some ways, the film follows the playbook of its predecessors. Li Fong (Ben Wang) moves to New York from Beijing with his mother and deals with the clashing of cultures and the

struggles of being an outsider. And while Li does eventually, like in previous films, fight the jealous ex-boyfriend of his new romantic interest, their rivalry is hardly the focal point of the story.

Instead, Li’s main struggle is internal, as he deals with the grief of witnessing his brother get fatally stabbed by a disgruntled opponent after a kung fu match back home. But even that internal struggle is buried under other subplots and is hardly dealt with in the end.

You might be wondering how Macchio and Jackie Chan fit into this story. They are, after all, on the movie poster. But neither is meaningfully in the film until about an hour into it, when they decide they need to help Li prepare for his karate match. Chan starred as a kung fu master in the 2010 remake, and the impressively choreographed fight scenes in this movie are more akin to his previous film - the convergence between Macchio’s karate and Chan’s kung fu is never really fleshed out.

“Karate Kid: Legends” is the first project in the franchise to connect Chan and Macchio, and does so in a way that feels forced. Once Chan and Macchio are finally on screen, there are a few endearing moments between the pair. But not enough to

save the film. The attempt to tell a different story, while laudable, turns the film into a convoluted one, with no real character development or stakes.

Part of the problem is that the movie takes itself so seriously, making some of the irreverent humor of “Cobra Kai” unattainable. (One of the best moments of the film is William Zabka’s cameo as Johnny Lawrence in a light-hearted coda.) For the most part, the film struggles tonally, thanks in part to the upbeat music set against a backdrop of violence and trauma.

That’s not to say the previous films haven’t always suffered from trying to do too many things. But there were moments of poignancy in the earlier movies that are absent in this latest installment of the franchise.

Despite its sprawling universe, there’s no need to have kept up with it to understand most of what’s going on. But rewatching the first wouldn’t hurt, even if it will make you nostalgic for what’s missing in “Karate Kid: Legends.”

“Karate Kid: Legends,” a Sony Pictures release, is rated PG-13 by the Motion Picture Association for martial arts violence and some language. Running time: 94 minutes. One and a half stars out of four.

## Daughter of the accused believes her father ‘most likely’ did it

## True crime docu shines light on Gilgo Beach killer’s family rift

NEW YORK, June 16, (AP): The daughter of accused Gilgo Beach serial killer Rex Heuermann believes he “most likely” committed the infamous killings in New York even as her mother steadfastly defends her ex-husband’s innocence in a new documentary released Tuesday.

The admission from Victoria Heuermann isn’t made on camera but through a statement from producers near the end of “The Gilgo Beach Killer: House of Secrets,” a three-part documentary on NBC’s streaming service Peacock.

“A week before the series release, Victoria Heuermann told the producers that based on publicly available facts that have been presented and explained to her, she now believes her father is most likely the Gilgo Beach killer,” reads a statement at the close of the final episode of the documentary.

Bob Macedonio, an attorney for Heuermann’s now ex-wife, Asa Ellerup, said in a statement after the documentary’s release that “time will only tell” whether his client will ever accept that her husband may have been a serial killer.

Heuermann’s lawyer didn’t respond to an email seeking comment.

The Manhattan architect has been charged with killing seven women, most of them sex workers, and dumping their bodies on a desolate parkway not far from Gilgo Beach on Long Island, some 50 miles (80 kilometers) from Manhattan.

He has pleaded not guilty and is due back in Riverhead court June 17 as a judge continues to weigh whether to allow key DNA evidence into the trial.

In the documentary, Victoria Heuermann struggles to reconcile her childhood memories with the portrait of the killer described by authorities.

She says her father was around the family “90% of the time” and was never violent toward any of them.

At the same time, Victoria Heuermann acknowledged there were times when he stayed home while the family went on vacation and that she was around 10 to 13 years old when the killings happened. Prosecutors say Heuerman committed some



This image released by Peacock shows Victoria Heuermann in a scene from the documentary ‘The Gilgo Beach Killer: House of Secrets.’ (AP)

of the killings in the basement while his family was out of town.

“Whether or not I believe my dad did it or not, I’m on the fence about that,” said the now 28-year-old. “Part of me thinks he didn’t do it, but at the same time, I don’t know, he could have just totally had a double life.”

Ellerup, for her part, maintained she saw no “abnormal behavior” in their nearly three decades of marriage. She dismissed a computer file prosecutors claim is a “blueprint” of his crimes as “absurd.”

Prosecutors say the document features a series of checklists for before, during and after a killing, such as a “body prep” checklist that includes among other items a note to “remove head and hands.”

Ellerup also shrugged off other evidence prosecutors have enumerated in court documents, including a vast collection of bondage and torture pornography found on electronic devices seized from their home, and hairs linked to Heuermann that were recovered on most of the victims’ bodies.

At the same time, she revealed that in July 2009, around the time one of his alleged victims went missing, Heuermann suddenly renovated a bathroom while she and their two children visited her family in Iceland. But she noted her former husband eventually joined the family for their final week of the trip.

“My husband, he’s a family man. He’s my hero,” Ellerup said. “What I want to say to him is, ‘I love you, no matter what.’”

Ellerup divorced Heuermann after his arrest in 2023. But in the documentary, Victoria Heuermann says the separation was for financial reasons to protect the family’s assets. Indeed, the filmmakers captured the family speaking to Heuermann by phone from jail, and the mother and daughter have been regularly attending court hearings with their attorney.

The family, which also includes Ellerup’s adult son from a prior marriage, is also planning to put up its notoriously ramshackle house in well-to-do Massapequa Park for sale as they look to move to a property they own in South Carolina.

Ryan McCormick, an NBCUniversal spokesperson, declined to say how much family was compensated, though he said the payments could not go toward Heuermann or his defense funds.

The documentary was produced by rapper 50 Cent’s G-Unit Film and Television production company alongside Texas Crew Productions and New York Post Entertainment.

A warning sign for global overtourism

Overwhelmed and understaffed, Louvre shuts its doors

PARIS, June 16, (AP): The Louvre, the world’s most-visited museum and a global symbol of art, beauty and endurance, remained shuttered Monday - not by war, not by terror, but by its own exhausted staff, who say the institution is crumbling from within.

It was an almost unthinkable sight: the home to works by Leonardo da Vinci and millennia of civilization’s greatest treasures - paralyzed by the very people tasked with welcoming the world to its galleries.

And yet, the moment felt bigger than a labor protest. The Louvre has become a bellwether of global overtourism - a gilded palace overwhelmed by its own popularity. As tourism magnets from Venice to the Acropolis scramble to cap crowds, the world’s most iconic museum is reaching a reckoning of its own.

The spontaneous strike erupted during a routine internal meeting, as gallery attendants, ticket agents and security personnel refused to take up their posts in protest over unmanage-



Tourists wait in line outside the Louvre museum which failed to open on time Monday, June 16, 2025 in Paris. (AP)

able crowds, chronic understaffing and what one union called “untenable” working conditions.

“It’s the Mona Lisa moan out here,” said Kevin Ward, 62, from Milwaukee, one of thousands of confused visitors cor-

ralled into unmoving lines beneath I.M. Pei’s glass pyramid. “Thousands of people waiting, no communication, no explanation. I guess even she needs a day off.”

It’s a rare thing for the Louvre to close its doors to the public. It has happened during war, during the pandemic, and in a brief 2019 staff strike - but never quite like this: with tourists lining the plaza, tickets in hand, and no clear sense of why the world’s most famous museum had simply stopped.

The disruption comes just months after President Emmanuel Macron unveiled a sweeping decade-long plan to rescue the Louvre from precisely the problems now boiling over - water leaks, dangerous temperature swings, outdated infrastructure, and foot traffic far beyond what the museum can handle.

But for workers on the ground, that promised future feels distant.

“We can’t wait six years for help,” said Sarah Sefian of the CGT-Culture union. “Our teams are under pressure now. It’s not just about the art - it’s

about the people protecting it.”

At the center of it all, as always, is the Mona Lisa - a 16th-century portrait that draws modern-day crowds more akin to a celebrity meet-and-greet than an art experience.

Roughly 20,000 people a day squeeze into the Salle des États, the museum’s largest room, just to snap a selfie with Leonardo da Vinci’s enigmatic woman behind protective glass. The scene is often noisy, jostling, and so dense that many barely glance at the masterpieces flanking her - works by Titian and Veronese that go largely ignored.

“You don’t see a painting,” said Ji-Hyun Park, 28, who flew from Seoul to Paris. “You see phones. You see elbows. You feel heat. And then, you’re pushed out.”

Macron’s renovation blueprint, dubbed the “Louvre New Renaissance,” promises a remedy. The Mona Lisa will finally get her own dedicated room, accessible through a timed-entry

ticket. A new entrance near the Seine River is also planned by 2031 to relieve pressure from the overwhelmed pyramid hub.

“Conditions of display, explanation and presentation will be up to what the Mona Lisa deserves,” Macron said in January.

The Louvre welcomed 8.7 million visitors last year - more than double what its infrastructure was designed to accommodate. Even with a daily cap of 30,000, staff say the experience has become a daily test of endurance, with too few rest areas, limited bathrooms, and summer heat magnified by the pyramid’s greenhouse effect.

In a leaked memo, Louvre President Laurence des Cars warned that parts of the building are “no longer watertight,” that temperature fluctuations endanger priceless art, and that even basic visitor needs - food, restrooms, signage - fall far below international standards. She described the experience simply as “a physical ordeal.”

Tourism



Tourists pose for photos in a classical Hui-style garden in Shexian County, Huangshan City, east China’s Anhui Province, on June 11, 2025. In 1988, Chunhua Garden, a classical Hui-style garden, was designed and built in Frankfurt of Germany. It was designed and planned by Cheng Jiuye, an expert on Hui-style architecture of China, and his team members. The style of the garden was based on traditional Hui-style architectures such as the Tan’gan Garden and other traditional

villages in China’s Huangshan City. The corridors, pavilions and bridges in Chunhua Garden were built around the water, and trees were integrated with the architectures. With its unique charm and delicacy, this garden in Frankfurt has attracted many visitors. From Huangshan in east China’s Anhui Province to the banks of Main River in Frankfurt, traditional Hui-style architecture connects international visitors with Chinese culture and aesthetics. (Xinhua)

Culture meets tech in China's new tourism model

China sees surge in culture-driven tourism

BEIJING, June 16, (Xinhua): A large-scale VR immersive experience, “The Recluse Dongpo,” premiered at the Hainan Museum in May, attracting eager fans of the iconic Song Dynasty poet Su Shi to embark on a virtual journey through millennia of Chinese history.

Wearing VR headsets, participants came face-to-face with a digital rendition of Su Shi (also known as Su Dongpo), who vividly recounted his dramatic life -- from political exile to literary legend -- in an interactive narrative.

This fusion of technology and tradition exemplifies China’s ongoing reinvention of cultural tourism. Alongside its iconic landscapes, the country is witnessing a surge in heritage-driven travel, where films, live performances, and immersive experiences spawn compelling new destinations.

According to a recent China Tourism Academy survey, travelers show growing interest in cultural activities: Nearly 29.2 percent of respondents prioritize cultural experiences in their itineraries, while 78.3 percent express general enthusiasm for such engagements during trips.

Cultural spaces can serve as new settings for tourism experiences and consumption, while tourism spaces can also function as new platforms for cultural display and dissemination, said Li Xinjian, executive dean of the Capital Institute of Culture and Tourism Development at Beijing International Studies University.

In a major government reshuffle in 2018, China merged two government agencies to form a new

ministry -- the Ministry of Culture and Tourism -- “to promote the integrated development of cultural undertakings, cultural industries, and tourism,” according to an official document. The development of culture-driven tourism has since picked up speed.

A 2023 high-level meeting on cultural development underscored the need to promote the “creative transformation and innovative development of China’s fine traditional culture.”

Government at all levels have been tapping into local cultural resources to enhance tourist appeal and boost the economy. During the Dragon Boat Festival holiday from May 31 to June 2, the city of Beijing held more than 1,700 cultural tourism events, including dragon boat carnivals, intangible cultural heritage markets, and Hanfu (traditional Chinese attire) workshops.

**Revenue**

The Chinese capital recorded 8.21 million tourist visits during the period, up 5.4 percent year on year. It generated 10.77 billion yuan (about 1.49 billion U.S. dollars) in tourism revenue.

Traditional festivals proved to be high seasons for travelers. This year, during the first Spring Festival after it was inscribed on the UNESCO’s Intangible Cultural Heritage list, travelers flocked to temple fairs, dragon dance performances, and intangible cultural heritage experiences to celebrate an authentic Chinese New Year.

The 2025 Aranya Theater Festival, which will open in the coastal city of Qinhuangdao in north Chi-

na’s Hebei Province, will stage 29 theatrical productions from 12 countries. During the festival, cultural activities such as art exhibitions and workshops will also be held in the coastal resort of Aranya.

The 2024 edition of the festival received about 164,000 visitors, including foreign travelers.

With the improvement of people’s living standards and increased opportunities for travel, there is a growing demand for cultural experiences during tourism activities, and participation takes diverse forms, said Dai Bin, president of the China Tourism Academy.

Museums, historical cities, ancient towns, cultural districts, live-action shows, concerts, and music festivals have become major attractions in numerous tourist destinations, Dai added.

A government initiative on boosting cultural and tourism consumption launched earlier this year proposed specific measures, such as encouraging public cultural institutions to actively develop cultural experiences, arts education services, and other offerings, enriching the supply of cultural and entertainment products, and allowing local governments to allocate special bond funds to support cultural and tourism projects.

According to Dai, the integrated development of culture and tourism will be a focus for boosting the tourism sector during China’s 15th Five-Year Plan period (2026-2030).

Efforts will be made to promote the integration of cultural industries and tourism supply to create more new cultural experience venues and novel tourism consumption settings for visitors, he added.

Television

AI brings live fuel stats

How Prime Video’s ‘Burn Bar’ transforms NASCAR viewing

NEW YORK, June 16, (AP): NASCAR fans have grown accustomed to seeing speed, throttle and braking on broadcasts for years. There has been one measurement, though, that has eluded networks and viewers for years.

Until now.

Viewers of the Prime Video races have been able to see fuel usage with the introduction of the Burn Bar. Race teams have measured burn rates and fuel levels down to the last ounce for years, but the methodology has been kept secret for competitive reasons.

Prime Video, though, developed an AI tool using car data available to broadcasters and teams that can measure miles per gallon. The Burn Bar made a brief appearance during Prime’s first broadcast, the Coca-Cola 600 on May 25. It has been used more frequently the past two weeks and will be deployed again on last Sunday during the race in Mexico City.

**Development**

NASCAR on Prime analyst Steve Letarte, a former crew chief for Jeff Gordon and Dale Earnhardt Jr., contributed to the development of the Burn Bar and sees it as the first step in taking race analysis to a new level.

“It’s the first true tool that is taking information off the car, making calculations and then displaying to the fan a calculation or measurement that is being used in the garage. And it does affect the team,” he said. “There’s not a sensor on the car giving us miles per gallon. It’s a mathematical calculation of other cars performances.”

The AI tool analyzes thousands of performance data per second, including a range of in-car telemetry signals, RPMs, throttle and optical tracking of each car’s position. The model then evaluates each driver’s fuel consumption and efficiency throughout the race.

Letarte worked with Prime

Video “Thursday Night Football Prime Vision” analyst Sam Schwartzstein and Amazon Web Services during the process. They came up with four methodologies that were tested during the first part of the season, which was broadcast by Fox. Schwartzstein and Letarte would then get the data from teams after races to see how close they were until they picked one that worked the best.

The Burn Bar received its toughest test during last week’s race at Michigan as the final 48 laps were run without a caution flag. Most teams made their final pit stops with 50 laps to go, meaning teams were going to be down to the end of their fuel runs at the checkered flag.

**Projected**

“We projected William Byron to run out, which he did, and then we were on the razor’s edge for Denny Hamlin. And then watching the truck push him back into victory lane at the end, knowing he was as close as we thought he was. What a cool way to see this feature come to life and elevate NASCAR broadcasts,” Schwartzstein said.

Alex Strand, Prime Video’s senior coordinating producer for live sports, also sees the Burn Bar as the first tool of many that Amazon and Prime Video can develop for its coverage. Prime Video is in the first year of a seven-year agreement to carry five races per season.

“It’s really cool to live in a world where it shows us that anything is possible. We’re starting with something that we’re really excited about, but it’s setting us down a path that will open up new doors for us,” he said. “I think that’s what we’re really excited about is to say, ‘OK, we’ve had success in Year 1 on a feature that’s resonated with fans right out of the gate.’ It raises the table for our offseason.”



In this screen shot from Prime Video broadcast released by Prime Video, The ‘Burn Bar,’ lower left, is used to measure Ryan Blaney’s performance during a NASCAR on Prime broadcast of a NASCAR Cup Series auto race from Lebanon, Tennessee, on June 1. The AI tool was developed by Prime Video to measure a car’s burn rate and fuel levels. (AP)

Sponsors pull support for the historic celebrations

Juneteenth events adapt amid funding shortfall

AUSTIN, Texas, June 16, (AP): Juneteenth celebrations have been scaled back this year due to funding shortfalls as companies and municipalities across the country reconsider their support for diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives.

Canceled federal grants and businesses moving away from so-called brand activism have hit the bottom line of parades and other events heading into Thursday’s federal holiday, which celebrates the end of slavery in the United States.

In Denver, for example, more than a dozen companies backed out of supporting the Juneteenth Music Festival, which is one of the city’s biggest celebrations of the holiday, according to Norman Harris, executive director of JMF Corporation, which puts on the event.

“There were quite a few sponsors who pulled back their investments or let us know they couldn’t or wouldn’t be in a position to support this year,” said Harris, who has overseen the event for more than a decade.

The festival, which takes place in the historically Black Five Points neighborhood, has been scaled back to one day instead of two because of the budget

shortfall. It has only been able to stay afloat thanks to donations from individuals and foundations.

“Thankfully, there was a wide range of support that came when we made the announcement that the celebration is in jeopardy,” Harris said.

Juneteenth celebrates the day the last enslaved people in Texas were told they were free on June 19, 1865, two years after President Abraham Lincoln’s Emancipation Proclamation. The day has been celebrated by Black Americans for generations, including in Harris’ family, but became more widely celebrated after becoming a federal holiday in 2021.

After the 2020 murder of George Floyd, many companies pursued efforts to make their branding more inclusive, but it has slowed down over the past few years after some received blowback from conservatives and because many companies didn’t see it as an important part of their revenue stream, said Dionne Nickerson, a professor in marketing at Emory University.

Some companies can no longer afford to support Juneteenth celebrations because they just don’t have the money given the economic uncertainty, according to Sonya Grier, a marketing professor at American University.

“It’s a whole confluence of issues,” Grier said.

Many state and local governments hold or help fund celebrations, but some decided not to this year.

The governor’s office in West Virginia stated that the state won’t be hosting any Juneteenth events this year for the first time since 2017 due to a budget deficit. Republican Gov. Patrick Morrisey last month signed a bill to end all diversity programs.

“Due to the continued fiscal challenges facing West Virginia, state government will not be sponsoring any formal activities,” deputy press secretary Drew Galang said in an email.

City Council members in Scottsdale, Arizona, dissolved their DEI office in February, which led to the cancellation of the city’s annual Juneteenth festival.

Event organizers in Colorado Springs, Colorado, had to move locations due to fewer sponsors and cuts in city funding, said Jennifer Smith, a planner for the Southern Colorado Juneteenth Festival.

Around five companies sponsored the event this year, compared to dozens in years prior, Smith said.

“They have said their budgets have been cut because of DEI,” and that they can no longer afford it, she said.



Volunteers work on putting up tents for displays for the Juneteenth celebration in the Five Points neighborhood where the event is staged Saturday, June 14, in Denver. (AP)

Young doctors answer the call to help amid Indian plane crash

Survivors turn rescuers: Indian doctors heal fellow victims

AHMEDABAD, India, June 16, (AP): Navin Chaudhary had just begun eating his meal when a loud bang startled him. He turned back to see a massive fire taking over the dining area where he and other trainee doctors had assembled for lunch.

The blaze approaching him, he rushed toward a window and jumped.

From the ground, looking upwards, the sight of the Air India plane's tail cone hanging from the burning building propelled Chaudhary and fellow medical students into action.

"There was fire and many were injured," said Chaudhary.

He said he felt lucky to survive but knew he had a task at hand. He rushed to the hospital's intensive care unit, where the injured, most of whom had burns, were wheeled in on stretchers.

"I felt that as a doctor I could save someone's life," he said. "I was safe. So I thought, whatever I can do, I should."

At least 270 died when the Air India flight crashed into the campus of a medical college in Ahmedabad shortly



In this image taken from a video, Navin Chaudhary, a doctor who witnessed Thursday's Air India plane crash, speaks to The Associated Press in Ahmedabad, India, Monday, June 16. (AP)

after takeoff on Thursday. Only one passenger among the 242 aboard survived. At least 29 others on the ground,

including five medical students inside the hostel, were also killed.

Many believe that the death toll would have been higher if it had not been for the intervention of the trainee doctors and students who emerged from the smouldering hostel and rushed to save their colleagues.

Akshay Zala, a senior medical student, said the crash felt "like an earthquake."

"I could hardly see anything as thick plumes of smoke and dust engulfed everything. I was barely able to breathe," he said.

Zala rushed to safety, running through dust and smoke. He cleaned and bandaged a wound on his left leg then joined others at the medical college's trauma center to treat the injured.

On Monday, the crash site teemed with excavators and workers clearing the debris. Officials inspected the building in search of clues that could enable the investigators to figure out what led to the tragedy.

Barely a kilometer (less than a mile) away, trainee doctors who survived one of India's worst aviation disasters were still working to identify the victims through

DNA testing.

Indian authorities have so far handed over the remains of 47 victims. The bodies of 92 others have also been identified through DNA matching and will be transferred to relatives soon.

College dean Minakshi Parikh said that many of the doctors who pulled their colleagues out of the debris, later that day went back to their duties to save as many lives as they could. "They did that and that spirit has continued till this moment," Parikh said.

Images of the hostel's dining area shortly after the crash showed parts of the aircraft and pieces of luggage strewn on the floor. Dining plates still containing food lay on the few dusty tables that were left intact by the impact.

"So that is human nature, isn't it? When our own people are injured, our first response is to help them," Parikh said. "So the doctors who managed to escape ... the first thing that they did was they went back in and dug out their colleagues who were trapped inside."

"They might not even have survived because the rescue teams take time coming," she added.

Center drives innovation in heart disease care

Oman's Heart Surgery Center: A regional, global heart care leader

MUSCAT, June 16, (KUNA): The National Heart and Cardiothoracic Surgery Center at the Royal Hospital stands as a leading medical institution in Oman, and has been offering cardiology and cardiac surgery services according to highest international medical standards since its inauguration in 2015.

The center has made significant strides toward excellence and leadership in cardiac healthcare, a reference medical institution locally, regionally, and internationally.

Dr. Najeeb Al-Rawahi, Director of the Center, told the Oman News Agency the center was founded with an ambitious vision aimed at achieving leadership in treating cardiovascular diseases and delivering high-quality healthcare services to citizens and residents of Oman, from fetal stages through adulthood and old age.

He added the center strives to offer a comprehensive range of advanced diagnostic, therapeutic and surgical services for heart diseases, including coronary artery diseases, valve disorders, and congenital defects.

It is equipped with the latest medical technologies and devices to ensure the highest level of care.

Dr. Al-Rawahi emphasized that the center aims to be among the top global cardiac treatment facilities by providing specialized services and advanced medical interventions, such as catheter-based valve repair and replacement, treatment of arrhythmias via catheterization, and the dilation of narrowed veins and arteries.

He noted that the center is committed to attracting and training highly qualified medical staff to ensure the delivery of top-tier healthcare, while also training personnel on the latest cardiac procedures and technologies.

Since its opening in 2015, the center has witnessed significant developments, including the expansion and upgrading of services to meet growing patient needs. The number of surgeries has increased, and the facility is now outfitted with state-of-the-art technologies across all cardiac specialties.

Upgrade

The cardiac catheterization unit has seen major upgrade, including the introduction of several world-class catheterization procedures. The number of daily catheter sessions increased from five to six, enhancing capacity and reducing patient wait times. The center also operates round-the-clock to manage complex and urgent cases, saving countless lives.

Regarding the number of surgeries performed from the center's inception to December 2024, Dr. Al-Rawahi confirmed that 9,168 procedures were done, including open-heart surgeries, minimally invasive procedures, and interventional catheterizations.

The success rate of these operations ranges from 93 percent to 96 percent, depending on the procedure type - figures consistent with international standards.

During the same period, the center conducted 49,846 adult catheterization procedures and 7,823 pediatric ones, with success rates ranging from 97 percent to 99 percent, aligning with global standards.

On cutting-edge technologies used in cardiac surgery, Dr. Al-Rawahi highlighted the center's dedication to staying up-to-date with the latest innovations. Among these is minimally invasive cardiac surgery, which uses small chest incisions to reduce pain and recovery time.

The center has introduced modern cardiac catheteri-

zation techniques that allow diagnosis and treatment without open surgery. These include pediatric electrophysiology catheters, cryoablation for atrial fibrillation, and thermal ablation for arrhythmia treatment.

Advanced imaging techniques such as MRI and CT scanning are used to produce highly accurate images of the heart and vessels.

The center also employs remote cardiac monitoring devices to detect early complications and ensure close follow-up.

Furthermore, the center implemented the electromagnetic pulse field ablation technique, a cutting-edge technology for treating atrial arrhythmias with high effectiveness and minimal side effects.

The center also introduced the "Aveir" wireless pacemaker, which sends electrical signals to regulate the heartbeat without the need for wires, a breakthrough in cardiac treatment, as it functions in both the atria and ventricles.

Catheterization

In the field of catheterization, the center uses internationally recognized advanced types, including transcatheter aortic, and pulmonary valve replacements and chronic total occlusion procedures for blocked coronary arteries.

Among its landmark achievements is the first heart transplant from a brain-dead donor for a patient with end-stage heart failure. The procedure, carried out by a multi-disciplinary Omani team, lasted five hours and marked a pivotal milestone in the country's healthcare system, showcasing years of planning, investment and development of national competencies.

Regarding partnerships, the center collaborates with international cardiac institutions, including American Heart Association, which recognizes it as a certified center for advanced cardiac life support (ACLS) training.

The center is also affiliated with Sultan Qaboos University's medical and nursing colleges, providing clinical training for students.

Additionally, it works with the Oman Medical Specialty Board, overseeing three training programs: adult cardiology, pediatric cardiology, and pediatric intensive care.

Dr. Al-Rawahi emphasized that the center is committed to expanding and enhancing its services. Planned upgrades include modernizing operating theaters and catheterization laboratories to meet increasing demand and incorporate the latest surgical and interventional methods.

Efforts are underway to launch new advanced catheterization techniques, increase the number of catheterization laboratories, reduce wait times, and expand specialized clinics, such as those focused on genetic heart diseases and advanced heart failure.

The center actively promotes scientific research in cardiology and surgery, aiming to develop new treatments and enhance care quality. Collaborations with local and international research institutions facilitate knowledge sharing and innovation. As part of its community engagement, the center launched the "One Heart, One Goal" campaign on its 10th anniversary to raise awareness about heart disease, encourage early screening, and highlight available treatment options.

Build support, hope around autism challenges

Dads go public with support for kids with autism and each other

ATLANTA, June 16, (AP): When Tyronne Green's youngest son was diagnosed with autism, his wife was immediately ready to get the 3-year-old the support he needed. But Green was stuck: He had questions about his son's future and an overwhelming feeling of loneliness - like no one, not his wife, not his friends, understood his experience.

"... (M)y wife couldn't understand what I was going through as a Black father, all these hopes and dreams I had for my kid," said Green, who lives in Michigan. "She didn't feel the same way."

In 2021, he joined a Black fathers' support group and met a few other dads eager to discuss their unique challenges. They started their own podcast in 2023 called AutisHIM, a place where Black dads talk about the wins and setbacks of having autistic children.



Evan Polk and his daughter, Jordyn Polk, 13, sit for a portrait in Secane, Pa., Thursday, June 5. (AP)

Growing

Green is among a growing number of Black fathers of autistic children looking to be more visible in the national autism conversation through podcasts, nonprofits and summits that specifically address their experience. These men say that their hope is not only to be considered more than sidekicks to mothers of the children, but also to help other Black dads accept autism diagnoses and not prolong getting kids the help that they need.

Autism is a neurodevelopmental disorder that affects how people communicate, process information and interact with the world around them. Federal data shows that since 2020, Black children have had a higher prevalence of autism spectrum disorder than white children - a change experts credit mostly to better awareness of autism in underserved communities.

Health Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. recently announced plans to have the federal government do a broad study for the causes of autism, even though it's been looked at by researchers for decades. He has said autism is a "tragedy" that "destroys families" and that some people with autism will never hold a job, pay taxes or go on dates.

But many people with autism live successful, socially rich and independent lives, which makes a narrative like Kennedy's dangerous, said Michael Hannon, a counseling professor at Montclair State University who studies the social and emotional aspects of autism on Black fatherhood.

It "can literally diminish hope for

any father or father figure or family," Hannon said of Kennedy's framing of autism.

But affinity groups for Black men who have kids with autism are a successful way to get the dads to engage with their emotions, Hannon said.

"The challenge is convincing people to (talk openly and honestly), because the practice of doing that is rare, not just among Black men, but people in general," he said, adding that people might think it will reflect on their ability to parent.

Evan Polk said a big part of navigating his 13-year-old daughter's diagnosis was learning to sit with emotions that weren't simply "happy and mad." In the beginning, he was very protective.

Nonprofit

"I became a helicopter dad," said Polk, who started AuSome Kicks, an art therapy nonprofit for autistic children near Philadelphia earlier this year. "I didn't want nobody or nothing to harm her whatsoever. When I found out she was autistic, she'd be outside with knee pads and elbow pads looking crazy."

He said he later taught his family to be more patient with his daughter, as opposed to traditional parenting styles of being firm and hoping that she would fall in line. Dr. Berry Pierre said he initially was on the sidelines of his autistic daughter's support team as his wife, Maria Davis-Pierre, did the bulk of advocating.

The Florida couple founded Autism in Black and for the first five years, he

said the organization didn't specifically tailor messaging to Black dads.

"Whether it be in schools, the (individual education plan) meetings, the mothers were just there." Pierre said. "But as we started to kind of try to go deeper and figure out 'Alright, what's going on? Where are the guys?' we started to realize that a lot of them will be there."

Many Black dads, Pierre found out, were equally involved as the moms, and Pierre wanted to get more of them talking publicly about autism.

"The dads are there, but we know the general public doesn't realize that yet," Pierre said. "So we try to serve as this engine to shine a light on what's really happening. The dads are there, they're attentive. And even with this diagnosis, they're going even harder."

Some dads, like Nicholas Love in North Carolina, said they first hesitated to openly share their journey of raising their kids with autism in fear that people may not understand.

"I was very guarded for a while in talking about my children both being on the spectrum," said Love, who is CEO of the marketing agency The Kulur Group. "Even in how you take pictures that you upload on social media, being cognizant and thinking about, 'Well is this a picture that looks, dare I say, the perception of what normal looks like?'" Now, he's an open book about them, is understanding when employees need a little extra time for urgent family needs and has advocated that men receive more paid leave so they will have time to be more involved with their kids.

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Tillman scores twice

US ends 4-game losing run, routs Trinidad in Cup opener

SAN JOSE, Calif., June 16, (AP): Malik Tillman scored twice as the United States built a three-goal, first-half lead and ended a four-game losing streak by routing Trinidad and Tobago 5-0 on Sunday in a CONCACAF Gold Cup opener.

Tillman scored in the 16th and 41st minutes for his first two international goals, both following giveaways by Alvin Jones, and Patrick Agyemang scored his fourth international goal in the 44th.

Brenden Aaronson added his ninth goal in the 82nd and Haji Wright his fifth just 1 minute, 13 seconds later as the 16th-ranked Americans overwhelmed the No. 100 Soca Warriors and ended their longest losing streak since 2007.

Victory in the Group D opener came after days of controversy over Christian Pulisic's desire to rest during the Gold Cup and coach Mauricio Pochettino not including the star in a pair of pre-tournament friendlies the attacker offered to play in.

The U.S. had 70.4% possession and a 21-3 advantage in shots against the Soca Warriors, whose 2-1 home win against the Americans in 2017 ended a streak of seven straight World Cup appearances by the U.S.

The Americans have won their group in 16 of 17 Gold Cups, along



United States forward Malik Tillman (17) jumps over Trinidad and Tobago defender Sheldon Bateau (4) during the second half of a CONCACAF Gold Cup soccer match in San Jose, Calif. (AP)

with a second-place finish behind Panama in 2011, and improved their group stage record to 41 wins, one loss and five draws. They play invited guest Saudi Arabia on Thursday at Austin, Texas, then close group play on June 22 against Haiti at Arlington, Texas.

Matt Freese was in goal in place Matt Turner, who had started 14 consecutive competitive matches for the U.S. and 23 of 24 dating to the 2022 World Cup. The lone exception was a Gold Cup group stage game against St. Kitts and Nevis in 2023.

Missing Pulisic, Yunus Musah, Weston McKennie, Tim Weah, Gio Reyna, Antonee Robinson, Tyler Adams, Folarin Balogun and Sergio Dest, the U.S. starting lineup averaged 14.8 international appearances. That was the second-fewest for the Americans in a Gold Cup opener behind 9.8 against Bermuda in 2009, according to Opta.

Adams (turf toe), Johnny Cardoso and Damion Downs (both illness) didn't dress.

Defender Tim Ream started, extending his Gold Cup span for the U.S. to 14 years and surpassing DaMarcus Beasley (2002-15) for the American high.

Trinidad, coached by former star Dwight Yorke, has lost four of its last five games and has been outscored 46-0 in its last 13 games against the U.S. on American soil.

In the other Group D game, Saudi Arabia beat Haiti 1-0 at San Diego as Saleh Al-Shehri converted a 21st-minute penalty kick after Frantzy Pierrot pulled him down by his jersey.



United States forward Patrick Agyemang (24) runs toward the ball against Trinidad and Tobago defender Sheldon Bateau (4) during the second half of a CONCACAF Gold Cup soccer match in San Jose, Calif. (AP)

Spaun wins US Open at wet Oakmont for 1st major title



J.J. Spaun celebrates with the trophy after winning the U.S. Open golf tournament at Oakmont Country Club in Oakmont, Pa. (AP)

Ciganda ends LPGA victory drought

OAKMONT, Pa., June 16, (AP): J.J. Spaun turned a sloppy mess of a U.S. Open at wet and nasty Oakmont into a thing of beauty at the end Sunday with two stunning shots that carried him to his first major championship.

First came his driver on the 314-yard 17th hole onto the green for a birdie that gave him the lead. Needing two putts from 65 feet on the 18th to win, he finished his storybook Open by holing the longest putt all week at Oakmont for birdie and a 2-over 72.

That made him the only player to finish under par at 1-under 279. It gave him a two-shot victory over Robert MacIntyre of Scotland.

And it made Spaun, the 34-year-old Californian who resembles the late Pittsburgh Steelers great Franco Harris, a major champion in only his second U.S. Open. He finished last year at No. 119 in the world with only one PGA Tour title in his career.

"I never thought I would be here holding this trophy," said Spaun, who finished last year at No. 119 in the world and moved up to No. 8 with his U.S. Open victory. "I always had aspirations and dreams. I never knew what my ceiling was. I'm just trying to be the best golfer I can be."

"I'm happy to display that here at Oakmont."

MacIntyre birdied the 17th and split the fairway on the 18th for a key par, a 68 and the clubhouse lead. Three groups later, Spaun de-

livered what looked like the winner, a powerful fade that rolled onto the green like a putt and settled 18 feet behind the cup. And then the final putt - no one made a longer one all week.

Carlota Ciganda birdied the final two holes to win the Meijer LPGA Classic for her first LPGA Tour victory in more than 8 1/2 years, while Lexi Thompson had two late bogeys to dash her bid to end a long drought of her own.

Ciganda hit to a foot to set up her birdie on the par-4 17th, then made a 4-foot comebacker on the par-5 18th to avoid a playoff with playing partner Hye-Jin Choi.

Part of a six-way tie to start the day at Blythefield County Club, Ciganda shot a 5-under 67 - her fourth straight round in the 60s - to

finish at 16-under 272 on the tree-lined layout in the final event before the major KPMG Women's PGA Championship in Texas.

Ciganda won for the first time since the 2016 Lorena Ochoa Invitational, a span of 8 years, 7 months, 2 days. The 35-year-old Spanish player has three LPGA Tour victories and has won eight times on the Ladies European Tour, the last in December in the Spanish Women's Open.

Choi finished with a 68, also shooting in the 60s all four days. Fellow South Korean player Somi Lee was third at 14 under after a 65.

Thompson had a 70 to tie for fourth with Celine Boutier (67) and Nanna Koerstz Madsen (70). Thompson, the 2015 winner at Blythefield, won the last of her 11



Robert MacIntyre, of Scotland, hits from the rough on the second hole during the final round of the U.S. Open golf tournament at Oakmont Country Club in Oakmont, Pa. (AP)

LPGA Tour titles in June 2019.

Stanford sophomore Paula Martin Sampedro of Spain won the Women's British Amateur with a 2-and-1 victory over Texas sophomore Farah O'Keefe at Nairn Golf Club in Scotland. The victory gets the Spaniard into the Women's British Open next month.

Riley Smyth won the Great Lakes Championship for her second Epsom Tour victory of the year. She closed with a 6-under 66 for a one-stroke victory over Erika Hara and Isi Gabsa at The Highlands in Harbor Springs, Michigan. Smyth also won the season-opening Central Florida Championship.

Shaun Norris closed with a 6-under 66 to force a playoff and beat Yusuke Sakamoto on the second extra hole with a birdie to win the Hana Bank Invitational, his eighth career title on the Japan Golf Tour.

Palmer Jackson, who played his college golf at Notre Dame, closed with a 7-under 64 for a six-shot victory in the Raiffeisenback Golf Challenge, his first Challenge Tour victory.

Sayaka Takahashi closed with a 2-under 70 for a one-shot victory over Eri Okayama in the Ai Miyazator Luntory Ladies Open on the Japan LPGA.

Dongeon Lee won the DB Group Korea Women's Open on the Korea LPGA with a 3-under 69, one shot ahead of Shihyun Kim.

Peter Baker won his eighth Legends Tour title with a 6-under 66 for a six-shot victory in the Costa Navarino Legends Tour Trophy in Greece.

Norway announces squad

Ada's leadership highlighted as key to Euro 2025 challenge

OSLO, Norway, June 16, (AP): The leadership of Norway captain Ada Hegerberg was highlighted Monday as key for the two-time former title holder heading into the Women's European Championship next month.

Hegerberg, the 2018 Ballon d'Or winner, headed a 23-player squad picked by coach Gemma Grainger for the July 2-27 tournament in Switzerland.

"One of Ada's biggest strengths is how authentic she is," Grainger said Monday with Hegerberg sitting next to her at a squad announcement event.

"Ada will always tell me what she thinks," the coach said, adding "then you get to places a lot quicker" even if it involved "many uncomfortable conversations."

Hegerberg quipped with a smile: "That is what you get."

Norway was European champion in 1987 and 1993 and is a four-time beaten finalist, most recently in 2013 when the team had a teenage forward line of Hegerberg and Caroline Graham Hansen.

The two storied veterans and former Champions League winners - Hegerberg at Lyon and Hansen at Barcelona - with a combined 100 national-team goals are the biggest stars in the Euro 2025 squad.

The 30-year-old Hegerberg has 49 goals despite persistent injuries, and a five-year exile from the team ahead of Euro 2022 that helped push the national federation to treat women's soccer more equally.

Norway has not advanced from the group stage in the past two Euros

editions though looks favored in the 16-nation draw for Euro 2025.

Norway plays in the opening-day game against host Switzerland on July 2 in Basel, faces Finland at Sion four days later and Iceland on June 10 in Thun.

"People can say there are none of the bigger names in our group," Grainger said. "You don't underestimate anybody."

Defender Maren Mjelde was picked for her fifth Euros at age 35 and with 179 national-team games. Four players left on standby include Liverpool forward Sophie Román Haug.

**Norway squad**

**Goalkeepers:** Cecilie Fiskerstrand (Fiorentina), Aurora Mikalsen (Cologne), Selma Panengstuen (Brann).

**Defenders:** Tuva Hansen (Bayern Munich), Guro Bergsvand (Wolfsburg), Maren Mjelde (No club), Thea Bjelde (Valerenga), Marit Bratberg Lund (Benfica), Emilie Woldvik (Rosengard), Mathilde Harviken (Juventus).

**Midfielders:** Ingrid Syrstad Engen (Barcelona), Vilde Bøe Risa (Atletico Madrid), Elisabeth Terland (Manchester United), Justine Kiehlund (Wolfsburg), Lisa Naalsund (Manchester United), Frida Maanum (Arsenal), Guro Reiten (Chelsea), Signe Gaupset (Brann).

**Forwards:** Caroline Graham Hansen (Barcelona), Ada Hegerberg (Lyon), Celin Bizet Ildhusøy (Manchester United), Synne Jensen (Atletico Madrid), Karina Sævik (Valerenga).



Switzerland's Viola Calligaris, left, and Norway's Ada Hegerberg, right, challenge for the ball during the Women's Nations League, group A2, soccer match between Switzerland and Norway in Sion, Switzerland. (AP)

Best of the Rest

**Qinwen ascends to career-high No. 4:** Chinese tennis star Zheng Qinwen has climbed to a career-high world No. 4 in the latest WTA rankings. The 22-year-old's rise was fueled by a strong showing at the Queen's Club Championships last week, a key grass-court warm-up event ahead of Wimbledon.

Zheng, the reigning Olympic champion, reached the semifinals on grass for the first time in her career, highlighted by a 6-2, 6-4 win over home favorite Emma Raducanu.

The achievement builds on her momentum from earlier this month at the French Open, where Zheng reached the quarterfinals for the first time with a 7-6 (5), 1-6, 6-3 victory over Russia's Liudmila Samsonova. (Xinhua)

**Bournemouth signs Truffert:** Bournemouth signed France left back Adrien Truffert from Rennes on Monday, potentially paving the way for Milos Kerkez to leave amid reported interest from Liverpool.

The 23-year-old Truffert has joined on a five-year contract after deciding to leave Rennes, where he was the captain.

"It's a dream for any player to play in the Premier League," Truffert said "It's one of the best and most competitive leagues in the world."

"I'm looking forward to testing myself at this level, facing top players every week and helping the team achieve great things."

British media have reported that Kerkez is heading to Premier League champion Liverpool, which would continue the breakup of Bournemouth's defense following Dean Huijsen's move to Real Madrid.

Belgium-born Truffert won his lone international cap for France as a substitute in a 2-0 loss to Denmark in the Nations League in September 2022. (AP)

Botafogo holds on to beat Sounders at Club World Cup

Bayern routs Auckland 10-0 as fans protest with ‘Smash FIFA!’ banner

CINCINNATI, June 16, (AP) — Bayern Munich romped to a 10-0 victory over Auckland City in its Club World Cup opener on Sunday as Jamal Musiala had a hat trick in a 17-minute span of the second half in front of a crowd that unfurled a banner urging to “Smash FIFA!” while accusing the governing body of mismanagement.

Thomas Müller, Kingsley Coman and Michael Olise scored two goals each for the Bundesliga champions, who went ahead on Coman’s goal six minutes in. Bayern had a 17-1 advantage in shots on target.

Musiala, a 22-year-old midfielder, replaced Harry Kane in the 61st minute, making his first appearance since April 4 after recovering from a hamstring injury. He scored in the 67th minute, converted a penalty kick in the 73rd and scored again in the 84th.

Before a crowd of 21,152 at TQL Stadium, fans displayed a red-and-white banner referring the 2015 raid by U.S. law enforcement at a Zurich hotel that led to the arrest of many soccer officials: “10 Years Baur Au Lac - World Football Is More Poorly Governed than Before! Smash FIFA!”

Defender Jonathan Tah started in his Bayern debut following his transfer from Bayer Leverkusen. Defender Dayot Upamecano entered in the 61st in his first appearance since March 23 for Germany after recovering from a knee injury.

Bayern built a 4-0 lead by midway through the first half when Sacha Boey scored in the 18th, Olise in the 20th and Coman in the 21st. Müller, the 35-year-old who plans to leave Bayern this summer, added a goal in the 45th minute and Olise made it 6-0 in the third minute of first-half stoppage time.

Bayern figures to be tested more against Boca Juniors on Friday and Benfica on June 24. Carrying a huge goal deficit, Auckland faces Benfica on Friday and closes Group C against Boca Juniors.

Jair Cunha and Igor Jesus scored in the first half and Botafogo beat the Seattle Sounders 2-1 at the Club World Cup on Sunday night.



Bayern Munich's Kingsley Coman sends a cross by Auckland City's Ryan De Vries during the Club World Cup Group C soccer match between Bayern Munich and Auckland City in Cincinnati. (AP)

Botafogo opened the scoring 28 minutes into the game as Cunha headed in a pass from Alex Telles. It came after a contentious yellow card to Nouhou Tolo gave the visitors a direct free kick just beyond the corner of the penalty box. Sounders players felt the call was unfair as there had been some unobserved jostling between Tolo and Artur before Tolo shoved his opponent to the ground.

Botafogo doubled the lead in the first half's final minutes with another headed goal. Vitorino connected with his 24-year-old star teammate Igor Jesus, who sent a powerful header to the bottom corner.

The Sounders played better in the second half, buoyed by their energetic subs. Four minutes after coming into the match, Paul Rothrock provided the assist for Christian Roldan's header in the 75th minute that deflected off Jesus.

The Sounders had two shots on target in a row in the final 30 seconds of stoppage time to try to tie the score, but the first was well blocked by a defender before John smothered Rothrock's attempt.

Seattle will now have to try to win points off the perceived titans of Group B, Atlético Madrid and Paris Saint-Germain to avoid going out in the group stage. Botafogo played good defense to hold onto its lead and is second in Group B on goal difference.

Russell holds off Verstappen for Canadian Grand Prix win



Mercedes driver George Russell, of the United Kingdom, leads the pack at the start of the F1 Canadian Grand Prix auto race in Montreal. (AP)

McLarens collide

MONTREAL, June 16, (AP) — George Russell won his first race of the Formula 1 season as the Mercedes driver held off defending race winner Max Verstappen at the Canadian Grand Prix on Sunday.

It was the fourth victory of Russell's career, and the race ended under yellow when McLaren teammates Oscar Piastri and Lando Norris staged a wheel-to-wheel late battle that ended with Norris hitting the wall.

"It's amazing to be back on the top step," Russell said. "I felt last year was a victory lost, so to get the victory and see (teammate) Kimi (Antonelli) on the podium, too, is an amazing day for the team. I think it shows the strength of our cars in the cooler conditions, so let's see in the coming races."

Russell started on pole for the second consecutive year in Montreal and held the advantage for most of the race at Circuit Gilles Villeneuve. The British driver became the fourth race winner this year, joining points leader Piastri, Norris and Verstappen, the four-time reigning F1 champion.

Verstappen, who has one more race to go before points drop off his license and eliminate the possibility of a one-race suspension, was satisfied with his second-place finish.

"Was quite a good race, even though in the first two stints we were struggling with the tires," the Dutch-



Mercedes driver George Russell, of the United Kingdom, celebrates after winning the F1 Canadian Grand Prix auto race in Montreal. (AP)

man said. "We hung in there in the final stint. That was the maximum we could have achieved today."

Mercedes rookie Antonelli finished third behind Verstappen for his first F1 podium.

"A really good day. It was absolutely victory on merit," Mercedes team principal Toto Wolff said. "We controlled the race all the way. George drove brilliantly and Kimi didn't crack under pressure, even with the McLaren right behind him."

"It's been a while since we've had two cars on the podium with a win and that's why everyone is delighted."

The two McLarens came together when Norris, then in fifth, attempted to pass Piastri multiple times on the 67th lap out of 70. Norris ultimately ran into Piastri and bounced into the wall, drawing a safety car for the fi-

nal laps.

"I was defending the inside, then I felt a small touch," Piastri said. "That's all I've got to go on at the moment. It's a shame for the team."

Norris received a 5-second penalty for contact with Piastri after the race and took responsibility.

"I just went for it. I thought Oscar would move a bit more to the right, not leave a gap," Norris said. "I wasn't expecting anything easy from him. But in the end, it was all my mistake. I take full blame and I want to apologize to my whole team and to Oscar for attempting something like that."

Piastri finished fourth, ending an eight-race podium streak dating back to the second race of the season. McLaren as a team failed to reach the top three for the first time this year.

"We never want to see a McLaren car involved in an accident and definitely not contact between our two cars," team principal Andrea Stella said. "This is a situation we know is not acceptable. At the same time, we appreciate that Lando immediately owned it."

"He raised his hand, as you should, and apologized to the team. For us, that sort of resets the situation. I'm sure there's an important learning point for him from this race. He's paid a price the championship and we value the way he handled it."

Piastri arrived in Montreal - the 10th of 24 stops this season - with a 10-point lead over Norris amid a dominant season for the papaya-colored cars.

The Australian driver extended his advantage to 22 points over his British teammate. Verstappen, ranked third in the drivers' championship, now trails Norris by 21 points. A race win is worth 25.

Ferrari drivers Charles Leclerc and Lewis Hamilton were fifth and sixth. Aston Martin's Fernando Alonso, Sauber's Nico Hulkenberg, Haas' Esteban Ocon and Williams' Carlos Sainz Jr. rounded out the top 10.

Leclerc, after holding off on a second pit stop, was the leader until the 54th lap when he finally swapped tires.

That set up a five-man race to the finish involving Russell, Verstappen, Antonelli, Piastri and Norris in the final 16 laps. A little more than five seconds separated the drivers.

‘Gattuso won’t be on his own’

Desperate Italy bucking trend of picking more established coaches

ROME, June 16, (AP) — It used to be that the coach of Italy's soccer team was someone who had a long list of managerial achievements and was nearer to the end of a career than the start.

Not so with **Gennaro Gattuso**.

But these are desperate times for Italy, the four-time champion that is facing a real possibility of failing to qualify for a third consecutive World Cup.

Luciano Spalletti was fired after Italy lost its opening qualifier 3-0 to Norway and when Claudio Ranieri rejected the job, the Italian federation turned to Gattuso - a member of the last Azzurri squad to win the World Cup in 2006.

The hope is that the 47-year-old Gattuso can transmit the same level of competitiveness and determination that he used to display as a gritty midfielder to a group of players who have shown more willingness to sweat it out for the clubs paying their contracts than the national team.

Never mind that Gattuso has won only one trophy in his 12-year coaching career: an Italian Cup with Napoli five years ago. Because wherever he's gone, he has had a no-nonsense and no-filter approach at a series of clubs in crisis.

So it's hard to imagine Gattuso dealing with Francesco Acerbi's refusal of an Italy call up for the Norway game in the same manner that Spalletti did - by mostly brushing it off.

When Gattuso didn't like the way he was being portrayed in the Greek media as coach of financially struggling club Crete in 2014, he lashed out in a verbal tirade during a memorable news conference.

"I didn't come here for (a) holiday," he said then. "One year here is 10 years in another club. And this is good for me."



Gattuso

Gattuso then resigned at Crete before he was convinced to change his mind and return a day later.

At his next job with Pisa, he and Foggia counterpart Roberto De Zerbi nearly came to blows in a heated argument during a playoff win to earn promotion to Serie B after Gattuso was hit on the head by a bottle thrown from the stands.

And just last season at Croatian club Hajduk Split, Gattuso removed star player Ivan Perisic from the team for disciplinary reasons.

As a player, too, Gattuso never shied away from standing up to the biggest names.

During the match in which he scored his only international goal - against England in 2000 - a 22-year-old Gattuso criticized David Beckham for alleged diving, telling the famous midfielder directly to his face, "This is not a swimming pool."

While financial details were not announced, Gattuso was reportedly given only a one-year contract with Italy worth 800,000 euros (slightly under \$1 million).

But the deal includes a 1 million euro (\$1.16 million) bonus if Italy qualifies for the World Cup, Italian media reported.

Gattuso won't be on his own.

Former Italy goalkeeper and captain Gianluigi Buffon remains the squad's team manager.

Leonardo Bonucci, the former defender who was captain of the squad that Gattuso coached at AC Milan, will be an assistant coach.

Andrea Barzagli, another member of the 2006 team, appears set to be named coach of Italy's under-20 or under-21 squad.

And Cesare Prandelli, who coached Italy to the final of the 2012 European Championship, is being tipped to take charge of the federation's development of young talents.

Gattuso's debut will come against Estonia in September.

West Indies beats Ireland to clinch T20 cricket series

BREADY, Northern Ireland, June 16, (AP) — West Indies piled up its second-highest Twenty20 international innings and beat Ireland by 62 runs to clinch a rain-marred three game series 1-0.

West Indies posted 256-5 after being sent in at Bready Cricket Club - propelled by an opening stand of 122 in 10.3 overs between Evin Lewis (91 runs in 44 balls) and captain Shai Hope (51 in 27).

West Indies smashed 20 sixes in total - Lewis hit eight maximums, with four each for Hope and Keacy Carty, who was 49 not out from 22 deliveries.

Ireland replied with 194-7. Ross Adair (48 in 36) and Harry Tector (38

in 25) took the total to 114-1 before Ireland was reduced to 116-4 in 12 overs.

The first and second games were abandoned because of rain.

The two teams drew a three-match ODI series 1-1 in Dublin in May, before England swept West Indies 3-0 in ODI and T20 series.

"Nice to take something back to the Caribbean," Hope said.

West Indies will host Australia in a three-test series starting June 25 in Barbados, followed by a five-game T20 series. Australia is coming off a loss in the World Test Championship final to South Africa in London on the weekend.

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NEWS



The leader of the overall classification France's Romain Gregoire of Groupama - FDJ team celebrates on the podium after the second stage, a 177 km race from Aarau to Schwar-zsee, at the 88th Tour de Suisse UCI World Tour cycling race, in Schwar-zsee, Switzerland. (AP)

# Sports

The squad has inspired hope

## A penalty shattered Palestinian World Cup dreams for 2026

AMMAN, Jordan, June 16, (AP): A long and engrossing qualifying journey of 16 games, while dealing with the obstacles of a war, came crashing down in an instant for Oday Dabbagh and his Palestinian team.

Their legacy will long continue.

Players left the field in tears in the immediate aftermath at the King Abdullah II Stadium in Amman, Jordan, last Thursday after their quest for a first appearance at a World Cup evaporated on a contentious penalty awarded deep in extra time. Fans looked on, stunned.

"It's very hard," Dabbagh, the team's star striker, told The Associated Press. "It was massive for us to get to the next stage - we prepared well, we had a positive atmosphere, and we had the fans with us. We gave everything, but it was gone in a moment."

Needing to win its last three Group B games to reach the playoffs for the last two of Asia's automatic spots at the World Cup, the No. 101-ranked team in the world beat Iraq in Basra in March, Kuwait in Kuwait City on June 5. Five days later, it was leading 1-0 against Oman in Jordan in the

97th minute.

The Palestinians had never been in a better position in qualifying for a World Cup. Then Oman was awarded, and scored, a penalty to make it 1-1 in the last real act of the game.

Not long after the dejected players had picked themselves up, the Palestine Football Association (PFA) made an official complaint to soccer's world governing body, FIFA, about the penalty. It didn't change the fact, however, that the long road trip was over.

"We tried to put smiles on the faces of Palestinians amid their great pain," head coach Ihab Abujazar said. "The heroic players are our pride and glory, a symbol of all that is beautiful in the Palestinian nation."

It may have been different if the Palestinian team, admitted into FIFA in 1998, was able to play home games in front of its fans in Gaza or the West Bank in the third round of qualifying. The Israel-Hamas war meant that couldn't happen. And so the many of the team's home games have been taking place in the nearby Jordanian capital of Amman,

home to a large community of Palestinians.

"It is easier to play in your home," Dabbagh, who helped Aberdeen win the Scottish Cup last month, said. "But the circumstances there are so difficult so we choose to play in Amman as it is close to Palestine, the people are the same, and we have a lot of fans there."

There's been no domestic soccer in the Palestinian territories since the war started in 2023. Hundreds of athletes are among the more than 55,000 Palestinians killed in the conflict and sports facilities have been destroyed.

"Everything that goes on makes us all sad," Dabbagh said. "As players, we try to focus on football during the games, but we use what is happening as motivation to bring happiness to the people of Palestine."

All but two of the roster of 27 national squad players are contracted to foreign clubs either in the region or in Europe, a change from the start of the conflict when a number of players weren't able to leave the West Bank or Gaza to report for international duty.

Over the past year or so, the Palestinian squad has assem-

bled for training camps in Algeria, Qatar and Saudi Arabia to prepare for World Cup qualifying.

The top two teams in each of three Asian groups in the third round earned direct spots for next year's World Cup in the United States, Canada and Mexico.

The third- and fourth-place teams in each group advanced to a playoff for two more places.

A win would have secured fourth spot in the group for the Palestinians. The last-minute draw meant they finished a point behind Oman in fifth.

Now their focus has to shift to the 2027 Asian Cup, which will take place in Saudi Arabia. The Palestinian team has already qualified for the tournament.

Dabbagh is ready to show that the team is set to remain a force in Asian soccer and continue to be ambassadors for millions of people.

"We will keep using football as a message to show the world that there are other things in Palestine," he said. "We will keep going. The dream is not over, it is just delayed."

## PSG thumps Atlético in impressive Cup opener



Atletico Madrid's Alexander Sorloth, left, goes for a header with Paris Saint-Germain's Joao Neves during the Club World Cup group B soccer match between PSG and Atletico Madrid, in Pasadena, Calif. (AP)

### Palmeiras and Porto draw 0-0

PASADENA, Calif., June 16, (AP): Fabián Ruiz and Vitinha scored in the first half, and Champions League winners Paris Saint-Germain opened Club World Cup play with a 4-0 victory over Atlético Madrid.

PSG largely dominated Atlético at the Rose Bowl in its first match since trouncing Inter Milan 5-0 to win its first Champions League title on May 31.

Senny Mayulu and Lee Kang-in scored against 10-man Atlético in the second half of the European powers' meeting in front of 80,619 fans at the site of the 1994 World Cup final. The matchup was one of the highest-profile games in the group stage of the first 32-team edition of the Club World Cup - and treble-winning PSG excelled under another spotlight.

Atlético's Clément Lenglet was sent

off in the 78th minute with his second yellow card on a frustrating day that left Diego Simeone visibly furious at both the referees and his players' mistakes.

Ousmane Dembélé wasn't in uniform for PSG after reportedly injuring a quadriceps while playing for France on June 6. Gonçalo Ramos replaced Dembélé in Luis Enrique's only change to the starting lineup from the Champions League final.

Enrique wore shorts and a training shirt on the sideline while coaching PSG in 88-degree midday California heat (31 Celsius).

PSG controlled possession early, and Ruiz capitalized atop the penalty area in the 19th minute. The Spanish midfielder long coveted by Atlético beat Jan Oblak with a clever strike into the far corner.

Vitinha followed with a goal in injury time off Khvicha Kvaratskhelia's second assist of the first half.

Julían Alvarez appeared to answer for Atlético in the second half, but the goal was waved off after VAR deter-

mined Koke had fouled Désiré Doué in the buildup.

Alexander Sorloth horrifically missed an open net in the 82nd minute for Atlético. Mayulu iced PSG's victory five minutes later, and Lee converted a penalty on the final kick of the match.

Atlético got a golden chance to tie it in first-half injury time, but Gianluigi Donnarumma swallowed up Thomas Griegmann's hard shot in the box. Moments later, Vitinha slipped through the Atlético defense and scored on the break.

PSG looked remarkably sharp late in its taxing season, showing no sign of treating this tournament as an anticlimax. The champs are in good shape to advance from group play after winning their toughest group match on paper.

Atlético somehow looked more exhausted than its opponents, and it collected seven yellow cards that raise the danger of suspension down the road. Simeone's club will be favored in its next two matches, but will have less margin for error.

"I think that in this competition, we've set ourselves the goal to make history. We are entering a new chapter, and we need to show it's possible to reinvent ourselves. It's a good challenge. We need to keep fighting and working to win games. I was happy with the way we performed today," - Enrique

"The sending-off killed us. We knew it was going to be difficult, but for me, 4-0 is not fair. PSG are fair winners. Given their level, they were better. ... We have to push harder, like in the second half, when we were a different team," - Koke, Atlético midfielder

Palmeiras and two-time European champion Porto tied 0-0 before a crowd of 46,275 at MetLife Stadium, which was just over half full.

Estevão's left-footed shot in first-half stoppage time went into the hands of Cláudio Ramos, and Richard Rios' attempt off the rebound was blocked.



Palmeiras' Richard Rios, left, and Vitor Roque vie for control of the ball against Porto's Rodrigo Mora during the second half of a Club World Cup group A soccer match in East Rutherford, N.J. (AP)

### Bell finishes second

## Van Gisbergen's emotional win in Mexico City locks him into playoffs

MEXICO CITY, June 16, (AP): Very little went right for Shane Van Gisbergen in the buildup to NASCAR's first international Cup Series points-paying race of the modern era.

A mechanical issue on takeoff forced his team charter to abort the initial journey to Mexico City. He arrived at the venue Friday, a day late, and after winning the pole Saturday, the New Zealander fell seriously ill.

He was sleeping on the floor of his hauler before Sunday's race, unsure he'd be able to physically complete the 100-lap event at Autódromo Hermanos Rodríguez.

But there's something special about the Kiwi and new venues, especially in the rain, and he salvaged the weekend by winning on the road course to earn an automatic berth into NASCAR's playoffs.

Van Gisbergen led 60 of 100 laps and beat Christopher Bell by 16.567 seconds.

"I tried to treat it like when I go to Asia, just drink bottled water and be careful in the shower and brush your teeth with bottled water, but I just went downhill," Van Gisbergen said. "Couldn't keep anything in. Everything just went straight through me. I felt really queasy and my mind was there, but my body just had so much pressure in my stomach. Crazy weekend and everyone dug deep."

It was the second Cup Series victory of his career. He won in his NASCAR debut at the inaugural 2023 street course race in Chicago - a victory that changed his career trajectory. Van Gisbergen left Australia V8 Supercars, where he was a multiple champion, for a full-time move to NASCAR.

Although he had success in the Xfinity Series - he won three races last year as Trackhouse Racing developed him for a Cup Series ride - Van Gisbergen has struggled this year at NASCAR's top level.

He started the race ranked 33rd in the Cup standings with only one top-10 finish through the first 15 races of the season. But his victory in Mexico City revived his season and gives him a shot to race for the Cup Series championship.



Shane Van Gisbergen celebrates his victory with a burn out during a NASCAR Cup Series auto race at Hermanos Rodríguez race track in Mexico City. (AP)

"It means everything to us, this is why I'm here," Van Gisbergen said. "I am getting better and more competitive. We're really making a lot of progress."

Van Gisbergen celebrated in his traditional rugby-style way - he drop-kicked a signed football into the grandstands and then said he had recovered enough to enjoy "some Red Bulls mixed with adult beverages" later Sunday.

Van Gisbergen benefitted from an early pop-up rain shower on the first lap of the race because he's an exceptionally skilled driver on a wet surface. His win at Chicago was in monsoon-like conditions.

Trackhouse now has two of its drivers - Ross Chastain and Van Gisbergen - locked into the playoffs. But it was a bit of a disappointment for Daniel Suarez, the Monterrey native who thrilled the hometown crowd with a win in the Xfinity Series race on Saturday, as he failed to challenge his teammate for the win and finished 19th.

"I wish I was in the mix fighting for it a little more, but it just wasn't in the cards," Suarez said. "Every single thing about this weekend exceeded my expectations, the people, the fans, the sponsors, the excitement, the energy."

"I had expectations for this weekend, not the results but, like, the event, and I can tell you that I personally exceeded those expectations," he added. "So very, very happy for that. Very blessed. I hope that we can do it many more times."

Suarez, who appeared to be blinking back tears as he sang along with the Mexican national anthem in pre-race ceremonies, desperately wanted the home win in this contract year with Trackhouse. He was the face of this event as NASCAR ventured outside the U.S. with its top series for the first time since 1958.

Bell finished second in a Toyota for Joe Gibbs Racing. He was followed by Chase Elliott in a Hendrick Motorsports Chevrolet. Alex Bowman, who hurt his back in a crash last week at Michigan, withstood the pain for a fourth-place finish in his Hendrick Chevrolet.

Michael McDowell of Spire Motorsports was fifth and followed by John Hunter Nemechek in a Toyota for Legacy Motor Club. Chase Briscoe of JGR was seventh and followed by Cole Custer for Haas Factory as the highest-finishing Ford driver. William Byron of Hendrick was ninth and Chris Buescher of RFK Racing rounded out the top 10.

### Permanent exemptions seem 'no longer possible'

## German regulator pushes for more fan control

DUESSELDORF, Germany, June 16, (AP): Top German soccer clubs including Bayer Leverkusen and Leipzig face the prospect of handing over more control to fans in future after a regulator intervened.

A statement Monday from Germany's antitrust regulator, the Federal Cartel Office, said it wants to see tighter enforcement of the rule known as 50-plus-1 which requires a soccer club's membership to have majority voting rights over how the team is run.

The regulator said recent European court rulings suggest permanent exemptions from 50-plus-1 for last year's champion Leverkusen and fellow top-tier club Wolfsburg seem "no longer possible."

It said efforts should be made in the future to ensure the club's professional soccer operations come under the control of membership organizations, but didn't name any deadline.

Leverkusen and Wolfsburg were founded as workers' teams at major companies which own the clubs, with pharmaceutical giant Bayer at Leverkusen, and car manufacturer Volkswagen at Wolfsburg. Their long-term involvement led to the



In this file photo, Bayer 04 Leverkusen fans cheer their team ahead of the German Bundesliga soccer match between Bayer Leverkusen and FC Augsburg at the BayArena in Leverkusen, Germany. (AP)

clubs getting exemptions from 50-plus-1. The regulator also said the German men's soccer league needs to ensure the clubs it oversees "offer their fans the opportunity to become a new full member with voting rights."

That appears to affect Leipzig and its relationship with drinks giant Red Bull, though they weren't

directly named by the regulator in Tuesday's statement.

The club was founded by Red Bull in 2009 and is part of its international network of soccer clubs. It grants voting rights to far fewer people than most German clubs. Local media reported that only 23 members had the right to vote at Leipzig as of last year.