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WEDNESDAY, JUNE 18, 2025 / ZUL-HIJJAH 22, 1446 AH

emergency number 112

NO. 18925

16 PAGES

150 FILS



PM Diwan photo  
His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah participates in the Central Blood Bank's donation campaign on Tuesday. — See Page 2



## Opinion

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

### Where is Iran headed?

THE G7 has unequivocally affirmed the right of Israel to self-defense and the permanent inability of Iran to acquire nuclear weapons. This reiterates global support for Tel Aviv, not due to any perceived wrongdoing against it.

It is crucial to recall its history of being the mother of all evils and for being the primary source of conflict since 1947. However, global perspectives on injustice are shaped by shared interests and relationships, not solely by historical grievances.

Regrettably, the Iranian regime has failed to grasp this reality since 1979. Instead, it has undermined its political and humanitarian principles, and disregarded international agreements. This is evident in its promotion of the 'exporting the revolution' ideology, the establishment of sectarian militias that destabilize nations, and the pursuit of nuclear weapons and long-range missiles; thereby, posing a global threat. This nation stands alone in grounding its strategic policy on globally rejected principles — even rejected by its wartime allies.

The 2014 statement of former Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad on preparing for the awaited Mahdi emergence should not be dismissed as mere domestic rhetoric. Such pronouncements by high-ranking officials indicate a regime actively pursuing certain objectives in all significant sectors.

It is only natural that this policy will raise international and regional concerns, because it is impossible for one country to decide the fate of the world. Even the superpowers have certain limits in this regard. Thus, when this is coupled with the pursuit of weapons of mass destruction; the

world must be on edge, especially if it is the policy of a regime that has many objections and is considered a sponsor of terrorism.

For 47 years, Iran's neighbors — at least — have not witnessed any sign of goodwill from Tehran. Instead, they have been plagued by tensions fueled by its troublesome neighbor.

So, when some in the Gulf and the Arab world say that Iran has left no room for reconciliation, the statement is based on numerous facts. Despite this, no one in the region wants to destroy this country, as they rather want it to prosper in all aspects.

In spite of its potential as a regional manufacturing hub and international trade route due to its strategic location; Tehran has found limited support in the Islamic world, with only a few capitals aligning with their own distinct interests.

The Iranian people — known for their energy and vast wealth encompassing not only oil but also agriculture, water, rare minerals, and valuable talent — could have enjoyed a prosperous life. Unfortunately, this has not been taken into account in the plans of the current regime. Instead, it has militarized the country and exacerbated the living conditions of its people.

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## Kuwait Amir, Qatar Amir review relations amid regional escalation

KUWAIT CITY, June 17, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah on Monday evening called Qatari Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, reviewing firm fraternal relations between both countries and sisterly peoples.

During the phone conversation, they also tackled the rapid developments in the Middle East region and the existing conflict between the friendly Islamic Republic of Iran and the heinous Israeli entity and the latest regional and international developments.

## KUWAIT STRENGTHENS RADIATION DETECTION

# Kuwait calls out spillover danger

Foreign governments seek emergency exits for stranded nationals

By Fares Ghaleb

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff and Agencies

KUWAIT CITY, June 17: National Guard Chief Sheikh Mubarak Humoud Al-Sabah on Tuesday heaped praise on the role and capabilities of the Sheikh Salem Al-Ali Al-Sabah Center for Chemical Defense and Radiological Monitoring, affirming that it is essential in maintaining national security.

Sheikh Mubarak Humoud Al-Sabah made the statement when he visited the center; indicating that it is home to cutting-edge equipment and modern tools, which assist in radiation detection and circumvention efforts.

He revealed the center relies on specialized devices and innovative techniques, in addition to the competence of its personnel, to identify any radiation sources; subsequently protecting the environment and the nation's security in equal measure.

Also, the Chief of General Staff of Kuwait Army revealed in a press release that they assessed national capabilities in the fields of energy, water and health; and reviewed the readiness of vital sectors to deal with emergencies and disasters.

The statement confirmed that the discussions touched on environmental monitoring plans and dealing with air and sea crises, in addition to civil defense plans and mechanisms of support and coordination between the concerned authorities.

This meeting is within the framework of enhancing integration between State institutions, and raising the level of coordination and preparedness to face potential risks.

Chairman of Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) Ambassador Khaled Al-Maghames affirmed the full commitment of KRCS to its national and humanitarian role amid the ongoing regional developments.

Speaking to Kuwait News Agency (KUNA), Al-Maghames emphasized that KRCS stands at the forefront of the national emergency response efforts of Kuwait, prioritizing the safety and wellbeing of citizens while working closely with government bodies.

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## GCC proposes deeper UN ties

NEW YORK, June 17, (KUNA): The GCC group presented late Monday the first of its kind draft paper on bolstering partnerships with UN organizations.

This came in a speech to a UN session by Kuwait Permanent Representative at the UN headquarters in New York Tareq Al-Banai on part of the GCC group.

This draft paper not only boosts current level of cooperation between the GCC and the UN, it pushes for more strategic and sustainable partnerships based on joint principals between the two sides.

He revealed that this partnership aimed at boosting efforts for peace post conflicts and crises, adding that the draft paper asked the UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres to provide a report on executing institutional partnership within this domain during the upcoming 80th UNGA.

Ambassador Al-Banai affirmed

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## Motorists, seafarers advised to stay alert

### Dust to cut visibility as Kuwait sizzles at 45°C

KUWAIT CITY, June 17, (KUNA): The Meteorological Department forecasted that the weather on Wednesday and Thursday will be extremely hot and dusty during the day, and warm at night.

Acting Director of the department Dherar Al-Ali explained to Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) that on Wednesday morning, the country will be affected by the extension of the Indian seasonal low, accompanied by a hot and dry air mass and strong north-westerly winds that may exceed 65

km/h. These winds will stir up dust, reducing horizontal visibility to less than 1,000 meters and possibly causing near-zero visibility in some exposed areas. Sea waves are expected to rise above six feet, and a relative drop in maximum temperatures is anticipated, with highs ranging between 43°C and 45°C across most areas of the country.

Al-Ali said the weather on Wednesday and Thursday will generally be hot and dusty during the day, and warm at night, with dust gradually settling in the evening.

He urged motorists to exercise caution on highways due to reduced and potentially sudden drops in visibility, especially on desert roads.

He also warned seafarers of high waves and advised individuals with asthma and allergies to wear masks when going outside.

Al-Ali called on citizens and residents to follow the weather updates via the department's official website, mobile app, social media accounts, and the "Sahel" app for the latest developments.

## Consumers turn to delivery for essentials amid tensions

By Najeh Bilal

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 17: It has been said that the misfortune of one person is the gain of another, as manifested in the remarkable increase in the activity of home delivery companies; in view of the escalation of war in the region between Iran and Israel, with no end in sight at present and amid the state of anticipation and caution among the public.

In a statement to the newspaper, Home Delivery Company Owners Committee Chairman Abdul Aziz Al-Falih disclosed that the increase in activity in this sector has been estimated at 10 percent since the outbreak of the ongoing war between Iran and Israel. He said delivery companies were receiving 300 delivery requests per minute under normal circumstances, but this has now jumped to 330. He pointed out that water and

food are the most in-demand commodities in recent days. "Demand for essential items has increased, while the rate of non-essential deliveries has declined," he added.

He went on to say that the number of officially registered home delivery companies is about 1,902; and around 900 of these companies are active and operating non-stop. He stated that the number of bicycles used for delivery in the local market currently stands at 14,000; along with approximately 25,000 vehicles.

He also confirmed that delivery prices have decreased due to the rising number of delivery companies. "Previously, the cost of delivery reached KD3, but with the increase in the number of companies in this field, the fee is now 500 fils or more; depending on the distance and the nature of the restaurants delivering the orders. The delivery market is

Continued on Page 5

### Day by Day

IF everyone whose citizenship has been revoked were given a choice between keeping their Kuwaiti identity or retaining the benefits that citizenship provides, most would choose their national identity. The reason is simple: they have nowhere else to go. Kuwait is their only homeland.

May God help them, for He is always with the patient.

... Yet tomorrow is another day.

Zahed Matar

### Newswatch

KHAN YOUNIS: At least 51 Palestinians were killed and more than 200 wounded in the Gaza Strip while waiting for U.N. and commercial trucks to enter the territory with desperately needed food, according to Gaza's Health Ministry and a local hospital.

Palestinian witnesses told The Associated Press that Israeli forces carried out an airstrike on a nearby home before opening fire toward the crowd in the southern city of Khan Younis.

The Israeli military said soldiers had spotted a gathering near an aid truck that was stuck in Khan Younis, near where Israeli forces were operating. (AP)



Photo by Rezk Tawfiq

As Kuwait bakes at 46°C on Tuesday, young ones take to the fountains for a much-needed cooldown.



8 Gulf Bank empowers female employees with monthly WOW sessions highlighting leadership and professional growth

8 Investment opportunities at the core of Boursa Kuwait's participation in HSBC's fourth GCC Exchanges Conference



9 ABK wins 'Best Call Center' in the banking sector – Kuwait Award from Global Brands Magazine for 2024



Prayer Timings			
Fajr .....	03:13	Asr .....	15:23
Sunrise ..	04:48	Maghrib ..	18:49
Zohr .....	11:49	Isha .....	20:22

# Local

Weather			
Expected weather for next 24 hrs:			
By Day: Hot and dusty with moderate to fresh strong at times northwesterly wind, with speeds of 20-65 km/h.			
By Night: Hot to rather hot and dust will subside gradually			
Station	Max Exp	Min Rec	
Kuwait City	47	35	
Kuwait Airport	48	34	

Abdaly	49	29
Jahra	49	34
Salmiyah	45	33
Ahmadi	46	31
Nuwaisib	49	34
Salmy	49	30
Managish	49	33



HH the Amir



HH the Crown Prince



HH the Prime Minister

## Amir congrats Iceland on founding 'versary

KUWAIT CITY, June 17, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent, on Tuesday, a congratulatory cable to the President of Iceland Halla Tomasdottir, on her country's founding anniversary.

His Highness the Amir wished Tomasdottir good health and further prosperity to Iceland and its people.

### Crown Prince

His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, on Tuesday, a congratulatory ca-

ble to the President of Iceland Halla Tomasdottir, on her country's founding anniversary.

His Highness the Crown Prince wished Tomasdottir good health and further prosperity to Iceland and its people.

### Prime Minister

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah sent, on Tuesday, a congratulatory cable to the President of Iceland Halla Tomasdottir, on her country's founding anniversary.



Sheikh Ahmad Al-Abdullah Al-Sabah



Sheikh Abdullah Al-Ali Al-Sabah



Dr Amthal Al-Huwailah



Dr Nader Mohammad Al-Jallal



Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi



Dr Ahmad Al-Awadhi



Khalifa Abdullah Dhahi Ajeel Al-Askar



Nasser Mohammad Al-Sumait

# Pledge to fight climate change & save energy

Kuwait power import from grid continues

By Mohammad Ghanem  
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 17: The report of the Statistics Department at the Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy for the month of May revealed that the local grid imported 560,872 megawatt-hours from the Gulf Cooperation Council Interconnection Authority (GCCIA) at a daily rate of 778.9 megawatts.

It stated that the peak load reached 16,980 megawatts on May 22; while the lowest load reached 9,490 megawatts on May 21.

The report indicated that the ministry connected electricity to all residential sectors -- a total of 830 customers in various governorates. The number of customers in the private residential sector reached 735, 48 in the government sector, 18 in the investment sector, 13 in the commercial sector, and eight each in the industrial and agricultural sectors. The total electricity load provided to these sectors reached 160,303,692 kilowatts.

Meanwhile, the State of Kuwait, represented by Undersecretary of the ministry Dr. Adel Al-Zamel and Ambassador of Kuwait to the Kingdom of Belgium and Head of Mission to the European Union and NATO Nawaf Al-Enezi, attended the 10th World Energy Efficiency Con-



Dr. Al-Zamel

ference organized by the International Energy Agency (IEA). The conference was held in Brussels, Belgium from June 12-13, 2025; with high-level participation among government representatives, international organizations and energy experts.

In his speech at the conference, Al-Zamel affirmed Kuwait's unwavering commitment to achieve sustainable development and enhance energy efficiency as part of its efforts to combat climate change.

He pointed out that Kuwait was among the first countries in the region to adopt the Energy Efficiency Code in 1983, which has seen continuous updates over four decades; contributing to the reduction of more than 30 million tons of carbon dioxide emissions.

He also announced the launching of a new, simplified version of the Energy Efficiency Code to expand its scope of application in various sectors, in preparation for the issuance of a more advanced version based on the latest technologies to improve energy efficiency at the national level. On strengthening regional cooperation, he revealed that Kuwait will host the Gulf Forum for Electricity and Water Conservation in November 2025.

The forum will also launch the 'Excellence in Energy Efficiency for Buildings' at the GCC level, honoring innovation and leadership in the design and operation of highly efficient buildings.

He confirmed the participation of Kuwait in the Gulf-European Conference on Energy, Renewable Energy and Energy Security that will be held in Brussels in the latter part of 2025. He added that Kuwait is keen on cooperating with regional and international partners to accelerate the energy transition, enhance resilience, and ensure a sustainable and secure future for future generations.



U.S. Ambassador to Kuwait Karen Hideko Sasahara with her hosts during her visit to Diwan Al-Bahr.

## Kuwait Premier leads gov't officials in 'CBB' campaign to donate blood

KUWAIT CITY, June 17, (KUNA): His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah took part Tuesday in a

blood donation campaign organized by the Central Blood Bank, aiming to increase the national strategic stock.

### 'Plan to streamline visas for Kuwaiti students'

## US envoy visits Diwan Al-Bahr, calls for efforts to encourage investment

KUWAIT CITY, June 17: During her visit to Diwan Al-Bahr, U.S. Ambassador to Kuwait Karen Hideko Sasahara called for greater efforts from Kuwait to attract foreign investment and foster a more competitive, investor-friendly business environment. She emphasized that such efforts are vital for enhancing Kuwait's economic position and aligning with global developments.

Ambassador Sasahara reaffirmed the strength and depth of U.S.- Kuwaiti relations, particularly in the areas of education and economic cooperation. She noted that the U.S. Embassy is actively working to streamline visa procedures for Kuwaiti students studying in the United States, underscoring the importance of supporting their educational journey.

In her remarks, the Ambassador stressed the importance of ongoing collaboration between Wash-

ington and Kuwait to promote regional stability, especially amid the current geopolitical tensions.

Engaging in an open dialogue with attendees at Diwan Al-Bahr, Ambassador Sasahara explored their perspectives on the future of Kuwait's business climate. She inquired about both government and private-sector initiatives aimed at strengthening the non-oil economy as a strategic approach to addressing fiscal deficits and diversifying national income sources.

On the topic of higher education, she reassured Kuwaiti students of the Embassy's commitment to facilitating the visa process. She also mentioned efforts to collaborate with U.S. universities to ensure smoother admissions and academic residency processes, in order to uphold the strong educational partnership between the two nations.

### Teachers, admin staff to get bonus later

## MoE disburses 'good job' bonus for top officials

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

KUWAIT CITY, June 17: The Ministry of Education announced Tuesday that the Finance Sector has completed all procedures related to reviewing and auditing the lists of employees eligible for the excellent job performance bonus for the calendar year 2024.

This is a confirmation of the report that the newspaper published earlier regarding the disbursement of the abovementioned bonus to approximately 6,000 administrators at the head office of the ministry and the educational districts.

The ministry indicated that the allocated amounts will be transferred to the Central Bank on Wednesday in preparation for disbursement to the accounts of employees entitled to the bonus.

### Entitled

It confirmed that those entitled to the bonus include 5,892 employees assigned in the head office, the six educational districts and those working in the private education sector. It stressed that the review and audit operations were conducted according to clear stand-

ards that ensure fairness and transparency, and in coordination with the relevant regulatory authorities.

It added that the Financial Sector completed all disbursement requirements after obtaining approval from the Financial Control Department, indicating the transfer to local banks will take place immediately upon receipt from the Central Bank to pave the way for depositing the bonus to the accounts of beneficiaries.

### Disclosed

Regarding members of the teaching and administrative staff in schools; the ministry disclosed that the disbursement of the bonus for this category will take place later, following the end of the current academic year and the completion of the annual performance evaluation procedures through the integrated systems, passing through the stages of auditing and review by the competent authorities.

The ministry then reaffirmed its commitment to grant the financial rights of its employees according to the approved timetables; expressing gratitude and appreciation to all administrative cadres for their efforts during the year. It urged everyone to continue to excel and give in a way that serves the educational process in the country.

## PAM gears up to implement exit permit system for expat workers

KUWAIT CITY, June 17: The Public Authority for Manpower (PAM) is now preparing for the implementation of the exit permit system for expatriate workers in the private sector that will take effect on July 1, reports Al-Rai daily.

The authority also reviewed the comments of relevant government agencies on the system and it has started co-ordinating with other concerned government agencies to activate the system. It continues to hold a series of meetings in order to address and respond to any comment.

Acting Deputy Director for Planning and Administrative Development at PAM Rabab Al-Osaimi disclosed that the issuance of an exit permit through the announced systems enables the workers to avail services through the 'Easy Companies' page or 'Easy Manpower' page under the 'Labor Services' portal, in addition to the Sahel Individuals application.

She confirmed that "the new service was activated as per the directive of First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahd Al-Yousuf to protect the rights of both the workers and employers." She said "employers can now submit a request for permission to leave the country,

specifying the period from which the worker is permitted to leave. The certificate containing a QR code must be printed to verify its authenticity at the ports or presented electronically through the official platforms."

She added "workers can also submit the request through Sahel Individuals app, where a special option is provided for the service and linked to the Sahel Business app. Notifications are sent directly to the worker after the employer's approval, and the certificate is then uploaded. Submitting the request and obtaining approval only takes a few minutes, as the service entails a direct link between the worker and the employer. There will be no intervention by authority employees to review the requests.

The services will be launched in English soon. PAM continues to update and develop its electronic services to ensure they operate efficiently round the clock; as well as guarantee the quality, speed of implementation, and improved user experience. The increased demand for electronic services has saved effort and improved employee performance, as automated systems receive no fewer than 30,000 electronic transactions daily in various platforms and portals of the authority."



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A DIGEST OF PUBLIC OPINION

People’s livelihood or missiles production?

“HISTORY offers us lessons and insights. Denmark, for example, engaged in several wars with Sweden - 11 in total - including one that lasted 200 years, all to prove the personal or military superiority of one king over another. At times, wars were waged for reasons unrelated to politics. These conflicts took on various names, such as the Denmark-Sweden War, the Seven Years’ War, the Kalmar War, the Torstenson War, the Scanian War, the Great Northern War, and the Theatre War”, columnist **Ahmad Al-Dawas** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.



“Over time, Denmark came to recognize the heavy toll of its material and human losses and acknowledged that its military and political approach had been a mistake. Ultimately, it understood that reconciliation and disarmament with Sweden were the best paths forward, allowing both societies to pursue development and prosperity.

“Indeed, both countries have since improved significantly. All restrictions on the movement of people between the two countries without the need for travel documents or ID have been lifted. I visited Denmark in the summer of 1975 and found it to be one of the best European countries. The streets resembled beautiful, well-maintained gardens. The Danes speak three European languages, treat others with respect and appreciation, and benefit from high standards of education and healthcare.

“I have written extensively about Iran and always wished the best for it. However, what Iran is doing in our Arab region today resembles the expansionist policies once adopted by Denmark in the Middle Ages. Iran’s interference in the internal affairs of four Arab countries is universally condemned and violates international law. Iranian influence in Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, and Yemen has contributed to their devastation, causing the deaths of hundreds of thousands and widespread destruction of property.

“Had Iran focused on managing its political and economic affairs responsibly, it could have become an advanced nation - the “Singapore of the Gulf.” By developing its internal situation and harnessing its natural resources and tourism potential, Iran could have significantly improved the standard of living for its citizens.

“Real power today is economic, not military, which is clearly evident from the progress of South Korea compared to the backwardness of North Korea. Iran, however, has not followed this path and has instead inflamed regional tensions against itself.

“On Friday, June 13, Israel launched an airstrike against Iran, targeting several nuclear facilities and missile launch sites. The attacks killed high-ranking figures, including the Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces, the Commander of the Revolutionary Guard, the Air Force Commander, and prominent nuclear scientists.

“Israel deployed approximately 200 aircraft, dropping hundreds of munitions on more than 100 targets. Hezbollah declared that it would not intervene in a conflict between Iran and Israel, viewing it as an international matter and choosing not to defend Iran. Hezbollah went even further, stating it would not intervene if Lebanon were attacked, emphasizing that Lebanon has its own army to defend the country.

“The Iranian Supreme Leader vowed revenge. On Friday evening, Iran launched missile strikes against Israel using drones. Iran may also target American interests in the Gulf.

“Wouldn’t it be better for Iran to open a new chapter with the world and welcome investments from Arab, American, and European partners? Wouldn’t it be wiser for Iran to harness its natural resources and vast coastline, develop its people, and become an advanced nation, rather than face external attacks or widespread popular discontent?”

**Also:**

“It is very difficult to judge political issues, especially in their early stages. In our era, politics often carries a strongly Machiavellian undertone. This makes me wonder about the powerful and complex interests between Iran and Israel. How could they simply disappear overnight, or even within days or weeks? I believe that, even in the worst-case scenario of hostility between Iran and Israel, this war will amount to little more than a slap on the cheek between two friends who are united by shared hopes, dreams, and, as we have seen before, shared pain”, Kuwaiti writer **Dr. Hamoud Al-Hattab** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

“Regarding the deaths on both

sides, the truth remains unclear, especially concerning the impact of the Iranian strikes on the entity. In my quick observations, I noticed that the bombed houses in Jaffa and Haifa, as well as some areas targeted by Iran, closely resemble Palestinian refugee camps. I believe that raising the Israeli flag over these destroyed homes is an attempt to mislead people into thinking they are Israeli residences. I have serious doubts about this and believe these are actually Palestinian homes.

“When loved ones grow angry with each other, they may slap one another lightly on the cheeks, only to soothe the pain with gentle care. They greet each other warmly on the subway, kiss, and embrace.”

□ □ □

“A historic decision in the United States has shifted the focus of government employment toward valuing skills, talent, and experience over academic qualifications.” Kuwaiti writer **Al-Bandari Al-Ajmi** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

“In a pivotal move, President Donald Trump, during his first term, signed an executive order that re-defined the federal government’s recruitment approach. The order emphasized skills as the primary criterion for hiring in public sector institutions, rather than academic degrees. While some may view this as a radical shift from tradition, I see it as a necessary correction. For too long, career advancement has been unfairly tied to official documents and certificates, often overlooking true talent and potential.

“Since 2018, within the walls of Kuwait University, the idea for the “Talent Caravan” was born under the umbrella of the Office for Gifted and Talented Persons. I have always believed that every individual possesses a unique talent that deserves to be discovered and supported. Although the office was later closed, my efforts did not stop. I transferred the idea to the media, launching a radio program on Kuwait Radio under the same name “Talent Caravan”. The program aims to highlight talented individuals and provide them with a platform to shine.

“What Trump did during his first term is exactly what I have been advocating for years. Talent, when recognized and embraced, makes a real difference. When a profession is practiced with passion and intrinsic motivation, it transforms into unmatched creativity and productivity.

“While I fully support this approach, I also believe that the foundation of any advanced nation must rest on the shoulders of those who possess genuine knowledge and real skills, rather than just academic degrees, which, in many cases, can unfortunately be bought.

“Prioritizing skills does not mean dismissing the role of education, but it means restoring it to its rightful place. Skills complement academic degrees, and degrees can enhance skills. It is the combination of both that builds a cohesive, aware, and productive society.

“As someone who has long advocated for talent and supported its recognition, I have consistently called for the widespread adoption of this principle, not out of reaction, but out of responsibility. Let us work together to create a fair and balanced work environment that respects individuals for their talent and effort, not merely the name of the university from which they graduated.”

□ □ □

“Life and the pencil represent lessons shaped by experience. A person lives in this world much like a pencil - sharpened by stumbles to write in a more beautiful way, and refined by trials to become more precise and clear. Just as a pencil goes through a process of shaping to fulfill its purpose, a person too faces hardships and challenges that reshape them, making them stronger and more mature.” Kuwaiti writer **Jaber Al-Tamimi** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

“The value of life doesn’t lie in the absence of pain, but in our ability to transform that pain into a driving force that pushes us forward and motivates us to achieve our goals. The picture of success is never complete without passing through stations of failure and challenge, which rebuild our willpower and strengthen our resolve, just like a pencil needs to be continuously sharpened to perform effectively.

“How many times have we stumbled along the way? How many dreams did we think were lost, when in reality, they were simply redrawing themselves?”

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

46 juveniles probed for driving sans license

Number of traffic violations on rise once again

KUWAIT CITY, June 17: Despite an initial decline in traffic violations following the enforcement of the new traffic law on April 22, the number of infractions has begun to rise again. A security source attributed this increase to the intensified operations carried out by the General Traffic Department and the General Department of Rescue Police.

According to statistics obtained by Al Anba for the period of June 7 to 13, authorities recorded 31,376 traffic violations, responded to 1,023 accidents, and arrested 580 individuals, including wanted persons and absconders. Among those arrested, 22 were found in abnormal conditions, and 46 juveniles were caught driving without licenses.

The traffic statistics revealed that 23,062 violations were registered, and authorities impounded 366 vehicles and 68 motorcycles. Additionally, 79 vehicles wanted by the judiciary—linked to thefts or trust violations—were seized.

Traffic officers also arrested 5 individuals in an abnormal state and detained 128 persons wanted for various offenses, including absconding, expired residency permits, and outstanding arrest warrants. Four street vendors were apprehended, and 85 violators were referred to the relevant authorities, including the traffic police. The 46 juveniles arrested for unlicensed driving were transferred to the Juvenile Prosecution.

The General Traffic Department recorded 913 traffic accidents during the week. Of these, 117



A combo picture shows delivery bikes confiscated by the traffic department.

resulted in injuries or fatalities, while 796 caused only material damage.

The General Department of Rescue Police also contributed to law enforcement efforts, arresting 17 individuals in abnormal conditions and 292 wanted persons on charges including fraud, theft, and court rulings. They detained 80 individuals

without identification, one infiltrator, and 166 expatriates with expired residency. Additionally, they recovered 82 vehicles connected to criminal cases and intervened in 10 public altercations.

Traffic officers issued 8,314 violations during this period, while emergency police units responded to 110 traffic accidents.

Moussawi killer goes to gallows

‘Justice only path to restore peace’

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

KUWAIT CITY, June 17: In a landmark ruling that underscored the strength of justice and sends a stern message to those who threaten public safety, the Criminal Court on Monday sentenced to death the defendant convicted of murdering Kuwaiti citizen Hani Al-Moussawi in his own home — a crime that shocked the nation and stirred widespread public outrage.

The verdict is in response to the Public Prosecution’s firm demand for the maximum penalty, which it described as the only fitting retribution for what it called a “totally merciless” act. The prosecution emphasized that justice for the victim and deterrence against future crimes could only be achieved through the severest punishment under the law.

Presided over by Judge Nayef Al-Dahoum, the court session was marked by heavy emotion and tense anticipation, with the eyes of the victim’s family — and the broader community — fixed on the long-awaited decision in the case now known as the ‘Jabriya crime.’

During the trial, Assistant Public Prosecutor for the Jahra Prosecution Fahad Al-Mutairi delivered a powerful closing argument. He stressed that the crime was devoid of justification or mercy, declaring: “Justice

is a sacred duty, and fair retribution is the only way to honor the victim’s life and protect the sanctity of innocent lives.”

Al-Mutairi also warned that “society cannot bear the weight of more murderers. Justice is the only path to restore peace in the hearts of the people.”

The brutal nature of the murder, committed inside the victim’s home, reverberated across Kuwaiti society. News on the crime sparked intense anger online, with the hashtag ‘#crime’ trending on social media platforms, accompanied by widespread calls for justice and accountability.

In a statement following the verdict, Attorney Hassan Al-Moussawi — lawyer for the victim’s heirs — described the ruling as “a significant milestone on the path toward justice.” He said it reflects the judiciary’s firm commitment to safeguard human life and dignity.

He conveyed the profound grief endured by the family and community in the wake of what he called a “heinous and inhumane crime.” He commended the transparency of the investigation and trial procedures, asserting that all legal rights, including those of the accused, were fully upheld.

“We value this verdict as a rightful tribute to the soul of the deceased and a step toward healing for his family,” he asserted.

He affirmed the family’s respect for legal procedures, emphasizing that the ruling remains subject to appeal in accordance with Kuwaiti law.

He concluded with a solemn message “the blood of innocents is a trust upon us all. The law remains the only path to achieve justice and maintain societal peace.”



KFF personnel at the scene.

1 hurt in Sabah Al-Salem early morning house fire

KUWAIT CITY, June 17: Fire broke out in a house in Sabah Al-Salem at dawn on Monday, resulting in injuries to one individual.

According to a press release issued by Kuwait Fire Force (KFF), firefighters from Mishref and Al-Qurain fire stations rushed to the location and brought the blaze under control. The injured individual was handed over to emergency medical services.

Jail-term suspended

Wife killer’s hearing postponed to July 14

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

KUWAIT CITY, June 17: The Criminal Court, headed by Judge Nasser Al-Badr, postponed until July 14 the trial of a man accused of the premeditated murder of his wife in Mutlaa desert to bring the accused from prison, pay the civil lawsuit fees and photocopy the file.

During the session, the victim’s lawyer Attorney Abdul Mohsen Al-Qattan appeared before the court and filed a civil claim of KD10,001.

The Public Prosecution had earlier interrogated the accused on three charges: premeditated murder by ‘deliberate running over’ the victim, kidnapping the victim through deception, and possession of psychotropic substances with intent to use.

Case files indicate that on March 30, the accused committed the premeditated murder of his wife, as he resolved and intended to kill her. Once he got hold of her and forcibly took her into her vehicle, he went to an unknown location and ran her over with the intention of taking her life, causing the injuries described in the autopsy report that led to her death.

□ □ □

**Jail-term suspended:** The Court of Appeals suspended the implementation of the three-year prison sentence imposed on a police station chief and five officers and a citizen who was sentenced to one year in jail for enabling a defendant to escape, pending the Appeal’s ruling. They were released on bail of KD1,000.

The Public Prosecution charged the defendants with allowing a detained defendant to leave the police station and go home — a practice known as “enabling a defendant to escape in violation of the law.”

Meanwhile, the Criminal Court will rule on the appeal filed by Salman Al-Khalidi on June 30. He was convicted in absentia to 10 years in prison in two cases of insulting His Highness the Amir and Saudi Arabia.

The court charged Al-Khalidi with intentionally challenging the authority of His Highness the Amir and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia through his X account, as well as misusing social media.

However, Al-Khalidi denied the charges against him.

It is worth mentioning that the Criminal Court upheld the imprisonment of Al-Khalidi for five years with hard labor in a State security case.

□ □ □



Al-Qattan

**Student jailed 3 years:** The Court of Appeals upheld the verdict issued by the Court of First-Instance, which sentenced an expatriate student at the College of Business Studies to three-year imprisonment with hard labor after it was proven that he had publicly insulted the Amir using offensive phrases.

The incident took place inside one of the institute’s academic faculties, where the student wrote the offensive phrases on a blackboard.

The Dean of the College of Business Studies received a report of the incident and immediately notified security authorities. Based on the report, State Security officers arrested the student. During the investigation, the student explicitly confessed to the offense.

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150 artworks illuminate Egypt-Kuwait cultural bond

‘Egyptian Visions’ exhibit returns with artistic fusion of two nations

By Fares Ghaleb

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 17: The Embassy of the Arab Republic of Egypt in Kuwait organized the seventh edition of the ‘Egyptian Visions’ exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art, with Egyptian Ambassador Osama Shaltout in attendance.

This is part of the celebrations of Kuwait as the Arab Capital of Culture and Media for the year 2025. It is under the sponsorship of the National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters (NCCAL).

Also present at the opening ceremony were several ambassadors and diplomats, Director of the Fine Arts Department at NCCAL Wael Al-Jaber; and Kuwaiti and Egyptian artists, intellectuals and art enthusiasts.

The exhibition witnessed the participation of more than 60 artists from Egypt and Kuwait who showcased around 150 artworks that depict the shared conscience and mutual cultural and civilizational heritage.

In his remarks during the opening of the exhibition; Shaltout explained that the exhibition comes at an important time, coinciding with the designation of Kuwait as the Capital of Arab Culture and a Center for Arab and Humanitarian Media. “This gives the event a special symbolic dimension and reflects the depth of communication between the two brotherly peoples. The event is a milestone in the long-standing cultural relations between the two countries,” he asserted.

He disclosed that many of the artworks displayed at the exhibition were inspired by the Egyptian and Kuwaiti environments or creatively blended them, reflecting the cultural and human interconnectedness between the two peoples.



The Egyptian Ambassador to Kuwait and the Director of the Fine Arts Department at the National Council for Culture and Arts with the artist Ebtisam Al-Asfour and her artwork.



The Egyptian Ambassador to Kuwait and the Director of the Fine Arts Department at the National Council for Culture and Arts with the artist Ebtisam Al-Asfour and her artwork.



Artist Hamdi Al-Ajami and his painting of Nefertiti using glass mosaic on wood.



Some of the artwork at the ‘Egyptian Visions’ exhibition.



KUNA photos

He said “art only flourishes in a climate of harmony and freedom. Egyptians in Kuwait consider it their second home, a fact clearly demonstrated by the level of creativity they presented at the exhibition.”

He expressed his gratitude and appreciation to NCCAL for its continuous sponsorship and cooperation

with the Egyptian Embassy in ensuring the success of such cultural events, as well as its unwavering support for Egyptian artistic initiatives in Kuwait.

In a related development, Shaltout announced that the opening of the New Egyptian Museum -- originally scheduled for July 3 -- was postponed until the last

quarter of this year due to the developments in the region and the turmoil in the landscape.

He said the museum will be a “gift to humanity,” housing more than 100,000 artifacts representing the essence of ancient Egyptian civilization and a center of cultural influence for the entire world.

On the other hand, General Co-

ordinator of the exhibition Dr. Ibrahim Salam stated that art is an expression of the identity and character of peoples; adding that visual art is a world transcending the boundaries of time and space.

“Art remains the artist’s means of expression in his constant search for answers to the major questions that shape his existence. Therefore,

creativity is necessary for human survival and existence. This exhibition is an extended search for soul and existence, with a group of artists from Egypt and Kuwait gathering for the seventh consecutive year to affirm the spirit of unity and brotherhood and to preserve cultural and civilizational heritage,” he added.

Ministry of Education moving to review organizational structures

‘We hope technical guidance will not be overlooked’

By Abdulrahman Al-Shammari

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 17: Chairman of the Kuwait Libraries and Information Association Dr. Abdulaziz Al-Suwait revealed there is a positive trend by the Ministry of Education to review organizational structures, including the structure for technical guidance for academic subjects.



Al-Seyassah photo of Dr. Abdulaziz Al-Suwait, Chairman of the Kuwait Libraries and Information Association.

He affirmed “this is a commendable trend that serves the development of the educational process. We, at the Kuwait Libraries and Information Association, hope that the technical guidance for educational activities will not be overlooked in this amendment. These include the guidance of libraries, guidance of educational technologies, and guidance of psychological and social services; given their effective and integrated role in supporting the educational field.”

He pointed out that the technical guidance for activities performs the same basic tasks as the technical guidance for subjects; including school monitoring, technical supervision, guidance and evaluation, and are a fundamental pillar of the educational system.

He stressed that fairness among these educational categories in the upcoming organizational restructuring contributes to enhancing the quality of educational work and achieving professional justice, as well as reflects the comprehensive vision for developing education in the State of Kuwait.

Commerce ministry reassures stable supply of bottled water

KUWAIT CITY, June 17: The Ministry of Commerce and Industry reassured citizens and residents that bottled water is widely available at all retail outlets, including cooperative societies, supermarkets, and warehouses, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The ministry stressed there are no shortages or disruptions in the supply chain, highlighting that commercial inspection teams monitor the availability of water and other basic commodities on a daily basis to ensure steady supply, accessibility, and price stability.

Sabah Al-Salem University City goes digital with power meters

KUWAIT CITY, June 17: The Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy has started the conversion of electricity meters in all facilities and buildings at Sabah Al-Salem University City from mechanical to digital, reports Al-Anba daily quoting sources from Kuwait University.

Sources said the ministry explained

that the goal of installing this system is to create a smart grid; which will contribute to increasing energy efficiency, providing energy to Kuwait, and monitoring the grid in an advanced manner.

Sources added this system is one of the world’s vital energy projects, and that Kuwait is a pioneer in quickly implementing its smart metering system.

Al-Habashi commends staff and student dedication

Jahra Governor inspects secondary exam halls

KUWAIT CITY, June 17: Jahra Governor Hamad Al-Habashi has inspected several secondary school exam committees in the governorate, reports Al-Anba daily.

This move aims to look into the progress of the examination process and guarantee the readiness of the committees in terms of organization, discipline, and the provision of a supportive and comfortable environment for students.

During the tour, Al-Habashi commended the efforts of the educational and administrative staff involved in organizing the exams. He praised their dedication in maintaining a calm and secure atmosphere that allows students to focus and perform with confidence.

Concluding his visit, he extended his best wishes to all students; highlighting the significance of this stage in their academic journey. He emphasized its vital role in shaping a well-informed and capable generation that will contribute to national progress and development.



Jahra Governor Hamad Al-Habashi toured several high school examination committees across schools in the governorate.

Plan integrates AI and green design to improve urban spaces

Council member pushes for sustainable parking code

By Inaas Awadh

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 17: Municipal Council member Alia Al-Farsi has submitted a proposal to create a comprehensive and sustainable parking code in the State of Kuwait, in line with the latest global developments in sustainable parking design.

The proposed code aims to establish sustainable urban standards for the design and establishment of parking spaces in the country (surface, underground and multi-storey); reduce the environmental impact of parking spaces in terms of urban expansion, carbon emissions and the encroachment of urban spaces; promote the use

of sustainable transportation alternatives by providing infrastructure that supports other modes of transportation; increase land use efficiency by guiding the use of parking spaces in an integrated and multi-functional manner; and improve the quality of life by integrating environmental components like afforestation and natural canopies with smart technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI).

Al-Farsi pointed out in the introduction to her proposal that Kuwait relies heavily on the use of private vehicles as the primary means of transportation; which has been reflected in the urban fabric through the significant expansion of parking spaces -- both surface and multi-storey -- without a unified framework, clear specifications,

and standards that take into account the principles of environmental sustainability and efficient land use.

She specified seven basic criteria for establishing a sustainable code for parking design in the country as follows:

1. Urban and engineering design
2. Environmental sustainability
3. Energy and smart technologies
4. Mixed use and urban connectivity
5. Materials and construction
6. Maintenance and operation
7. Achieving sustainable development goals

Meanwhile, the Technical Committee at the Municipal Council, chaired by Munira Al-Amir, held its first meeting for the fourth legislative term on Tuesday.

During the meeting, the council approved only one out of three items on its agenda -- the request of the Tripartite General Trading and Contracting Company to amend the subdivision project represented by survey plan M/37868 located in Dasman for plot 55, which belongs to the company.

The committee retained on its agenda the final version of the proposed amendment to Table No. Two regarding the requirements and specifications for investment housing buildings in and outside Kuwait City. It decided to refer this item to the executive branch to conduct a detailed study, while considering the item related to the site plans for the Ministry of Communications sites an urgent matter.

KAPP okays tenders for Souq Sharq, Muthanna

KUWAIT CITY, June 17: The Higher Committee of the Kuwait Authority for Partnership Projects (KAPP), chaired by Minister of Finance and Minister of State for Economic Affairs and Investment Noura Al-Fassam, has approved the tender documents for the Souq Sharq and the Muthanna Complex real estate projects in Kuwait City, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

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Suspect had dozens of potential targets: prosecutors

## Members of Congress hold emergency briefings on security after Minnesota shootings

WASHINGTON, June 17, (AP): Members of Congress will attend emergency briefings this week after the killing of a Minnesota state lawmaker brought renewed fears - and stoked existing partisan tensions - over the security of federal lawmakers when in Washington and at home.

The suspect in the attack had dozens of federal lawmakers listed in his writings, besides the state lawmakers and others he's accused of targeting. The man is accused of shooting and killing former Democratic House Speaker Melissa Hortman and her husband, Mark, in their home early Saturday in the northern Minneapolis suburbs and wounding another lawmaker and his wife at their home.

The shootings come after credible threats to members of Congress have more than doubled in the last decade, the troubling tally of an era that has been marked by a string of violent attacks against lawmakers and their families.

In 2011, Democratic Rep. Gabby Giffords was shot and wounded at an event in her Arizona district. In 2017, Republican Rep. Steve Scalise was shot and wounded as he practiced for a congressional baseball game with other GOP lawmakers near Washington. In 2022, Democratic House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's husband, Paul, was attacked by a man who broke into their San Francisco home. And in 2024, two men separately tried to assassinate Donald Trump during his Republican presidential campaign.

All four survived, some with serious injuries. But those attacks, among others and many close calls for members of both major political parties, have rattled lawmakers and raised recurring questions about whether they have enough security - and whether they can ever be truly safe in their jobs.

"I don't have a solution to this problem right now," said Minnesota Democratic Sen. Tina Smith, a friend of Hortman's who received increased security after the attack. "I just see so clearly that this current state of play is not sustainable."



FBI Special Agent in Charge, Alvin M. Winston speaks during a news conference at the United States Courthouse in Minneapolis on June 16. (AP)

Connecticut Democratic Sen. Chris Murphy said lawmakers are "clearly at the point where we have to adjust the options available to us."

The U.S. Capitol Police's threat assessment section investigated 9,474 "concerning statements and direct threats" against members of Congress last

year, the highest number since 2021, the year that the Capitol was attacked by Trump's supporters after he tried to overturn his 2020 presidential election defeat to Democrat Joe Biden. In 2017, there were 3,939 investigated threats, the Capitol Police said.

While members of Congress may be high profile, they do have some resources available that might not be available to state and local lawmakers, said Sen. Mike Rounds of South Dakota, who was a member of the South Dakota state Senate for 10 years before he was the state's governor. In the state legislature, "it just wasn't feasible all the time" to have increased security, said Rounds, a Republican.

As threats have increased, members of Congress have had access to new funding to add security at their personal homes. But it is unclear how many have used it and whether there is enough money to keep lawmakers truly safe.

"Resources should not be the reason that a U.S. senator or congressman gets killed," Murphy said.

Instead of bringing lawmakers together, the Minnesota shootings have created new internal tensions. Smith on Monday confronted one of her fellow senators, Utah Republican Mike Lee, for a series of posts on X over the weekend. One mocked Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz, a Democrat who ran for vice president last year. Another post said of the killings, "This is what happens when Marxists don't get their way."

Trump said he had no plans to call Walz, describing the Democratic leader as "so whacked out."

"Why would I call him? I could call him and say, 'Hi, how are you doing?'" the Republican president told reporters aboard Air Force One during an overnight flight back to Washington. "The guy doesn't have a clue. He's a mess. So I could be nice and call him, but why waste time?"



This photo provided by the Maui Fire Department shows smoke from a fire burning in Kahikinui, Hawaii on the island of Maui on June 15. (AP)

### Brush fire on Hawaii's Maui island evacuates 50 people

A fast-moving Hawaii brush fire fueled by fierce winds forced the evacuation of about 50 Maui residents on the opposite side of the same island where a devastating blaze killed over 100 people two years ago.

The fire started Sunday in a sparsely populated area with land set aside for Native Hawaiians. Here's what we know about the fire so far:

The Kahikinui was initially estimated at 500 acres (202 hectares), but aerial surveys overnight put the estimate at about 330 acres (134 hectares), Maui's fire department said. The fire is 85% contained.

The remote, challenging terrain made it difficult to estimate the fire's size, the department said in a statement. A police drone showed hot spots, but none flared overnight. (AP)

## US judge extends block on Trump's Harvard international students ban

BOSTON, June 17, (AP): US President Donald Trump's order to block incoming foreign students from attending Harvard University will remain on hold temporarily following a hearing Monday, when a lawyer for the Ivy League school said Trump was using its students as "pawns."

US District Judge Allison Burroughs in Boston extended a temporary restraining order on Trump's proclamation until June 23 while she weighs Harvard's request for a preliminary injunction. Burroughs made the decision at a hearing over Harvard's request, which Trump's Republican administration opposed.

Burroughs granted the initial restraining order June 5, and it had been set to expire Thursday.

Trump moved to block foreign students from entering the US to attend Harvard earlier this month, citing concerns over national security. It fol-



A passer-by walks through a gate to the Harvard University campus on Jan 2, 2024, in Cambridge, Mass. (AP)

lowed a previous attempt by the Department of Homeland Security to revoke Harvard's ability to host foreign students on its campus in Cambridge,

Massachusetts. Burroughs has temporarily blocked that action, too, and is weighing whether it should remain on hold until the case is decided.

Ian Gershengorn, a lawyer for Harvard, told Burroughs on Monday that Trump was "using Harvard's international students as pawns" while arguing the administration has exceeded its authority in an attempt to retaliate against the school for not agreeing to the president's demands.

"I think there is no finding that Harvard is dangerous," he said.

Trump has been warring with Harvard for months after it rejected a series of government demands meant to address conservative complaints that the school has become too liberal and has tolerated anti-Jewish harassment. Trump officials have cut more than \$2.6 billion in research grants, ended federal contracts and threatened to revoke its tax-exempt status.

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View of the village Brienz and the 'Brienzer Rutsch', taken in Brienz-Brinzauls, Switzerland on May 12, 2023. (AP)

### Swiss village evacuated over rockslide threat

Swiss authorities cleared a village in the country's east over a potential rockslide, three weeks after a mudslide submerged a vacated village in the southwest.

Residents of Brienz/Brinzauls, about 40 kilometers (25 miles) southwest of Davos, were being barred from entering the village because a rock mass on a plateau overhead has "accelerated so rapidly that it threatens to collapse," a statement from local officials said Monday.

Farm work in the area was also being halted, and livestock owners moved their animals out of nearby pastures due to early warning signs on Sunday. (AP)

## Russia drone and missile attack on Ukraine kills 15, injures 156

KYIV, Ukraine, June 17, (AP): An overnight Russian missile and drone bombardment of Ukraine killed 15 people and injured 156, local officials said Tuesday, with the main barrage demolishing a nine-story apartment building in one of the deadliest attacks on Kyiv in recent months.

At least 14 people were killed as explosions echoed across the Ukrainian capital for almost nine hours, Kyiv City Military Administration head Tymur Tkachenko said, destroying dozens of apartments.

Russia fired more than 440 drones and 32 missiles, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said, calling the Kyiv attack "one of the most terrifying strikes" on the capital.

Ukraine's Interior Ministry said 139 people were injured in Kyiv. Mayor Vitalii Klitschko announced that Wednesday would be an official day of mourning.

The attack came after two rounds of direct peace talks failed to make progress on ending the war, now in its fourth



Firefighters put out the fire after a Russian missile hit a residential building during Russia's massive missile and drone air attack on Kyiv, Ukraine on June 17. (AP)

year.

Russia has repeatedly hit civilian areas of Ukraine with missiles and drones.

## Czech govt faces no-confidence vote

PRAGUE, June 17, (AP): The Czech coalition government on Tuesday faced a parliamentary no-confidence vote over a bitcoin-related scandal.

The main opposition centrist ANO (YES) movement led by populist billionaire Andrej Babiš requested the vote after the Justice Ministry accepted a donation of bitcoins and sold them for almost 1 billion Czech koruna (\$47 million) earlier this year.

The three opposition parties, including ANO, the anti-migrant Freedom and Direct Democracy movement and the liberal Pirates party, are unlikely to oust the four-party coalition government led by conservative Prime Minister Petr Fiala, which has a majority in the lower house of Parliament.



Babiš



Workers deploy a Saildrone 'Voyager', uncrewed surface vehicle (USV), into the Baltic Sea at the Koge Marina in Koge, eastern Denmark on June 16. (AP)

### Denmark uses 'Voyagers'

From a distance they look almost like ordinary sailboats, their sails emblazoned with the red-and-white flag of Denmark.

But these 10-meter (30-foot)-long vessels carry no crew and are designed for surveillance. Four uncrewed robotic sailboats, known as "Voyagers," have been put into service by Denmark's armed forces for a three-month operational trial. (AP)



# N.Korea to send army construction workers and deminers to Russia

SEOUL, South Korea, June 17, (AP): North Korea will send thousands of military construction workers and deminers to support reconstruction work in Russia's Kursk region, Russian media reported, another sign of expanding military partnership between the two nations.

Russian state news agency RIA Novosti cited top Russian security official Sergei Shoigu as saying that North Korea will dispatch 1,000 deminers as well 5,000 military construction workers to the Kursk region.

RIA Novosti said Shoigu made the comments during a visit to Pyongyang for a meeting with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un.

North Korea has already sent thousands of troops and conventional weapons to support Russia's war against Ukraine. Washington and Seoul have expressed concern that, in return, Kim may seek Russian technology transfers that could enhance the threat posed by his nuclear-armed military.

During a visit to Pyongyang earlier this month, Shoigu and Kim Jong Un had discussed rebuilding the Kursk region, according to Russian state media.

Russia's Tass news agency earlier reported Shoigu arrived in the North Korean capital on Tuesday on an unspecified "special" mission from Putin and was expected to meet with Kim.

North Korean state media didn't immediately confirm the visit.

In April, Pyongyang and Moscow officially confirmed the deployment of North Korean troops to Russia for the first time, saying that soldiers of the two countries were fighting alongside each other to repel a Ukrainian incursion into Russia's



In this photo provided by the North Korean government, its leader Kim Jong Un speaks during a launch ceremony of a destroyer named Kang Kon at the Rajin shipyard in Rason, North Korea on June 12. (AP)

Kursk border region. Putin thanked North Korea at that time for its participation in the war and promised not to forget their sacrifices.

Shoigu last visited North Korea in March for a meeting with Kim.

North Korea and Russia haven't said how many North Korean troops are in Russia.

## Asia

**China fireworks factory blast kills 9:** An explosion at a fireworks factory in central China has killed nine people and injured 26 others, state media said Tuesday.

A huge plume of smoke could be seen rising into the sky after the Monday morning blast in a video posted online by state media. The Shanzhou Fireworks Co. factory is in a mountainous part of Linli county, north of the city of Changde in Hunan province.

The risk of further explosions and the lack of a major water source complicated the firefighting and the search for victims, state broadcaster CCTV said in an online report around midday Tuesday. Firefighters set up remote-controlled water cannons and brought in 28 water tankers and two trucks with high-powered pumps.

The Ministry of Emergency Management sent a working team to the site. The cause of the explosion was under investigation. (AP)



People watch as Mount Lewotobi Laki-Laki spews volcanic materials into the air during an eruption, in Maumere, Indonesia on June 17. (AP)

desks. There were also whiteboards the police said were used for tracking their progress, and clocks on a wall showing time zones across Australia. (AP)

**13 foreigners arrested in investment scam:** Thai police said Tuesday over a dozen foreigners, mostly Australians and British, were arrested for allegedly running an online investment fraud that had duped people out of at least 1.9 million Australian dollars (about \$1.2 million).

Police raided Monday a rental house in the province of Samut Prakan, neighboring Bangkok, and arrested 13 people, said Jirabhob Bhuridej, chief of the police's Central Investigation Bureau, at a press conference in the Thai capital.

Jirabhob said the Australian Federal Police (AFP) informed Thai authorities last year of a scam group led by an Australian and a British, and a joint investigation was launched.

The alleged scammers operated out of Thailand to swindle money from victims in Australia and potentially other English-speaking countries through online advertisements and phone calls to invest in long-term bonds with a promise of high returns, Jirabhob said.

Footage showed the men after being arrested in the rental house that was converted into an office. Papers of alleged scam scripts and workflow were taped to their partitioned

**Indonesia's Mount Lewotobi Laki Laki erupts:** Mount Lewotobi Laki Laki volcano in south-central Indonesia erupted on Tuesday, spewing towering columns of hot ash into the air. Authorities raised the eruption alert to the highest level and expanded the danger zone to 8 kilometers (about 5 miles) from the crater.

Indonesia's Geology Agency said in a statement it recorded the volcano unleashing 10,000 meters (about 32,800 feet) of thick grey clouds on Tuesday afternoon, following significant volcanic activities, including 50 in two hours, rather than the usual daily 8 to 10 activities.

The ashes expanded into a mushroom-shaped ash cloud that could be seen from the cities located 90 kilometers (about 56 miles) to 150 kilometers (nearly 93 miles) from the mountain.

There were no casualties reported.

Residents were warned to be vigilant about heavy rainfall triggering lava flows in rivers originating from the volcano.

An eruption of Mount Lewotobi Laki Laki in November killed nine people and injured dozens.

The 1,584-meter (5,197-foot) mountain is a twin volcano with Mount Lewotobi Perempan in the district of Flores Timur. (AP)

## 4 killed, 6 injured in Uttar Pradesh firecracker factory explosion

# Black boxes from India crash under study to ascertain cause of disaster that killed 270

NEW DELHI, June 17, (Agencies): Investigators in India are studying the black boxes of a Boeing 787 Dreamliner after recovering them from the aircraft wreckage to ascertain the cause of last week's plane crash that left at least 270 people dead.

The black boxes will provide cockpit conversations and data related to the plane's engine and control settings to investigators and help them in determining the cause of the crash.

The London-bound Air India aircraft, a Boeing 787 Dreamliner, crashed on a medical college hostel soon after taking off from the western city of Ahmedabad. Only one passenger survived the crash, while 241 people on board and 29 on the ground were killed in one of India's worst aviation disaster in decades.

Experts from India's Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau are probing the crash with assistance from the U.K., the U.S. and officials from Boeing.

Amit Singh, a former pilot and an aviation expert, said the recovery of the flight data and cockpit voice recorders, or black boxes, are crucial to piece together the sequence of events.

The cockpit voice recorder records pilots' conversation, emergency alarms and any distress signal made before a crash. The plane's digital flight data recorder stores information related to engine and control settings. Both devices are designed to survive a crash.

"The data will reveal everything," Singh said, adding that the technical details could be corroborated by the cockpit voice recorder that would help investigators know of any communication between air traffic control and the pilots.

India's aviation regulatory body has said the aircraft made a mayday call before the crash. Singh said the investigating authorities will scan CCTV footage of the nearby area and speak with witnesses to get to the root cause of the crash.

Additionally, Singh said, the investigators will also study the pilot training records, total load of the aircraft, thrust issues related to the plane's engine, as well as its worthiness in terms of past performances and any previously reported issues.

Aurobindo Handa, former director general of India's Aircraft Accident Inves-



Family members and relatives of Akash Patni, victim of the Air India plane crash, grieve during his funeral procession in Ahmedabad, India on June 17. (AP)

tigation Bureau, said the investigators across the world follow a standard UN-prescribed Manual of Accident Investigation, also called "DOC 9756," which outlines detailed procedures to arrive at the most probable cause of a crash.

Handa said the investigation into last week's crash would likely be a long process as the aircraft was badly charred. He added that ascertaining the condition of the black boxes recovered from the crash site was vital as the heat generated from

the crash could be possibly higher than the bearable threshold of the device.

The Indian government has set up a separate, high-level committee to examine the causes leading to the crash and formulate procedures to prevent and handle aircraft emergencies in the future. The committee is expected to file a preliminary report within three months.

Authorities have also begun inspecting and carrying out additional maintenance and checks of Air India's entire fleet of Boeing 787 Dreamliners to prevent any future incident. Air India has 33 Dreamliners in its fleet.

The plane that crashed was 12 years old. Boeing planes have been plagued by safety issues on other types of aircraft. There are currently around 1,200 of the 787 Dreamliner aircraft worldwide and this was the first deadly crash in 16 years of operation, according to experts.

**Also:**

**NEW DELHI:** At least four women were killed and six others injured Monday in an explosion in a firecracker factory in the northern Indian state of **Uttar Pradesh**, police said.

The explosion took place in **Atrasi** village of **Amroha** district, about 402 km northwest of **Lucknow**, the capital city of Uttar Pradesh.

Senior police officer in Amroha, **Amit Kumar Anand**, told media that four women were killed on the spot, and their bodies have been sent for post-mortem. Six other women injured in the accident were taken to the hospital.

According to Anand, the firecracker factory was a licensed unit.

Officials said the victims were working in the factory at the time of the explosion.

The blast caused massive damage to the structure located in the middle of an agricultural field. The reason behind the explosion was not known yet.

An investigation was underway.

Accidental explosions are common in firecracker factories in India, and shops as owners usually ignore safety standards.

# Death toll from gun attack in north-central Nigeria reaches to 150, say survivors

DAKAR, Senegal, June 17, (AP): The death toll from an attack by gunmen over the weekend in north-central Nigeria has climbed to 150, survivors said Monday as the villagers were still digging through burned homes, counting their dead and looking for dozens of people still missing.

Assailants stormed Benue state's Yelewata community late on Friday night, opening fire on villagers who were asleep and setting their homes ablaze, survivors and the local farmers union said. Many of those killed were sheltering in a local market after fleeing violence in other parts of the state.

No one immediately claimed responsibility for the killings, but such attacks are common in Nigeria's northern region where local herders and farmers often clash over limited access to land and water. The prolonged conflict has become deadlier in recent years, with authorities and analysts warning that more herdsmen are taking up arms.

The farmers accuse the herders, mostly of Fulani origin, of grazing their livestock on their farms and destroying their produce. The herders insist that the lands are grazing routes that were first backed by law in 1965, five years after the country gained its independence.

Nigeria's President Bola Tinubu, whose government has fallen short of expectations in ending the country's deadly security crises, described the Benue attack as "senseless bloodletting" while his office said he would visit the stricken community on Wednesday.

Titus Tsegba, who lost his wife and



Soldiers stand guard prior to a visit from government officials following an attack by gunmen in Yelewata community north-central Nigeria on June 16. (AP)

four of his children in the attack, said more than 20 bodies were recovered on Monday. The initial death toll was reported to be 100 on Saturday.

His wife and children - the youngest 8 and the oldest 27 - were "burned into ashes beyond recognition," he told The Associated Press, adding that he survived because he was sleeping in another part of the community.

"Everything is gone," he said.

Benue Deputy Gov. Sam Ode said he suspected the perpetrators were herdsmen. Ode and the survivors spoke to the AP by phone.

The gunmen made it difficult for many to flee after surrounding the Yelewata community, which is about 120 kilometers (75 miles) from the state capital of Makurdi, said Jacob

Psokaa, who lost his 55-year-old father in the attack.

"They were coming from different sides at the same moment ... it was sporadic shooting," Psokaa said. "The situation is very bad now with many people in the ground ... your people leaving you suddenly."

The gunmen also burned food stores in the local market, razing a year's harvest that included rice and yam, staple food mainly exported from Benue to other parts of Nigeria.

"Enough is enough!" said Tinubu, the president. "I have directed the security agencies to act decisively, arrest perpetrators of these evil acts on all sides of the conflict, and prosecute them."

# Over 56,200 Mexicans repatriated from United States in 2025 – govt

MEXICO CITY, June 17, (Agencies): A total of 56,298 Mexicans have been repatriated from the United States since Jan. 20 this year, including 12,183 arriving by air, the government said Monday.

At a press conference, Undersecretary of Human Rights, Population and Migration Arturo Medina said that the government's repatriation program "Mexico Embraces You," launched in response to U.S. immigration crack-downs, has received 24,082 nationals at border care centers.

So far, over 92,246 food rations have been distributed to returnees, along with 9,786 medical and 4,019 psychological services. They have also received legal advice and support for victims of gender-based violence.

"More than 19,282 people were given a Paisano Welfare Card, which offers 2,000 pesos (105 U.S. dollars) for travel expenses to their communities of origin, and our fellow citizens have been incorporated into Bienestar (welfare) programs," Medina said.

Returning nationals have also received assistance in obtaining ID cards and birth certificates. Additionally, with private-sector support, 2,495 people have been connected to job opportunities, the official said.



Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum is swarmed by supporters after arriving in Calgary, Alberta on June 16, to attend the G7 Leaders meeting taking place in Kananaskis, Alberta. (AP)

**Also:**

**MIAMI:** Tropical Storm Erick formed early Tuesday near southern **Mexico** and is expected to become a hurricane by Wednesday, the U.S. National Hurricane Center in Miami said.

The storm was about 450 miles (725 kilometers) southeast of **Punta Maldonado, Mexico**, with maximum sustained winds of 40 miles per hour (60 kmh), the center said. It was forecast to approach the coast by late Wednesday.

Erick was moving west-northeast at nearly 12 miles an hour (19 kmh).

A hurricane watch was in effect Tuesday for southern Mexico as a tropical depression in the eastern Pacific gained strength.

A hurricane watch was posted for a stretch of the Pacific coast from **Bahia De Huatulco in Oaxaca** state to Punta Maldonado. A hurricane watch means hurricane conditions with winds exceeding 74 mph (119 kph) are possible in the area within two days.

## Africa

**Tanzanian opp'n leader represents self:** The main opposition leader in Tanzania was granted permission on Monday to represent himself in his treason trial after being denied the right to meet his lawyers in private by prison authorities.

**Tundu Lissu** was arrested on April 9 and charged with treason after addressing a public rally calling for electoral reforms ahead of planned general elections in October.

Lissu's Chadema party has been critical of the absence of an independent electoral commission and laws that favor the ruling CCM party, which has been in power since Tanzania's independence in 1961.

Lissu survived an assassination attempt after being shot 16 times in 2017, three years before the last election.

The opposition leader told the court on Monday that he was being forced to speak to his lawyers through a phone in a small room and was worried that anyone could be listening or recording the conversations.

"I have more than 30 lawyers who I trust very much. Today is the 68th day since I was arraigned and charged with treason, but my lawyers have been repeatedly denied the right to see me in private," Lissu said. (AP)



Lissu

**Kenya's deputy police chief steps aside:** Kenya's deputy police chief stepped aside on Monday as investigations into the death of a blogger while in custody continue.

The death of Albert Ojwang, who was accused of defaming Deputy Inspector General Eliud Langat, sparked days of protests in Nairobi. Several demonstrators were injured and property destroyed. Langat said on Monday that he was stepping aside "in view of the ongoing investigations" into the death of Ojwang. He failed to acknowledge that he was the complainant.

"I undertake to provide any support that may be required of me during the investigations of the unfortunate incident," Langat said in a statement.

Langat's boss, Inspector General Douglas Kanja, previously said that investigations into Ojwang's online activities started after Langat filed an official complaint. (AP)

**Togo suspends RFI and France 24:** Togo has suspended broadcasts by two French state-owned networks for three months on an alleged lack of impartiality in their reporting, a government agency in the West African nation said Monday. Radio France Internationale, or RFI, and France 24, are the networks being suspended.

"This measure follows repeated failings, already reported and formally recalled, in matters of impartiality, rigor, and fact-checking," according to a statement from the High Authority for Audiovisual Communication.

"Several recent broadcasts have relayed inaccurate, biased, and even contrary to established facts, undermining the stability of republican institutions and the country's image," it said. "Freedom of the press cannot be synonymous with disinformation or interference." (AP)

## Subcontinent

**Pakistan blast kills 2, injures 11:** At least two people were killed and 11 others injured in a bomb blast in Pakistan's southwest Balochistan province on Monday, rescue officials said.

The explosion took place in the main market of Rakhni area in Barkhan district when an explosive device planted on a parked motorcycle went off, according to Rescue 1122.

"Two people died on the spot, while 11 others sustained injuries," a spokesperson for Rescue 1122 told Xinhua. He said four of the injured were in critical condition and shifted to a hospital for treatment.

Nearby shops, buildings, and a vehicle were also damaged in the blast, the official added.

Pakistan's prime minister is **Shehbaz Sharif**.

Following the explosion, an emergency was declared in



Sharif

all hospitals across the district. Security personnel rushed to the scene, cordoned off the area, and launched a search operation.

No group claimed responsibility for the attack. (Xinhua)

**Illegal drugs discovered in Afghanistan:** The police have discovered more than 270 kg of illegal drugs, including 70 kg of heroin, in western Afghanistan's Herat province, provincial police spokesman Ghulam Nabi Nabizada said Tuesday.

The contraband, which also included 42 kg of opium poppy and 163 kg of methamphetamine, was discovered following intelligence-based operations, the official said, adding a band of smugglers was attempting to take the drug out of the country but failed.

No one has been detained so far, the official said, adding police have been trying to arrest those involved in the illegal business.

In a similar anti-drug drive, the police discovered more than one ton of illegal drugs and arrested 12 alleged drug smugglers in southern Kandahar province 10 days ago. (Xinhua)



Kuwait oil price up to USD 73.57 pb

KUWAIT CITY, June 17, (KUNA): The price of Kuwaiti oil rose by 38 cents to reach USD 73.57 per barrel on Monday, compared to USD 37.19 pb last Friday, said Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) on Tuesday

In global markets, Brent crude dropped one dollar to reach USD 37.23 pb as West Texas Intermediate dropped USD 1.21 to reach USD 71.77 pb.

Business

In conjunction with the conference, bourse organized 15th Corporate Day, with eight companies listed on ‘Premier’ Market taking part

Investment opportunities at the core of Boursa Kuwait’s participation in HSBC’s fourth GCC Exchanges Conference

LONDON, June 17: As part of its ongoing efforts to enhance its international presence and showcase the compelling investment opportunities within the Kuwaiti capital market, Boursa Kuwait concluded its participation in the fourth GCC Exchanges Conference, organized by multinational British investment bank HSBC, held in London from 16–17 June 2025 and coinciding with the bourse’s 15th Corporate Day.

The Corporate Day saw the participation of eight companies listed on the “Premier” Market, including Boursa Kuwait, Kuwait Finance House, National Bank of Kuwait, Mobile Telecommunications Company (Zain), Warba Bank, Burgan Bank, Jazeera Airways and Kuwait Real Estate Company, and attracted a strong turnout from representatives of world-renowned investment institutions, including investment banks, asset management firms, sovereign wealth funds and international pension funds. Over 100 meetings were held throughout the Corporate Day, offering institutional investors in-depth insights into the financial performance, strategic plans and operational outlooks of the participating Kuwaiti companies.

“Boursa Kuwait’s participation in international investment conferences, corporate days, and roadshows underscores its pivotal role in positioning the Kuwaiti capital market as a compelling destination on the global investment landscape. These platforms are instrumental in showcasing the market’s competitive strengths and reinforcing its reputation as a transparent, efficient, and regionally significant financial hub. They also provide valuable



Naim Azad Din



Flyer of the 15th Corporate Day in London.



Noura Al-Abdulkareem

opportunities to exchange knowledge, share expertise, and adopt global best practices—bolstering investor confidence and advancing our vision of a sustainable market that aligns with evolving global economic trends,” said Boursa Kuwait’s Head of Markets, Noura Al-Abdulkareem.

Boursa Kuwait presented a comprehensive overview to institutional shareholders and potential investors, highlighting its key financial results for the first quarter, operational performance through May and key takeaways from its latest sustainability report. The company also outlined its announced plans, including the upcoming launch of the Central Counterparty (CCP) system, exchange-traded funds (ETFs) and a dedicated fixed-income trading platform that includes bonds and sukuk.

Commenting on the company’s meetings with prospective investors and shareholders, Boursa Kuwait’s Chief Financial Officer Mr. Naim Azad Din said, “Boursa Kuwait’s consistent efforts to enhance transparency and maintain direct and meaningful engagement with prospective shareholders and investors are aligned with the highest international standards adopted by leading exchanges across the globe. We are committed to presenting our financial and operational performance with clarity and accuracy while providing effective channels for dialogue that allow shareholders and investment institutions to stay informed on the latest developments and plans of Boursa Kuwait and the broader Kuwaiti capital market.”

“Key initiatives such as the launch of

the Central Counterparty (CCP) system and the fixed-income trading platform reflect the capital market apparatus’s commitment to broadening the range of financial products and improving investor experience—ultimately strengthening shareholder confidence, supporting the market’s sustainable growth and maintaining its regional and international competitiveness,” he added.

The GCC Exchanges Conference is taking place in London for the fourth consecutive year, bringing together representatives from all seven Gulf Cooperation Council stock exchanges. As one of the region’s most prominent and influential financial forums, the conference provides a unique opportunity to deepen engagement with international investors and serves as

a strategic platform for collaboration and knowledge sharing.

Head of Wholesale Banking for HSBC Kuwait, Mr. Ahmed AlMurad, welcomed Boursa Kuwait’s participation in the conference, saying: “Boursa Kuwait plays a pivotal role in developing Kuwait’s capital market, driving economic diversification in line with the country’s ambitious vision for economic transformation. As the largest international bank in the country with a longstanding history, HSBC is proud of the strong working relationship with Boursa Kuwait and will continue its role in connecting global investors with the investment opportunities in the country.”

Boursa Kuwait and HSBC share a longstanding partnership, having collaborated on numerous Corporate Days and Roadshows across major

global financial centers as part of a broader strategy to attract foreign capital and institutional investors to the Kuwaiti capital market.

Boursa Kuwait has been a key driver in the development of the Kuwaiti capital market and the diversification of the national economy, in line with the goals of the “New Kuwait” vision. Since its inception, the company has worked diligently to create a thriving capital market that attracts local and foreign investors through a broad spectrum of new products and services, infrastructure upgrades, and market reform initiatives, as part of its multi-phase market development (MD) plans.

Boursa Kuwait was fully privatized in 2019, the first government entity in the country to successfully undergo the process, bringing about greater levels of efficiency. It has also been self-listed since September 2020 and has made great strides in sustaining its operations and business continuity in the face of uncertainties and challenges.

The company has rolled out numerous market reforms and new initiatives as part of its comprehensive multi-phase market development (MD) plans and showcases some of the standout listed companies and the investment opportunities that reside in the Kuwaiti capital market through its series of Roadshows and Corporate Days, putting these companies in touch with some of the world’s leading investment firms and financial institutions and highlighting their financial health and business strategies and outlooks, to help investors gain an in-depth understanding of the benefits and opportunities of investing in Kuwaiti companies.

Lectures aim to inspire personal growth, among others

Gulf Bank empowers female employees with monthly WOW sessions highlighting leadership and professional growth

KUWAIT CITY, June 17: As part of its continued commitment to empowering women and enhancing their role within the Bank and the broader banking industry, Gulf Bank is carrying on with its monthly Women of Wisdom (WOW) sessions — an internal initiative designed specifically for its female employees. These sessions aim to inspire personal growth, strengthen connections, and cultivate leadership among women across the organization.

In the latest session, which drew strong engagement from employees across various departments, renowned coach and consultant Ms. Rehab Al-Tawari led an insightful talk titled “Building Connections: Strengthening the Assets That Matter.” Tailored specifically for early-career female employees, the session offered an engaging and interactive experience, guiding participants through the importance of professional relationships and strategies to nurture key personal assets in the workplace. Drawing from her rich



The lecture in progress.

experience in the banking and education sectors, Ms. Al-Tawari sparked meaningful conversations on how to thrive during the early stages of one’s career.

The Women of Wisdom (WOW) initiative provides a supportive platform for women to navigate workplace challenges, find balance between personal and professional life, and boost female

representation in leadership roles. It also serves as a space for networking, idea-sharing, and open dialogue around the experiences and challenges women face throughout their careers.

Gulf Bank was one of the first banks in Kuwait to eliminate gender-based disparities in employee benefits, ensuring equal opportunities and treatment for both male and female staff. It also stands among the early signatories of the United Nations Women’s Empowerment Principles (WEPs) in Kuwait, reflecting its deep-rooted commitment to advancing gender equality in the workplace and beyond.

Introduced in 2017 as one of Gulf Bank’s leading internal initiatives, the Women of Wisdom (WOW) program continues to provide monthly sessions that delve into key topics such as leadership, personal development, and maintaining work-life balance — all with the goal of empowering women and fostering a strong, collaborative network within the Bank.

Boursa Kuwait ends on a ‘positive’ note

General index up 0.65%

KUWAIT CITY, June 17, (KUNA): Boursa Kuwait closed higher on Tuesday, with the general index climbing 52.11 points (0.65%) to finish at 8,010.13. Trading was active, with 537.2 million shares exchanged in 25,302 transactions, totaling 107.7 million Kuwaiti dinars (approximately \$329.5 million).

The Main Market Index gained 57.79 points (0.84%) to reach 6,912.91, as 224.3 million shares changed hands in 13,019 transactions, valued at 24.9 million dinars (\$76.19 million).

The Premier Market Index advanced 53.28 points (0.62%) to 8,679.65, with 312.9 million shares traded across 12,283 transactions, amounting to 82.8 million dinars (\$253.3 million).

Meanwhile, the Major 50 Index rose 70.40 points (1.03%) to close at 6,910.23, with 137.9 million shares traded in 6,771 transactions, worth 15.5 million dinars (\$47.4 million).

As part of its support for Diraya campaign

KFH: Banks & licensed entities offer safe investment options

KUWAIT CITY, June 17: In support of the Diraya campaign, Kuwait Finance House (KFH) emphasized the role of Kuwaiti banks in offering a diversified array of investment opportunities for customers wishing to grow their savings in a secure manner and under a regulated and clear framework.

In a press release, KFH added that the investment options offered by local banks, under the regulations of the Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK), are a safe haven and a stable source for financial investments, along with other companies and official institutions licensed and subject to the regulatory authorities responsible for protecting the national economy and the investment sector.

KFH pointed out that the secure investment services and products obviate the need for involvement in investment activities with unfamiliar entities that promise financial returns from fraudulent or high-risk projects. KFH also stated that banks are assisting individuals seeking to invest in their funds through a variety of investment tools and experienced employees subject to the regulations and guidelines of regulators.

KFH explained that among these safe investment services the banks offer are investment deposits, investment funds, investment savings in addition to the long and short-term investment plans.



KFH & Diraya logos

Meanwhile, KFH warns customers against engaging in high-risk investments that are promoted by unregulated entities and are not subject to oversight by any supervisory authority fueled by the growing presence of shell companies and other online scammers that promise quick profits. KFH advises customers and investors to refrain from responding to advertisements, text messages and emails received from unknown sources. Additionally, the Bank also urges investors to seek advice from qualified experts before making any investment decisions.

UAE economy grows 4 pct in 2024, driven by non-oil sectors

DUBAI, June 17, (Xinhua): The United Arab Emirates (UAE) recorded a 4 percent real GDP growth in 2024, reaching 1.77 trillion dirhams (about 482 billion U.S. dollars), fueled primarily by robust expansion in non-oil sectors, the Ministry of Economy announced on Sunday.

Non-oil activities surged by 5 percent to 1.34 trillion dirhams, accounting for 75.5 percent of total GDP. In

contrast, the oil sector contributed 434 billion dirhams.

Abdulla bin Touq Al Marri, UAE’s economy minister, said the latest figures highlight progress toward transitioning to a knowledge-based, sustainable economy. He attributed the performance to modern economic policies centered on innovation, technology, and business environment development.

ALSAYER Group revitalizes its partnership with Enviro Group



KUWAIT CITY, June 17: Young people, with their energy and creativity, are positioned to be the most able catalysts to drive meaningful transformations in the community. This has prompted ALSAYER Car Rental division to collaborate with Enviro Group, a UN Habitat associated volunteering team for an effective campaign to enhance youth skills and inspire young thinkers to innovate and deliver positive and constructive solutions.

The new facility of the “Enviro” team was inaugurated at the ALSAYER Al Ahmadi Center. This center is expected to gather young professionals from various engineering and professional streams, to coach ambitious and creative minds who are striving for a future of greater sustainability and environmental awareness. This promising partnership opens wide horizons for youth to develop and implement innovative engineering and environmental solutions, exchange inspiring ideas, and apply the sustainability standards set by the United Nations — especially Goal 11: “Sustainable Cities and Communities.” This association to uphold the forward thinking approach of private and Non-Profit Organisations through UNSDG 17 “Partnerships For the Goals” to leverage their expertise

to the next generation ready to thrive.

The opening ceremony was attended by distinguished supporters and inspirational figures, including His Excellency the Republic of Georgia Ambassador to Kuwait Noshrevan Lomtadize, HE Dr. Duc Thang Nguyen Vietnam Ambassador to Kuwait and HE the Romanian Ambassador to Kuwait Mugurel Stanescu paid a visit along with Dr. Amira Al-Hassan - Head of the UN Mission for Human Settlements in the Gulf Region, Eng.

Ibrahim Al-Fouzan - Senior Business Director of Toyota Services and Vice Chairman of the ALSAYER Sustainability Committee, Mr. Salah Al-Mousa Al-Saif – Head of the Nahtam Volunteer Team and Founder and President of Al-Adailiya Healthy City.

This campaign is designed to empower and inspire young minds by offering hands-on experiences across a range of fields including engineering, electrical and electronics, designing and construction, programming, as-

onomy, medical, law and sustainability. Our goal is to spark creativity, encourage critical thinking, and promote teamwork through interactive learning. By combining technical knowledge with real world problem solving, we aim to guide a new generation toward exploring the exciting possibilities of technology and sustainable development, explained Ibrahim Al Fouzan, Snr Business Director Toyota Service and Vice Chairman of ALSAYER Sustainability Committee.

The Enviro team takes on the responsibility of spreading environmental awareness and promoting the concept of sustainability as an approach to life. Through our field events and interactive workshops, we imbibe in each participant the seeds of leadership and initiative, to paint together the features of a new sustainable Kuwait, a more conscious community and capable of impact globally, informed Fatma Ashkanani Founder and CEO of Enviro Group.

It is evident that sustainability development will happen only when we empower youth and create pathways for their meaningful participation. ASAYER Group is focused on these efforts to collaborate and enable youth to achieve this goal relentlessly.



Top and above: Some photos from the event.



Dubai hosts award ceremony

# ABK wins ‘Best Call Center’ in the banking sector – Kuwait award from Global Brands Magazine for 2024

KUWAIT CITY, June 17: Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) has been awarded the title of ‘Best Call Center’ in Kuwait by Global Brands Magazine for the year 2024. This new achievement highlights the Bank’s ongoing success in meeting customer needs and providing around-the-clock service aligned with global standards.

The award ceremony took place in Dubai, UAE, with the attendance of Ammar Khajah, Assistant General Manager of Retail Banking at ABK, and Hussain Shamouh, Call Center Manager at the Bank. During the event, the selection criteria and evaluation process were outlined, emphasizing assessments conducted by a jury of experts and professionals across various banking sectors.

This award affirms ABK’s commitment to customer-centric service and innovation in the banking industry, showcasing its capability to introduce advanced banking solutions that strengthen customer trust.

On this occasion, Johair Marafi, General Manager of Retail Banking at ABK, stated, “This award reflects the high level of service



ABK maintains its track record of excellence.

we provide to our clients and our continuous efforts to develop our offerings in line with increasing demand and evolving expectations. It demonstrates our excellence in offering 24/7 support through our call center, where our staff are well-prepared to respond promptly, securely, and reliably.”

Marafi added that ABK places spe-

cial importance on its call center as a primary point of interaction with customers. She noted the center has been upgraded to meet the latest global standards, integrating advanced telecommunication systems in partnership with leading providers. She also emphasized the ongoing development and training of staff to elevate the quality of phone banking services.



Johair Marafi, General Manager – Retail Banking

She continued by highlighting that the award follows recent enhancements to ABK’s call center, including strengthened services and solutions for customers. She affirmed the Bank’s readiness to continue improving its offerings and reinforcing its role as a trusted banking partner for all financial and transactional needs.

Marafi confirmed ABK’s ongoing investment in improving customer service, aiming to save clients time



Ammar Khajah and Hussain Shamouh receiving the award.



Ammar Khajah and Hussain Shamouh celebrate winning the title.

and effort while making daily interactions smoother. The call center addresses inquiries related to various banking products and services, receives customer feedback, and delivers quick and practical solutions around the clock, every day of the week.

Currently, ABK’s call center offers a wide range of services 24/7, including during holidays and official breaks. These services include requesting new bank cards, reporting

and blocking cards in case of suspicious activity, account and service inquiries, branch hours, promotional campaign details, SMS service activation, and more.

This latest recognition adds to a series of awards ABK has received from leading international organizations in recent years, reflecting its success in providing exceptional services that earn customer trust and boost its competitive edge within Kuwait’s banking sector.

## Weyay Bank offers exclusive KNPC cashback for SELECT cardholders

KUWAIT CITY, June 17: Weyay Bank, Kuwait’s first digital bank, is excited to announce a new exclusive offer designed to support its allowance customers who own their SELECT card. In collaboration with Kuwait National Petroleum Company (KNPC), SELECT cardholders will now enjoy a 10% cashback at all KNPC stations across Kuwait.

This collaboration underscores the Bank’s commitment to providing practical support for students’ daily expenses, especially those related to transportation. It also reflects the Bank’s dedication to offering innovative digital banking solutions that seamlessly integrate with the dynamic lifestyles of Kuwaiti youth.

“The core idea behind launching the SELECT card and membership is to enhance the student experience and provide them with benefits that continuously evolve with their lifestyle,” stated Fawaz Al-Nakib, Campaign and Partnership Manager at Weyay Bank. “Our collaboration with KNPC embodies this commitment by delivering tangible, direct offers that benefit students in their daily lives, particularly in transportation, which is a fundamental part of their routine.”

### A World of Benefits for SELECT Cardholders

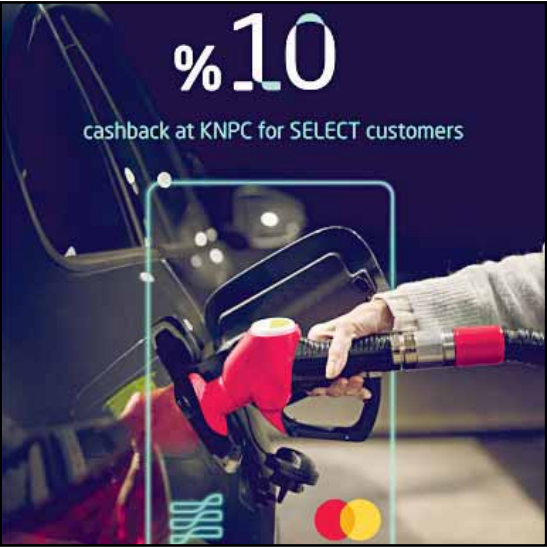
In addition to the KNPC offer, SELECT cardholders continue to enjoy a wide array of exclusive benefits:

- Food Delivery Cashback: a 40% monthly cashback on orders placed through platforms like Jahez.
- Coffee Perks: 30% cashback on orders made via the Caribou Coffee app.
- Exclusive Telecom Offers: special, competitively priced packages from stc Telecom Company through the digital store within the Weyay app.
- Travel Discounts: up to 10% on Economy and Premium Economy flights and 5% on Business Class when booking with Emirates Airline.
- Fitness Savings: discounts of up to 30% on gym memberships at popular fitness centers such as Flare Fitness and Shift Lagree.

All Weyay allowance customers can easily obtain the SELECT membership and card. A single step within the Weyay app activates the membership upon their first student allowance transfer and deposit into their Weyay account. SELECT cardholders can then immediately start using their digital card through the app, unlocking a new world of benefits with ease.



Fawaz Al-Nakib



Flyer of the new exclusive offer.

### True investment lies in people

## Saud Al-Nasser Diplomatic Institute, Warba Bank sign MoU to empower Kuwaiti diplomatic talent

KUWAIT CITY, June 17: In a strategic step aimed at developing national competencies and strengthening institutional partnerships between the public and private sectors, the Saud Al-Nasser Al-Sabah Kuwaiti Diplomatic Institute has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Warba Bank. The agreement sets the foundation for collaboration on advanced training programs designed to prepare national talent for diplomatic service, and to develop a mechanism for capability-building across both government and private institutions under a framework rooted in quality, integration and sustainability.

This partnership aligns with the Institute’s vision to adopt a modern approach to preparing and empowering national talent, in line with Kuwait’s vision for developing human capital and aligning government performance with regional and global transformations, in accordance with Kuwait’s national development plan.

On this occasion, Ambassador Nasser Subaih Al-Subaih, Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs for the Diplomatic Institute, stated: “This MoU represents a qualitative shift in the concept of modern diplomacy, where institutional development is integrated with national partnership to build flexible institutions capable of confidently representing our country abroad. It is a true reflection of Kuwait’s commitment to adopting international best practices in preparing national diplomatic talent.”

He added: “Capability-building is a shared national responsibility between the public and private sectors, and this partnership is an institutional model that leverages private-sector tools and expertise to enhance the efficiency of public institutions. What Warba Bank is doing today goes beyond support. It is a genuine contribution to shaping Kuwait’s future by strengthening its diplomatic tools and the competencies of its men and women in foreign service.”

From his side, Mr. Shaheen Hamad Al-Ghanem, Chief Executive Officer of Warba Bank, expressed pride in this collaboration, saying: “We at Warba Bank are proud to be the first strategic partner from the private sector for the Institute in this national initiative. It reflects our deep commitment to supporting state institutions and empowering national human capital. This is a true expression of our sense of national responsibility.”

Al-Ghanem added: “This MoU reflects Warba Bank’s vision of offering real added value that goes beyond financing, by providing institutional support that connects human development with Kuwait’s regional and international role.”

He continued: “We believe at Warba Bank that true investment lies in people. That is why human capacity development lies at the heart of our strategy. Our continued support for educational, professional, scientific, cultural, and awareness initiatives reflects our firm commitment to contributing to a more empowered and prosperous Kuwaiti society; one that raises the country’s flag high across all sectors globally.”



As part of the agreement signing, Nasser Al-Subaih and Shaheen Al-Ghanim represented the Saud Al-Nasser Al-Sabah Diplomatic Institute and Warba Bank, respectively.

The signing ceremony concluded by reaffirming that this step represents a major milestone in the path of fruitful collaboration between government entities and national financial institutions. It is a model to be followed for strategic partnerships focused on capacity-building and improving government performance, within a sustainable institutional framework that supports comprehensive development in Kuwait.

Guided by its slogan “Let’s Own Tomorrow,” Warba Bank is committed to setting new benchmarks for the future of Islamic banking, redefining customer experience and supporting the development of a sustainable and inclusive financial ecosystem. As one of the fastest-growing Islamic banks in Kuwait, Warba remains dedicated to excellence, sustainability, and innovation, reinforcing its position as a trusted partner for both individuals and businesses.

Warba Bank’s investments in educational, scientific, cultural, and religious initiatives reflect its unwavering commitment to building an aware and empowered society, placing people at the heart of its development journey. Through its continued support of initiatives that promote quality education, scientific knowledge, and Islamic and cultural values, Warba Bank aims to contribute actively to shaping a generation equipped to lead the future with knowledge, ethics, and a strong sense of belonging.

It is worth noting that Warba Bank has achieved remarkable success in a short period, securing a leading position in the field of digital Islamic banking. With one of the largest shareholder bases among local banks, Warba remains close to all segments of society, affirming its status as a reliable financial partner that combines innovation with social responsibility in delivering top-tier financial services and products.

## BoJ keeps monetary policy, slows bond-purchase cut pace

TOKYO, June 17, (KUNA): The Central Bank of Japan decided on Tuesday to keep its policy rate unchanged, while downgrading its assessment of the country’s economy, according to a statement released by the bank.

At a two-day policy meeting, Bank of Japan’s (BOJ) Governor Kazuo Ueda and his eight board colleagues agreed to maintain the benchmark short-term rate steady at around 0.5 percent, holding the policy the BOJ made in January.

Meanwhile, the BOJ said it will slow the reductions of its monthly purchases

of Japanese government bonds from April 2026 amid uncertainty over US President Donald Trump administration’s high tariffs.

Under the new plan, the central bank will continue reducing purchases by about JPY 400 billion (USD 2.8 billion) every quarter until March 2026, then slow the cuts to JPY 200 billion (USD 1.4 billion) every quarter from April next year.

“Japan’s economic growth is likely to moderate, as trade and other policies in each jurisdiction lead to a slowdown in overseas economies and to a decline in domestic corporate profits and other

factors, although factors such as accommodative financial conditions are expected to provide support,” the BOJ said in the statement.

“Thereafter, Japan’s economic growth rate is likely to rise, with overseas economies returning to a moderate growth path,” it said.

The central bank also pointed out various risks to the outlook, saying, “In particular, it is extremely uncertain how trade and other policies in each jurisdiction will evolve and how overseas economic activity and prices will react to them.”

## US, UK announce trade deal

Steel imports still being negotiated

KANANASKIS, Alberta, June 17, (AP): U.S. President Donald Trump and British Prime Minister Keir Starmer said Monday that they had signed a trade deal that will slash tariffs on U.K. auto and aerospace industry imports - but they are still discussing how to handle steel production.

The pair spoke to reporters at the Group of Seven summit in the Canadian Rockies, with Trump brandishing the pages of what he said

was a long-awaited agreement. The rollout was anything but smooth, however, as Trump dropped the papers and at first said his administration had reached an agreement with the European Union when he meant the United Kingdom.

The president nonetheless insisted the pact is “a fair deal for both” and would “produce a lot of jobs, a lot of income.”

“We just signed it,” Trump said, “and it’s done.”

Starmer said it meant “a very good day for both our countries, a real sign of strength.”

Reaching an agreement is significant as Trump has threatened much of the world with steep import tariffs that

have unsettled markets and raised the possibility of a global trade war.

He has since backed off on many of his proposed levies but also continued to suggest that administration officials were furiously negotiating new trade pacts with dozens of countries - even as few have actually materialized.

Trump said “the U.K. is very well protected,” from tariffs. “You know why? Because I like them.”

The signing of the deal at the G7 followed Trump and Starmer’s announcement in May that they’d reached a framework for a trade pact that would slash U.S. import taxes on British cars, steel and aluminum in return for greater access to the British market for U.S. products, including beef and ethanol.

### Underscoring confidence in the company’s capabilities

## KIB Group, represented by KIB Invest, serves as Joint Lead Manager in Boubyan Bank’s USD3 billion sukuk issuance

KUWAIT CITY, June 17: Kuwait International Bank (KIB) Group announced that its investment arm, KIB Invest, successfully participated as a Joint Lead Manager (JLM) in the issuance of senior unsecured U.S. dollar-denominated sukuk with a five-year maturity, issued by Boubyan Sukuk Limited on behalf of Boubyan Bank.

The issuance, structured according to Wakala and Murabaha principles and valued at USD 500 million, is part of Boubyan Bank’s USD 3 billion Trust Certificate Issuance Program. It garnered strong interest from both regional and international investors, reflecting solid confidence in Kuwait’s Islamic financial and banking institutions.

The issuance is supported by Boubyan Bank’s strong credit ratings from leading global agencies, including an “A2” rating from Moody’s and an “A” rating from both Standard & Poor’s (S&P) and Fitch.

Commenting on the occasion, Jamal Al Barrak, CEO of KIB Invest, said: “We are pleased to have participated in this successful joint issuance. KIB Invest’s involvement reflects the market’s confidence in our Sharia-compliant investment instruments, as well as the trust placed in us by investors and stakeholders across both regional and global markets.”

Al Barrak also highlighted that KIB Invest is strategically advancing its regional and international expansion by actively participating in high-profile transactions. He affirmed the company’s commitment to delivering Sharia-compliant investment solutions through a growing platform, supported by a team of experts and aligned with



Jamal Al Barrak



Ma'ab Mohammed Al Qassem

international standards in Islamic finance.

On her part, Ma’ab Mohammed Al Qassem, General Manager of International Banking and Financial Institutions at KIB, expressed her appreciation to Boubyan Bank for their confidence in the capabilities and expertise of KIB Invest’s team. She noted that the selection of KIB’s investment arm for this landmark issuance underscores the strength of relationships among local banks and sets the stage for deeper partnerships within Kuwait’s Islamic banking sector. She added: “This transaction also highlights KIB’s ongoing support for local banks and its role in empowering regional financial institutions through strategic partnerships that enhance access to capital markets.”

Al Qassem further reaffirmed KIB’s commitment to fostering the growth of capital markets through innovative, Sh-

aria-compliant solutions designed to deliver strong long-term investment value.

The sukuk issuance was jointly arranged by HSBC, Standard Chartered, and Citibank as global coordinators. In addition to KIB Invest, a number of prominent regional financial institutions also participated in managing the issuance, including Arab Banking Corporation, Boubyan Capital Investment Company, KFH Capital Investment Company, Warba Bank, Dubai Islamic Bank, SMBC Bank International, and the Islamic Corporation for the Development of the Private Sector.

It is worth noting that KIB, through its investment arm KIB Invest, continues to solidify its position in the debt capital markets, driven by deep market expertise, disciplined execution, and a specialized team dedicated to providing Sharia-compliant financial solutions tailored to the needs of sovereign and institutional clients across the region.



# Israel-Iran escalation stresses geopolitical risk scenarios for regional sovereigns and banks

By S&P Global Ratings

The sharp escalation of the Israel-Iran conflict tests our existing moderate-stress scenario and incorporates a material proportion of our high-stress scenario. S&P Global Ratings believes risks on the downside have increased and notes the possibility of an even more severe scenario.

It's highly uncertain how the conflict will unfold. We now see a greater possibility of it affecting regional credit conditions. In our view, the main credit risk transmission channels are:

- Broader confidence factors and a “risk-off” setting that could hamper economic growth, funding costs, and banking system liquidity and asset quality.
- Energy prices, production, transportation (not just limited to hydrocarbons), and potential inflation.
- Weaker tourism and capital outflows.
- Security-related expenditure.

Our sovereign ratings in the region incorporate short-term increases in geopolitical stress.

Supportive elements of our assessments remain in place, particularly the presence of large, liquid government asset buffers and a track-record of extending support to weaker governments. These should continue to provide substantial resilience. We note that the region's capital and financial systems have remained remarkably resilient through all but the most severe geopolitical shocks.

We have in recent years identified geopolitical risk as one of the key downside risks for sovereign credit-worthiness, with implications for the global economy. The escalation of the Israel-Iran conflict, since June 13, 2025, increases those risks by introducing an additional stress factor to the base case scenario that underpins most of our regional sovereign ratings.

In updating our regional risk assessment, we consider the following factors most pertinent: Israel says its stated aim of destroying Iran's nuclear capability could take at least two weeks, maybe longer. This points to a more sustained Israeli campaign than experienced during the retaliatory attacks of 2024. The latest operations hit a wide range of targets in Iran, including missile storage facilities, gas fields, air defense systems, airports, public buildings, and key regime-related individuals.

Iran's response has been more expansive and more effective in hitting Israeli targets than the strikes of October 2024. The conflict so far appears limited to the two countries, with attacks and counter attacks seeking to avoid drawing in third countries, such as the U.S. and Gulf countries. If Iran follows through on threats to widen its retaliation it could provoke a response from the U.S. and others in the region, raising risks further.

Israel has also attacked energy facilities in Iran, including a processing plant at the largest gas field in the world, the South Pars field, and a refinery in Abadan. If Israel targets more oil production facilities, it could disrupt global oil sector dynamics. Iran accounts for 3% of the world's oil output and about 7% of gas production.

The likelihood of a diplomatic solution appears increasingly distant. Iran-U.S. talks scheduled to resume on June 15 were cancelled following the Israeli attacks.

Iran's leadership is likely to feel increasingly threatened as strikes continue, particularly if the U.S. administration increases its direct support for Israel's actions. This could raise the risk of prolonged trade route disruptions by Iran or its proxies. Conversely, an attack on U.S. military assets in the region is less likely, in our view, given that the subsequent response from the U.S. would likely be severe for the Iranian regime.

Proxy forces, such as the Houthis in Yemen, could disrupt trade routes and oil infrastructure.

Media and intelligence reports suggest some proxies have weakened. However, the threat from Houthi forces has suppressed maritime activity in the Red Sea and forces allied to Iran are active in Iraq (where U.S. assets have previously been attacked) and Syria. Media reports suggest that tanker activity through the Strait of Hormuz is decreasing, on the potential threat of Iranian activity.

A longer, more intense conflict increases the potential for military miscalculations.

**Same Credit Risks, Different Country Impacts**

Our sovereign ratings in the region factor in short-term increases in geopolitical stress but the transmission channels we identify could



A shopkeeper waits for customers as most other shops remain shuttered at the historic Grand Bazaar in Tehran, Iran, Monday, June 16, 2025. (AP)

## Key Takeaways

- Developments in the Israel-Iran conflict are testing S&P Global Ratings' previous assumptions by increasing downside risk including due to the prospect of further escalation. Thus far, developments suggest attacks and counter attacks are seeking to avoid drawing in third countries, such as the U.S. or Gulf countries.
- The transmission channels that could pressure regional credit include disruption to key transportation routes, fluctuating energy prices, reduced tourism, capital outflows, higher security spending, and

weaker consumer and investment confidence.

- Higher oil prices will only benefit the region if production continues, global demand is sustained, and trade routes remain open.
- Gulf Cooperation Council banks display strong balance sheet resilience under our stress test scenarios although a complex, unpredictable, and protracted regional conflict would likely have adverse implications for their creditworthiness.

affect countries in the region in different ways. Some sovereigns are more sensitive to certain stresses than others, so parts of our scenarios may apply to some countries but not others. The geography of the region matters and may partly determine the potential impact. As a result, some GCC sovereigns are more vulnerable to a prolonged and persistent disruption in the Strait of Hormuz than others.

Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states have sought to diversify activity away from hydrocarbons and this has started to reduce related vulnerabilities. For now, oil and gas receipts remain the largest component of fiscal and current account revenues. Consequently, oil sector dynamics continue to underpin much of the non-oil activity through public investment, consumer confidence, and asset valuations.

Blockages of the Strait of Hormuz or Bab Al Mendab—or a perception that they could be blocked—could reduce traffic, curb oil exports, and increase shipping and insurance costs. Any blockage could also disrupt regional cargo flows, particularly through Jebel Ali port in Dubai—a key hub in regional supply chains.

**Oil Gains Depend On Output, Demand, And Open Trade Routes**

Higher oil prices will only benefit the region if production continues, global demand is sustained and if trade routes are kept open.

Powerful factors have disrupted oil market supply and demand dynamics over 2025, and we believe similar conditions will likely persist. In our sovereign analysis, we assume prices will be volatile as ongoing conflicts continue, while at the same time U.S. trade tariffs create policy uncertainty and OPEC+ accelerates its additional production. Following Israel's June 13 attack on Iran, prices initially jumped by more than they fell on.

Each of these factors alone has the potential to re-establish a new price level.

Our ratings incorporate the potential for price volatility. Key to our assessment is our medium term average price expectations. Absent the uncertainty of the conflict on supply and prices, we currently assume that oversupply in the oil market will continue to outweigh slow demand growth through 2025 and beyond. We will keep this assumption under review as market dynamics evolve.

**Our Negative Outlook On Our Rating For Israel Reflects Vulnerability To Geopolitical, Security Risks**

The negative outlook on our 'A' long-term sovereign credit rating on

Israel reflects the risk that the escalation of military conflict could substantially weaken Israel's economy and fiscal and balance-of-payments positions.

An escalation could include shocks to foreign and domestic investor confidence, capital flight, and financial market and exchange-rate volatility. It could add to direct physical damage to infrastructure and associated risks to growth and public finances. It is difficult to quantify the scope of such effects at this stage.

The structure of the Israeli economy should somewhat cushion the impact of security disruptions. The economy is centered on high-tech services exports, with a high proportion of employees able to work from home.

In previous stress episodes the heightened security environment has had only limited impact on the behavior of Israeli residents, with no evidence of bank deposit instability or conversion to foreign exchange. Protracted military activity of high intensity could change this.

**Higher Risk Scenarios For Regional Sovereigns Will Affect Banks' Creditworthiness**

We see a high risk of escalatory attacks between Israel and Iran that will likely hit business confidence in the GCC region. In our base-case scenario, the risk of a protracted, broader regional conflict is probably less likely at this stage.

We have identified three channels of risk transmission for the GCC banking systems:

- Outflows of foreign funding, with non-resident investors potentially exiting the GCC region as confrontation intensifies.
- Outflows of local funding, although we assume that this would materialize only in the case of a broader regional conflict or in our severe stress scenario.
- A spike in default rates among banks' corporate and retail clients as the geopolitical instability affects regional economies particularly if it disrupts oil exports.

To quantify the risk and to stress test banks' existing balance sheet positions, we use data on local and external funding published by central banks as of Dec. 31, 2024, and data reported by the top 45 banks in the GCC region.

We examine the impact of external funding outflows under various assumptions (see table 3).

We assume significant external funding outflows, particularly for what we would consider as volatile liabilities

such as non-resident interbank deposits. We also assume banks will liquidate their external assets, with some haircuts to face these outflows.

Finally, we assume that material external funding outflows are triggered under the high and severe stress scenarios.

For the local private sector deposit outflows, we assume that these would happen only under the severe stress scenario. Local private sector deposit outflows would imply expats and residents leaving and hence the reason it is less likely. We calibrate the stress at 20% outflows of private sector deposits, which is based on historical data from the 1990-1991 Gulf War.

We assume no outflows of government or other public sector deposits. In fact, in previous episodes

of heightened geopolitical risk, the government and its related entities intervened to support banks to face capital outflows.

Finally, for asset quality indicators, we calibrate our stress assumptions (see table 4) based on previous shocks. For example, during the global financial crisis, the average nonperforming loan ratio of rated GCC banks reached about 6%.

**Government Support Will Help Contain Projected Outflows**

Under our hypothetical stress assumptions, external funding outflows could reach about \$240 billion, which is equivalent to about 30% of the cumulative external liabilities of tested systems.

That said, we think banks have sufficient external liquidity to cover these outflows in most cases, assum-

ing they can liquidate their external assets.

Qatar is the only country where banks could require some support for a very manageable estimated amount of \$9 billion under our hypothetical stress assumptions. That's because Qatari banks have the highest net external debt among the six GCC countries. At year-end 2024, Qatari banks net external debt reached 31.8% of the system's total loans.

In our view, the risk of outflows is mitigated by the strong likelihood of government support in case of need, as we saw during the boycott of Qatar in 2017. During that time, the banking system lost about \$20 billion of external funding and received around twice that amount in form of additional deposits from the government and its related entities.

In Saudi Arabia, the banks actual position appears satisfactory. However, if they are unable to continue to mobilize external funding, their capacity to continue financing Vision 2030 projects may weaken.

Finally, United Arab Emirates banks have the strongest net external asset position in the region and therefore show the highest resilience to our hypothetical capital outflows.

In terms of local deposit outflows, under our severe stress scenario, banks could also experience about \$290 billion in deposit outflows from local private sector deposits. We think banks can cope with this. And if their assets are less liquid than we assume, they will receive support from central banks.

Finally, factoring in our asset quality deterioration assumptions means that 16 of the top 45 banks in the GCC region will likely display cumulative losses of just over \$5 billion under the high stress scenario, based on banks' annualized reported net income as of Dec. 31, 2024. This represents 3% of affected banks' total equity at year end 2024.

This number increases to 26 for the severe stress scenario, with cumulative losses reaching about \$30 billion—10% of affected banks total equity at year end 2024.

Under both scenarios, the average Tier-1 capital ratio for the banks showing losses will likely remain at about 15%. These amounts indicate that the hypothetical shock is likely to be a profitability event rather than a solvency one. That's because GCC banks' business models and profitability remain sound, with average returns on assets of 1.7% at year-end 2024.

In addition, banks display strong capitalization, with an average Tier 1 capital ratio of 17.2% on the same date, which could help them cope with a stronger stress that we expect.

**Further Escalation Will Test Regional Resilience**

Our stress test scenarios indicate that regional banks are starting from a strong position and have a high degree of balance sheet resilience. On the flipside, a complex, unpredictable, and protracted regional conflict, would likely have adverse implications for the creditworthiness of regional banks.

Possible regional stress scenarios			
Modest stress	Moderate stress	High stress	Severe stress
In this scenario, the intensification of direct, interstate hostilities between Israel and Iran would remain short (less than three months). Attacks, including from proxy forces, on Israeli and allied regional assets are short-lived. Limited impact on credit metrics for the wider region.	In this scenario, a series of escalatory attacks between Israel and Iran threaten wider regional security but ultimately settle, in a time period somewhat beyond that in the modest stress scenario. Impacts on economic growth, energy prices, and key trade routes are manageable and temporary with limited impacts on fiscal and external credit metrics.	In this scenario, persistent and intense cycles of attacks between Israel and Iran develop, implying a material impact on macroeconomic stability for the wider region. This includes more prolonged blockages to trade routes, which could engender a response from non-regional actors, and a greater stress on transmission channels such as energy prices, security expenditure, tourism flows, and capital outflows.	In this scenario, regional and non-regional allies are drawn into the conflict, including Iran and its supported forces, the U.S., and Gulf allies. This results in material increases in energy prices and risks to export volumes because of persistent threats to trade routes; lasting impacts on regional macroeconomic stability; and greater stresses on sovereigns' fiscal and external metrics.

Regional sovereign credit considerations						
	Rating	Key sovereign credit considerations	Key physical asset vulnerabilities (Source: S&P Global Market Intelligence)	2025F Net GG debt/GDP*	2025F Net external debt*	2025F External financing needs*
Iraq	B-/Stable/B	Most of Iraq's oil is exported via the southern port of Basra, which then passes through the Strait of Hormuz. Iraq is very exposed to security risks given the potential for Iran-backed militias in the country to launch attacks at Israel or U.S. bases in the Gulf. Heightened regional tensions will pressure the fiscal position, but its foreign exchange reserves exceed \$100 billion and offer some cushion.	U.S. military Bases	38	-75	50
Egypt	B-/Stable/B	Egypt is a net energy importer, including from Israel, and increases to its oil or gas bill—or disruption of its supply—could have an impact on fiscal and external metrics. Houthi missiles targeting shipping in the Strait of Hormuz could also further affect Suez Canal receipts. However, access to the Mediterranean Sea helps the country help if there is any blockages.	Commercial shipping (Suez Canal)	72	111	150
Bahrain	B+/Negative/B	In comparison the rest of the GCC, Bahrain's oil production is small and its economic base relatively diversified. However, it remains one of the most fiscally dependent on oil receipts and is highly indebted. Bahrain has benefited from support from the rest of the GCC in the past and our rating incorporates future assistance if needed. Bahrain hosts the U.S. Navy's Fifth Fleet.	U.S. military bases, critical infrastructure, commercial shipping	127	-16	357
Jordan	BB-/Stable/B	Jordan's external ratios are sensitive to tourism revenue as it accounts for nearly one-third of CARs. Jordan is a net importer of oil and is sensitive to increases in oil prices. About 40% of Jordan's exports go to the rest of the Middle East, exposing them to regional trade route disruption.	U.S. military bases	84	49	154
Oman	BBB-/Stable/A-3	Oman's export facilities in Sohar, on the Gulf of Oman or Duqm, on the Arabian Sea coast, avoid the Strait of Hormuz entirely and therefore we view Oman as less exposed to the risk of its blockage. Its container facilities could be used as an alternative to Gulf ports and help regional trade routes, which could benefit its external accounts and potentially boost growth. While the authorities have been successful in improving the country's resilience to oil price volatility, the government's balance sheet is not as resilient as other GCC peers.	Critical Infrastructure	-8	14	110
Israel	A-/Negative/A-1	Israel's wealthy economy has historically been resilient not least due to its sizable high-tech services sector (some 20% of GDP and over 50% of exports), with a high percentage of employees able to work from home. This should somewhat cushion the impact of security disruptions. The development of offshore gas fields transformed Israel into a net exporter of natural gas in recent years. Tourism accounts for just 2%-3% of total exports. Israel's foreign exchange reserves stand at \$229 billion (40% of GDP), covering 1.7x the gross external debt of the whole economy. The elevated security spending weighs on public finances. Israel's small size and high population density suggest the socioeconomic and fiscal fallout from physical damage to infrastructure could be sizable.	Military, nuclear, critical infrastructure	67	-80	58
Kuwait	A+/Stable/A-1	Kuwait depends on the Strait of Hormuz as an export route and the concentration of oil in fiscal and external revenues is among the highest in the region. Consequently, its fiscal and external flows are highly sensitive to changes in the oil price. Still, the government has amassed one of the largest asset stocks globally, which provides a significant buffer against shocks. It hosts a large U.S. army base at Al Arifan.	U.S. military bases, critical infrastructure, commercial shipping	-495	-900	107
Saudi Arabia	A+/Stable/A-1	The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia exports about 6.5mbpd, roughly 80% of which is exported through the Strait of Hormuz. We understand the East-West pipeline system has additional capacity of 3.3mbpd and a total capacity of 5mbpd. This facility could potentially be material in maintaining export earnings. The kingdom is driving an expensive economic transformation program, which is starting to reduce its dependence on hydrocarbons. Related expenditures are high and fiscal deficits elevated as a result. However, the government's net asset position provides substantial credit resilience.	U.S. military bases, critical infrastructure	-49	-60	78
Qatar	AA/Stable/A-1+	Qatar depends on the Strait of Hormuz as an export route, although it does export gas to the UAE through pipeline. It shares the North Field, where it sources its natural gas, with Iran. As a result, we understand diplomatic relations are potentially less strained. However, Qatar also hosts the Al Udeid Air Base, which we understand is the largest U.S. military base in the region and its regional central command. Qatar's government balance sheet is very strong and it offers significant protection against potential capital outflows, which have happened in the past. Although covered by substantial assets, we view Qatar's external debt, emanating from its financial system, as high and as a source of risk.	U.S. military bases, critical infrastructure, commercial shipping	-128	-121	188
Abu Dhabi*	AA/Stable/A-1+	We understand that the Abu Dhabi Crude Oil Pipeline to Fujairah has the capacity to deliver about 50% of the emirate's oil exports directly to the Fujairah terminal on the Indian ocean, bypassing the Strait of Hormuz. It hosts the U.S. Al Dhafra Air Base. Abu Dhabi has built up one of the highest fiscal buffers among our rated sovereigns and it operates a controlled fiscal policy.	U.S. military bases, critical infrastructure, commercial shipping	-325	-200	139
CAR--Current account receipts. GCC--Gulf Cooperation Council. Mbpd--Million barrels per day. *Net general government debt/GDP--A negative figure indicates a net asset position, where liquid government asset are larger than debt. Narrow net external debt/current account--Receipts or payments (if in a net external asset position) is our primary indicator for a country's external indebtedness. See Sovereign Rating Methodology for full definition. Gross external financing needs--our key measure of a country's external liquidity. The sum of the gross external financing needs to the sum of CAR plus usable official foreign exchange reserves For Abu Dhabi's external data, we use UAE values. Source: S&P Global Ratings.						

CAR—Current account receipts. GCC—Gulf Cooperation Council. Mbpd—Million barrels per day. \*Net general government debt/GDP—A negative figure indicates a net asset position, where liquid government asset are larger than debt. Narrow net external debt/current account—Receipts or payments (if in a net external asset position) is our primary indicator for a country's external indebtedness. See Sovereign Rating Methodology for full definition. Gross external financing needs—our key measure of a country's external liquidity. It is the ratio of gross external financing needs to the sum of CAR plus usable official foreign exchange reserves For Abu Dhabi's external data, we use UAE values. Source: S&P Global Ratings.



**Boss' hidden tracks tell a different musical story**

## Springsteen unveils box set of 7 'Lost Albums'

NEW YORK, June 17, (AP): Bruce Springsteen's new project, "Tracks II: The Lost Albums," is entirely about that age-old question: What if?

The box set, out June 27, comprises seven albums encompassing the period between 1983 and 2018, all but one he prepared to release in its time but ultimately shelved. Now that he's decided to drop them simultaneously, they offer a fascinating alternative story of his musical life.

Building on its predecessor "Tracks," 1998's four-disc, 66-song collection of unreleased material, there are 83 songs here. While some slipped out on other projects - "My Hometown" and "Secret Garden" among them - the vast majority hadn't been heard publicly. This is all fully completed material, not half-baked or half-finished outtakes. It's not unusual for artists to leave songs - or even full-lengths - on the cutting-room floor, but multiple entire albums? Springsteen explains that he's taken care releasing albums, looking to build a narrative arc for his career, and believes this approach has served him well.

Perhaps as a result, the most interesting work on "Tracks II" comes when he stretches out and explores pathways not in his wheelhouse: countrypolitan Bruce, border-town Bruce, Burt Bacharach-inspired Bruce and a set of synthesizer-based songs modeled after his Oscar-winning "Streets of Philadelphia." Oddly, the one disc of strays cobbled together that feels most like an E Street Band record is the least compelling.

Since these are seven distinct albums, it's worth evaluating them that way.

"LA Garage Sessions '83" captures Springsteen working virtually alone at a home in the Hollywood Hills. It was

squarely in between his "Nebraska" and "Born in the USA" albums, and he seems torn between those two approaches. There are character studies here, and more lighthearted fare like "Little Girl Like You," with a single man yearning to settle down. The most striking cut is "The Klansman," about a boy and his racist father, yet it cries out for more development. Ultimately, Springsteen chose the right albums to release at the time.

The song "Streets of Philadelphia" was a genuine departure musically, and Springsteen decided to make an album in the same vein, with synthesizers and drum loops the dominant elements. If released in the early 1990s, this would have been the most contemporary-sounding disc of his career, with atmospherics that occasionally recall U2. Springsteen pulled it at the last minute, reasoning that the stories of doomed relationships - sample lyric: "We loved each other like a disease" - was too much like "Tunnel of Love."

At the same time he recorded "The Ghost of Tom Joad" in 1995, Springsteen also convened a country band steered by pedal steel player Marty Rifkin. Their work was terrific, led by the one-two punch of "Repo Man" and the Johnny Rivers cover, "Poor Side of Town." The title cut to a disc he calls "Somewhere North of Nashville" escaped into the public some two decades later. Since the somber "Joad" won a Grammy, who are we to second-guess his choice of what to put out? "Nashville," though, is a rollicking good time.

"Inyo" is similar to "Joad" and "Devils & Dust," mostly acoustic-based narratives, here many of them stories of the Southwest. Springsteen even appropriately brings in mariachi bands for "Adelita" and "The Lost Charro." Soozie Tyrell's violin is notable, particularly on the majestic "When

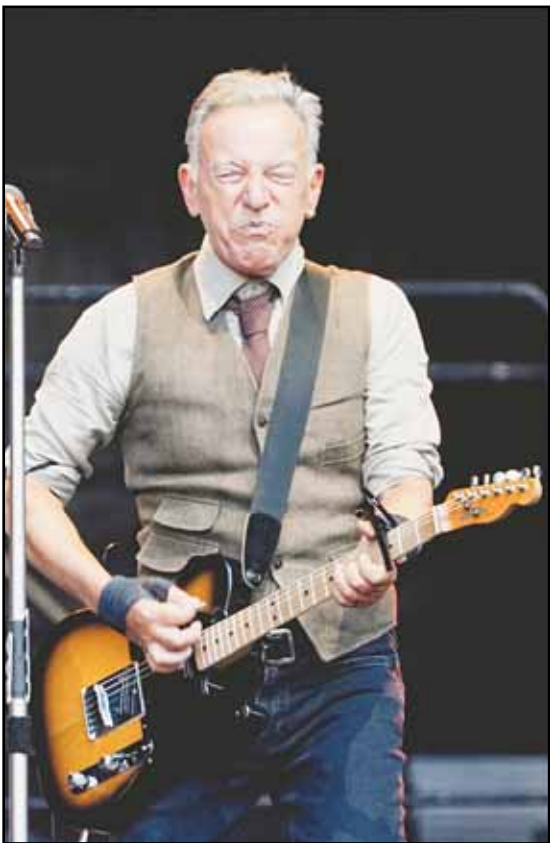
I Build My Beautiful House." We're guessing that Springsteen may have considered "Inyo" one album too many in the same style, but it's still strong work.

At one point Springsteen considered making "Western Stars," his salute to early 1970s California songwriting, a double album. When he didn't, the songs on "Twilight Hours" were left behind. Here Bacharach is the primary influence, and this almost feels like Elvis Costello's collaboration with Burt, only without him (and is the lyric "God give me strength" a hat-tip to that project?). The crooning Bruce of "Sunday Love" is spellbinding, maybe the box's best song. "Lonely Town" sits at the intersection of Bacharach and Roy Orbison, while "Dinner at Eight" is a lovely sum-up. "Twilight Hours" may startle Springsteen fans - and impress them, too.

The workmanlike songs on "Faithless" were written on commission in two weeks, the soundtrack to a movie that was never made. It's a good bet it would have been a moody Western.

When Springsteen duels with Tom Morello on the song "Another Thin Line," you realize how little you've heard his electric guitar on "Tracks II." The album "Perfect World" is the one here made up of leftovers from different periods, with the greatest E Street Band participation. Here's the deal, though: Most good E Street Band material has already been released. The best left behind for this disc is "You Lifted Me Up," with minimalist lyrics and a vocal collaboration with Patti Scialfa and Steve Van Zandt.

The box gives Springsteen completists plenty to mull over, and you can question whether these "lost discs" would get more attention released separately instead of together. If it's too much, he's releasing a 20-song set of its highlights.



Bruce Springsteen performs with the E Street Band at the Olympic Stadium in Berlin, Germany, Wednesday, June 11. (AP)

### Film



Brad Pitt, (left), and Ines de Ramon attend the world premiere of 'F1 The Movie.' (AP)



Brad Pitt, (from left), Lewis Hamilton, and Damson Idris at the world premiere of 'F1 The Movie.' (AP)



Kerry Condon attends the world premiere of 'F1 The Movie' on June 16, 2025, in Times Square in New York. (AP)



Callie Cooke attends the world premiere of 'F1 The Movie' on Monday, June 16, in Times Square in New York. (AP)

### Overdose probe

## Perry's doctor to plead guilty

LOS ANGELES, June 17, (AP): A doctor charged with giving **Matthew Perry** ketamine in the month leading up to the "Friends" star's overdose death will plead guilty, according to an agreement filed in court Monday.

Dr. Salvador Plasencia agreed to plead guilty to four counts of distribution of ketamine, according to the signed document filed in federal court in Los Angeles.

In exchange for his plea, prosecutors agreed to drop three additional counts of distribution of ketamine and two counts of falsifying records.

Federal prosecutors said in a statement that the plea carries a maximum sentence of 40 years in prison. They said Plasencia is expected to formally plead guilty in the coming weeks.

According to a co-defendant, Plasencia in a text message called the actor a "moron" who could be exploited for money. The physician had been one of the primary targets of the prosecution, along with a woman accused of being a ketamine dealer. Three other defendants, including another doctor, agreed to plead guilty last year in exchange for their cooperation.

Plasencia and the woman, Jasveen Sangha, had been scheduled to face trial in August. An email to his attorney seeking comment was not immediately answered.

Perry was found dead by his assistant on Oct. 28, 2023. The medical examiner ruled that ketamine, typically used as a surgical anesthetic, was the primary cause of death.

The actor had been using the drug through his regular doctor in a legal but off-label treatment for depression, which has become increasingly common. Perry, 54, began seeking more ketamine than his doctor would give him.

Plasencia admitted in his plea agreement that another patient connected him with Perry, and that starting about a month before Perry's death, he illegally supplied the actor with 20 vials of ketamine totaling 100 mg of the drug, along with ketamine lozenges and syringes.

He admitted to enlisting the other doctor, Mark Chavez, to supply the drug for him, according to the court filings.



Perry

Action-comedy flick fails to deliver laughs or thrills

## Wilson's 'Bride Hard' is easy to break up with

LOS ANGELES, June 17, (AP): Take your average wedding flick, shotgun a hostage situation into it and add some anarchic energy from Rebel Wilson and you get "Bride Hard," which is a movie, for better or for worse. In this case, much, much worse.

"Bride Hard" - which mixes over-the-top costume gimmicks with bursts of automatic gunfire - fails to be either funny or thrilling. It suffers from sluggish pacing reminiscent of a made-for-TV movie and features performances that lack energy and conviction.

Director Simon West, whose action movie credits include "Con Air" and "Lara Croft: Tomb Raider," seems to be making a parody until he's not. The whole thing stinks of an '80s low-budget movie that you might find, back in the day, rummaging through a discount bin at Blockbuster.

Wilson stars as Sam, a secret government "Mission Impossible"-type agent who is a loose cannon, lethal with an elbow and as creative as MacGyver, but poor at managing her personal life.

"I will give you all of your flowers on the job, but in your real life, you're kind of dumb," says her agent friend, played by Sherry Cola, who like everyone here, has been shorn of saying anything amusing. Even the blooper reel at the end of the movie is underwhelming.

We start when Sam is reunited with her childhood best friend, bride-to-be Betsy - Wilson's "Pitch Perfect" co-star Anna Camp - for a bachelorette party in Paris, which goes disastrously bad since Sam is also hunting for a bioweapon at the time.

The action then shifts to a mansion on a private island in Savannah, Georgia, the site of a lavish wedding and lots of daytime drinking. That is, until heavily armed goons arrive to steal a pallet of gold bars. (Gold bars, like it's a Looney Tunes cartoon.) It's up to Sam to save the day and prove she's a good friend.

Screenwriters Cece Pleasants and Shaina Steinberg seem to be mocking spy



This image released by Magenta Light Studios shows Rebel Wilson, (left), and Anna Camp in a scene from 'Bride Hard.' (AP)

thrillers and wedding movies alike until they also kind of stop. There's lots of real blood, fiery explosions, impalings and electrocutions, along with irritable bowel syndrome jokes and plenty of kicks to the groin.

Sample dialogue: "Oh, Sam, you're alone," the mother of the bride says as she approaches Sam. "Well, no. I have my emotional support ...." Sam responds. There's also needless scene-explaining, like one bad guy yelling,

"She's using the chocolate fountains as cover!" Yeah, we see that.

Have the screenwriters been reading the room? Not clear. "If anybody ever mentions that I'm a secret agent, we will rendition you to one of our many unnamed bases," warns Sam, as her spy colleague does a throat-slitting gesture. Rendition jokes are really so funny this summer.

To be fair, there are some intriguing wedding-themed assaults, like the use of hairspray in the eyes, curling iron burns and a bad guy's chest punctured on an hors d'oeuvres platter. Sam likes to wield champagne bottles as clubs.

One of the most cringe moments is when a stressed-out pregnant bridesmaid requests another sing the nasty, freaky "My Neck, My Back (Lick It)" to her unborn baby, which triggers a sing-a-long with all the captives, mostly white, rich and middle aged. But even here it's neutered: The moviemakers go with the radio edit.

The movie co-stars Stephen Dorff as the main bad guy, Justin Hartley as eye candy with a secret, Anna Chlumsky as a high-strung maid of honor and Da'Vine Joy Randolph as an edgy, sassy bridesmaid. They all need to break up with their agents. (So does whoever did the stunts - the body doubles are embarrassing.)

"Bride Hard" hits an insane low in a battle sequence in which the bridesmaids - all in fluffy red gowns - use Revolutionary-era cannons to take on trained mercenaries in tactical gear with rocket-propelled grenades. That, of course, leads to plenty of jokes about "ramming it in."

If you do decide to pony up real cash to see this historic misfire in the movie theaters instead of waiting until you can hate-watch it for free on a streaming service, we have a word of advice: Bring your emotional support gear.

"Bride Hard," a Magenta Light Studios release in theaters Friday, is rated R for "sexual references and some violence." Running time: 105 minutes. Zero stars out of four.



Dust and debris fill Tehran TV studio; anchor rushed off camera

Israeli attack rocks Iranian state TV during live show

TEHRAN, Iran, June 17, (AP): Dust and debris filled an Iranian state television studio and an anchor rushed off camera Monday when an Israeli strike hit during a live broadcast, an hour after Israel issued a warning for the area of Tehran where the station is located.

Sahar Emami, an anchor at the Islamic Republic of Iran News Network, was seen hurrying off-camera as the screen behind her cut out. People on set were heard saying “Allahu akbar,” the Arabic phrase for God is great.

The broadcast quickly switched to pre-recorded programs. Soon, Emami came back live from another studio and was seen speaking with another anchor. Images showed smoke and flames in the sky. The station later said that the building was hit by four bombs.

Israel’s defense minister took immediate credit for the attack.

“The Iranian regime’s propaganda and incitement broadcasting authority was attacked by the IDF after a widespread evacuation of the area’s residents,”

Israel Katz said in a statement. “We will strike the Iranian dictator everywhere.”

Esmail Baqaei, spokesman for the Iranian foreign minister, condemned the strike, calling on the international community to demand justice from Israel for its attack on the media. “The world is watching: targeting Iran’s news agency #IRIB’s office during live broadcast is a wicked act of war crime,” Baqaei wrote on X.

Videos circulating on social media show that the IRINN building, known as “the glass building,” is still burning. There has been no official report on casualties from the incident. An anchor said on air that a few colleagues had been injured, but that their families should not be worried.

The network said its live programs have now been transferred to another studio, which resembles that of radio studios..

An hour earlier, the Israeli military had issued an evacuation warning affecting up to 330,000 people in a part of central Tehran that includes the country’s

state TV and police headquarters, as well as three large hospitals.

The IDF has issued similar evacuation warnings for civilians in parts of Gaza and Lebanon ahead of strikes.

The warning came on the fourth day of the conflict, when the Israeli military claimed it had achieved air superiority above the Iranian capital and could fly over the city without facing major threats.

Iran, meanwhile, announced it had launched some 100 missiles and vowed further retaliation for sweeping attacks on its military and nuclear infrastructure that have killed at least 224 people in the country since Friday.

So far, 24 people have been killed in Israel and more than 500 injured, Israeli officials said, after Iran launched more than 370 missiles and hundreds of drones.

The Committee to Protect Journalists said it was “appalled by Israel’s bombing of Iran’s state TV channel while live on air.”



This frame grab from a video released by Iran state TV shows anchor Sahar Emami amid an explosion from an Israeli attack during a live TV broadcast, June 16, in Tehran, Iran. (AP)

Daily Life



(Pic B) Grass and plants grow on an old ship on a side arm of the river Main in Frankfurt, Germany, Monday, June 16. (AP)

New biography dives into Talking Heads’ rise and fall

Fingerprint expert hunts missing sister’s fate

NEW YORK, June 17, (AP): Sixteen years have passed since Shaw Connolly’s teenage sister, Thea, slipped out of their family home in rural Maine to party with friends and never came home.

Shaw (short for Shawnee), now a fingerprint expert for law enforcement agencies, is certain that her sister was murdered, but she is obsessed with learning where she was buried.

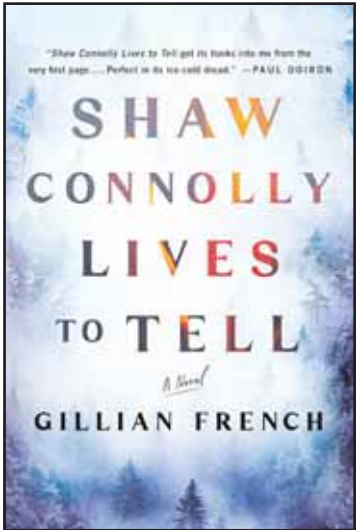
Even now, after all these years, she continues to put up posters and roam the woods of their hometown with a cadaver dog. Her obsession takes a toll not only on her but on her family, driving her husband away and traumatizing her two boys.

But in author Gillian French’s “Shaw Connolly Lives To Tell,” Shaw isn’t the only one who is obsessed. Someone is obsessed with her.

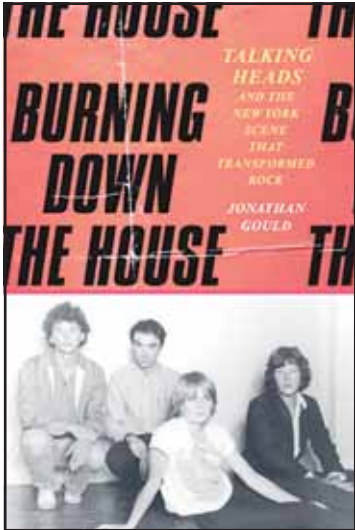
His name is Anders Jansen, and he calls Shaw frequently, often at odd hours. He taunts her about Thea, revealing details that hint at his involvement in the girl’s disappearance - but never enough to justify an arrest.

As their cat-and-mouse game continues, the phone calls become more menacing, and soon he starts following her and making vague threats against her family. When Shaw grows alarmed enough to get a protective order, he violates it, giving police a justification to make an arrest. But now he’s on the run, the police can’t find him, and the calls continue.

Meanwhile, Shaw has a job to do. She assists police investigating the death of a man who was bludgeoned while walking his dog. She is called



This cover image released by Minotaur shows ‘Shaw Connolly Lives to Tell’ by Gillian French. (AP)



This cover image released by Mariner Books shows ‘Burning Down the House: Talking Heads and the New York Scene That Transformed Rock’ by Jonathan Gould. (AP)

to assist with an arson fire in a vacant building. But then there is another arson fire. And another. And another. When the arsonist burns down the church Shaw attended as a child, she and the readers wonder if Anders could be setting the fires.

This well-written, emotionally wrenching novel is not a mystery in the traditional sense. It is apparent early on that Thea is dead and that Anders killed her. The tension lies in how far Shaw will go to learn where she is buried, what Anders will do if she persists,

and the price the people she loves will pay for her obsession.

Talking Heads fans, rejoice! Hard on the heels of the re-release of “Stop Making Sense,” the 1984 Jonathan Demme film widely considered the best concert movie ever made, **Jonathan Gould** has published a comprehensive biography of the seminal band that injected an art school vibe into popular music and forever changed rock ‘n’ roll.

Gould, the author of well-received books on Otis Redding and the Beatles, chronicles in meticulous detail the rise and fall of the band that got its start in New York City’s underground punk scene and ended up touring the world with a repertoire shaped by blues, funk and jazz.

He begins “Burning Down the House: Talking Heads and the New York Scene That Transformed Rock” with a vivid description of the drizzly June night in 1975 when the original trio - singer/songwriter **David Byrne**, bassist **Tina Weymouth** and drummer **Chris Frantz** - made its debut at the seedy club CBGB in downtown Manhattan, opening for the Ramones before a handful of patrons. With their “unremarkable haircuts” and “non-descript casual clothes,” they offered a sharp contrast to the “baroque turn” that rock fashion had taken in the 1970s, Gould observes.

“The qualities that characterized this neophyte group in their first public performance centered on the awkward, disquieting intensity of their singer-guitarist, David Byrne, their sketchy, skeletal arrangements, and the quirky intelligence of their songs,” Gould writes. “Tall and thin, with a long neck and an anxious, wide-eyed stare, Byrne stood stiffly at the microphone, his upper body jerking and jiggling like a shadow puppet as he scratched out chords on his guitar.... Instead of doing his best to command the stage and the room, Byrne looked trapped by his surroundings, as if he were prepared, at any moment, to make a break for the door.”

Obituary

Renowned philanthropist

Leonard Lauder, beauty industry icon, dies at 92

NEW YORK, June 17, (AP): Leonard Lauder, a renowned philanthropist who expanded the family cosmetics business into a worldwide empire, has died at the age of 92. Estée Lauder Cos. announced the news in a release on Sunday and said he died on Saturday surrounded by family.

Lauder, the oldest son of Estee and Joseph H. Lauder, who founded the company in 1946, formally joined the New York business in 1958. Over more than six decades, Lauder played a key role in transforming the business from a handful of products sold under a single brand in US stores to a multi-brand global giant. He had held the title of chairman emeritus at the time of his death.

Estee Lauder’s products are sold in roughly 150 countries and territories under brand names including Clinique and Aveda, according to the company’s latest annual report.

The company generated sales of nearly \$16 billion in the fiscal year ended June 30, 2024, the filing said.

Estee Lauder went public in 1995, but members of Lauder family still have about 84% of the voting power of common stock, according to the latest annual filing.

Lauder served as president of The Estée Lauder Cos. from 1972 to 1995 and as CEO from 1982 through 1999. He was named chairman in 1995 and served in that role through June 2009.

Under his stewardship, Lauder created the company’s first research and development laboratory, brought in professional management at every level, and was the impetus behind The Estée Lauder Cos.’ international expansion, helping to spearhead the company’s sales and profits exponentially,



Lauder

according to the company.

Lauder led the launch of many brands including Aramis, Clinique, and Lab Series, among others. Until his death, he remained deeply involved in the company’s acquisition strategy, including the acquisitions of such brands as Aveda, Bobbi Brown, Jo Malone London and MAC, the company said.

During his years as chairman emeritus, Lauder was closely involved in the business and day-to-day operations and was a constant fixture at its global headquarters in New York and at its stores around the world until the time of his death, the company said.

“Throughout his life, my father worked tirelessly to build and transform the beauty industry, pioneering many of the innovations, trends, and best practices that are foundational to the industry today,” said William P. Lauder, son and chair of the board at The Estée Lauder Companies in a statement. “He was the most charitable man I have ever known, believing that art and education belonged to everyone, and championing the fight against diseases such as Alzheimer’s and breast cancer.”

Lauder was a longtime patron of the Metropolitan Museum of Art and, in 2013, pledged his 78-piece collection of Cubist art to the museum in the largest single philanthropic gift in the museum’s history. He later added five major works to that pledged gift, the company said.

In concert with his Cubist collection donation, he helped establish the Leonard A. Lauder Research Center for Modern Art at the Met to support a program of fellowships, focused exhibitions, and public lectures.

He also was the Whitney Museum of American Art’s chairman emeritus and a trustee from 1977 to 2011.

Lauder was married to Evelyn H. Lauder, who had been the senior corporate vice president at the cosmetic company and the founder of the Breast Cancer Research Foundation, from 1959 until she passed away in 2011.

Rose farmers cling to heritage

Syria’s Damask rose wilts under climate stress

AL-MARAH, Syria, June 17, (Xinhua): In the hillside town of Al-Marah, nestled in the Qalamoun mountains north of Damascus, the legendary Damascene rose is facing one of its most difficult seasons in recent memory.

A symbol of Syria’s cultural and botanical heritage, the Damask rose has bloomed for centuries in this rugged landscape. Once the village’s economic backbone and a source of global pride, the delicate flower now struggles to survive amid shifting climate patterns.

“This year has been one of the worst,” said Mohammad Jamal Abbas, a local farmer also known as Abu Qusai. “Rainfall was only about 20 millimeters, around 25 percent of the average. We used to get 125 or 150 millimeters. Add to that a wave of heat, then another of severe cold. All of it affected production.”

Speaking to Xinhua, Abbas explained that they began irrigating the bushes solely to preserve their survival, not for any specific production or other purposes. Their primary objective was to ensure that the bushes did not perish.

Syria is currently experiencing a severe drought, potentially the worst in 36 years. The drought has led to a significant drop in wheat production and widespread water scarcity. UN humanitarian office has



A farmer harvests Damascene rose petals in the town of Al-Marah, Syria, June 14. (Xinhua)

warned that the drought could push 60 percent of the population closer to hunger.

But Abbas, like many others in Al-Marah, refuses to abandon the rose that has shaped their identity. “This is our labor, our work through all these years. It is impossible to give up. We are here every day.”

The practices and craftsmanship associated with the Damask Rose were inscribed in 2019 on the UN-

ESCO List of Intangible Cultural Heritage.

The annual harvest starts in May. Families venture into the fields at dawn to handpick the roses, then gather in the afternoon to sort the buds for drying into tea and prepare the rest for distillation. Women come together to make rose syrup, jam, and pastries, singing traditional songs as they work.

Diaa al-Khatib, farmer and school principal, recounted to Xinhua how farming was the main business in their town before bad weather forced many farmers to change jobs.

“In the past, this was the main income for most of the village’s farmers. Now, due to drought, it’s become secondary. Very few still depend solely on the Damask rose. Production is down, profits are down, so people have turned to other work.”

The link to the Damascene rose, however, is deeper than economics. “We can’t let go of it. It’s an inheritance from our ancestors,” al-Khatib said. “There’s a spiritual connection. When you give something your effort, you grow attached.”

Over the past four to five years, Al-Marah has not seen snow, which the rose depends on for nourishment. Farmers now use supplementary irrigation to compensate, though not enough to transform the fields into fully irrigated land.



‘Sleep critical for blood sugar control’

Sleep loss rewires the brain for cravings and weight gain

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

By Joanna Fong-Isariyawongse  
University of Pittsburgh

You stayed up too late scrolling through your phone, answering emails or watching just one more episode. The next morning, you feel groggy and irritable. That sugary pastry or greasy breakfast sandwich suddenly looks more appealing than your usual yogurt and berries. By the afternoon, chips or candy from the break room call your name. This isn't just about willpower. Your brain, short on rest, is nudging you toward quick, high-calorie fixes.

There is a reason why this cycle repeats itself so predictably. Research shows that insufficient sleep disrupts hunger signals, weakens self-control, impairs glucose metabolism and increases your risk of weight gain. These changes can occur rapidly, even after a single night of poor sleep, and can become more harmful over time if left unaddressed.

I am a neurologist specializing in sleep science and its impact on health. Sleep deprivation affects millions. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Preven-

tion, more than one-third of US adults regularly get less than seven hours of sleep per night. Nearly three-quarters of adolescents fall short of the recommended 8-10 hours sleep during the school week.

While anyone can suffer from sleep loss, essential workers and first responders, including nurses, firefighters and emergency personnel, are especially vulnerable due to night shifts and rotating schedules. These patterns disrupt the body's internal clock and are linked to increased cravings, poor eating habits and elevated risks for obesity and metabolic disease. Fortunately, even a few nights of consistent, high-quality sleep can help rebalance key systems and start to reverse some of these effects.

Your body regulates hunger through a hormonal feedback loop involving two key hormones. Ghrelin, produced primarily in the stomach, signals that you are hungry, while leptin, which is produced in the fat cells, tells your brain that you are full. Even one night of restricted sleep increases the release of ghrelin and decreases leptin, which leads to greater hunger and reduced satisfaction after eating. This shift is driven by changes in how the body regulates hunger and stress. Your brain becomes less responsive to fullness signals, while at the same time ramping up stress hormones that can increase cravings and appetite.

These changes are not subtle. In controlled lab

studies, healthy adults reported increased hunger and stronger cravings for calorie-dense foods after sleeping only four to five hours. The effect worsens with ongoing sleep deficits, which can lead to a chronically elevated appetite.

Sleep loss changes how your brain evaluates food. Imaging studies show that after just one night of sleep deprivation, the prefrontal cortex, which is responsible for decision-making and impulse control, has reduced activity. At the same time, reward-related areas such as the amygdala and the nucleus accumbens, a part of the brain that drives motivation and reward-seeking, become more reactive to tempting food cues.

In simple terms, your brain becomes more tempted by junk food and less capable of resisting it. Participants in sleep deprivation studies not only rated high-calorie foods as more desirable but were also more likely to choose them, regardless of how hungry they actually felt.

Sleep is also critical for blood sugar control. When you're well rested, your body efficiently uses insulin to move sugar out of your bloodstream and into your cells for energy. But even one night of partial sleep can reduce insulin sensitivity by up to 25%, leaving more sugar circulating in your blood.

If your body can't process sugar effectively, it's more likely to convert it into fat. This contributes to

weight gain, especially around the abdomen. Over time, poor sleep is associated with higher risk for Type 2 diabetes and metabolic syndrome, a group of health issues such as high blood pressure, belly fat and high blood sugar that raise the risk for heart disease and diabetes.

On top of this, sleep loss raises cortisol, your body's main stress hormone. Elevated cortisol encourages fat storage, especially in the abdominal region, and can further disrupt appetite regulation.

In a culture that glorifies hustle and late nights, sleep is often treated as optional. But your body doesn't see it that way. Sleep is not downtime. It is active, essential repair. It is when your brain recalibrates hunger and reward signals, your hormones reset and your metabolism stabilizes.

Just one or two nights of quality sleep can begin to undo the damage from prior sleep loss and restore your body's natural balance.

So the next time you find yourself reaching for junk food after a short night, recognize that your biology is not failing you. It is reacting to stress and fatigue. The most effective way to restore balance isn't a crash diet or caffeine. It's sleep.

Sleep is not a luxury. It is your most powerful tool for appetite control, energy regulation and long-term health. (AP)



The US Food and Drug Administration campus in Silver Spring, Md., is photographed, Oct. 14, 2015. (AP)

Fatal liver injury reported

2nd patient death linked to gene therapy for DMD

WASHINGTON, June 17, (AP): Shares of Sarepta Therapeutics plunged Monday after the biotech drugmaker reported a second death in connection with its gene therapy for muscular dystrophy.

Sarepta reported the death over the weekend and provided additional details about its response, which includes pausing shipments of the therapy, Elevidys, for older patients who are no longer able to walk. The one-time treatment is approved for children with a genetic variant of Duchenne's muscular dystrophy, which causes weakness, loss of mobility and early death in males.

Elevidys is the first gene therapy approved in the US for the rare muscle-wasting condition, but it has faced scrutiny since its accelerated approval in 2023.

The second death, like an earlier one reported in March, occurred in a teenage boy who suffered a fatal case of acute liver injury, a known side effect of the therapy. Older patients receive a larger dose of the therapy.

Sarepta said it would pause a study in those patients and assemble an expert panel to recommend new safety protocols for taking the drug. Those changes are expected to include increased use of immune-system suppressing drugs, company executives said Monday. The liver injury associated with the therapy is thought to be connected to the immune system's response.

Sarepta said it was cooperating with the Food and Drug Administration, which would have to sign off on any changes to the product's use.

Elevidys received expedited approval despite concerns from some FDA scientists about its effectiveness in treating Duchenne's.

The FDA granted full approval last year and expanded the therapy's use to patients 4 years and older, regardless of whether they are still able to walk. Previously it was only available for younger patients who were still walking.

Shares of the Cambridge, Massachusetts-based company fell more than 42% to close at about \$21 in trading.

Wall Street analysts speculated that FDA officials, including new vaccine chief Dr. Vinay Prasad, might impose more restrictions on the drug or even block its use. Prasad has been highly critical of the therapy since its approval under the agency's previous leadership.

"Now with two deaths reported in this segment of the market, it seems increasingly more possible that the FDA could step in and remove the therapy from the market in non-ambulatory patients," said Leerink Partners analyst Joseph Schwartz, in a Sunday research note.

Elevidys uses a disabled virus to insert a replacement gene for producing dystrophin into patient cells. It costs \$3.2 million for a one-time infusion.

Malaria summit

Dengue deaths rise in Yemen

ADEN, Yemen, June 17, (Xinhua): The World Health Organization (WHO) on Monday ramped up a large-scale dengue fever control campaign in Yemen's southern Aden and Lahj provinces, where a surge in infections since the start of 2025 has added pressure to an already severe humanitarian crisis.

More than 3,900 dengue cases and 14 deaths have been reported in the two provinces as of April, the WHO said in a statement via its Yemen office on Sunday. Both areas are under the control of the internationally recognized government.

The campaign aims to reduce dengue-related illness and deaths while limiting transmission, the WHO said in a post on social media platform X.

Key measures include larval source management to eliminate mosquito breeding sites, community health education, and targeted fogging operations in affected areas.

The war, now in its second decade, has triggered what the United Nations calls the world's worst humanitarian crisis. Despite repeated mediation efforts, a lasting peace remains elusive.

**Malaria:** Countries and regions in the Asia-Pacific region called for urgent action and solidarity in the fight against malaria during the 9th Asia Pacific Leaders' Summit on Malaria Elimination, held in Bali, Indonesia, from Monday to Tuesday.

"Time is the most precious commodity we have. And in this time of extraordinary conflict, contraction, and chaos across the global health landscape, what we need most is cooperation and commitment," said Sarthak Das, chief executive officer of the Asia Pacific Leaders Malaria Alliance, on Tuesday.

The World Health Organization has recorded more than 260 million global malaria cases, with over 600,000 deaths, three-quarters of them children under the age of five.

A technical session with international experts was held on the first day, discussing the latest evidence, innovations, and malaria control and elimination strategies, while emphasizing the importance of solidarity across borders, sectors, and communities.

Peter Sands, executive director of The Global Fund, highlighted the progress made in tackling malaria, in line with growing global capabilities in technological and medical innovation.

Killer heat waves, droughts, floods surge

Planetary waves linked to wild summer weather have tripled since 1950: study

WASHINGTON, June 17, (AP): Climate change has tripled the frequency of atmospheric wave events linked to extreme summer weather in the last 75 years and that may explain why long-range computer forecasts keep underestimating the surge in killer heat waves, droughts and floods, a new study says.

In the 1950s, Earth averaged about one extreme weather-inducing planetary wave event a summer, but now it is getting about three per summer, according to a study in Monday's Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences. Planetary waves are connected to 2021's deadly and unprecedented Pacific Northwest heat wave, the 2010 Russian heatwave and Pakistan flooding and the 2003 killer European heatwave, the study said.

"If you're trying to visualize the planetary waves in the northern hemisphere, the easiest way to visualize them is on the weather map to look at the waviness in the jet stream as depicted on the weather map," said study co-author Michael Mann, a University of Pennsylvania climate scientist.

Planetary waves flow across Earth all the time, but sometimes they get amplified, becoming stronger, and the jet stream gets wavier with bigger hills and valleys, Mann said. It's called quasi-resonant amplification or QRA.

This essentially means the wave gets stuck for weeks on end, locked in place. As a result, some places get seemingly endless rain while others endure oppressive heat with no relief.

"A classic pattern would be like a



Survivors waded through water in their village Khairpur Nathan Shah, Pakistan, on Nov. 2, 2010, surrounded by floodwaters. (AP)

high pressure out west (in the United States) and a low pressure back East and in summer 2018, that's exactly what we had," Mann said. "We had that configuration locked in place for like a month. So they (in the West) got the heat, the drought and the wildfires. We (in the East) got the excessive rainfall."

"It's deep and it's persistent," Mann said. "You accumulate the rain for days on end or the ground is getting baked for days on end."

The study finds this is happening more often because of human-caused climate change, mostly from the burning of fossil fuels, specifically because

the Arctic warms three to four times faster than the rest of the world. That means the temperature difference between the tropics and the Arctic is now much smaller than it used to be and that weakens the jet streams and the waves, making them more likely to get locked in place, Mann said.

"This study shines a light on yet another way human activities are disrupting the climate system that will come back to bite us all with more unprecedented and destructive summer weather events," said Jennifer Francis, a climate scientist at the Woodwell Climate Research Center who wasn't involved in the research.

Climate change may worsen sleep apnea

CANBERRA, June 17, (Xinhua): Rising global temperatures could double the worldwide impact of obstructive sleep apnea (OSA) by the end of the century, Australian sleep experts have revealed.

Researchers warn that unchecked climate change will exacerbate this sleep disorder, escalating health risks and economic costs across nations, according to a release from Flinders University in South Australia on Monday.

Projections indicate that if current climate trends continue, the overall impact of OSA on society could double in most countries within the next 75 years, according to the research, the first of its kind.

The study, published in Nature Communications, discovered that higher ambient temperatures are linked to a 45 percent greater likelihood of experiencing OSA on any given night.

"Overall, we were surprised by the magnitude of the association between ambient temperature and OSA severity," said the study's lead author, Bastien Lechat from Flinders Health and Medical Research Institute.

OSA is a widespread disorder affecting nearly one billion people globally, causing repeated breathing interruptions during sleep and raising the risk of serious health issues, including dementia, cardiovascular disease, and premature death.

In Australia, the annual economic impact of poor sleep, including OSA, is estimated at 66 billion Australian dollars (43 billion US dollars), the study showed.

The study examined sleep data from more than 116,000 participants worldwide, each tracked for roughly 500 nights using an under-mattress sensor, and linked this information with 24-hour temperature data from climate models to assess how rising temperatures affect sleep apnea rates.

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# Marathon stand puts Bangladesh in control

Shanto, Mushfiquir hit unbeaten 247 against Sri Lanka

GALLE, Sri Lanka, June 17, (AP): Najmul Hossain Shanto and Mushfiquir Rahim stitched together an unbroken 247-run stand to put Bangladesh in a commanding position at 293-3 at the end of the first day of the first test against Sri Lanka.

Shanto and Mushfiquir came together when Bangladesh were tottering at 45-3 and combined for the highest fourth-wicket partnership for Bangladesh in tests against Sri Lanka, eclipsing the 180-run alliance between Litton Das and Mominul Haque in 2018.

It ruined a strong start for Sri Lanka, as offspinner Tharindu Ratnayake took two early wickets in his test debut for the hosts.

Captain Shanto led from the front, dispatching anything remotely loose as he brought up his seventh test century and remained unbeaten on 136. It was innings laced with 14 crisply timed boundaries and a six, showing the full face of the blade more often than not.

At the other end, the veteran Mushfiquir finally found his form after going 13 straight innings without a fifty. He had a narrow escape when a miscued pull on 25 was grassed at midwicket



Bangladesh's Mushfiquir Rahim plays a shot during the first day of the first cricket test match between Sri Lanka and Bangladesh in Galle, Sri Lanka. (AP)

and the Sri Lankans paid dearly. By stumps, Mushfiquir was unbeaten on 105, having carved out

his 12th test ton with just five boundaries. "I was coming into this game

after a lean patch. When you have a long career like me that can happen," Mushfiquir said.

"Once I had got a start I tried to cash in and was very happy to end up with a hundred."

The toss had gone Bangladesh's way and although the top order failed, the fourth-wicket pair batted through both the post-lunch and post-tea sessions without offering a sniff.

Sri Lanka, desperate to break the partnership, took the second new ball the moment it was due. But even with the shine and seam restored, their attack was blunted by the resolve of the two seasoned batters.

Sri Lanka handed out two test caps in the first match of the new World Test Championship cycle - 31-year-old opener Lahiru Udara and Ratnayake, the ambidextrous spinner.

"Everyone knew I will be soon turning 30 and that's not the kind of age the selectors look to hand someone his test debut," Ratnayake said. "Was very happy to get two wickets in the first session but after lunch it was tough work as the wicket had become flat and it was easy for batting."

The match also marks the swansong of former Sri Lanka skipper Angelo Mathews, who is playing his 119th and final test.

The match at Galle is the first in the 2025-2027 cycle of the World Test Championship, starting just days after South Africa won the title for the first time with a victory over defending champion Australia at Lord's on the weekend.

## Formula 1 extends Canadian GP contract

# Norris says 'F1' movie mirrors his rivalry with Piastri after Canadian GPrix collision

NEW YORK, June 17, (AP): Lando Norris says the new Formula 1 movie contains some reminders of his own rivalry with McLaren teammate Oscar Piastri after their collision at the Canadian Grand Prix.

Speaking Monday at the Times Square premiere of "F1," starring Brad Pitt, Norris said his rivalry with Piastri remains friendly, even if they sometimes run into "roadblocks and chicanes."

"You always want to be the top dog and you always want to be on top - of everyone, not just your teammate. You want to be on top of the grid, right?" Norris said. "The interesting part, and I think the thing that the F1 movie gets into a little bit more, is how teammates have to be teammates but also how they want to beat one another, and how do you get that balance right? Because if it's too much one way, it's not good. If it's too much the other way, it's not good. It's a difficult balance, but that's part of the sport."

Norris apologized immediately for colliding with Piastri in Sunday's race as he tried to overtake. The contact caused Norris to hit the wall, ending his race. Piastri was able to finish fourth and extend his standings lead over Norris to 22 points ahead of next week's



McLaren driver Oscar Piastri, front of Australia, is pursued by teammate Lando Norris, of the United Kingdom, during the F1 Canadian Grand Prix auto race in Montreal. (AP)

Austrian Grand Prix.

"We've always known we want to beat each other, but I think one thing we've done very well is work together as a team," Norris said. "Of course there's always going to be some little roadblocks and chicanes and things to navigate through, but in the end of the day, I think, as long as we pull through the other day together, that's the most important."

George Russell's victory in Canada on Sunday made him the only driver other than Norris, Piastri and defending champion Max Ver-

stappen to get a win this season.

He's hoping it's the springboard to more success for him and the Mercedes team.

"The season's going well, it could always be better. Of course the last race was great, winning in Canada, but we're striving for more. We want to be in that championship fight," Russell said, adding that now he's looking for "more of the same."

"I think we're understanding the car more and more, I'm understanding myself further. We want to get more wins on the board."

The Canadian Grand Prix will remain on the Formula 1 schedule through 2035 after a four-year extension was announced.

The circuit in Montreal is a fan favorite with a reputation for unpredictable racing, which was further bolstered by the collision in Sunday's race between McLaren teammates Lando Norris and Oscar Piastri.

It's also one of the older tracks on F1's schedule, having first hosted a Grand Prix in 1978, and F1 said Tuesday that investment by the promoter "will continue and be vital in continuing to enhance the event in the years ahead."

The Circuit Gilles Villeneuve, named after a Canadian F1 great who died in a 1982 crash, was already due to stay on the schedule through 2031. Its most recent extension was by two years in 2021 to make up for two editions of the race which were canceled during the COVID-19 pandemic.

"As Formula 1 celebrates its 75th anniversary, it is fitting that we have announced an extension with the Canadian Grand Prix, a race that has such incredible history in our sport and is named after a true legend in Gilles Villeneuve," F1 president and chief executive Stefano Domenicali said in a statement.

## UEFA cites ownership rules

# US-owned Irish club barred from Conference League

LAUSANNE, Switzerland, June 17, (AP): Irish Cup winner Drogheda lost its appeal on Monday against being removed from the Conference League next season for breaking UEFA rules on club ownership.

The Court of Arbitration for Sport said its judges gave an urgent decision dismissing Drogheda's appeal that was heard on Monday. On Tuesday, UEFA will start making the draws for qualifying rounds in the third-tier European competition.

Drogheda and Silkeborg of Denmark qualified for the Conference League second preliminary round but are owned by the Trivela Group from the United States.

UEFA rules to protect sporting integrity do not allow teams from a multi-club network to enter the same competition if one owner has "decisive influence" over management of both.

CAS said the three judges agreed UEFA committed key information to Drogheda and that by a 2-1 majority "rejected (the club's) sub-

missions on alleged unequal treatment by UEFA."

Other cases involving Manchester City, Manchester United, AC Milan, Brighton and Aston Villa in the past two years were resolved by one of the ownership stakes being placed into a blind trust for the season. A UEFA expert panel also imposed transfer bans and limited cooperation between clubs in question.

The UEFA panel is also assessing if Crystal Palace and Lyon can both enter the next Europa League.

Lyon's American owner John Textor has a 43% stake in Palace though with limited decision-making power.

In the latest case, Silkeborg took priority with UEFA to get the Conference League place because it finished higher in the Danish league this season than Drogheda did in the Irish league last year.

Drogheda loses prize money of 350,000 euros (\$406,000) that UEFA pays for playing in the Conference League second qualifying round.

## Al-Nassr terminates CEO contract

RIYADH, June 17: Saudi Club Al-Nassr has issued a sharply worded statement announcing the immediate termination of CEO Majed Al-Jamaan's contract, citing confirmed contractual violations during his tenure.

In a post on its official Twitter account, the club revealed that the decision was made unanimously after internal and external reports flagged questionable practices. Al-Jamaan's powers were frozen as of May 8, pending investigation, and he was formally notified of the suspension terms, including a confidentiality agreement he signed.

However, the situation escalated when Al-Jamaan reportedly breached the agreement by publishing a tweet during the investigation process, which the club claims harmed its reputation on social media.

Shortly after the club's announcement, Al-Jamaan responded via Twitter, describing the decision as "unprofessional, inappropriate, and unacceptable." He added that legal



Majed Al-Jamaan

action will follow, stating, "Therefore, a litigation process will begin between me and the management that runs our club, and whoever has a right will get it."

The incident marks a rare public fallout between a top executive and a leading Saudi football club, raising questions about internal governance and the growing role of social media in sports administration.

## 'Completely unprofessional'

# Aryna apologizes to Gauff for comments after French Open

BERLIN, June 17, (AP): Aryna Sabalenka says she has written to Coco Gauff to apologize for the "unprofessional" comments she made following her loss to her American rival in the final of the French Open.

Speaking to Eurosport Germany, the top-ranked Sabalenka said her remarks after her 6-7 (5), 6-2, 6-4 loss to Gauff at Roland-Garros this month were a mistake. In her post-match press conference in Paris, Sabalenka had suggested that the result was more due to her own errors than to Gauff's performance.

"That was just completely unprofessional of me," Sabalenka said. "I let my emotions get the better of me. I absolutely regret what I said back then. You know, we all make mistakes. I'm just a human being who's still learning in life. I think we all have those days when we lose control. But what I also want to say is that I wrote to Coco afterward - not immediately, but recently."

Sabalenka hit 37 winners but finished the final with 70 unforced er-

rors - compared to Gauff's 30.

She said she wrote to Gauff to apologize and "make sure she knew she absolutely deserved to win the tournament and that I respect her."

"I never intended to attack her,"

Sabalenka added. "I was super emotional and not very smart at that press conference. I'm not necessarily grateful for what I did. It took me a while to go back and think about it, to approach it with open eyes, and to understand. I realized a lot about myself. Why did I lose so many finals?"

Sabalenka, a three-time major champion, also lost to Gauff in the 2023 U.S. Open final, where she also won the first set.

"I kept getting so emotional," Sabalenka added. "So I learned a lot. Above all, one thing: I'm the one who always treats my opponents with great respect, whether I win or lose. Without that respect, I wouldn't be where I am today. So it was a tough but very valuable lesson for me."



In this file photo, Coco Gauff of the U.S. holds the trophy while being interviewed after winning the final match of the French Tennis Open against Aryna Sabalenka of Belarus at the Roland-Garros stadium in Paris. (AP)

## Best of the Rest

**Brighton signs Coppola:** Premier League club Brighton and Hove Albion has signed Italian international central defender Diego Coppola from Hellas Verona for an undisclosed fee.

Coppola has agreed a five-year contract with 'the Seagulls' and will help cover for the loss of Spain international Dean Huijsen, who signed for Madrid earlier in the summer for 50 million pounds (68 million U.S. dollars).

Coppola, who is currently with the Italian U-21 side at the European Championships in Slovakia, made his debut for Hellas Verona in 2021 and made 81 first team appearances for the club.

"Diego is an exciting addition for the club. Although he is still young, he is tall, strong and mobile, and he will give us a real physical pres-

ence," commented Brighton head coach Fabian Hurzeler on the club website.

Hurzeler highlighted the "impressive progress" the defender has made, adding he "deserved his call-up to the Italian national team." Coppola is Brighton's second signing of the summer, with striker Charalampos Kostoulas also arriving from Greek outfit Olympiakos. (Xinhua)



**Valles to Betis, Moleiro to Villarreal:** La Liga outfit Real Betis has announced the signing of goalkeeper Alvaro Valles from Las Palmas with a five-year contract.

The 27-year-old, who began his career in the Betis youth system, returns on a free transfer after spending last season in the stands after rejecting a new contract with the recently relegated outfit, for whom he made 132 league appear-

ances.

He has agreed a deal until the end of June 2030 and will strengthen Betis' squad as the club prepares to play in the Europa League next season after finishing sixth in La Liga and reaching the Conference League final last season.

Ligue 1 side Olympique de Marseille was also reported to be interested in the goalkeeper, who rejected a better offer to return to Betis.

Valles isn't the only player to leave Las Palmas, with winger Alberto Moleiro confirmed as a new signing for Villarreal.

Moleiro has signed until June 2030 with the team that ended last season fifth in La Liga, and his arrival at the club from the east coast of Spain could open the door for Villarreal to sell Spain international Alex Baena to Atletico Madrid this summer, with Atletico willing to pay around 50 million euros for the forward. (Xinhua)



CWC offers Man City chance to redeem poor season

# Plenty of interest as Real prepares for Club World Cup debut

MIAMI, July 17, (Xinhua): Expectations are high ahead of Real Madrid’s debut at the 2025 FIFA Club World Cup, as it faces Al Hilal at Hard Rock Stadium in Miami on Wednesday. The match marks Xabi Alonso’s first official game as Real Madrid head coach. Although the former Madrid midfielder and ex-Bayer Leverkusen boss has had just over a week with the squad, all eyes will be on what early changes he has implemented.

Under former coach Carlo Ancelotti, Real Madrid covered among the least distance on the pitch and rarely applied a high press, instead relying on the pace of Kylian Mbappe, Vinicius Jr. and Rodrygo to hit on the break.

Alonso favored a high-pressing style at Leverkusen, with his players disrupting opponents’ buildup from the back. Whether he can instill that mentality in Madrid after only a few sessions, particularly in Miami’s heat, remains to be seen.

At Leverkusen, Alonso frequently deployed a back three with attacking full-backs. It is unclear if he will adopt a similar system with Madrid.

The arrival of Trent Alexander-Arnold from Liverpool supports the use of wing-backs, and the England international appears poised to make his Real Madrid debut, along with Dean Huijsen, who signed from Bournemouth.

Huijsen impressed during the recent international break. His height and composure on the ball offer Madrid added flexibility, and it’s easy to envision Mbappe

and Vinicius exploiting gaps behind Al Hilal’s defense as Huijsen delivers long passes from deep.

Vinicius remains under scrutiny following a disappointing domestic campaign, while Alonso must also finalize his central midfield pairing, likely Fede Valverde and possibly Dani Ceballos.

Al Hilal’s lineup features several players familiar to Spanish fans, including former Barcelona and Manchester City defender Joao Cancelo, forward Malcom, and former Atletico Madrid left-back Renan Lodi.

With a sell-out crowd expected, the match promises to provide a strong benchmark of the Saudi League’s level against one of Europe’s top clubs.

A new-look Manchester City makes its Club World Cup debut against Moroccan side Wydad AC at the Lincoln Field Stadium in Philadelphia on Wednesday night. The Club World Cup has taken on an extra importance after Pep Guardiola’s side finished last season a disappointing third in the Premier League, went out of the Champions League early, and ended the campaign with a defeat to Crystal Palace in the FA Cup final.

As well as offering the chance of some redeeming silverware and an important payday, the Club World Cup gives Guardiola the chance to bed in new players ahead of next season in the Premier League.

City has acted quickly to start correcting last season’s failings with four signings, all of whom are eligible to play in the tournament. Left back Rayan Ait Nouri, midfielder Tijani Reijnders and forward Rayan Cherki should give more spark to the team, while goalkeeper Marcus Bettinelli is an experienced back-up on the bench.

As well as hoping to see his new arrivals adapt to his style of play, with Ait Nouri hopefully balancing a side that seemed to spend much of last season without a specialized left-back, Guardiola will also be hoping that Rodri Hernandez can use the tournament to step up his recovery.

Rodri missed nearly all of last season with a cruciate knee ligament injury, playing a handful of minutes as the campaign drew to a close and with Mateo Kovacic missing the tournament through injury, his return now would be a huge boost to the City midfield - and perhaps show what they have been missing.

Meanwhile, players such as Nico Gonzalez and Abdoukodie Khusanov, who arrived in January, also need to step up.

Kevin de Bruyne is no longer with City after joining Napoli on a free transfer, while Jack Grealish has been left out of the squad and will presumably be on his way this summer, along with Kyle Walker, with the England right back linked to Everton in the last few hours.

# Thunder on verge of NBA title



Oklahoma City Thunder forward Jalen Williams (8) shoots past Indiana Pacers center Tony Bradley (13) during the second half of Game 5 of the NBA Finals basketball series in Oklahoma City. (AP)

Williams scores 40 points in win over Pacers

**OKLAHOMA CITY, June 17, (AP): Game 5 was starting to look like Game 1 all over again. Oklahoma City, at home, takes a huge lead. Indiana comes roaring back in the fourth quarter.**

Indiana won that one. This time, the Thunder crafted a different ending - and a 3-2 lead in the NBA Finals was their reward.

Jalen Williams scored a career playoff-high 40 points, MVP Shai Gilgeous-Alexander added 31 and the Thunder moved one win from a title by beating the Pacers 120-109 on Monday night.

“We’re learning,” said Williams, whose previous playoff best was 34.

It was the 10th - and by far, the biggest - time the Thunder stars combined for more than 70 points in a game. Williams was 14 of 24 from the field, and Gilgeous-Alexander added 10 assists.

“It wasn’t a perfect game at all and there’s a lot of room for growth,” Thunder coach Mark



Oklahoma City Thunder guard Shai Gilgeous-Alexander does up to score against the Indiana Pacers during the second half of Game 5 of the NBA Finals basketball series in Oklahoma City. (AP)

Daigneault said. “But our improvement from Game 4 to Game 5 was critical.”

Pascal Siakam had 28 points for Indiana, which will host Game 6 on Thursday night. TJ McConnell added 18 for the Pacers, who whittled an 18-point deficit down to two in the fourth - then watched the Thunder pull away again, and for good.

“It kind of went away from us,” Siakam said. “But the fight was there.”

It was, but now everything favors the Thunder.

Teams that win Game 5 of an NBA Finals that was tied at 2-2 have gone on to win the series 23 times in 31 previous opportunities, or 74%. And teams with a 3-2 lead in the finals have won 40 times in 49 previous opportunities, or 82%.

But Game 5 was not easy. Far from it.

Down by 18 late in the second quarter, the Pacers - the comeback kings of these playoffs, with as many wins in this postseason from 15 points down or more (five) than the rest of the

league has combined, including in Game 1 of this series - did what they do, chipping away. And they did it with Tyrese Haliburton reduced to basically playing decoy on offense because of a leg issue that he aggravated in the first quarter.

“He’s not 100%,” Pacers coach Rick Carlisle said. “It’s pretty clear.”

Led by McConnell, who scored 13 points in just under seven minutes of the third, the Pacers got within five late in that quarter.

Then, Siakam went to work - a pair of free throws with 9:19 left got Indiana within four, then a 3-pointer about a minute later made it 95-93. In the play-by-play era of the NBA, starting with the 1997 playoffs, teams with leads of 15 points or more in the finals were 80-9.

Make that 81-9 now, and the Thunder are one win away from giving Oklahoma City its first NBA title.

“That was honestly the same exact game as Game 1,” Williams said. “Learning through these finals, that’s what makes a team good.”

One more win, and his team will be certified as great.

‘Right path, despite all the risks’

## Roma has 2 coaches in charge with Ranieri advising Gasperini

ROME, June 17, (AP): Claudio Ranieri turned down Italy to stay at Roma. Gian Piero Gasperini chose the capital club over Juventus and left Atalanta after transforming the Bergamo team into a top contender in Italy and Europe.

The two white-haired coaches sat side by side on the stage during Gasperini’s presentation as Roma’s new coach on Tuesday.

The 73-year-old Ranieri is moving into an advisory role after coaching Roma out of a crisis. The 67-year-old Gasperini is looking to crown his career by making an impact in one of Italy’s biggest markets for the first time.

Gasperini acknowledged that he was approached by Juventus - his hometown club and the team that he spent his youth career with as a player.

“Yes. But I had a feeling that this was the right path, despite all the risks I keep being reminded about,” Gasperini said, alluding to the pressures of coaching a perennially underperforming club in the country’s biggest city. “Considering my style of soccer, I feel I can make an impact. It’s an ideal situation. It’s what I’m looking for right now. I strongly believe that I made the right choice.” The only other time Gasperini coached a big Italian club came in 2011 when he lasted just five winless matches at Inter Milan.

But Ranieri said that Gasperini, who signed a three-year contract, could turn to him for help whenever trouble arises.

“My relationship will be like that of a friend,” Ranieri said. “If he needs something, I will try to resolve it. That’s my job now.” Gasperini is Roma’s fourth coach in the 1½ years since Jose Mourinho was fired, following Daniele De Rossi, Ivan Juric and Ranieri.

Ranieri was hired in November when Roma was struggling in 12th place. He guided the team to a fifth-place finish as the Giallorossi lost just once during the second half of the season.

Then when Italy coach Luciano Spalletti was fired less than 10 days ago amid the prospect that the four-time champion could fail to qualify for the World Cup for a third straight time, the Italian soccer federation asked Ranieri to take over.



In this file photo, Atalanta’s head coach Gian Piero Gasperini celebrates with Europa League trophy at the end of the Europa League final soccer match between Atalanta and Bayer Leverkusen at the Aviva Stadium in Dublin, Ireland. (AP)

## Best of the Rest

**Siegrist will miss time with knee injury:** Dallas Wings forward Maddy Siegrist is recovering from a right knee injury that won’t require surgery but will keep her out of the lineup for some time.

Siegrist suffered the injury in Wednesday’s loss at Phoenix. The Wings said Monday that the injury won’t require surgery and that the third-year player is expected to make a full recovery and return to the lineup “later this season.”

The Wings said Siegrist was diagnosed with an anterolateral tibial plateau fracture. WebMD describes the tibial plateau as the bone more commonly known as the shin bone, and being made up of cartilage.

Dallas drafted Siegrist third overall out of Villanova in 2023, and she has averaged 9.4 points and 5.2 rebounds a game in 11 games this year.

The Wings last month exercised her fourth-year rookie contract option for next season.

She won the Athletes Unlimited individual championship in March, outscoring Odyssey Sims in the four-week event in Nashville. (AP)

## Kuwait youth team starts intensive training for Arab Volleyball Championship in Amman

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

KUWAIT CITY, June 17: The Kuwait youth volleyball team officially kicked off its training the day before yesterday in preparation for the 17th Arab Volleyball Championship for players born in 2007, scheduled to take place in Amman, Jordan, from August 14 to 26. The training sessions are being held at the Federation Hall within the Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Sports Complex.

Leading the team is national coach Mohammed Abdulrazzaq, supported by assistant coach Mishaal Al-Sabti and team administrator Abdullah Al-Rayes. The technical staff has initially selected 41 players across various clubs, including:

Ahmed Jassim, Bader Bouarki, Shaheen Abdul Latif, Ali Al-Qattan, Mohammed Al-Dhahabi, Mohammed Al-Qattan, Mohammed Ibrahim, Ahmed



Mohammed Abdulrazzaq

Al-Sarheed, Mohammed Al-Huwaidi, Nasser Al-Sanea (Kuwait), Mahdi Ismail, Waleed Al-Shammari, Rashid Al-Naimi, Saad Al-Failakawi, Saud Al-Duwaisan (Al-Qadisiyah), Rashid Al-Arouj, Saqr Al-Sharhan, Abdul Latif Khaled Al-Bahouh, Fahad Ghaith, Mishari Al-Ansari, Mishali Al-Kandari, Bandar Al-Ahmad, Abdul Rahman Al-Saif, Mohammed Al-Dokhi (Kazma), Abdullah Al-Ali, Mishari Al-Mutawwatah, Yousef Al-Khudair,

Salem Khadada, Salman Al-Mutairi, Abdulaziz Al-Ubaid, Ali Dashti, Mahdi Safar (Al-Yarmouk), Khaled Hijres, Mishari Al-Hamdan (Burgan), Fares Al-Enezi, Mohammed Al-Zaabi (Al-Sahel), Ahmed Dashti, Salman Kanaan, Mohammed Dashti, Abdulrahman Walid (Al-Arabi), and Salem Al-Shammari (Al-Jahra). Coach Abdulrazzaq confirmed that an intensive two-phase training program has been developed. The first phase consists of domestic training lasting about six weeks, followed by an external training camp, with its location to be announced soon.

He added that the inclusion of a wide age range aims to build a new generation of skilled athletes for the national team and ensure strong representation in the upcoming Arab Championship.

The list of selected players includes representatives from Kuwait Club, Al-Qadsiya, Kazma, Al-Yarmouk, Burgan, Al-Sahel, Al-Arabi, and Al-Jahra.

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Benfica's Florentino Luis, right, and Boca Juniors' Carlos Palacios go for a header during the Club World Cup Group C soccer match between Boca Juniors and Benfica in Miami Gardens, Fla. (AP)

# Sports

## Suroor wins gold for Kuwait at Tunis Grand Prix

Kuwaiti breaks own Asian record

**TUNIS, June 17, (KUNA):** Kuwaiti Paralympic champion Faisal Suroor secured the gold medal in the discus throw on the opening day of the Tunis Grand Prix Athletics Championships, which concluded today.

Nasser Al-Ajmi, head of the Kuwaiti delegation and chairman of the Paralympic Athletics Committee, praised Suroor's outstanding performance, attributing the achievement to the hard work of both the athlete and the technical team, led by coach Ahmed Al-Harbi.

Al-Ajmi also revealed that Suroor broke the Asian record in the discus throw – surpassing the previous mark, which he had set himself – underscoring the athlete's continued excellence and dominance in the event.

"This victory is the result of dedication and determination. Faisal and his fellow athletes are com-

mitted to making Kuwait proud and raising the national flag high at international competitions," Al-Ajmi said.

He affirmed that the Paralympic athletics team entered the championship fully prepared, with all players in excellent technical and physical condition after undergoing rigorous training in recent weeks. Al-Ajmi expressed full confidence in the team's ability to represent Kuwait honorably.

The Kuwaiti team is competing in the championship with a strong lineup of nine athletes: Faisal Suroor, Dhari Butti, Abdullah Al-Saif, Abdullah Al-Enezi, Nasser Faraj, Khaled Al-Rashidi, Abdullah Al-Saleh, Mohammed Al-Azmi, and Abdullah Al-Adheena.

This year's edition of the Tunis Grand Prix set a new participation record, bringing together 500 male and female athletes competing in events such as the shot put, discus throw, javelin, club throw, high jump, sprints, and various middle- and long-distance races.



Gold medalist Faisal Suroor poses with other winners.

## Kuwait handball faces administrative challenges despite its recent success

KUWAIT CITY, June 17: Despite the impressive achievements of the Kuwait Handball Federation in recent years, a series of administrative challenges now threatens to stall its momentum. Under the leadership of its current board and committees, the Federation had successfully restored Kuwait's handball teams to the podium at Arab and Asian levels – reviving the "Blues" and delighting fans across the country.

However, the Federation is currently grappling with a governance issue, as recent attempts to convene a Board of Directors meeting have failed due to the absence of both the President and Vice President. This has created a ripple effect, delaying crucial decisions such as approving financial dues for the committees that organized the 10th Arab Handball Championship, which concluded in Kuwait on May 11. According to the Federation's bylaws, a meeting can only proceed with the presence of either the President or Vice



A file photo of players fighting for the ball.

President.

The delay is also affecting preparations for the upcoming 2025–2026 season. Without finalized competition regulations and schedules, clubs are unable to structure their training plans or plan for the season ahead.

Stakeholders – including clubs and committee members – are urgently awaiting a resolution to ensure that dues are paid and that the framework for the new season is in place.

Meanwhile, attention turns to the court as the 57th edition of the Handball Federation Cup kicks off tomorrow for the 2024–2025 season. Group A features three opening matches: Al-Sahel vs Al-Qurain, Al-Yarmouk vs Al-Tadamon, and Al-Nasr vs Al-Salmiya. All matches will be held at the Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Sports Complex Hall, with the tournament scheduled to run until June 28.

Historically, Kuwait Club leads the Cup's honor roll with 14 titles, including an impressive run of 11 consecutive wins. Al-Arabi follows with 10 titles, then Kazma and Al-Salmiya with 8 each, Al-Qadisiya with 7, Khaitan with 4, Al-Fahahel with 3, and Al-Sulaybikhat with 2.

## Jovovic renews with Kuwait Club after historic treble

Clubs begin early preparations for season

By Hassan Mosa

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 17: Clubs across the country have wasted no time in beginning preparations for the new soccer season, aiming for a stronger start and improved results compared to the previous campaign.

Kuwait Club has confirmed the renewal of Montenegrin coach Nebojsa Jovovic's contract, along with his technical staff. The decision, endorsed by the club's board, came after a stellar season where Jovovic guided the team to a domestic treble – clinching the Super Cup, Zain Premier League, and Crown Prince Cup – and reached the final of the Amir's Cup against Al-Arabi. The final was scheduled for the day before yesterday but has been postponed due to regional circumstances.

The new contract was signed in the presence of Club Chairman Khaled Al-Ghanim and Adel Aqla.

Al-Arabi is actively reviewing coaching candidates to succeed Nasser Al-Shatti, who is close to joining Al-Salmiya as a replacement for Croatian coach Ante Misa. Though Misa is contracted through next season, Al-Salmiya is keen to part ways with him after failing to secure any titles under his leadership.

Among the frontrunners for the Al-Arabi post is Bosnian coach Rosmir Sefko, who briefly coached Kazma earlier this year and had a previous stint with the Greens.

On the player front, Al-Arabi has decided not to renew the contracts of Moroccan Hamza Khaba, Bahraini Kamil Lassoued, and Algerian Sofiane Bouchar. Nigerian forward



Nebojsa with Khaled Al-Ghanem, Adel Aqla and Ali Marzouq Al-Ghanem.

Emmanuel Iwala will stay, while the future of compatriot Christopher John remains undecided.

Al-Salmiya has opted to keep Tunisian striker Imad Louati and Brazilian midfielder Alex Lima for the upcoming season. The club reached a settlement with Libyan winger Al-Sanousi Al-Hadi, whose contract runs until the end of next season, and decided not to renew the contracts of Gambian Sang Pierre and Syrian defender Amr Midani.

Al-Qadisiya renewed contracts with Nigerian forward Daniel Gibola and Moroccan midfielder Mehdi Berrahma for a second season. Both will join Libyan winger Mohamed Soula, who remains under contract.

## Benfica holds Boca at Club World Cup

## Chelsea, Flamengo secure comfortable wins



Chelsea's Cole Palmer, right, kicks a ball challenged by Los Angeles FC's Olivier Giroud during the Club World Cup Group D soccer match between Chelsea and Los Angeles FC in Atlanta. (AP)

NEW YORK, June 17, (Xinhua): Benfica left it late to hold Boca Juniors while Chelsea and Flamengo secured comfortable wins at the FIFA Club World Cup.

Nicolas Otamendi scored an 84th-minute equalizer as Benfica recovered from two goals down to earn a 2-2 draw with Boca Juniors in a tense encounter at Hard Rock Stadium in Miami Gardens.

Miguel Merentiel gave the Argentine side the lead by angling a first-time effort into the far corner after Lautaro Blanco's fine run and cross from the left flank.

Rodrigo Battaglia made it 2-0, latching onto Ayrton Costa's nodded pass from a corner with a low header that beat goalkeeper Anatoliy Trubin at his near post.

Angel Di Maria pulled a goal back from the penalty spot after a soft foul from Carlos Palacios on Otamendi.

The Portuguese side was reduced to 10 men in the 72nd minute when Andrea Belotti was shown a straight red card for catching Costa with a boot to the head.

Despite the numerical disadvantage, Benfica pushed for an equalizer and the Lisbon-based club was rewarded as Otamendi met Orkun Kokcu's corner with a thumping header.

Boca also finished with 10 men after Jorge Figa was dismissed for a studs-up challenge on Florentino Luis two minutes from time.

"It's a strange feeling, to be honest," Boca captain Merentiel said afterwards. "It leaves a bit of a bitter taste, and now it's about moving forward. Now, we'll focus on believing in ourselves, in our own strengths, and we'll come out in the next match to give our best." Benfica manager Bruno Lage was similarly rueful, insisting his team deserved to win.

"We started the game well, we were the better team but we conceded two goals and it's difficult to accept," Lage said. "Our first goal was important, then we made more runs into the box and we could have won the game." In Atlanta, Pedro Neto and Enzo Fernandez scored either side of halftime as Chelsea registered a 2-0 victory over Los Angeles FC.

Neto gave the Premier League side the lead in the 34th minute, running onto Nicolas Jackson's through ball and skipping around his marker before firing low past Hugo Lloris at the near post.

Enzo Fernandez doubled the advantage, showing the touch of a center-forward as he deftly controlled Liam Delap's cross and prodded home from point-blank range.

"What's important is the behavior and the attitude of the players, and once again they showed how professional they are," Chelsea manager Enzo Maresca told a post-match news conference. "Our desire to win was evident from the beginning and so was our willingness to work hard to not concede a goal." In Philadelphia, Luiz Araujo scored one goal and set up another as Brazil's Flamengo cruised to a 2-0 victory over Tunisian club Esperance.

Uruguayan midfielder Giorgian de Arrascaeta opened the scoring when his first-time shot after Araujo's cross left goalkeeper Ben Said with no chance.

## Sousa set to lead Kuwait national team

By Khaled Al-Enezi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 17: Portuguese coach Helio Sousa has reached an agreement with the Kuwait Football Association on most terms of a one-year contract to take charge of the national team.

Sousa's appointment comes in the wake of Argentine coach Juan Antonio Pizzi's disappointing stint, during which Kuwait failed to secure direct qualification for the 2026 FIFA World Cup. The Blues are now set to compete in the World Cup play-offs.

The Football Association aims to ensure optimal preparation for the team's upcoming fixture against Mauritania in late November. The match will determine qualification for the Arab Cup, which is scheduled to be held in



Helio Sousa

early December in Doha, Qatar.

Sousa, 55, brings a wealth of coaching experience. He notably led Bahrain to the 2019 West Asian Championship title in Erbil and guided it to its historic first Gulf Cup title later that year at the 24th edition of the tournament.

## Ex-PL ref Coote charged by FA for offensive comments about Klopp

LONDON, June 17, (AP): Former Premier League referee David Coote was charged by the Football Association on Tuesday for making offensive comments to friends about ex-Liverpool manager Jürgen Klopp in a private video that ended up being widely circulated on social media, leading to the match official getting fired.

Coote is alleged to have "acted in an improper manner and/or used abusive and/or insulting words," the FA said about a video recorded around July 2020.

The governing body said it's alleged that the official's actions constitute an "aggravated breach" of rules because they "included a reference - whether express or implied - to nationality."

Two videos, apparently filmed using a phone, circulated on social media appearing to show Coote giving his personal opinion on Liverpool and Klopp, its long-time former manager, when asked by an unidentified man.

Coote uses an expletive for Liverpool and a derogatory term for Klopp, saying he disliked the German manager because he was "arrogant" and "accused me of lying" after one game.

Coote was initially suspended for his conduct and then fired in December because his position was deemed "untenable" by English soccer's referees body following an investigation into his conduct.

Coote was also investigated by the FA following allegations in British newspaper The Sun that he discussed with a fan the possibility of giving a yellow card to a player in a match. Coote denied any wrongdoing and the FA said Tuesday no charges were issued in relation to that investigation.

Separately, UEFA launched an investigation into Coote following a video, again published by The Sun, allegedly showing him using cocaine during the European Championship this year.