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Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait – Egypt Achieves 42.3% Growth in Q1 2025 Net Profit to EGP 1.3 Billion

Ali Marafi: The Bank succeeded in achieving robust growth rates across all financial indicators



Business Page 9

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HH the PM chairs the Supreme Petroleum Council meeting on Wednesday.

PM Diwan photo

## Kuwait PM heads Supreme Petroleum Council meeting

KUWAIT CITY, June 18, (KUNA): His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah chaired the 125th meeting (1/2025) of the Supreme Petroleum Council at Bayan Palace Wednesday.

The meeting discussed the most prominent projects approved by the Kuwait Petroleum Corporation and its subsidiaries, and its strategy related to these projects as well as the impact of the latest political developments on global oil markets.



## HORIZON TALK

Ahmed Al-Jarallah

### The humane judge rules with mercy without violating the law

Judge Hisham El-Sherif, “The Humane Judge”, said, “We will resolve it, God willing,” and then adjourned the session.

The unfortunate woman was sued for failing to pay 7,000 Egyptian pounds.

The actual amount owed was not 7,000 pounds but only 1,000 pounds.

Her difficult circumstances prevented her from repaying the loan, and the merchant refused to wait.

She was in her forties and remained in prison for failing to pay bail.

The judge took money from his own pocket, saying, “This is all I have.”

The lawyer said, “My father told me to accept only 500 Egyptian pounds.”

The defendant received 7,500 Egyptian pounds from lawyers and judges.

3

## NATIONAL GUARD CHIEF CALLS FOR MAXIMUM VIGILANCE

# Kuwait reinforces supply shield for food, medicine

Iran rebuffs surrender demands, warns against foreign interference

By Fares Ghaleb and Abdulrahman Al-Shammari  
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff and Agencies

KUWAIT CITY, June 18: In light of the ongoing conflict between Iran and Israel, the Cabinet has looked into the arrangements and measures taken by all ministries and other State institutions to guarantee the abundance of medical and food supplies, as well as the availability of services at all times.

The Cabinet took this step in its recently concluded weekly meeting, held at Bayan Palace under the chairmanship of His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.

During the meeting, Minister of Health Dr. Ahmad Al-Awadhi briefed the Cabinet on the preparations of his ministry to provide hospitals and health centers with all the necessary medicines and medical supplies.

Minister of Commerce and Industry Khalifa Al-Ajeel presented his ministry’s report about food security and stock – mainly the necessary commodities; and ways to monitor the market movement and ensure the abundant supply of everything, especially food and water.

In a related development, Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Abdullah Ali Al-Yahya has announced that his ministry prepared a comprehensive emergency plan to evacuate Kuwaiti citizens who are in the Islamic Republic of Iran due to the current situation in the region.

He affirmed that the ministry, as per the directive of the political leadership, is closely monitoring the situation of Kuwaiti citizens in Iran round the clock through the Kuwaiti Embassy in Tehran. He stressed that communication with them is ongoing to ensure their safety and to provide them with necessary guidance.

He urged all citizens to comply with the instructions of the embassy and to register in the ‘Traveler Emergency’ service, emphasizing that the security and safety of Kuwaiti citizens abroad is a top priority in the foreign policy of the country.

Also, Assistant Foreign Minister for Asian Affairs Ambassador Samih Johar Hayat announced a plan to evacuate more than 1,000 Kuwaiti citizens from Iran as quickly as possible. He made the announcement when he attended the Independence Day celebration of the Philippine Embassy on Tuesday.



Undersecretary of the National Guard conducts an inspection tour of Tahrir Camp, Medical Services Directorate and Supply and Transport Branch.

National Guard photo

Furthermore, the Government Performance Follow-up Agency (GPFA) on Wednesday held a coordination meeting with several entities; including Kuwait Municipality, Kuwait Investment Authority (KIA), Kuwait Warehousing Company, Ministry of Public Works, and Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA).

The meeting aimed to follow up the implementation of the

decision of the Cabinet regarding the report of GPFA on the allocation of strategic storage areas for the establishment of warehouses and depots for food storage and other essential purposes.

GPFA also disclosed that it held a separate meeting with the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Kuwait Municipality, Public Institution for Social Security (PIFSS), Kuwait Flour

Continued on Page 5

Cabinet reviews T2 project progress

## Kuwait declares June 26 Islamic New Year holiday, work resumes June 29

KUWAIT CITY, June 18, (KUNA): The Kuwaiti Cabinet on Tuesday declared June 26 (Thursday) as a public holiday on the occasion of the Islamic New Year (Hijri New Year), with all ministries and state bodies suspending work on that day and resuming work on June 29 (Sunday).

The decision was made by the Cabinet during its customary weekly meeting that was presided over by His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.

Marking the advent of the Islamic New Year (Hijri New Year), the Cabinet congratulated His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah and the Kuwaiti people on the occasion, wishing Kuwait and both Arab and Muslim worlds goodness and blessings.

As part of governmental follow-up on the country’s development projects, the Cabinet reviewed a visual presentation

made by Minister of Public Works Dr. Noura Al-Mashaan about the Kuwait International Airport’s new terminal project T2.

She said that the T2 has received the gold rating for the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification, which is an internationally recognized system, explaining that the evaluation is conducted by the U.S. Green Building Council.

Afterwards, the Cabinet listened to an explanation from Minister of State for Municipal Affairs and Minister of State for Housing Affairs Abdullatif Al-Meshari about the Northern Economic Zone and Islands Project, mainly including Boubayan Island and Failaka Island.

He elaborated that this project is considered a major project that would contribute to maximizing non-oil revenues

Continued on Page 5

## Kuwait slaps up to KD 500,000 fine in push against money laundering

By Jaber Al-Hamoud

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 18: A new decree No. 10/2025 has been issued to amend certain provisions of Law No. 106/2013 concerning combating money laundering and the financing of terrorism.

The decree includes the following

provisions:

Article One:

Article 25 of Law No. 106/2013 shall be replaced with the following text:

“Based on the recommendation of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Council of Ministers shall issue the necessary decisions to implement United Nations Security Council’s

resolutions issued under Chapter VII of the UN Charter, related to combating terrorism, its financing, and the financing of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. This includes decisions to list, delist, or freeze funds and other assets, and to prohibit transactions with natural or legal persons,

Continued on Page 5

## Incheon, TAV advance in race to run Kuwait’s Terminal Four

By Mohammad Ghanem

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 18: The Central Agency for Public Tenders (CAPT) has confirmed that South Korean company Incheon International Airport Corporation and Turkish company TAV passed the technical evaluation for the operation and management of Terminal Four (T4) at Kuwait International Airport.

Sources told the newspaper that this evaluation was part of a comprehensive assessment conducted by the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) in a bid to enhance the operation, management and overall service quality at Terminal Four. Sources disclosed that the scope of work includes training, maintenance and development initiatives.

Sources added that CAPT reviewed the file in its latest meeting and reconsidered the request of the DGCA to examine the results of the technical

evaluation submitted by the bidding companies.

According to the sources, CAPT reviewed a letter from the DGCA dated May 5, which included Incheon’s written acknowledgment of full compliance with all contract terms. “This was in reference to Resolution No. 27, issued during Meeting No. 45/2025 of the CAPT Board of Directors. Based on this, the board approved the technical evaluation results and authorized the opening of financial bids from companies that met the technical specifications. Incheon got an evaluation score of 87.5 percent, while TAV followed closely with 87 percent, sources narrated.

Sources pointed out that this development is considered a major leap in the competitive tendering process for the strategic management of Terminal Four – an important facility at the airport.



5 New housing vision unveiled post-law repeal

8 Agility KSCP launches Kuwait-Centric strategy supporting Kuwait Vision 2035

### Day by Day

WHEN you hold a position of importance among people, you must be humble and tolerant, and welcome everyone who knocks on your door. God has placed you in that position to serve His creation and protect them, so do not be arrogant and tyrannical. God is not unjust to His servants, and every oppressor will eventually face one even more oppressive.

The poet spoke the truth when he said, “Injustice ultimately leads to regret.”

... Yet tomorrow is another day.

Zahed Matar

## Hot, dusty spell to grip Kuwait

KUWAIT CITY, June 18, (KUNA): Acting Director of the Meteorological Department, Dhirar Al-Ali, stated that the country will experience hot and dusty weather during the daytime on Thursday, with warm conditions at night. Dust is expected to gradually settle in the evening.

Al-Ali told Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) that Kuwait is currently affected by the extension of the Indian seasonal low, accompanied by a hot and dry air mass, with active to strong northwesterly winds reaching speeds of over 65 kilometers per hour. These winds will stir up dust, reducing horizontal visibility to less than 1,000 meters in some areas, especially open spaces.

He also predicted a slight drop in maximum temperatures, ranging between 43°C and 45°C in most parts of the country, adding that sea waves are expected to exceed six feet in height.

Regarding the weather on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, Al-Ali said the northwesterly winds will be moderate to active, reaching up to 45 kilometers per hour and causing dust over open areas. A gradual rise in maximum temperatures is expected, with highs between 47°C and 49°C.



Prayer Timings			
Fajr .....	03:13	Asr .....	15:23
Sunrise ..	04:48	Maghrib ..	18:50
Zohr .....	11:49	Isha .....	20:22

# Local

**Expected weather for next 24 hrs:**  
**By Day:** Hot and dusty with moderate to fresh strong at times northwesterly wind, with speeds of 25-60 km/h.  
**By Night:** Hot to rather hot and dust will subside gradually with light

Weather			
to moderate freshening at times over coastal areas northwesterly wind, with speeds of 15-45 km/h.			
Station	Max Exp	Min Rec	
Kuwait City	45	33	
Kuwait Airport	45	33	

Abdaly	45	26
Jahra	45	33
Salmiyah	40	32
Ahmadi	40	30
Nuwaisib	43	30
Salmi	43	28
Managish	46	31



Philippine Ambassador to Kuwait Jose Cabrera III, Assistant Foreign Minister for Asian Affairs Ambassador Samih Hayat at the cake-cutting ceremony.



Philippine Ambassador to Kuwait Jose Cabrera III receives the US Ambassador Karen Sasahara.



Philippines ambassador receives UK Ambassador Belinda Lewis.



A Filipino troupe performs a traditional dance at the get-together.



Amir of Qatar, Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani receives the Kuwaiti Ambassador Khaled Al-Mutairi.

## Qatar Amir honors Kuwaiti envoy

DOHA, June 18, (KUNA): The Amir of Qatar, Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani awarded Al-Wajbah Medal to Kuwaiti Ambassador to Qatar, Khaled Al-Mutairi, in recognition of his role in strengthening bilateral relations between the two countries.

The Qatari Amiri Diwan said that this came during the Amir's reception of the ambassador at his office on the occasion of the end of his tenure Qatar. Ambassador Al-Mutairi expressed his thanks and appreciation to the Amir of Qatar and the country's officials.

## Elaph Charitable Society board dissolved over major violations

By Fares Ghaleb  
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 18: The Board of Directors of Elaph Charitable Society has been dissolved for committing grave violations, which were documented in the reports of the concerned committees.

Sources from the Social Affairs Ministry revealed that the charitable society failed to comply with applicable laws and regulations, indicating the ministry has appointed an interim board to manage the affairs of the society. Sources said the interim board will assume their duties soon.

Sources stressed that this decision is in line with the ongoing efforts of the minis-

try to regulate charitable work, and ensure transparency and integrity. They confirmed that there is strict oversight over the activities and publications of charitable societies; and that investigations are being conducted to verify their compliance with the governing laws, particularly the Clubs and Public Benefit Societies Law and the decisions regulating charitable work.

Sources said all charitable associations and foundations are subject to strict oversight by the ministry, asserting there is no tolerance for any party that violates the law or circumvent the decisions and instructions issued in this regard. They added that legal measures will be taken against anyone proven to have committed violations or neglected their duties.

# Kuwait-Manila bonds gain momentum: ambassador

'Philippines right place for multi-pronged investment'

By Fares Ghaleb  
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 18: "The Kuwaiti-Philippine relations are historic and both countries are keen to further strengthen cooperation in various fields," says Assistant Foreign Minister for Asian Affairs Ambassador Samih Hayat.

Hayat made the statement on the sidelines of his participation in the Philippine Embassy's celebration of the 127th anniversary of the independence of the country.

He praised the results of the meeting between the His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled -- the representative of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-

Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, and President of the Philippines Ferdinand Marcos Jr. on the sidelines of the two summits held in Malaysia between the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), and the GCC and China.

On the other hand, Philippine Ambassador to Kuwait Jose Cabrera III praised the deep-rooted friendship between his country and the State of Kuwait; stressing that these relations are witnessing growing momentum, thanks to the high-level meetings between the leaderships of the two countries and the ongoing cooperation in various fields.

He indicated that his country aspires to host the first round of bilateral consultations in Manila this year; which will address important issues such as maritime safety, combating human trafficking, sports, and international security.

He expressed his country's appreciation for the contribution of more than 220,000 Filipinos residing in Kuwait to the economic and social development of both countries; while commending the measures taken by the Kuwaiti authorities to improve labor conditions and protect them.

He recalled the struggles of forefathers who sacrificed their lives for the independence of the Philippines and the first raising of the flag on June 12, 1898; emphasizing that the Philippines remains committed to the values of peace, democracy and human rights despite all the challenges.

He also affirmed that the Philippines has become an attractive destination for investment; especially in the sectors of agriculture, services, electric vehicles, renewable energy, and space technology -- benefiting from a young and skilled workforce.



Consul at the Peruvian embassy Pedro Javier Sedano talking to the press.

Visa takes three days: Peruvian consul

## 'Peru enchanting destination for Kuwaiti & global tourists'

By Fares Ghaleb  
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 18: The Embassy of the Republic of Peru in Kuwait organized a promotional event to showcase the country's unique tourism offerings. Representatives of local media and several Kuwaiti tourism and travel companies attended the event.

Peruvian Ambassador to Kuwait Carlos Enrique confirmed the depth and strength of Kuwaiti-Peruvian relations, indicating these relations are historic and continue to evolve in various fields.

He disclosed that the tourism event is part of ongoing efforts to strengthen cultural communication and promote Peruvian tourist destinations.

He also unveiled a plan to launch direct flights between Dubai to Peru soon to facilitate access to his country for those seeking a unique travel experience in order to enjoy its pristine nature and rich culture.

In addition, Pedro Javier Sedano -- Consul at the embassy -- affirmed that it is easy to obtain a tourist visa to

Peru. He said the entire process takes only about three working days; indicating that his country has proposed a draft agreement to the Kuwaiti side to exempt Kuwaiti tourists from visa requirements, and that it is currently under review by the relevant authorities. He disclosed that the Consular Section at the embassy issues around 250 visas annually.

He added "we welcome all Kuwaitis and are working to provide all possible facilities so they can have the best tourism experience in Peru -- from the towering Andes Mountains to the enchanting beaches of the Pacific Ocean."

The promotional event included the special video conference participation by tourism sector officials in Peru and Dubai, who presented promotional videos of the most important destinations and tourist attractions.

They also showcased a variety of activities, including visits to historical sites, mountaineering, surfing, safaris, and learning about the ancient Peruvian civilization dating back thousands of years.

## Airline ordered to pay comp for flight delay

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

KUWAIT CITY, June 18: The Court of First Instance (Commercial Division) ordered a commercial airline to pay compensation to Attorney Mohammad Safar due to the delayed departure of his flight from Cairo to Kuwait.

Details of the lawsuit filed by Safar against the airline are stated in his explanation. He disclosed that his flight from Cairo to Kuwait was scheduled to depart at 8:05 pm on June 30, 2024 and arrive at 11:05 pm. However, the flight was delayed for more than five hours, departing at 1:45 am on July 1, 2025. He was not notified in advance about this significant delay, which resulted in the cancellation of important appointments with his clients. He requested compensation amounting KD5,001 for the material and moral damages he suffered.

The court confirmed in its ruling that full responsibility lies with the commercial airline and ordered it to pay KD470.

## 'New Kuwait airport offers facilities for sick, disabled'

KUWAIT CITY, June 18, (KUNA): Minister of Social Affairs and Minister of State for Family and Childhood Affairs Dr. Amthal Al-Huwaila affirmed Wednesday that the new Kuwait International Airport adheres to the "Kuwait Accessibility Code under Universal Design."

Speaking to KUNA, the minister noted that the code aims to ensure the provision of a comprehensive and safe environment that caters to the needs of all segments of society, particularly persons with disabilities, the elderly, and individuals with special needs.

Dr. Al-Huwaila said the project includes supporting facilities, such as sensory rooms specifically designed to provide an appropriate environment for individuals who may face difficulties with external stimuli - including children with autism, individuals with intellectual disabilities, and elderly people with conditions such as Alzheimer's disease.

She noted that the Public Authority for Persons with Disabilities has coordinated directly with the Ministry of Public Works, Kuwait Municipality, and the Directorate General of Civil Aviation, in line with directives from the country's leadership, to facilitate procedures and ensure seamless accessibility - reflecting Kuwait's commitment to social justice and universal design principles in national development projects.

Dr. Al-Huwaila added that implementing the national accessibility code in the new airport project represents a model of institutional integration and reflects the state's vision for an inclusive built environment that serves all segments of society without exception.

## Other Voices

## Kuwait and charity taxes in US

By Ahmad alsarraf

The U.S. Supreme Court has heard three controversial cases. The first concerns the Constitution's prohibition against using public funds to establish religious schools. Despite this, the Catholic school "Ezido" was opened with public funding. The state Supreme Court had previously ruled against the school due to its public financing, but the school appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court.



alsarraf

The second case - Mahmoud vs. Taylor - was filed by a group of parents from diverse religious backgrounds against the local school board. They sought to prevent their children from being exposed to LGBTQ+ topics without prior notice or an opt-out option, arguing that this violated their constitutional right to oversee their children's religious education. The court ruled against the parents, finding they had not sufficiently demonstrated that the policy burdened their religious freedom. The case has now been referred to the U.S. Supreme Court for a final ruling.

The third case was concerning the tax exemption status of donations made to churches and other religious organizations under a dual-benefit system, which benefits both the recipient organization and the donor. Under this system, when an individual or company donates to an approved religious organization, the donor is allowed to deduct the value of the donation from their taxable income.

For instance, if someone earns \$100,000 and donates \$20,000 to a church, they are only taxed on the remaining \$80,000. This arrangement is rooted in long-established U.S. tax law, which exempts churches and religious organizations from income tax.

This section of the U.S. tax code also extends tax-exempt status to organizations that are established and operated exclusively for religious, charitable,

scientific, literary, or educational purposes.

The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) prohibits churches from providing private benefits to those who run them, such as pastors or their family members. Employee salaries must also be reasonable and not excessive. Also, U.S. law forbids churches from engaging in political campaigning or participating in elections.

Despite these regulations, corruption among some church and charitable organization leaders in the U.S. is a known issue, with certain individuals living lavishly, more like royalty than servants of a cause.

Recently, the Wisconsin Supreme Court ruled that a charitable organization serving the poor and individuals with special needs, regardless of their religious affiliation, was primarily engaged in "secular charitable activity," rather than religious work. As a result, it was deemed ineligible for tax-exempt status. This ruling has sparked significant controversy and remains unsettled at the national level.

In Kuwait, the First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior has suspended all activities of charitable associations and foundations, especially those operating abroad, and prohibited them from receiving or disbursing any funds. This decision will remain in effect until a neutral committee, formed to review their status, completes its work and drafts a law to regulate their operations. The move comes in response to a rising number of reported abuses, the extent and severity of which have become a growing public concern.

It may be worth considering the imposition of a one-percent tax on the funds received by these associations, with the proceeds transferred to the Zakat House, provided that its management is kept free from the influence of any religious political parties. Notably, the Zakat House implements overseas projects, yet little is publicly known about the true nature or impact of these initiatives outside the Zakat House itself.

☐ ☐ ☐

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Encouraging Direct Investment hosts a Thought Leadership Circle event entitled ‘Enabling the Transformation in the Energy Sector’.

# KDIPA leads push for green transformation

Kuwait eyes net-zero by 2050

KUWAIT CITY, June 18, (KUNA): Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority (KDIPA), in partnership with The Business Year (TBY), hosted The Thought Leadership Circle: Empowering Energy Transformation at the Chairman’s Club, KIPCO Tower.

The event convened leaders from Kuwait’s energy and finance sectors, along with global partners, to chart the country’s energy future. Keynote remarks by KDIPA Director General Sheikh Dr. Meshal Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, emphasized energy’s strategic role in Kuwait’s sustainable development and diversification goals. Chief Enterprise Business Officer at Zain Kuwait Hamad Al-Marzouq reaf-



KUNA photos  
Kuwait’s energy and finance sectors, along with global partners group photo.

firmed Zain’s support for the energy sector through digital innovation and collaboration. Shell Kuwait, represented by Anwar Al-Mutlaq, contributed with insights on upstream advancements and the role of international expertise in achieving Kuwait’s 2035 and 2040 production goals. Kuwait Banking Association (KBA), a strategic sponsor, highlighted the financial sector’s contribution to green

infrastructure and capital mobilization. Discussions centered on Kuwait’s path to net-zero by 2050, recent upstream discoveries including Al-Nokhatha, Al-Julaiah, and North Wafra, as well as the role of innovation and foreign investment. Supported by Shell Kuwait and Zain as Executive Sponsors, the event served as a platform for collaboration to advance Kuwait’s energy transformation and investment appeal.

## National carrier promotes integrity in staff seminar

# Kuwait Airways advances transparency drive

KUWAIT CITY, June 18: Kuwait Airways organized an awareness seminar on combating corruption in cooperation with the Kuwait Anti-Corruption Authority (Nazaha) at the company’s headquarters. Several company officials and employees from various departments attended the seminar, reports Al-Seyassah daily. On the sidelines of the seminar, Chair of the Board of Directors of Kuwait Airways Captain Abdulmohsen Al-Faqan stated that this initiative is part of the company’s strategy to uphold the highest standards of integrity in all departments.

He explained that preventing corruption begins with raising awareness about the importance of adhering to the company’s laws and regulations, as well as creating a healthy and professional work environment for employees.

Kuwait Airways is committed to creating a transparent and fair work environment that motivates employees to be dedicated and proactive, ensuring the delivery of the highest quality services to customers and contributing to the achievement of the goals outlined in New Kuwait 2035 vision.

This policy is in line with the state’s approach to enhancing institutional performance, recognizing the national carrier as an important part of the country’s vital sectors.

Meanwhile, the acting Director of the Training and Development Department Ghazlan Al-Tashah said cooperation with Nazaha is an important initiative that creates a positive environment for employees.

She explained that these seminars play a key role in raising awareness among Kuwait Airways staff about the importance of combating corruption and promoting a culture of good governance



Chair of the Board of Directors of Kuwait Airways, Captain Abdul Mohsen Al-Faqan speaking at the seminar.



Kuwait Airways photos  
An integrity representative giving an explanation about combating corruption.

in the workplace. Kuwait Airways is committed to developing the skills and talents of its national employees and qualifying them in various sectors. The company operates a comprehensive training center dedicated to preparing and training national cadres, ensuring they stay up to date with the latest standards in air transport in both administrative and operational fields.

Al-Tashah also revealed that Kuwait Airways, over the past year,

has trained approximately 9,100 employees both inside and outside Kuwait, and collaborated with accredited training institutions. In addition, Nazaha representatives gave a detailed presentation on the authority’s role in combating corruption, outlining the legal and institutional mechanisms employed in this effort. They also affirmed the importance of reporting violations and strengthening governance and transparency in the workplace.

# JUNE

## Room Promotion

## Kuwait moves up to 36th rank in Global Competitiveness Index '25

KUWAIT CITY, June 18: Kuwait has advanced to 36th place out of 69 countries in the 2025 Global Competitiveness Index, issued by the International Institute for Management Development (IMD), moving up one position from its 2024 ranking, reports Al-Seyassah daily. Kuwait’s overall score increased by approximately four points from 65.03 in 2024 to 68.69 in 2025. According to the Kuwait Anti-Corruption Authority (Nazaha), the improvement is primarily attributed to significant progress in the index’s main

pillar - economic performance - which saw a 12-point jump compared to the previous year. It is worth highlighting that the Global Competitiveness Index evaluates a country’s economic performance and global standing for assisting decision-makers in identifying strengths and weaknesses, and adopting global best practices. It assesses a country’s ability to create a business environment that generates sustainable value, and is also one of the reference sources used in compiling the Corruption Perceptions Index.

## Leave submissions now fully electronic

# Islamic Affairs links 12 departments to CSC employee attendance system

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

KUWAIT CITY, June 18: The Ministry of Islamic Affairs has completed linking 12 departments in various sectors with the system of the Civil Service Commission (CSC) for employee attendance and departure registration. The ministry confirmed that all types of leave have been submitted electronically through the CSC since the end of last week. Sources told the newspaper that the remaining sectors; such as the Islamic Studies Sector, the Mosques Sector, and their affiliated departments and centers, will be linked later. They confirmed that employees in these sectors have been instructed to begin the linking process. Sources stated that the link with CSC is part of efforts to update work systems and unify human resources management mechanisms. They added that all employees of the de-

partments affiliated with the senior management and the media and external relations sector have been linked to the CSC system. They indicated that access to the SAP program for department employees regarding leave will be suspended; urging all employees to promptly submit vacation, work assignments, leave and other requests related to the previous period -- before the specified deadline. Sources added the CSC has asked its direct supervisors to quickly take the necessary action regarding these requests -- whether approval or rejection -- before the system shutdown date. They also called on all employees to download the CSC application onto their devices and begin using it without delay. They asserted that no future leave requests will be accepted or approved through the ministry’s application, emphasizing the need to monitor employee leave daily through the CSC system.

## ‘No cheating, no complaints’

# MoE ensures orderly final exams

KUWAIT CITY, June 18: High school students in the Science and Arts sections took the Islamic Studies examination in a calm and secure environment; thanks to the tremendous efforts exerted by the Ministry of Education, reports Al-Anba daily. Several students expressed satisfaction over the exam process, describing it as smooth and straightforward. “We were able to complete the exam ahead of the allotted time,” many of them affirmed. Matrab Al-Arak, Head of the Exam Committee at Urwa bin Al-Zubayr Secondary School, disclosed that a total of 512 students took the exam -- 306 in the Science section and 206 in the Arts section. He confirmed that the exam was conducted in an orderly and efficient manner, without any issue. Al-Arak commended the students for strictly complying with the exam protocols and the ministry for providing the necessary resources to ensure a calm and supportive environment for the students. He said no cases of cheating were recorded, expressing appreciation for the cooperation and dedication of supervisors and proctors in ensuring the smooth administration of the exams. Meanwhile, Grade 12 students in the Arts

section took the Philosophy exam earlier. Philosophy Technical Supervisor in Jahra Educational District Fahad Al-Jarman stressed that the exam was free of technical errors, aligned with curriculum standards, and met the intended learning outcomes. “No inquiries or complaints were received from students or exam committees,” he stated; pointing out that the clarity of questions contributed to a positive exam experience. He added that a total of 12,586 answer sheets were submitted and distributed among 70 marking committees for men and 52 for women. “The grading process has been proceeding in an organized and disciplined manner, within a constructive and supportive atmosphere. Preliminary results indicate encouraging performance levels, reflecting the clarity of the exams and the preparedness of students. Also, the Physics exam for Grade 12 students in the Science section was conducted in a calm and well-coordinated setting. Hessa Al-Majbal, General Technical Supervisor for Physics, affirmed that the exam questions were clearly formulated, encompassed various cognitive levels, and well-suited to the allotted time.

Weekdays (Saturday - Wednesday)	
Queen Cabana (2 persons inclusive of breakfast) per night.	2 Bedroom Chalet (4 persons inclusive of breakfast) per night.
NOW	NOW
BHD 57.173	BHD 128.000/-net
Weekends (Thursday & Friday)	
Queen Cabana (2 persons inclusive of breakfast) per night.	2 Bedroom Chalet (4 persons inclusive of breakfast) per night.
NOW	NOW
BHD 65.000/-net	BHD 145.000/-net

Promo period from 15<sup>th</sup> June to 30<sup>th</sup> June 2025

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Al-Mishari reveals new systems and city revival plans

# New housing vision unveiled post-law repeal

KUWAIT CITY, June 18: Following the decision of the Council of Ministers to repeal the ‘Who Sold His House’ Law last week, Minister of State for Housing and Municipal Affairs Abdullatif Al-Mishari promptly unveiled a housing map featuring updated regulations and systems.

This swift action reflects the commitment of the top leadership and the Council of Ministers to tackle the backlog of housing applications and find comprehensive solutions for the housing issue.

Al-Mishari confidently stated that these upcoming changes will ultimately benefit citizens.

Drawing inspiration from the higher leadership’s directive for a comprehensive housing vision, Al-Mishari announced in a meeting with Editor-in-Chief of Al-Seyassah and Arab Times newspapers Ahmed Al-Jarallah at his office in the ministry that significant changes are expected in the ministries of Housing and Municipality.

He disclosed that some new housing regulations and systems are already public, and others are currently under study.

While revealing that “meetings are underway to examine modifications and housing initiatives,” he revealed “some will involve investment in the reju-

venation of the Capital and surrounding areas.” He explained that the role of the State will be confined to allocating land to companies for the development and investment in self-sustaining cities to stimulate commercial activity in the Capital.

He added that the current State efforts focus on enabling the allocation of State land in Kuwait City -- the Capital.

He also explained that the cities constructed by companies will be subject to the terms and specifications set by the Municipality and Housing ministries, in line with the needs of citizens.

**Self-sufficiency**

He added “other cities are being prepared and will follow the same approach in terms of ‘self-sufficiency in services,’ helping citizens obtain everything they need in the same area. There are several workers’ cities being contracted for, and they will be of high-quality specifications.”

He pointed out that “all this requires the development of laws, which we are currently working on. There is no doubt that the heavy burden of urban planning falls on the shoulders of the aforementioned ministries.



Editor-in-Chief of Al-Seyassah and Arab Times newspapers Ahmed Al-Jarallah with Abdullatif Al-Mishari, Minister of State for Housing and Municipal Affairs.

Continued from Page 1

## Kuwait declares

and enhancing the private sector’s various economic activities, particularly the industrial, commercial and tourism sectors.

The minister also commended the project as a flexible and visionary economic model that reflects Kuwait’s state orientation toward investment and creating an attractive competitive environment.

Furthermore, Director-General of the Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority (KDIPA) Sheikh Meshaal Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, Managing Director of the Kuwait Investment Authority (KIA) Sheikh Saud Salem Abdulaziz Al-Sabah and Acting Director of the Follow-up Unit - Asset Management at the PIA Sheikh Mohammad Salman Humoud Al-Sabah, about a new entertainment city as a community service and tourist destination that would stimulate the national economy.

The Cabinet also approved a draft decree-law bearing on the fight against money laundering and terror finance just as part of Kuwait’s commitment to relevant United Nations Security Council (UNSC) resolutions.

## Kuwait slaps

without prejudice to the rights of those acting in good faith.

These decisions shall take effect from the date of their issuance. The Council of Ministers may delegate the exercise of the powers stipulated in the above paragraph to a minister. In the absence of any legal impediment, the Minister Plenipotentiary may assign the task to a special committee.

The executive regulations shall specify the rules for publishing or making these decisions available, the method for appealing them, the rules for managing frozen funds and assets, and the procedures for authorizing the release of specific amounts to cover necessary living expenses and other financial obligations. These measures aim to ensure that such funds are used strictly for their designated purposes, in addition to outlining any other controls and procedures necessary to implement the provisions of this article.

**Article Two -**

A new article “33-bis” shall be added to Law No. 106/2013, as follows:

Anyone who violates a decision issued pursuant to Article 25 of this law shall be subject to a fine ranging from KD 10,000 to KD 500,000 for each violation. This penalty shall be without prejudice to any other penalties or measures that regulatory authorities may impose on financial institutions or designated non-financial businesses and professions, in accordance with the provisions of Article 15 of this law.

**Article Three -**

Regulations and decisions issued prior to the entry into force of this decree-law, concerning the implementation of United Nations Security Council resolutions issued under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter related to combating terrorism and preventing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, shall remain in effect, provided they do not conflict with the provisions of this decree, unless amended or repealed.

**Article Four -**

The Prime Minister and the ministers, each within their respective jurisdiction, shall implement this decree-law, which shall enter into force from the date of its publication in the official gazette.

**Kuwait reinforces**

Mills and Bakeries Company, and Kuwait Supply Company to look into the implementation of the decision of the Cabinet on the construction of multi-storey buildings for supply centers.

These efforts fall within the commitment of the State to enhance food security by establishing strategic storage facilities to meet various national needs.

It can be recalled that in the meeting held on Jan 14, the Council of Ministers asked Minister of Commerce and Industry Khalifa Al-Ajeel to submit a quarterly report detailing the progress of the strategic supply centers project.

Meanwhile, Director of the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training (PAAET) Dr. Hassan Al-Fajjam recently presided over an extensive meeting with his deputies and

senior departmental officials to discuss preventive measures and review the emergency preparedness plan of the authority.

The meeting was held in line with government directives in relation to ongoing regional developments.

Al-Fajjam reaffirmed that the safety of students and staff in the colleges, institutes and training centers of PAAET remains its highest priority. He stressed the importance of enhancing preparedness levels, boosting readiness, and maintaining continuous coordination with relevant official bodies.

The meeting included a comprehensive review of the updated emergency plan, and the associated organizational and administrative procedures; such as ensuring immediate and orderly evacuation, maintaining continuity of education and operations, activating communication and emergency systems, and securing all institutional facilities.

He issued a directive on the immediate updating of all officials’ contact information, activation of technical support and e-learning platforms as needed; and intensified awareness campaigns on preventive measures for the students and staff.

In a related announcement, PAAET confirmed the readiness of designated shelters in its campuses. These facilities meet all safety and emergency standards set by competent authorities and are fully equipped to safeguard the staff and students in case of any emergency.

It also affirmed the ongoing coordination with the Civil Defense General Directorate to update shelter locations, verify data, and provide guidance to all educational institutions.

Al-Fajjam underscored the need to establish sub-emergency committees in each college and institute. These committees will be directly linked to the Central Operations Unit of the authority to ensure quick response and continuous coordination with vital ministries, particularly the ministries of Interior and Health.

He emphasized the importance of institutional discipline and the precise execution of procedures, while commending the commitment and professionalism of the technical and administrative teams.

Expressing confidence in the workforce of the authority, he called for collective responsibility and cooperation to guarantee a secure and resilient educational environment. He reaffirmed that public safety remains a strategic priority for PAAET, and that it is closely monitoring developments to ensure full readiness and rapid response.

On the other hand, Undersecretary of the National Guard Lieutenant General Eng. Hashem Al-Rifai -- accompanied by Assistant for Operations and Training Major General Dr. Faleh Shujaa -- on Wednesday made an inspection tour at Tahrir Camp, where they were warmly welcomed by Assistant for Administrative Support Major General Engineer Essam Nayef, senior commanders and officers.

In a press statement, the National Guard confirmed that Al-Rifai visited the Medical Services Directorate and inspected the building housing the specialized clinics, medical warehouses and the central pharmacy; as well as the Supply and Transport Branch, to determine the strategic stock in the institution.

According to the statement, Al-Rifai called for vigilance, activating the plans in force, and taking the highest level of caution in light of the current developments in the region. He was briefed on the smart ambulance system, specifically its role in diagnosing the patient in a step aimed at enhancing the efficiency of emergency response and enabling ambulance teams to record patients’ medical data in real time using smart devices inside ambulances to ensure the accuracy and speed of data transfer. He said the smart ambulance system is a strategic step and the fruit of continuous efforts to employ advanced technology and innovation in protecting the personnel.

He praised the high level of readiness of the staff and their vital role in protecting the country, maintaining national security, and supporting other State agencies. He cited the unlimited support provided by the leadership of the National Guard to the affiliates -- represented by National Guard Chief Sheikh Mubarak Hamoud Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and Deputy Chief Sheikh Faisal Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al Sabah -- for everything that serves the country under the wise leadership of Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal

Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, may Allah protect them.

Moreover, Deputy Foreign Minister Ambassador Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah received a phone call from Bahraini Undersecretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Ambassador Khaled Al-Jalalham.

In a press statement, the Foreign Affairs Ministry disclosed that the two sides discussed the latest developments in the region.

Also, the national carrier of Lebanon -- Middle East Airlines (MEA) -- has announced that it changed the departure times of its flights from Beirut to Kuwait on June 18-20 due to emergency changes in certain air routes in the region.

In a press statement, the company explained that the flight schedules were revised due to current circumstances and alterations to some air routes, which have resulted in longer flight durations. It stated that flights from Beirut to Kuwait will retain their original flight number of ME 404, but will now depart at 7:50 am instead of the previously scheduled time of 8:40 am on Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays. It added that the revised departure times will follow local time in both Beirut and Kuwait.

The company advised all the affected passengers to contact its call center or visit the official website for more information and updated flight details.

This exceptional measure is taken amid the regional tension impacting civil aviation, particularly due to the ongoing military confrontation between Israel and Iran, which have led to changes in flight routes in neighboring regional airspace.

In latest development, Iran’s supreme leader on Wednesday rejected U.S. calls for surrender in the face of blistering Israeli strikes and warned that any military involvement by the Americans would cause “irreparable damage” to them, in recorded video aired by state TV.

It was the second public appearance by Ayatollah Ali Khamenei since the Israeli strikes began, and came a day after U.S. President Donald Trump demanded “UNCONDITIONAL SURRENDER” in a social media post and warned Khamenei that the U.S. knows where he is but has no plans to kill him, “at least not for now.”

Trump initially distanced himself from Israel’s surprise attack on Friday that triggered the conflict, but in recent days has hinted at greater American involvement, saying he wants something “much bigger” than a ceasefire. The U.S. has also sent more military aircraft and warships to the region.

Khamenei dismissed the “threatening and absurd statements” by Trump.

“We people, and its history never speak to this nation with the language of threats, because the Iranian nation is not one to surrender,” he said in the low-resolution video, his voice echoing. “Americans should know that any military involvement by the U.S. will undoubtedly result in irreparable damage to them.”

Iran followed a similar sequence in releasing Khamenei’s statement before the video was aired, perhaps as a security measure. His location is not known and was impossible to discern from the tight shot that showed only beige curtains, an Iranian flag and a portrait of Grand Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, Khamenei’s immediate predecessor who died in 1989.

An Iranian diplomat had earlier Wednesday warned that U.S. intervention would risk “all-out war.”

Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmail Baghaei did not elaborate, but thousands of American troops are based in nearby countries within range of Iran’s weapons. The U.S. has threatened a massive response to any attack.

Another Iranian official said the country would keep enriching uranium for peaceful purposes, apparently ruling out Trump’s demands that Iran give up its disputed nuclear program.

The latest Israeli strikes hit one facility used to make uranium centrifuges and another that made missile components, the Israeli military said. It said it had intercepted 10 missiles overnight as Iran’s retaliatory barrages diminish. The U.N. nuclear watchdog said Israel struck two centrifuge production facilities in and near Tehran.

The Israeli military said it also carried out strikes in western Iran, hitting missile storage sites and a loaded missile launcher.

Everything is under the watchful eye of the senior leadership that pays full attention to this matter and closely follows it up.”

Regarding the State Ministry of Housing, Al-Mishari stated “much is required of it and we are working hard to develop this aspect, especially in terms of the ministry’s work and government housing as well.”

He added “higher orders emphasize the need to benefit from successful experiences in other countries, even in the implementation of recreational projects.”

He then stressed the importance of activating the Complaints Office at the ministry to allow citizens to directly lodge complaints regarding perceived negligence by officials in any department, with the office reporting directly to the minister.

“The aim is to promptly remove obstacles and resolve issues, as the ministry is attentive to all the concerns of citizens,” he explained.

He went on to say that “any negligence is subject to strict oversight, as successful performance is a collective duty. The senior leadership closely monitors this area, with clear directives emphasizing the need for tangible achievements.”

# Kuwait energy sector builds cyber fortress

KPC leads cybersecurity push

**KUWAIT CITY, June 18, (KUNA): With concrete steps and a lucid vision, Kuwait’s oil sector has succeeded in assembling a rigid cybersecurity system that acts as a shield for the national economy, helping to stifle any potential threats that could potentially emerge.**

This intricate cybersecurity system is routinely updated to ensure that it meets international standards, with a key method being effective penetration testing to ensure that the system is well prepared to deal with potential hackers, while the use of Artificial Intelligence tools can be instrumental in detecting incoming threats.

In addition to the use of cutting-edge technology and the investment in such tools in a bid to enhance protection, the regular training of oil sector personnel is another effective strategy, allowing them the chance to get acquainted with the latest breakthroughs in cybersecurity research, all of which constitute preemptive measures.

Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC), alongside its affiliates, is home to multiple cybersecurity centers that aim to enhance protection and put in place proper defense systems


that are well-equipped to deal with any cyber threats and hacking attempts.

To shed more light on the matter, KUNA interviewed a bevy of experts and specialists in Kuwait’s oil sector, all of whom agreed on the sheer importance of an effective cybersecurity system to deal with threats that seemingly lurk around every corner, which include malicious software developed by cybersecurity criminals.

Presenting a comprehensive vision about the significance of cybersecurity in Kuwait’s oil sector, Ali Al-Qallaf, Kuwait National Petroleum Company’s (KNPC) cybersecurity operations chief, said that the matter entails multiple aspects, primarily, the reliance on digital platforms in day-to-day operations.

On KNPC’s cybersecurity system, he cited critical components including infrastructure, operational and security systems, in addition to user data and digital services, all of which combine as a unit to form a system that can safeguard properties against various hazards, chief among them the rising cyber attacks.

With malicious intentions, these efforts aim to steal, disable or destroy data and applications, often through unauthorized access to networks and computer systems, he explained, saying the state-run oil company constantly monitors the risk of these incidents and the detrimental effects they could have.



Announcement

On the occasion of issuing the decision of the bankruptcy judge/ Omran Mohamed Al Kandari, dated 12/6/2025 in application No.3/2024 Preventive Settlement, filed by Penta Furniture and Furnishing Company WLL, against 1- Kuwait Finance House, 2-Ahli United Bank, currently Kuwait Finance House, 3- Warba Bank, 4-Al Mulla Finance Company, 5-Industrial Bank and others, issued in the following manner:

In the Name of His Highness the Amir of the State of Kuwait  
Sheikh Mishal Al Ahmad Al Jaber Al Sabah

Bankruptcy Management

Decision

On Thursday, corresponding to 12/6/2025 at the headquarters of the Bankruptcy Management.

With membership of Mr. Omran Al Kandari, bankruptcy judge.

In the presence of Mr. Yousef Ahmad Al Baker, secretary.

In the application listed under No. 3/2024 Preventive Settlement Listed under computer No.244194230.

Filed by: Penta Furniture and Furnishing Company WLL.

Versus

1- Kuwait Finance House.

2- Ahli United Bank, currently Kuwait Finance House.

3- Warba Bank.

4- Al Mulla Finance Company.

5- Industrial Bank and others

In the Name of Allah Most Gracious Most Merciful

In the Name of His Highness the Amir of the State of Kuwait

Sheikh Mishal Al Ahmad Al Jaber Al Sabah

Bankruptcy Management

State of Kuwait

Court of First Instance

Hawally Courts Complex

(Decree)

On Thursday, 12/6/2025 at the headquarters of the Bankruptcy Management.

With the membership of Mr. Omran Mohamed Al Kandari, bankruptcy judge.

In the presence of Mr. Yousef Ahmad Al Baker, secretary.

In application No.3/2024 Protective Settlement

Registered under computer No. 244194230.

Submitted by	Penta Furniture and Furnishings Co.WLL
Versus	<div><div>1- Kuwait Finance House.</div><div>2- Ahli United Bank- currently Kuwait Finance House.</div><div>3- Warba Bank.</div><div>4- Al Mulla Finance Company.</div><div>5- Industrial Bank and others.</div></div>

Having perused the application and enclosed documents. The fact is concluded in that the applicant/ Penta Furniture and Furnishing Company WLL submitted an application to the Bankruptcy Management in it capacity as (debtor) to claim protective settlement against :1- Kuwait Finance House, 2-Ahli United Bank- currently Kuwait Finance House, 3- Warba Bank, 4- Al Mulla Finance Company, and 5-Industrial Bank and others.

The applicant Company's business is capable of continuing, based on its knowledge of a technical study by the Kru Kuwait Consulting Office, which is registered with the regulatory authorities. Further, the applicant debtor has a plan to continue the business, has future cash flows, and its creditors are holders of ordinary debts. The total bank debts amount to two million five hundred eighty-nine thousand and forty-one dinars, the total supplier debts amount to one million eight hundred forty-three thousand and eleven dinars, and the total employee debts amount to one million four hundred thirty-four thousand three hundred and sixteen dinars. There are debts of other parties amounting to one million six hundred thirty-eight thousand and seven dinars. The book value of fixed assets is 650,357 dinars. There are methods for extinguishing accumulated losses, and there is a financial study with a preventive settlement plan. The applicant debtor has provided evidence and documents demonstrating its ability to continue and extinguish its losses within a short period of time. Dockets have been provided, and we summarize the most important contents therein as follows: (An extraordinary general assembly resolution and a letter classifying creditors, amounts due, submitted guarantees, a copy of the list of goods and assets and the financial statements of the banks, suppliers, and employees.) Therefore, the Company became unable to pay its debts as a result of this prevention.

In the hearing of 26/12/2024, the lawyer of the applicant company submitted a memo of defense and a docket evidencing its ability to continue the business and pay the creditors' debts, in light of the preventive settlement plan it submitted, particularly that the applicant company, in its application, outlined a summary of the proposed preventive settlement and the agreements it intends to conclude with creditors regarding the settlement. It also clarified that it wishes to be given sufficient time to settle its outstanding debts, in order to preserve the Company's entity, the value of its assets, and the interests of its shareholders. It also affirmed its ability to meet all of these debts. At the same hearing, a decision was issued (to address the Bankruptcy Committee to examine the application, express an opinion on it, and determine the feasibility of a preventive settlement, as well as assess the debtor's financial position and outstanding debts, and determine whether or not precautionary measures should be taken, indicate whether or not the debtor is capable of managing its business and assets on its own, and provide us with a detailed report, and complete the same as much as possible within the legal deadlines set for doing so in accordance with the Bankruptcy Law, indicate the need to appoint an auditor to examine the proposed preventive settlement, the measures taken, and whether or not to implement its proposal, and in the first case, it should state the value of the amount due to the auditor, whether on monthly or annual basis.)

The Bankruptcy Committee's last letter dated June 12, 2025 stated: (1- The proposed (amended) preventive settlement plan is acceptable in principle, as stated in Clause Three. 2 - Appointment of an auditor, as stated in Clause 5.)

Whereas the bankruptcy judge decided to present the papers to today's hearing to consider the request to open preventive settlement procedures, in accordance with the facts presented.

**Legal Basis:**

Whereas Articles 1, 29, 33, 7/58, and the last paragraph Article 61 of the Bankruptcy Law promulgated by Law No. 71 of 2020 stipulate that, in applying the provisions of this law, the following words and phrases shall have the meanings indicated next to each of them: Suspension of Claims: Suspension of any lawsuit or enforcement action filed against the debtor related to his assets or debts. The bankruptcy judge shall decide on the request, within ten days from the expiry of the specified period for responding, by issuing a decision to initiate preventive settlement procedures. The Bankruptcy Department shall, within ten days from the date of the bankruptcy judge's decision to initiate, reject, or not accept the proceedings, by publishing and announcing the decision, notifying the concerned parties thereof, disclose it on the Kuwait Stock Exchange if the debtor is listed therein, and instruct the debtor to disclose it on his website, unless the bankruptcy judge decides to suffice with any of these methods or other methods. The bankruptcy judge may decide to announce the decision in a daily newspaper published in a foreign country if a significant portion of the debtor's creditors, assets, or businesses are in that country, or for any other reason the bankruptcy judge deems appropriate. In all cases, the decision to open proceedings must be registered within the period specified in this article. The issuance of the decision to open preventive settlement proceedings results in a stay of claims for a period of three months following the date of issuance of the decision. Subject to the provisions stipulated in this law regarding the request to open proceedings, the debtor may submit a request to open preventive settlement proceedings in accordance with the following...7- If a final judgment declaring the debtor bankrupt has previously been issued, the application may not be submitted until three years have passed since the end of the bankruptcy. As an exception to the provisions of clauses (...), (7) of this Article, the debtor may submit the application at any time if it is accompanied by evidence of prior approval by the required majority of the proposed preventive settlement submitted in connection with the application.

Given the foregoing and the legal principles mentioned above, and that the applicant company, "Penta Furniture and Furnishings WLL," has submitted a request to initiate preventive settlement procedures against all its creditors, specifying the required procedure and its reason, and has attached the documents and information required by Articles 20 and 59 of the Bankruptcy Law to the extent necessary to warrant the issuance of this decision. The Bankruptcy Committee has submitted its second and final report, No. 140, dated June 12, 2025, to the Bankruptcy Management, which concluded with a final opinion recommending acceptance of the preventive settlement plan in accordance with the aforementioned provisions. Therefore, the bankruptcy judge issues his decision to initiate preventive settlement procedures. There are debts owed to creditors against the applicant company, with the total bank debts amounting to two million, five hundred and eighty-nine thousand and forty-one dinars, the total supplier debts amounting to one million, eight hundred and forty-three thousand and eleven dinars, and the total employee debts amounting to one million, four hundred and thirty-four thousand, three hundred dinars and sixteen dinars. There are debts of other parties amounting to one million, six hundred and thirty-eight thousand and seven dinars. Moreover, the creditors, before addressing the Bankruptcy Committee, agreed in principle to the request for a preventive settlement, with the exception of the creditor, Al Mulla Finance Company. Thus, the applicant has provided evidence of the prior approval of the affected creditors, who hold more than half of the affected debts, for the proposed preventive settlement for which the request was submitted. The bankruptcy judge then proceeds to issue a decision to initiate preventive settlement procedures in accordance with the aforementioned legal rules and in accordance with Articles 1, 20, 24, 25, 26, 55, 59, 62, 70, 71, 73, 74, and Articles 76 through 81 of the Bankruptcy Law, as will be stated in the operative part.

**Therefore,**

**We have decided the following:**

**First:** To initiate preventive settlement procedures regarding the application submitted by the debtor (Penta Furniture and Furnishings Company WLL), while suspending all legal claims and enforcement procedures taken against it for a period of three months from the date of this decision. The Bankruptcy Management shall notify the Central Bank, the General Execution Administration, the Company submitting the application, the defendants, and the Bankruptcy Committee of this decision in accordance with Article 55 of the Bankruptcy Law, publish it in the Official Gazette and register it within ten days. The Company submitting the application shall be instructed to disclose this decision on its website and to advertise it in two local daily newspapers, one of which is published in English at its own expense, and to provide evidence to this effect.

**Second:** To instruct the debtor (Penta Furniture and Furnishings Company WLL) to prepare a preventive settlement proposal, including the information required by Article 13 of the Bankruptcy Law, while exerting the necessary care to persuade creditors to approve the preventive settlement proposal. It shall coordinate with the creditors within ten days from the date of issuance of this decision. Creditors are requested to form a creditors' committee from representatives of their debt categories, in accordance with Article 70 of the Bankruptcy Law. The bankruptcy statement must be filed with the Bankruptcy Administration within ten days of the expiry of the period specified in the previous article. A copy of the debt categories must be filed with the Bankruptcy Administration within ten days of the expiry of the period specified in Article 72 of the Bankruptcy Law. A copy of the debt categories must be filed with the Creditors' Committee, in accordance with Article 74 of the Bankruptcy Law, within a period not exceeding three months from the date of issuance of this decision. The creditors are requested to approve the settlement proposal, in accordance with Article 74 of the Bankruptcy Law, and then seek to complete the procedures stipulated in Articles 76 to 81 of the Bankruptcy Law.

Bankruptcy Judge

Omran Mohamed Al Kandari

Signed 12/6/2025

Hearing Secretary/signed



NYC mayoral candidate Lander arrested

Los Angeles Mayor Bass lifts downtown curfew

LOS ANGELES, June 18, (AP): Downtown Los Angeles businesses hoped customers would return quickly on Tuesday after Mayor Karen Bass lifted a curfew she had imposed last week to prevent vandalism and break-ins during nighttime protests against President Donald Trump’s immigration crackdown.

The protests, which have been concentrated in a few blocks of downtown where federal and local government buildings are, were in response to President Donald Trump’s immigration crackdown in the city and subsequent deployment of the National Guard and Marines.

The curfew set in place June 10 provided “successful crime prevention and suppression efforts” and protected stores, restaurants, businesses and residents, the Democratic mayor said. It covered a relatively tiny slice of the sprawling city.

On Tuesday afternoon, the impact of days of protests could be seen in the boarded-up windows lining the streets of Little Tokyo, a historical Japanese American district right next to a federal detention building still heavily guarded by military troops.

A steady stream of tourists stopped in the neighborhood to take photos of baseball superstar Shohei Ohtani wearing Dodgers blue in a massive mural on the side of a hotel.

Don Tahara, the owner of Far Bar, said businesses in the area have been hit hard with vandalism and some



California Highway Patrol officers arrest two men after a dispersal order during a protest on June 14, in Los Angeles. (AP)

break-ins.

**Also:**

**NEW YORK:** New York City Comptroller and Democratic mayoral candidate Brad Lander was arrested by federal agents at an immigration court Tuesday after he linked arms with a person authorities were attempting to detain.

A reporter with The Associated Press and other journalists witnessed Lander’s arrest at a federal building in Manhattan, the latest confrontation between U.S. agents and a Democratic

politician objecting to the Trump administration’s mass detention and deportation programs.

Lander was released from custody after a few hours. The U.S. attorney’s office said it was investigating his actions and would decide later whether to charge him with a crime. The immigrant Lander escorted out of the courtroom was also arrested.

Lander had spent the morning observing immigration court hearings and told an AP reporter he was there to “accompany” some immigrants out of the building.

Virginia Democrats move to round out ticket in key off-year election

RICHMOND, Va., June 18, (AP): Former Del Jay Jones will look to be the face of legal resistance to President Donald Trump in Virginia after winning Tuesday’s closely watched Democratic state primary for attorney general.

Jones will face Republican Attorney General Jason Miyares in the November general election. His victory was a critical step for Democrats in rounding out their ticket ahead of a bellwether election later this year.

Democrats are also nominating their pick for lieutenant governor from a field of six candidates. State Sen. Ghazala Hashmi led Former Richmond City Mayor Levar Stoney in the tightly locked race Tuesday night, and she declared victory, but The Associated Press deemed the race too early to call.

The November election is sure to make history as Virginia is set to elect its first female governor since the state’s first governorship 250 years ago. Democrat Abigail Spanberger, who ran for the Democratic nomination unopposed, will battle Republican Lt. Gov. Winsome Earle-Sears - the only Republican who qualified for the ballot.

Virginia is one of two states that host statewide elections the year after a presidential election - New Jersey is the other - and the races are



Richmond Mayor Levar Stoney, (left), gestures as Richmond interim Police Chief Rick Edwards listens during a news conference in Richmond, Va on June 7, 2023. (AP)

typically seen as referendums on the party in power before Congress heads into midterm elections.

**Also:**

**BATON ROUGE, La:** Louisiana state Sen. Blake Miguez officially launched his bid on Tuesday to unseat fellow Republican U.S. Sen. Bill Cassidy in 2026.

Miguez is the latest GOP challenger to Cassidy, who has been chastised by his party for being one

of seven GOP senators who voted to convict President Donald Trump during his 2021 impeachment trial.

“Phony politicians like Bill Cassidy can’t shoot straight,” Miguez, 43, says in a video on social media to announce his campaign.

In the video, Miguez, a champion competitive sharpshooter, shows off his skills - using various firearms and, literally, aiming at targets brandishing words like “Marxism,” “food dyes” and “crime.”

‘Wrong! He is ‘publicity seeking’ and always gets it wrong’

US President Trump jabs Macron over comments about early departure from G7

PARIS, June 18, (AP): What began with a handshake evolved into turbulence at 33,000 feet as one of diplomacy’s oddest relationships took another strange turn.

The political chemistry that once defined the Trump-Macron dynamic - immortalized by a famously tense 29-second handshake in 2017 - was nowhere to be seen in midair Tuesday when U.S. President Donald Trump blasted his French counterpart on social media.

As Trump departed the G7 summit early, French President Emmanuel Macron tried to reframe the exit as strategic.

“There is indeed an offer to meet and exchange,” Macron told reporters, suggesting the US might help broker a ceasefire between Israel and Iran.

But aboard Air Force One, Trump responded with a swipe that accused Macron of showboating.

“Wrong! He is ‘publicity seeking’ and always gets it wrong,” Trump said in a post on his Truth Social site. “He has no idea why I am now on my way to Washington... Much bigger than that. Stay tuned!”

The takedown punctured Macron’s narrative and revealed a rupture in a relationship that has featured theater, flattery and touch.

Macron, who once styled himself as a “Trump whisperer,” has long used charm and proximity to try to manage the unpredictable US leader, often contrasting himself with more openly critical peers like Germany’s Angela Merkel. But those efforts are far from foolproof.

But as Trump became increasingly aggressive in his comments about Iran, urging Tehran’s “UNCONDITIONAL SURRENDER,” Macron eventually offered a blunt counter assessment, saying a push for regime change in Iran would spark “chaos” and further destabilize the Middle East.

“We do not want to see Iran acquire nuclear weapons or ballistic capabilities,” Macron told reporters at the G7. “But I believe the greatest mistake today would be to pursue regime change in Iran through military means, as that would lead to chaos.”

Recalling the US-led invasion of Iraq, he continued: “Does anyone think what was done in Iraq in 2003 was a good idea? Does anyone think what was done in Libya last decade was a good idea? No.”

Macron also noted that he’d had “the best relations in the world” with Trump during the US president’s first term.

Their diplomatic style has never been purely transactional - and has often been



US President Donald Trump speaks with reporters while flying aboard Air Force One en route from Calgary, Canada to Joint Base Andrews, Md on June 16. (AP)

tactile. From their earliest encounters, physical gestures have been part of the pagentry: Trump’s firm pats and arm-yanks, Macron’s theatrical poise and instinctive touches.

The roots of their rapport run deep. In 2017, Macron dazzled Trump with a Bastille Day parade, formal dinners and white-knuckle handshakes. A viral 29-second grip - knuckles white, jaws clenched - set the tone for a relationship of theatrical dominance.

The physical choreography evolved over the years: Trump yanking Macron’s arm at the Élysée, Macron placing a steadying hand on Trump’s thigh in Washington. Their February 2025 White House meeting brought a refined version of the

dance as Macron delivered corrections with charm, countering Trump’s Ukraine comments while laughing at Fort Knox jokes.

Trump joked about Macron’s marriage last month after a video of Brigitte Macron playfully pushing her husband surfaced. “Make sure the door remains closed,” he quipped, before adding: “They’re fine.”

But the chill had already begun to set in.

This month, Macron traveled to Greenland - a territory Trump has floated buying - to express solidarity with Danish sovereignty.

“This is not what is done between allies,” Macron said, in a message to Trump.

The G7 summit, intended to project Western unity on Russia and Iran, instead showcased fracture. Trump skipped the final sessions, refused to back new Russia sanctions, and warned Tehran to “immediately evacuate.”

Macron - who announced Tuesday that France will host the next G7 summit in 2026 at the lakeside Alpine resort of Evian-les-Bains - tried to frame the early exit as useful. Trump’s one-line rebuttal shut that down.

Trump’s clash with Macron wasn’t the only unscripted moment to puncture the summit’s polished exterior. Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni was filmed rolling her eyes as Macron whispered in her ear during a roundtable - a clip that quickly lit up social media. It was a flash of visible tension at a gathering meant to project unity amid war, economic uncertainty and global unrest.

Later aboard Air Force One, Trump softened his tone. When reporters asked about the outburst, he replied: “That was Emmanuel - nice guy but he doesn’t get it right too often.”

The pivot was familiar.

“It’s difficult to be confident about any clear arc in President Trump’s reactions to people or events,” said Dana Allin, US policy expert at the International Institute for Strategic Studies. “He tends to be disinhibited - he says what’s on his mind, and that can change quickly.”

There was no handshake this time. No shoulder clap. Just a flick of the thumb - and a public slap across the alliance.

The dynamic, Allin suggests, reflects a shift in how Europe engages with Washington. In Trump’s first term, many European leaders treated his behavior as a storm they could wait out.

“Now it seems like a more permanent thing,” Allin said.



A view of the bridge connecting the Russky Island and Vladivostok, in Russia’s far east, on Aug 26, 2023. (AP)

Russia plans for long-term aggression against Europe, says EU’s top diplomat

BRUSSELS, June 18, (AP): Russia poses a direct threat to the European Union through acts of sabotage and cyberattacks, but its massive military spending suggests that President Vladimir Putin also plans to use his armed forces elsewhere in the future, the EU’s top diplomat warned on Wednesday.

“Russia is already a direct threat to the European Union,” EU foreign policy chief Kaja Kallas said. She listed a series of Russian airspace violations, provocative military exercises, and attacks on energy grids, pipelines and undersea cables.

Kallas noted that Russia is already spending more on defense than the EU’s 27 nations combined, and this year will invest more “on defense than its own health care, education and social policy combined.”

“This is a long-term plan for a long-term aggression. You don’t spend that much on (the) military, if you do not plan to use it,” Kallas told EU lawmakers in Strasbourg, France.

“Europe is under attack and our continent sits in a world becoming more dangerous,” she added.

NATO Secretary-General Mark Rutte has said that Russia is producing as much weapons and ammunition in three months as the 32 allies together make in a year. He believes that Rus-



European Union foreign policy chief Kaja Kallas addresses the media at EU headquarters in Brussels on June 10. (AP)

sia could be in a position to launch an attack on a NATO ally by the end of the decade.

The acts of sabotage and cyberattacks are mostly aimed at undermining European support for Ukraine, military officers and experts have said.

But concern is mounting in Europe that Russia could try to test NATO’s

Article 5 security guarantee - the pledge that an attack on any one of the allies would be met with a collective response from all 32.

In 2021, NATO allies acknowledged that significant and cumulative cyberattacks might, in certain circumstances, also be considered an armed attack that could lead them to invoke Article 5, but so far no action has been taken.

**Also:**

**BRUSSELS:** The European Union has summoned Russia’s envoy to Brussels for an explanation after one of the bloc’s officials was attacked in the eastern city of Vladivostok last month, an EU spokesperson said Wednesday.

The diplomat was attacked on May 26. Their name, nationality and medical condition weren’t provided. German news outlet Der Spiegel reported that the official was a Romanian woman who had traveled to the city on official business.

Der Spiegel said that the woman was attacked after leaving her hotel for an early morning walk. It said a car pulled up alongside her, and that two men got out. She was threatened, and then beaten up. The men were believed to work for Russian security authorities, the news magazine said, citing EU diplomatic sources.

‘Power outage not cyberattack’

April blackout caused by grid failures: Spain govt

MADRID, June 18: (AP): Spain’s government said Tuesday that the massive April power outage across Spain and Portugal that left tens of millions of people disconnected in seconds was caused by technical and planning errors that left the grid unable to handle a surge in voltage.

Ecological Transition Minister Sara Aagesen, who manages the nation’s energy policy, told reporters that a voltage surge led to small grid failures, mainly in the south of Spain, which then cascaded to larger ones and brought the system down in the two Iberian Peninsula nations.

She ruled out that the failure was due to a cyberattack.

The outage began shortly after noon on April 28 in Spain and lasted through nightfall, disrupting businesses, transit systems, cellular networks, internet connectivity and other critical infrastructure. Spain lost 15 gigawatts of electricity - or about 60% of its supply. Portugal, whose grid is connected to Spain’s, also went down. Only the countries’ island territories were spared.

“All of this happened in 12 seconds, with most of the power loss happening in just five seconds,” Aagesen said.

Several technical causes contributed



A bus drives in downtown Madrid during a major power outage on April 28. (AP)

to the event, including “poor planning” by Spain’s grid operator Red Eléctrica, which didn’t find a replacement for one power plant that was supposed to help balance power fluctuations, the minister said. She also said that some power plants that utilities shut off preventively when the disruptions started could have stayed online to help manage the system.

Power was fully restored by the early hours of the following day.

The government’s report will be released later on Tuesday - 49 days after the event - and included analysis from Spain’s national security agencies, which concluded, according to the minister, there were no indications of cyber-sabotage by foreign actors.

Europe

**‘Slovakia might be better off neutral’: Slovakia’s populist Prime Minister Robert Fico suggested Tuesday that his country might be better off neutral as he and other officials prepared for a NATO summit next week.**

Fico made the remarks before heading into a meeting with political party leaders and President Peter Pellegrini to discuss proposals to increase defense spending to meet targets that the alliance is moving toward. Fico accused Western leaders of being “warmongers” who enable weapons profiteering in their support of Ukraine.

“Neutrality would be very beneficial for Slovakia,” he said, adding that, “Unfortunately, such a decision is not in my hands.” Fico’s comments suggested a withdrawal from NATO, but when pressed by reporters to elaborate he declined to comment. (AP)

□ □ □

**Portugal arrests 6 people:** Portuguese authorities arrested six people linked to a far-right group with “big capabilities” to conduct some action “of a certain dimension” and seized explosive material and several firearms, police said Tuesday.

The detainees are believed to belong to the so-called Movimento Armilar Lusitano (MAL), which sought to establish itself as a political movement supported by an armed militia, according to a police statement. (AP)

Putin set to take questions from international journo

ST. PETERSBURG, Russia, June 18, (AP): Russian President **Vladimir Putin** is set to take questions Wednesday from international journalists on the sidelines of the St. Petersburg International Economic Forum.

Putin scheduled a roundtable session with senior news leaders of international news agencies, including The Associated Press. Among other issues, he’s expected to spell out Moscow’s position on the conflict between Israel and Iran that he offered to help mediate in a weekend call with U.S. President Donald Trump.

Russia has maintained a delicate balancing act in the Middle East for decades, trying to navigate its warm relations with Israel even as it has developed strong economic and military ties with Iran, a policy that potentially opens opportunities for Moscow to play power broker to help end the confrontation.





An aerial drone photo taken on June 14, 2025 shows boats berthing in Zhanjiang City, south China's Guangdong Province. (Xinhua)

### Flood affects over 180,000 people in south China county

As of 7 am Wednesday, continuous heavy rainfall had affected over 180,000 residents in Huaiji County under Zhaoqing City, south China's Guangdong Province. The downpours, triggered by Typhoon Wutip, the first typhoon of the year, along with an upper-level trough and monsoon rains, have lashed the region since Saturday. At 7:05 am Wednesday, floodwaters in Huaiji peaked at 55.22 meters, surpassing the warning level by 5.22 meters. As of 7 a.m. Wednesday, around 183,000 residents across 19 townships in Huaiji had been affected, with

levees, roads and croplands sustaining significant damage. Meanwhile, 68,000 people have been urgently relocated to safer areas, according to local authorities. Currently, more than 10,000 rescue personnel and over 500 units of emergency equipment have been mobilized. Huaiji elevated its flood control emergency response to level I, the highest, on 7 p.m. Tuesday. Local authorities have suspended classes, work, production, transportation and business activities across the county. (Xinhua)

## South Korea ratifies treaty aimed at safeguarding international adoptions

SEOUL, South Korea, June 18, (AP): After years of delay, South Korea has ratified the Hague Adoption Convention, an international treaty meant to safeguard international adoptions, highlighting a significant policy shift decades after sending tens of thousands of children to the West through an aggressive but poorly regulated adoption system. The government's announcement Tuesday came as it faces growing pressure to address widespread fraud and abuse that plagued its adoption program, particularly during a heyday in the 1970s and '80s when the country allowed thousands of children to be adopted every year. Many adoptees have since discovered that their records were falsified to portray them as abandoned orphans, while others were carelessly removed - or even outright stolen - from their birth families. South Korea's Foreign Ministry and Health and Welfare Ministry, which handles adoption policies, issued a joint statement saying the country submitted the necessary documents to ratify the Hague Adoption Convention to the Dutch Foreign Ministry, the treaty's depositary. The treaty, which requires countries to strengthen state oversight and safeguards to ensure international adop-



Truth and Reconciliation Commission Chairperson Park Sun Young, right, comforts adoptee Yoo-ree Kim during a press conference in Seoul, South Korea on March 26. (AP)

tions are legal and ethical, will take effect in South Korea on Oct. 1. South Korea signed the Hague convention in 2013, but ratification was delayed by more than a decade as the country struggled to bring adoptions under centralized government authority, as required by the treaty, after allowing private agencies to control inter-

national child placements for decades. "Going forward, intercountry adoptions will be permitted only when no suitable family can be found in his or her state of origin, and only if deemed to serve the child's best interests through deliberation by the adoption policy committee under the Ministry of Health and Welfare," the ministries said.

## Colombia's Senate approves labor bill that would mean more pay, protections for workers

BOGOTA, Colombia, June 18, (AP): Colombia's Senate on Tuesday night approved a labor bill that is expected to grant workers more overtime pay while making it harder for companies to hire employees on short-term contracts. The bill's approval comes as tensions have been increasing between the Senate and President Gustavo Petro over reforms to the economy and health system that have polarized the nation's politics and tested the separation of powers in Colombia's fragile democracy. Petro has repeatedly accused Congress of blocking his reforms and last week issued a decree that called on Colombia's elections agency, the National Registrar, to organize a referendum on labor laws. The agency said Tuesday it would wait for Colombian courts to decide if it was legal for it to organize the referendum, because the Senate had voted against the referendum last month. Petro has threatened to change Colombia's constitution, by calling for a constituent assembly, if his request for a referendum on labor laws is not



Colombia's President Gustavo Petro speaks at a rally to garner support for a referendum on labor reform, in Cali, Colombia on June 11. (AP)

granted, and in a post on X Tuesday, said that those who did not approve the referendum were committing "treason." Opposition leaders have accused the president of developing an authoritarian streak, as he tries to override decisions made by Congress.

The labor bill approved by Colombia's Senate on Tuesday includes many of the changes to Colombia's labor laws proposed by Petro's party, the Historical Pact. It increases surcharges paid to employees who work Sundays and also makes companies pay more for late evening shifts, which is likely to apply to many retailers, restaurants and hotels. The bill also says delivery apps must formally hire delivery workers as freelancers or as full-time employees and help to pay for their health insurance. Business associations in Colombia oppose the changes, arguing they will raise the cost of employing people and could ultimately increase unemployment. Currently, 56% of Colombian workers labor with no contracts, in what is known as the informal economy. Economists expect the reforms to push more people into informality, while supporters of the bill argue they are just pushing for the restoration of rights workers had in the early 1990s, before Colombia began to make labor laws more flexible.

## Argentine ex-prez Fernández allowed to serve corruption sentence at home

BUENOS AIRES, Argentina, June 18, (AP): A federal court on Tuesday granted a request by former Argentine President Cristina Fernández de Kirchner to serve a six-year prison sentence for corruption at her home in Buenos Aires. Judges ruled that Fernández, 72, can serve time in the apartment where she lives with her daughter and her granddaughter, citing her age and security reasons. Fernández was the victim of an attempted assassination three years ago. In the ruling, obtained by The Associated Press, the court said Fernández "must remain at the registered address, an obligation that she may not break except in exceptional situations." The court also ordered Fernández be placed under the watch of an electronic surveillance device to monitor her movements. Last week, Argentina's highest court upheld Fernández's sentence in a ruling that permanently banned her from public office over the corruption conviction that found she had directed



A poster of Argentina's former President Cristina Fernandez and her late husband Nestor Kirchner, who was president before her, gather outside her home to show support two days after the nation's Supreme Court upheld her corruption conviction in Buenos Aires, Argentina, on June 12. (AP)

state contracts to a friend while she was the first lady and president. The ruling against Fernández, Argentina's charismatic yet deeply di-

visive ex-leader, sent her supporters pouring into the streets of Buenos Aires, Argentina's capital, and blocking major highways in protest.

### 4 killed as car swept away in Gujarat river

## India, Canada to restore diplomatic services

NEW DELHI, June 18, (Agencies): India and Canada agreed to restore diplomatic services nearly two years after Ottawa accused New Delhi of alleged involvement in the killing of a Sikh separatist leader, which turned into a row straining relations between the two countries. The announcement was made after Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Canadian counterpart, Mark Carney, met Tuesday on the sidelines of the Group of Seven summit in Kananaskis, Alberta. "The leaders agreed to designate new high commissioners, with a view to returning to regular services to citizens and businesses in both countries," a statement from Carney's office said. High commissioners are senior diplomats, representing their country's interests and fostering relationships with the host nation. Modi and Carney reiterated the importance of a bilateral relationship based on mutual respect and a commitment to the principle of territorial sovereignty, according to the statement. They also discussed further collaboration in several sectors, including technology, digital transition, food security, and critical minerals. Meanwhile, India's foreign ministry underscored the importance of restarting senior ministerial engagements to "rebuild trust and bring momentum to the relationship." Carney's predecessor, Justin Trudeau, shocked the world in Sep-



India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi, (left), and Canada's Prime Minister Mark Carney shake hands during a meeting at the G7 Summit in Kananaskis, Alberta, on June 17. (AP)

tember 2023 after announcing in Parliament there were credible allegations about India's link to the killing of Hareep Singh Nijjar near Vancouver. New Delhi vehemently denied the allegations and accused Trudeau's government of harboring extremists.

**Also:** **NEW DELHI:** At least four people were killed and three others went missing after a car carrying nine passengers was swept away in a swollen river in

India's western state of Gujarat, officials said Wednesday. Two people have been rescued, and the operation to trace the missing is underway. The car was swept away in a river about 174 km southwest of Gandhinagar, the capital city of Gujarat. According to officials, torrential rains on Tuesday hit many parts of Gujarat, raising the water level in rivers and water bodies, leading to the closure of some roads and causeways.

## Volcanic eruption forces evacuations of villages and flight cancellations in Indonesia

LEMBATA, Indonesia, June 18, (AP): Indonesia's Mount Lewotobi Laki Laki erupted with giant ash and smoke plumes again Wednesday after forcing evacuations of villages and flight cancellations, including to and from the resort island of Bali. Several eruptions sent ash up to 5,000 meters (16,400 feet) into the sky Tuesday evening to Wednesday afternoon. An eruption Tuesday afternoon sent thick, gray clouds 10,000 meters (about 32,800 feet) into the sky that expanded into a mushroom-shaped ash cloud visible as much as 150 kilometers (nearly 93 miles) away. The eruption alert was raised Tuesday to the highest level and the danger zone where people are recommended to leave was expanded to 8 kilometers (about 5 miles) from the crater. Officers also evacuated from the Mount Lewotobi Laki Laki monitoring post 7 kilometers (4.3 miles) from the crater to avoid falling gravel released in the eruption. No casualties have been reported. Ash and debris fell in a number of places outside the danger zone, including the villages of Boru, Hewa and Watobuku. Some residents from Nubabelen village in Ile Bura subdistrict fled to evacuation sites in Konga to avoid the impact of the eruption, the National Disaster Management Agency said in a statement. "Some residents have also evacuated to Nileknoheng village, which is 12 kilometers (7.4 miles) from the crater," said Abdul Muhari, the National Disaster Management Agency's spokesperson. Dozens of flights Wednesday were canceled, including those connecting Bali to cities in Australia, Malay-



This photo provided by Indonesia's Center for Volcanology and Geological Hazard Mitigation (PVMBG) shows volcanic materials spewing from Mount Lewotobi Laki-Laki at East Flores regency in East Nusa Tenggara, Indonesia, on June 17. (Xinhua)

cy said in a statement. "Some residents have also evacuated to Nileknoheng village, which is 12 kilometers (7.4 miles) from the crater," said Abdul Muhari, the National Disaster Management Agency's spokesperson. Dozens of flights Wednesday were canceled, including those connecting Bali to cities in Australia, Malay-

sia, India and China, according to the website of Bali's I Gusti Ngurah Rai International Airport. Volcanic ash can pose a risk to plane engines. Flights also were canceled to and from the international airport in Labuan Bajo another tourist destination in Flores Island, East Nusa Tenggara province. The airport is still operating.



Protesters gesture during a demonstration over the death of blogger Albert Ojwang in police custody, in downtown Nairobi, Kenya on June 17. (AP)

## Kenya's Ruto signs law to tackle money laundering and terrorism financing

NAIROBI, Kenya, June 18, (Agencies): Kenyan President William Ruto on Tuesday signed into law the Anti-Money Laundering and Combating of Terrorism Financing Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2025, aimed at strengthening the country's fight against financial crimes. According to a statement from the presidency issued in Nairobi, the capital, the legislation is designed to enhance Kenya's framework for combating money laundering, terrorism financing, and proliferation financing. "Its enactment represents a decisive step in bolstering the country's financial system against illicit financial flows," the statement said. The presidency said the amended

law seals long-standing loopholes that have allowed the misuse of property transactions and shell companies for illegal financial activities, noting, "these legal reforms reaffirm Kenya's standing as a leader in financial integrity and enhance the country's credibility in the global regulatory regime." The presidency said that 10 Acts of Parliament have been amended to address technical compliance deficiencies identified by the Eastern and Southern Africa Anti-Money Laundering Group and the Financial Action Task Force. "The introduction of enhanced regulatory clarity and oversight in sectors such as real estate and mining is expected to significantly boost investor

confidence and attract foreign direct investment," it added. **Also:** **NAIROBI:** Activists and the father of a Kenyan civilian who was shot at close range by police during the latest protests over the alleged killing of a blogger in custody on Wednesday demanded for accountability and called for the officer who shot him to be charged. Boniface Kariuki's father, Jonah Kariuki, told journalists his only son remained under intensive care after he underwent surgery on Tuesday night. He said the bullet went through his son's head, just above the ear, but the surgery had been "successful" and "his heart was beating."

### Africa

**'Reject signs of instability':** Tanzanian Prime Minister Kassim Majaliwa on Tuesday urged citizens to uphold patriotism and preserve national peace as the country prepares for the October general elections. Majaliwa made the appeal during the 50th-anniversary celebrations of the Tanzania Institute of Education (TIE), where he called on the public to reject any actions or statements that may signal threats to national



Majaliwa

stability. (Xinhua)

**South Africa vehicle collision kills 12:** A bus and a truck collided head-on on the R34 near Vryheid, South Africa's KwaZulu-Natal Province, on Monday, resulting in the death of 12 people, said a KwaZulu-Natal provincial government official on Tuesday. Siboniso Duma, member of the Executive Council for Transport and Human Settlements in the KwaZulu-Natal Province, said the accident occurred around midnight on Monday. He confirmed that ten people died at the scene, while another ten were seriously injured and taken to nearby hospitals. Two more victims later succumbed to their injuries in the hospital. (Xinhua)



Kuwait's May trade surplus with Japan down 52.7 pct

TOKYO, June 18, (KUNA): Kuwait's trade surplus with Japan narrowed 52.7 percent from a year earlier to JPY 39.2 billion (USD 252 million) in May, down for the fourth straight month due to slow exports, government data showed Wednesday. However, Kuwait stayed in black ink with

Japan for 17 years and four months, as exports still outpaced imports in value, the Finance Ministry said in a preliminary report. Overall exports from Kuwait to Japan fell 34.7 percent year-on-year to JPY 67.1 billion (USD 441 million), down for the fourth month in a row.

Business

Company will align operations and investments with national economic priorities

Agility KSCP launches Kuwait-Centric strategy supporting Kuwait Vision 2035

KUWAIT CITY, June 18: Agility Public Warehousing Company KSCP's (Agility KSCP) new Board of Directors today announced a refocusing of its strategic direction, shaped by Kuwait's promising growth outlook and aimed at accelerating infrastructure development.

The new strategy positions the company as a dedicated platform supporting Kuwait's national development priorities under Kuwait Vision 2035.

This focus affirms Agility KSCP's foundational mission, as defined by the Amiri Decree that established the company in 1979 to develop critical warehousing and infrastructure in Sulaibiya, Doha, and Mina Abdullah.

Positioning for Strategic Alignment with Kuwait Vision 2035

Agility KSCP is positioning its capital, operations, and leadership to support national economic priorities, with plans to invest more than KD 100 million through 2030. Agility KSCP will focus on high-priority sectors including:

- Facilitating government initiatives to attract FDI and develop Mubarak Al Kabeer Port.
- Contributing to the development of new economic zones such as the Northern Area project.
- Customs modernization and supply chain enablement.
- Industrial real estate and warehousing.
- Industrial waste management and recycling infrastructure.
- Development of major data centre projects.
- Promoting the resilience and security of Kuwait's food and health care sectors.

The company's streamlined, Kuwait-centric strategy unlocks operational agility and capital efficiency by consolidating its footprint in a growth market where it has long-standing execution capability and deep institutional knowledge.



Tarek Sultan, Vice Chairman of Agility KSCP

Driving Impact Through Governance and Capital Alignment

To better support Agility KSCP's new direction and improve the company's responsiveness to government priorities, Agility KSCP is taking several structural steps:

- National alignment: Formation of a permanent senior board committee dedicated to aligning with national initiatives and enhancing stakeholder coordination, with a particular focus on deepening engagement and responsiveness to government priorities and policy direction.
- Unlocking shareholder value through an in-kind distribu-



Agility logo

tion of Agility Global PLC stake: Agility KSCP's Board is enhancing value for its shareholders through an in-kind dividend distribution of an approximately 20% stake in ADX-listed Agility Global PLC to shareholders of Agility KSCP. This strategic move provides a direct and tangible return, allowing shareholders to benefit from a stake in a high-potential entity. By increasing Agility Global PLC's free float, the distribution is expected to significantly improve share liquidity, enhance price discovery, and position Agility Global PLC for greater visibility and potential inclusion in key equity indices. This initiative reflects the Board's ongoing commitment to maximizing shareholder value and aligning long-term interests.

■ Fostering Kuwaiti Talent: Building on its longstanding commitment to developing Kuwaiti human capital, the company will intensify efforts to recruit, develop, and retain Kuwaiti nationals – who will serve as the driving force behind the strategy.

■ New brand: To provide further clarity for shareholders and stakeholders, Agility KSCP will in due course carry a new name that reflects its new mission.

Together, these strategic priorities are designed to en-

hance focus and operational efficiency and unlock long-term value—reinforcing Agility KSCP's position as a trusted industrial partner and key enabler of Kuwait's economic growth.

Offering Investors Access to Kuwait's Growth

Tarek Sultan, Vice Chairman of Agility KSCP, said: "As a company with deep national roots, we are aligning every aspect of our operations and capital allocation to serve Kuwait's long-term economic transformation. This evolution to focus on Kuwait's infrastructure priorities offers investors direct access to the country's most promising non-oil growth sectors – backed by committed capital, local execution strength, and strategic alignment with government objectives.

Our KD 100+ million investment in Kuwait's logistics and infrastructure sector underscores our belief in the country's strategic geographic position, resilient economy, and fast-growing e-commerce market. We're proud to support the development of advanced logistics and industrial infrastructure that will drive trade, create jobs, and contribute to Kuwait's broader economic diversification efforts."

In-Kind Dividend Announcement

Agility's Board of Directors has approved an in-kind dividend for Q1, 2025 in the form of shares in Agility Global PLC, representing around 20% of Agility Global PLC's issued share capital. Under the approved terms, eligible shareholders of Agility KSCP will receive 82 shares of Agility Global PLC for every 100 shares held in Agility KSCP.

This distribution reflects the Board's ongoing efforts to unlock shareholder value, improve trading liquidity for Agility Global, and enhance the company's eligibility for index inclusion.

Key economic metrics improve in Q2 but regional conflict triggers uncertainty

By National Bank of Kuwait

Overview

Recent data releases point to a pick-up in key activity metrics after a slowdown in Q1. The ramp-up in Israel-Iran hostilities has sharply increased regional uncertainty, while also pushing oil prices back above our forecast for 2025 of \$70/bbl. Our base case still sees Kuwait's non-oil GDP growth at 2.5% in 2025, though a lengthy regional conflict that adversely affects economic activity and confidence could weigh on the outlook. In tandem with higher oil production as OPEC+ accelerates market resupply, the rise in oil prices has lowered the probability of a fiscal deficit larger than our forecast of 8% of GDP this year, but we do not see this deflecting the government from its ongoing fiscal consolidation program. One upside risk to growth is the potential approval of the housing finance ('mortgage') law, which could begin to unlock higher household borrowing and consumer spending.

Latest developments

■ Oil prices surged in mid-June following Israel's attack on Iran. The price of Kuwait Export Crude jumped 6% overnight to \$73/bbl as markets feared disruption to Gulf oil supplies either directly or from Iranian reprisals (including via a closure of the Strait of Hormuz). Earlier in Q2, oil prices had been battered by both global demand and supply side concerns, dropping to a four-year low of \$60/bbl in the weeks after President Trump's "Liberation Day" tariff blitz and OPEC+'s decision to accelerate the pace of supply hikes in May, June and July. (See our latest oil market brief.) For Kuwait, the more rapid pace of supply increases (+24 kb/d per month) will see the full 135 kb/d of its voluntary supply cuts from 2024 unwound by October 2025 and production reach 2.55 mb/d – almost a year ahead of schedule.

■ Non-oil GDP rebounded in Q4 2024 with a strong 4% y/y expansion. Growth in Q4 was the fastest in nearly three years and a significant improvement on the 2.5% contraction recorded in Q3, according to preliminary official figures. (Chart 1.) (Full GDP report here.) Manufacturing (12.2%), real estate (8.6%) and hospitality (6.9%) all performed strongly. However, oil sector output extended its run of declines to seven consecutive quarters (-5.7%), contributing to a fall in overall GDP of 0.7% in Q4. For 2024 as a whole, non-oil growth ticked up to 1.8% from 1.0% in 2023, though due to further contraction in the oil sector, overall economic growth turned more negative (-2.6%).

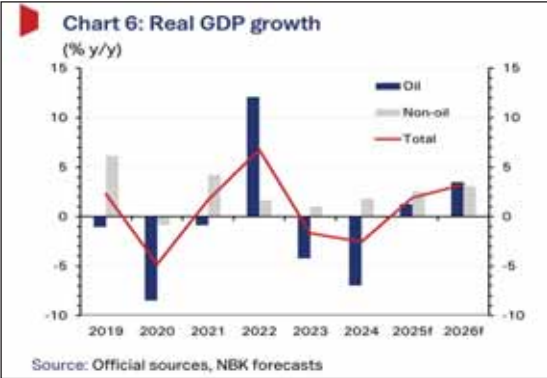
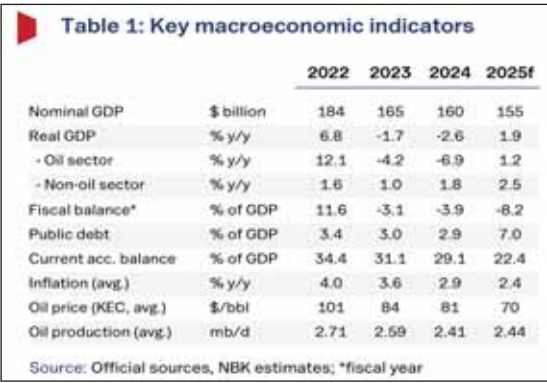
■ Non-oil private sector activity recorded solid but moderating expansion in May, with the PMI settling down slightly to 53.9 from April's five month-high reading of 54.2. (Chart 2.) (Report here.) This is, nevertheless, a ninth consecutive month of expansion for Kuwait's private sector. Growth in output and new orders slowed but remained relatively strong, while the pace of employment growth was the joint fastest in the series' history. Businesses were the most positive about their prospects in a year.

■ Local consumer spending growth (as reported by card transactions) turned negative in Q1 2025 at -5.9% y/y, according to Central Bank of Kuwait data. This was the steepest annual decline since the pandemic, though continues the trend weakness now witnessed for more than a year. This softness is partly a readjustment to the massive surge in spending due to pent-up demand (facilitated by higher savings rates) that accompanied the lifting of Covid-19 mobility restrictions. But it is also well down on pre-pandemic trend rates and reflects the current, relatively more challenging domestic conditions such as higher borrowing costs and sluggish wage and employment growth. (Chart 3.)

■ Project activity slowed in Q1 25, with the value of awards falling 51% q/q to KD445 million, according to MEED Projects. Momentum strengthened slightly in April and May with awards totaling KD336 million in the two months. The transport sector accounted for the bulk of activity year-to-date, with KD254 million in awards linked to South Saad Al-Abdullah Q2 infrastructure in Q1 and a KD128 million contract in Q2 for Phase 2 of the Mubarak Al-Kabeer port project. Looking ahead, contracts for the Al-Zour North IWPP (Phases 2 & 3) and Mubarak Al-Kabeer port (Phase 3) and the Shagaya Renewable Energy Complex project (Phase 1) are expected this year.

■ Real estate sales hit a 5-month high of KD367 million in May (29% m/m). (See here.) The improvement was led by the investment sector especially (40% m/m) but sales in the residential and commercial sectors also climbed. Year-on-year growth, however, declined (-1.2% y/y), due to a high base effect in the commercial segment. After a soft start to 2025 (perhaps linked to seasonal factors), some confidence appears to be returning to the market, with sentiment possibly buoyed by the forthcoming housing mortgage law and potential interest rate cuts in the medium term.

■ The budget for FY2025/26 was approved by Amiri Decree in late March. A fiscal deficit of KD6.3 billion (13% of GDP) was forecast for FY25/26, wider than the previous year's estimate of KD5.6 billion, based on lower revenues of KD18.2 billion (-3.6% b/b) and little-changed expenditures of KD24.5 billion (-0.1% b/b). (Full report here.) The projected decline in revenues is entirely due to lower anticipated oil receipts (-5.7% b/b to KD15.3bn) after both the oil price (KEC) and oil production assumptions were reduced compared to the previous budget, to \$68/bbl (from \$70/bbl) and 2.5 mb/d (from 2.55 mb/d), respectively. Spending restraint is evident in the smallest annual increase in em-

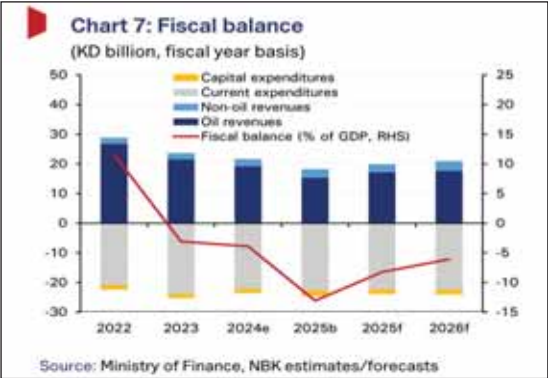
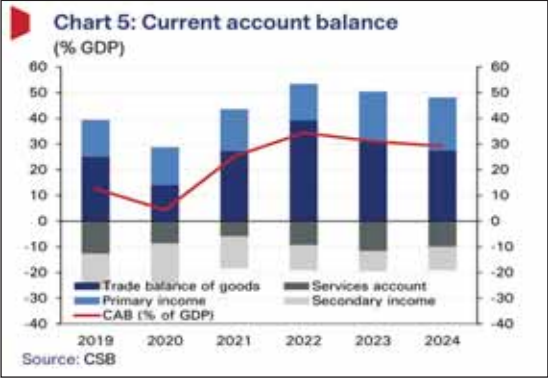
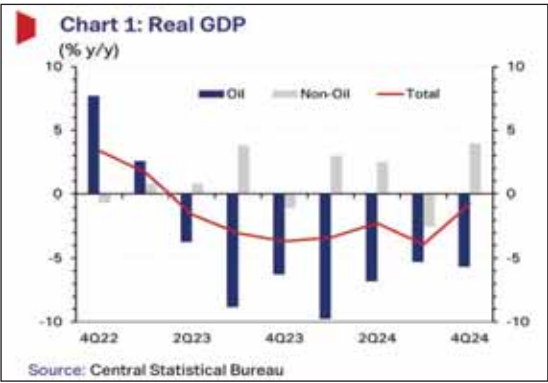


ployee compensation in percentage terms (0.8% b/b) since the pandemic, which will be offset by lower allocations for subsidies (-2.1%) and capex (-1.6%), the latter for the fourth year in a row.

■ The long-awaited public debt law was approved by Amiri Decree in April. The law allows the government to issue up to KD30 billion (60% of GDP) in sovereign bonds and sukuk with maturities of up to 50 years, following a hiatus in issuance since 2017. (Report here.) Importantly, it will increase the options available to the government to finance current and future fiscal deficits beyond drawing down reserves at the General Reserve Fund. Also, the establishment of a sovereign yield curve will be important to stimulate capital project financing. The new law should strengthen Kuwait's sovereign credit rating.

■ CPI inflation slowed to 2.3% in April, reaching its lowest level since September 2020 amid continued disinflation in most CPI components but especially food & beverages (4.6% y/y), the main contributor to the post-pandemic inflation landscape. (Chart 4.) (Report here.) Housing services inflation was unchanged (0.7%) as was the core CPI rate (2.4%), despite a deepening in transportation price deflation (-1.1% y/y).

■ The external current account surplus narrowed in 2024 but remained large at 29% of GDP. Kuwait's current account surplus narrowed for a second straight year in 2024, to KD14.3 billion (29% of GDP) from KD15.8 billion in 2023. (Chart 5.) (Write-up.) This was driven primarily by weaker oil export revenues (-12% y/y to KD21.1bn) and a recovery in workers' overseas remittances. Helping to partially offset a smaller merchandise trade surplus was a narrower services deficit due in part to lower spending overseas by Kuwaitis (for leisure, studies and medical tourism). Income (net) earned on foreign investments reached a historic high of KD10.2 billion (net) in 2024, up 2.3% y/y and equivalent



to 57% of the country's oil export revenues. ■ Domestic credit increased by a strong 1.3% m/m in April, the fastest monthly growth in three years, driving up growth to 5.7% y/y. (Report here.) Corporate credit growth, after 4 strong months, slowed to 0.2% m/m (5.3% y/y), while household credit grew 0.3% m/m, its fastest in 3 months. Credit was boosted in April by 'non-core' segments including securities lending, which may have benefitted from the rights issue of a local bank in April. Meanwhile, strong growth in private sector deposits pushed overall resident deposits up 1.6% m/m (6.0% y/y) in April.

Forecast

Economic growth to turn positive in 2025-26

GDP is expected to rebound in 2025 from two years of oil sector-led declines and post growth of nearly 2%. The upturn will reflect both oil GDP growth turning positive (+1.3% in 2025 from -6.9% in 2024) as Kuwait begins restoring 135 kb/d of crude oil output withheld since 2024 in line with its OPEC+ quota obligations and improving non-oil sector performance. On the latter, there are already signs of a recovery across various metrics in Q2 – such as the PMI, credit, and real estate activity (see Latest developments section above) – following a dip in Q1 that we believe partly reflected seasonal factors including Ramadan (which fell in March). This improvement strengthens our view that a pick-up in non-oil growth in 2025 to 2.5% (and higher in 2026) from 1.8% last year remains feasible.

We see only limited direct downside risk to Kuwait from the ongoing US-led international trade war, given small non-oil trade exposures. A \$5/bbl drop in oil prices from our \$70/bbl 2025-26 baseline would widen the fiscal deficit further (see below). But with consolidation efforts already underway and the new public debt law providing extra financing

flexibility, we believe that the immediate impact on fiscal decision-making – and therefore any fresh downside risks to economic growth – would be relatively modest. Moreover, the initial downside risk to oil prices from weaker global demand has been offset by the fresh upside risk to prices from the escalating Israel-Iran conflict.

We still see the non-oil growth dynamic being shaped by a combination of government efforts to rein in the fiscal deficit and softness in consumer spending on the one hand, but signs of a pick-up in business and investment spending on the other. Declines in consumer outlays – partly payback from a period of super-strong growth in 2021-22 but also tight control of government wage spending – may be close to bottoming-out, but we do not expect a sharp improvement over the coming year. Rising investment is reflected in higher project awards, stronger business credit growth, steadily increasing real estate activity and potential interest rate cuts ahead. Government efforts to speedup execution of key development projects will help, despite a small cut in budgeted capex this year.

One key upside risk to growth is the potential passage of the housing finance ('mortgage') law over coming months, which would trigger higher household borrowing and related consumer spending. However, the full impact of the law once approved will be felt more over time than right away, given the parallel requirement for a major infrastructure rollout. The housing finance law is one part of the government's plan to promote private sector growth and diversify the economy away from oil under the Vision 2035 agenda.

Progress being made on fiscal reform

The government has made some important strides in addressing the issue of serial fiscal deficits in recent months. These include repricing government fees and services, hiking fines and penalties and the introduction of a 15% minimum top-up tax on multinationals from January 2025 in line with the OECD BEPS program. Moreover, spending in the FY25/26 budget was unchanged from the previous year at KD24.5bn. Despite this restraint, we see the deficit widening to 8% of GDP from an estimated 4% in FY24/25, due to an 11% drop in oil revenues driven by a lower oil price of \$70/bbl versus \$80/bbl last year. This would be the tenth deficit in the past eleven years.

Improving fiscal sustainability will be a multi-year event, meaning another tight spending round and more revenue-boosting measures in FY26/27. Our forecast assumes the introduction of excise taxes on tobacco and sugary drinks from FY26/27, and VAT at 5% a year later, which together could yield 1-2% of GDP (versus expected non-oil receipts of 6% this year). We factor in spending growth of only 1% per year this year and next, consistent with the government's push for efficiencies and savings across the public sector, and potentially some subsidy cuts. However, within the overall total we see scope for higher capex, which was cut by a cumulative 35% in the past four budgets to help address the deficit. Tight fiscal policy would inevitably weigh on demand and spending in the economy, but also cut the deficit to 6% of GDP by FY26/27 assuming unchanged oil prices. This would be broadly in line with the IMF recommendation of fiscal consolidation at a pace of 1-2% per year.

Passage of the public debt law in April (following an eight-year hiatus) provides increased flexibility in financing any future deficits and eases pressure on liquid reserve drawdowns at the General Reserve Fund, about which officials have warned in recent years. We see most of this year's deficit being financed by debt, with an initial focus on local debt issuance. Even if three-quarters of the deficit were debt financed, the government's debt-to-GDP ratio would rise to 9%, which is still very low by international standards. The debt law and progress on fiscal reforms more generally also helps to address concerns of credit rating agencies who have cut the sovereign rating since the pandemic.

Inflation moderate, interest rates could ease

Having recorded a gradual but broad-based decline so far this year, we see CPI inflation remaining close to current levels (2.3%) for the rest of 2025, weighed down by moderate non-oil growth and subdued consumer spending but potentially pushed up slightly by the impact of the weaker US dollar on local import prices. There is some upside price risk ahead from possible subsidy cuts or hikes in indirect taxes. The Central Bank of Kuwait is expected to lower interest rates (discount rate currently at 4%) at a more gradual pace than the US Fed over coming quarters, given its relatively slow pace of tightening in 2022-23. Futures markets now expect 50 bps of further Fed cuts this year and 50 bps in 2026.

Reforms would unlock faster economic growth

Longer term, unlocking sustainably faster rates of non-oil economic growth will require a range of structural reforms (such as to the business climate, the labor market and public sector efficiency) and higher rates of investment – both areas where Kuwait has lagged its Gulf peers in recent years amid political and bureaucratic constraints. The government formed in May 2024 has been more active on laws and economic reforms (especially fiscal policy) than its predecessors, though presentation of its multi-year work agenda was delayed in April 2025, around the time of major global market volatility due to tariffs.

In the oil sector, earlier OPEC-related cuts have left domestic output around 20% below capacity of 3.0 mb/d, implying strong growth potential if global oil market conditions allow. State oil firm KPC plans to raise capacity to 4.0 mb/d by 2035, having recently completed a big expansion of the refining sector.



Net profit up 42.3% as bank expands presence and strengthens customer trust

# ABK-Egypt reports strong results for first quarter of 2025

KUWAIT CITY, June 18: Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait – Egypt (ABK-Egypt), reported strong Q1 2025 financial results with Net Profit standing at EGP 1.3 billion, reflecting an increase of 42.3% for 31 March 2025 compared to same period last year after excluding foreign exchange revaluation impact. Net Interest Income grew 26.2% to reach EGP 1.8 billion compared to EGP 1.4 billion in the same period of the last year.

Despite the challenging economic landscape, the Bank managed to further expand its total footings with Total Assets recording a 10.2% increase in the end of the Q1 2025 to reach EGP 156 billion compared to EGP 141.6 billion in December 2024. Customer Deposits grew by 12% to reach EGP 134.1 billion compared to EGP 119.9 billion in December 2024. Furthermore, the Bank's Total Gross Loans Portfolio grew by 15.8% to reach EGP 80.2 billion compared to EGP 69.3 billion in December 2024. Non-Performing Loans (NPL) ratio recorded 2.04% at the end of March 2025 compared to 1.74% at the end of December 2024.

Commenting on the results, Mr. Ali Marafi, Chairman of ABK-Egypt stated, "Over the course of our operational journey that is close to ten years in the Egyptian market, the Bank succeeded in achieving robust growth rates across all financial indicators and managed to demonstrate its strong presence, whilst carefully adhering to all risk management practices to best navigate challenging market conditions and ensure achieving its sustainable success and expansion goals."

Mr. Marafi also confirmed that ABK-Egypt has always been keen on prioritizing corporate social responsibility as an integral part of its well-articulated strategy. Since it started operating in Egypt, the Bank has proactively played a leading role in supporting the communities in which it operates through various social initiatives that support the development of the education and healthcare sectors in addition to providing financial relief to the underprivileged. The Bank has also made various contributions to help integrate individuals with disabilities and improve the lives of children, women, and families in need.

Mr. Marafi noted that ABK-Egypt will continue to support development plans in Egypt in cooperation with the relevant authorities. He added that the Bank remains committed to providing the necessary financing to assist individual and corporate clients in carrying out their operations and expanding their activities. This thereby strengthens trust in the Bank as a preferred banking partner in the Egyptian banking sector.



Mr. Ali Marafi, Chairman of ABK-Egypt

■ Mr. Ali Marafi: Over the course of our operational journey, the Bank succeeded in achieving robust growth rates across all financial indicators and managed to demonstrate its strong presence.



Mr. Khaled El Salawy Chief Executive Officer and Managing Director ABK-Egypt

■ Mr. Khaled El Salawy: Our vision will remain focused on providing experiences that simplify and enrich people's lives through our range of innovative and secure banking solutions that serve all customer segments.

Moreover, we maintain a positive outlook regarding market conditions and will continue to support all endeavors led by the Egyptian government and the Central Bank of Egypt that pave the way for a brighter future."

Mr. El Salawy additionally stated that, in line with the Bank's ambitious growth strategy and plans to expand its geographical presence to best cater for its growing customer base in Egypt, ABK-Egypt recently opened its new branch located in Palm Hills, 6th of October. This recent opening brings the Bank's network to 46 branches covering 18 governorates across the country. Furthermore, the Bank will continue to prioritize the enhancement of its suite of offerings and upgrading its service quality to ensure a distinguished banking experience across all channels and to maximize value for its customers.

**International Certification**

It is worth mentioning that ABK-Egypt recently obtained the Payment Card Industry Data Security Standard (PCI DSS) certification V4.0.1, a globally recognized benchmark that guarantees the highest standards in payment cards data protection. The Bank was certified after successfully passing a full audit process and a comprehensive review on Bank's systems and technical procedures related to electronic payment cards data processing.

Obtaining this certification reflects the Bank's full commitment to the regulations and directives of the Central Bank of Egypt and will further strengthen its ongoing efforts to implement global best practices in information security and the protection of customer data from threats or breaches.

The PCI DSS certification marks an important milestone in the Bank's journey to solidify its credibility in the Egyptian banking market and support its strategy aimed at developing digital services while ensuring the highest levels of security in banking transactions – offering customers a safe and reliable experience.

This achievement is the result of effective collaboration across various divisions within the bank, as well as the presence of highly qualified personnel with the technical expertise and skills required to implement advanced security solutions.

Previously, ABK-Egypt had also obtained the ISO/IEC 27001:2013 certification in Information Security Management Systems, making it one of the few Egyptian banks to earn this international accreditation. This stands as further proof of its excellence in applying security governance standards and ensuring data confidentiality and professional handling.

# Global shares up, oil slips on ME tension

Investors watch Fed amid Mideast risk

HONG KONG, June 18, (AP): Global shares were mostly higher Wednesday and oil prices slipped as investors awaited a decision on interest rates by the Federal Reserve, which was expected to keep its key interest rate unchanged for a straight time.

Oil prices continued to gyrate as the conflict in the Middle East intensified. U.S. benchmark crude oil fell 84 cents to \$72.43 per barrel. Brent crude, the international standard, lost 86 cents to \$75.59 per barrel. Crude prices had jumped more than 4% on Tuesday.

Fighting between Israel and Iran has driven prices for crude oil and gasoline higher because Iran is a major oil exporter sitting on the narrow Strait of Hormuz, through which much of the world's crude passes. Past conflicts in the area have caused spikes in oil prices, though they tend to abate in the absence of disruptions in oil supplies.

In share trading, Germany's DAX rose 0.1% to 23,455.04, while Britain's FTSE 100 added 0.2% to 8,853.62. The CAC 40 in Paris picked up 0.2% to 7,701.69.

Japan reported its exports fell in May as the auto industry was hit by Trump's higher tariffs, with exports to the U.S. falling more than 11%. But Tokyo's Nikkei 225 jumped 0.9% to 38,885.15.

Hong Kong's Hang Seng dropped 1.1% to 23,710.69 while the Shanghai Composite Index added less than 0.1% to 3,388.81.

The Kospi in Seoul gained 0.7% to 2,972.19 while Australia's S&P/ASX 200 shed 0.1% to 8,531.20.

The nearly unanimous expectation among traders and economists is that the Fed will make no move as it wraps



A dealer watches computer monitors near the screens showing the Korea Composite Stock Price Index (KOSPI), left, and the foreign exchange rate between U.S. dollar and South Korean won at a dealing room of Hana Bank in Seoul, South Korea, Wednesday, June 18, 2025. (AP)

up its policy meeting on Wednesday. The U.S. central bank has hesitated to lower interest rates and it has been on hold this year after cutting at the end of last year. It's waiting to see how much Trump's tariffs will hurt the economy and raise inflation, which has remained relatively tame recently and is near the Fed's target of 2%.

On Tuesday, U.S. stocks slumped under the weight of higher oil prices and weaker than expected retail sales in May.

The S&P 500 fell 0.8% and the Dow Jones Industrial Average dropped 0.7%. The Nasdaq composite fell 0.9%.

Pricier oil can help stocks of companies in the solar industry because they increase the incentive to switch to alternative energy sources. But solar stocks tumbled Tuesday on the possibility that Congress may phase out tax credits for solar, wind and other energy sources that produce fewer emissions

that change the Earth's climate. Enphase Energy dropped 24% and First Solar fell 17.9%.

Treasury yields fell after a report said shoppers spent less last month at U.S. retailers than the month before. Solid spending has been one of the linchpins keeping the economy out of a recession, but part of May's drop may have simply been a return to more normal trends.

In April, some shoppers had rushed to buy automobiles to get ahead of Trump's tariffs.

Verve Therapeutics soared 81.5% after Eli Lilly said it would buy the company developing genetic medicines for cardiovascular disease in a \$1 billion deal that could be worth up to \$1.3 billion if certain conditions are met. Lilly's stock fell 2%.

In currency trading Wednesday, the U.S. dollar fell to 144.97 Japanese yen from 145.29 yen. The euro edged higher to \$1.1506 from \$1.1480.

# Borrowers must wait for relief

## Fed unlikely to cut rates

WASHINGTON, June 18, (AP): The inflation-fighters at the Federal Reserve are expected to keep their key interest rate unchanged Wednesday for the fourth straight time. That's likely to shift attention to how many interest rate cuts they forecast for this year.

It's widely expected that the 19 Fed officials that participate in the central bank's interest-rate decisions will project two rate cuts for this year, as they did in December and March. But some economists expect that one or both of those cuts could be pushed back to 2026.

The Fed will almost certainly keep the short-term rate it controls at about 4.3%, economists say, where it has stood since the central bank last cut rates in December. Since then, it has stayed on the sidelines while it evaluates the impact of President Donald Trump's tariffs and other policy changes on the economy and prices.

Inflation has been cooling since January, and many economists say that without the higher import taxes, the Fed would likely be cutting its rate further. According to the Fed's preferred measure, inflation dropped to just 2.1% in April, the lowest since last September. Core inflation - which exclude the volatile food and energy categories - was 2.5%.

Those figures suggest inflation is

largely coming under control, for now. Yet the Fed's short-term interest rate remains at an elevated level intended to slow growth and inflation. Some economists argue that with inflation cooling, the Fed could resume its rate reductions.

When the Fed reduces its rate, it often - though not always - leads to lower costs for consumer and business borrowing, including for mortgages, auto loans, and credit cards. Yet financial markets also influence the level of longer-term rates and can keep them elevated even if the Fed reduces the shorter-term rate it controls.

But Fed officials have said they want to see whether Trump's tariffs boost inflation and for how long. Economists generally believe a tariff hike should at least lead to a one-time increase in prices, as companies seek to offset the cost of higher duties. Many Fed officials, however, are worried that the tariffs could lead to more sustained inflation.

"While theory might suggest that (the Fed) should look through a one-time increase in prices, I would be uncomfortable staking the Fed's reputation and credibility on theory," Jeffrey Schmid, president of the Fed's Kansas City branch and a voting member of the Fed's interest-rate setting committee, said earlier this month.

The Trump White House has sharply ramped up pressure on Powell to reduce borrowing costs, with Trump himself calling the Fed chair a "numbskull" last week for not cutting. Other officials, including Vice President JD Vance and Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick, are also calling for a rate reduction.

Pushing the Fed to cut rates simply to save the government on its interest payments typically raises alarms among economists, because it would threaten the Fed's congressional mandate to focus on stable prices and maximum employment.

One of Trump's complaints is that the Fed isn't cutting rates even as other central banks around the world have reduced their borrowing costs, including in Europe, Canada, and the U.K. On Tuesday, the Bank of Japan kept its key short-term rate unchanged at 0.5%, after actually raising it recently.

But the European Central Bank, Bank of Canada, and Bank of England have reduced their rates this year in part because U.S. tariffs are weakening their economies. So far the U.S. economy is mostly solid, with the unemployment rate low.

The Bank of England has cut its rate twice this year but is expected to keep it unchanged at 4.25% when it meets Thursday.

90-day reprieve aims to keep app running

# Trump will ink EO extending deadline for TikTok's Chinese owner to sell app

WASHINGTON, June 18, (AP): President Donald Trump will sign an executive order this week to extend a deadline for TikTok's Chinese owner to divest the popular video sharing app, the White House announced Tuesday.

Trump had signed an order in early April to keep TikTok running for an additional 75 days after a potential deal to sell the app to American owners was put on ice.

"As he has said many times, President Trump does not want TikTok to go dark," White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt said in a statement. "This extension will last 90 days, which the Administration will spend working to ensure this deal is closed so that the American people can continue to use TikTok with the assurance that their data is safe and secure."

Trump had told reporters aboard Air Force One as he flew back to Washington early Tuesday from the Group of Seven summit in Canada that he "probably" would extend the deadline again.

Trump also said he thinks Chinese President Xi Jinping will "ultimately approve" a deal to divest TikTok's business in the United States.

It will be the third time Trump has extended the deadline.

The first one was through an executive order on Jan. 20, his first day in office, after the platform went dark briefly when the ban approved by Congress - and upheld by the U.S. Supreme Court - took effect.

The second was in April, when White House officials



The TikTok app logo is shown on an iPhone on Friday, Jan. 17, 2025, in Houston. (AP)

believed they were nearing a deal to spin off TikTok into a new company with U.S. ownership that fell apart after China backed out following Trump's tariff announcement.

It is not clear how many times Trump can - or will - keep extending the ban as the government continues to try to negotiate a deal for TikTok, which is owned by China's ByteDance. Trump has amassed more than 15 million followers on TikTok since he joined last year, and he has credited the trendsetting platform with helping him gain traction among young voters. He said in January that he has a "warm spot for TikTok."

Exports suffer from Trump's tariffs

# Japan records trade deficit

TOKYO, June 18, (AP): Japan's exports fell in May as shipments of autos to the U.S. dropped nearly 25% from a year earlier due to higher tariffs imposed by President Donald Trump.

Exports fell 1.7% year-on-year, which was less than the decline analysts had forecast, the Finance Ministry reported Wednesday. Imports sank 7.7%, reflecting weakening domestic demand and worse than the 2% fall recorded in April.

The trade deficit in May was 637.6

billion yen, or \$4.4 billion.

Japan has yet to reach a deal with Trump on resolving the tariffs issue, with Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba saying after he met with the U.S. president at the Group of Seven summit in Canada earlier this week that the two sides were unable to agree on some points.

Trump has imposed a 25% additional tariff on Japanese autos and a 24% tariff on other goods. He recently said the auto tariff may become even higher.

Ishiba has emphasized that Japan is an important ally in a key bilateral defense alliance with Washington and that he is pushing to protect his own country's national interests.

The auto industry is a pillar of Japan's economy, and Japan exports more than a million vehicles to the U.S. a year. Tokyo has repeatedly stressed that automakers like Toyota and Honda produce cars in North America, contributing to the economy and creating jobs.





Embassy event in Kuwait highlights cultural events, scenic regions, and film-inspired travel.

British envoy welcomes growing Kuwaiti travel to UK

VisitBritain promotes new destinations and experiences to drive tourism to Britain this summer

KUWAIT CITY, June 18: VisitBritain, Britain’s national tourism agency, and the British Embassy Kuwait, jointly hosted an afternoon tea showcasing the UK’s vibrant summer experiences and promoting travel beyond London. The event was hosted by Her Excellency Belinda Lewis, British Ambassador to Kuwait, at her official Residence and attended by members of the local media, travel influencers, and content creators.

Presenters showcased the breadth of Britain’s tourism offering, with a focus on destinations and experiences outside of London. They also highlighted major events taking place this summer, including world-class sporting moments such as the British Grand Prix at Silverstone and the Wimbledon tennis tournament, Bath’s festivities marking 250 years since the birth of renowned author Jane Austen, and the Liverpool Biennial, the UK’s largest contemporary art festival.

Her Excellency Belinda Lewis, British Ambassador to Kuwait, said: “We are delighted to welcome VisitBritain and media partners to the British Embassy today. As the long-standing bonds between the UK and Kuwait continue to strengthen, I am glad to see ever more Kuwaiti travelers choosing to visit the UK. The British Embassy is proud to support initiatives that encourage people to experience the rich diversity of that the UK’s home nations have to offer.”

Alongside the various summer experiences on offer, the event also outlined VisitBritain’s new global campaign, “Starring GREAT Britain”.



British envoy hosts immersive showcase celebrating heritage, art, and regional charm.

Launched earlier this year, the campaign taps into the growing trend of ‘set-jetting’, whereby travellers visit destinations featured in popular films and television shows - encouraging visitors to explore iconic filming loca-

tions across England, Scotland, and Wales.

Gary Robson, VisitBritain Director for Europe, Middle East & India, said: “Our collaboration with the British Embassy Kuwait is an invaluable opportunity to strengthen relationships in one of our key GCC markets. We’re working closely with local media, influencers, and the travel trade to showcase the very best of Britain and encourage visitors to explore beyond London. Our culturally relevant campaigns, delivered in English and Arabic, are tailored to resonate locally through popular platforms such as Snapchat, which plays a key role in our engagement strategy across Kuwait and Saudi Arabia.

In 2024, Kuwaiti nationals made 162,000 trips to the UK, representing a 6% increase from 2023, with an average spend of £2,641 per visitor. The Gulf region is the UK’s tenth-largest source market globally, with 1.04 million visits, and Kuwait is forecast to have the third-highest visitor spend among GCC countries this year.

A major driver of this growth is the UK’s Electronic Travel Authorisation (ETA) scheme, which has made visiting easier than ever. Kuwaiti nationals made 148,854 applications between February 2024 and March 2025, the second highest in the Gulf after Saudi Arabia. Kuwait and the UK also boast a number of regular direct flight connections, with 16 direct weekly flights from Kuwait City to London, along with additional services to Manchester.

Recognizing high achievers in 10th and 12th CBSE exams

IWA and Students India Kuwait host prestigious Student Awards Ceremony

KUWAIT CITY, June 18: The Islamic Women’s Association (IWA) Kuwait and Students India Kuwait jointly organized the Student Excellence Award Distribution Ceremony. The Excellence Award for students who achieved high results in the 10th and 12th CBSE Board examinations was distributed at the Oxford English School, Ab-basiya.

About 100 students, both overall toppers and subject toppers, were awarded from the registered children. Representatives of various social and cultural organizations in Kuwait, including Dr. Ameer Ahmed, Munawwar Mohammed, Abdul Aziz, Abdurrahman, Shafas, Mohammed Rafi, Afzal Khan, Kiran Reddy, Muna, Fatima, Naureen Naushad, Dr. Susovana Sujith Nair, Shiny Frank, Shilpa Mohanan, Dr. Shamima, Dr. Jubi Leo, Simi Baiju, Dr. Tasneem, Jasina, Anu, Dr. Neetu Mariam Chacko, Samiya Faisal, Faisal Manjeri, Warda Anwar, Mehbooba Anees, Firoz Hameed, Anwar Saeed, Sabikh Yusuf, Sijil Khan, Najma Sharif, Murad Anwar Saeed, and Hayyan Naseem, attended the program and presented the awards.

The program was presided over by IWA President Samiya Faisal and inaugurated by KIG Acting President Faisal Manjeri. In his inaugural speech, he mentioned that education is a great process that should continue from birth to death and that education should help create a person with good values and culture. Students India President Murad Anwar Saeed welcomed the gathering. Program Convener Aysha Faisal addressed the audience and controlled the distribution of awards. Saiba Anees and Aswa Khalid entertained the audience with their melodious songs. KIG General Secretary Firoz Hameed proposed the vote of thanks. Nawal Farheen conducted the qiraat.



Photos during the Student Excellence Award distribution ceremony.



Photo from the event.

Pakistani Businessman hosts dinner for Pir Amjad Hussain

A great Dinner party was hosted and arranged by Well Known Pakistani Businessman, CEO Grand Pearl Co, Mr. Shamshad Khan Tanoli in honor of Pir Amjad Hussain on his return from Hajj. Prominent figures of Pakistani Community attended the event. Faisal Majeed from Pakistan Embassy of Kuwait was the chief guest and graced the event. Members of Pakistan Business Community and Heads of Different Community Organizations attended the event.

Mr. Inaam Morganite conducted the event gracefully and extended his warm wishes. Other Participants also congratulated Pir Amjad Hussain on his return from Hajj. At the End, Dua was offered and lavish dinner was served!

PakDonors, City Bus team up for May blood drives

KUWAIT CITY, June, 18: Pak-Donors successfully organized its 28th and 29th blood donation drives in partnership with City Bus, held on 23rd and 30th May 2025 respectively at the Al Adan Hospital Blood Bank.

City Bus staff and drivers turned out in large numbers to donate blood, demonstrating a strong commitment to saving lives and supporting the community.

These efforts showcased the true spirit of “Humanity Beyond Nationality”, a message that PakDonors has continuously promoted through its noble initiatives.

With the support of volunteers, donors, and our community partners like City Bus, PakDonors continues to fulfill its mission of encouraging regular blood donation and creating awareness about its importance.

These back-to-back drives are



PakDonors successfully organized its 28th and 29th blood donation drives.

a testament to the trust, teamwork, and collective responsibility shared between PakDonors, its volunteers, and socially responsible partners across Kuwait. PakDonors Team thank City Bus for their collaboration and every donor who stepped forward to give the gift of life.



## Academy to honor Parton, Allen, Thomas for humanitarian work

## Cruise finally getting an Oscar... without a stunt

LOS ANGELES, June 18, (AP): Thirty-five years after Tom Cruise received his first Oscar nomination, he's finally getting a trophy. It's not for his death-defying stunts, either. At least, not exclusively.

Cruise, choreographer Debbie Allen and "Do The Right Thing" production designer Wynn Thomas have all been selected to receive honorary Oscar statuettes at the annual Governors Awards, the film academy said Tuesday. Dolly Parton will also be recognized with the Jean Hersholt Humanitarian Award for her decades-long charitable work in literacy and education.

"This year's Governors Awards will celebrate four legendary individuals whose extraordinary careers and commitment to our filmmaking community continue to leave a lasting impact," Academy President Janet Yang said in a statement.

Most recipients of the prize historically have not yet won a competitive Oscar themselves. Cruise, 62, has been nominated four times, twice for best actor in "Born on the Fourth of July" and "Jerry Maguire," once for supporting actor in "Magnolia" and once for best picture with "Top Gun: Maverick." He's also championed theatrical moviegoing and big-scale Hollywood production through the coronavirus pandemic.

Yang spotlighted Cruise's "incredible commitment to our filmmaking community, to the theatrical experience, and to the stunts community."

Allen, 75, has never been nominated for an Oscar. But the multi-hyphenate entertainer - she also acts and produces - has played an integral role in the Oscars show, having choreographed seven ceremonies over the years. Four of those were nominated for

prime-time Emmy awards.

A nomination had also eluded Thomas, a leading production designer whose films have often gone on to best picture nominations and even one win, for Ron Howard's "A Beautiful Mind." Thomas is most known for his long-term collaboration with filmmaker Spike Lee, from "She's Gotta Have It" and "Malcolm X" through "Da 5 Bloods."

Parton has been nominated twice for best original song, for "9 to 5" and, in 2006, "Travelin' Thru" from the film "Transamerica." But her honor celebrates her humanitarian efforts over the years, through organizations like the Dollywood Foundation and the literary program "Dolly Parton's Imagination Library."

Yang said Parton "exemplifies the spirit" of the Jean Hersholt Humanitarian Award.



Tom Cruise appears at the premiere of 'Top Gun: Maverick' at the 75th international film festival, Cannes, southern France on May 18, 2022. (AP)

### People

#### Dixon exposes

## Perry sued for sexual assault

LOS ANGELES, June 18, (AP): An actor who worked on the Tyler Perry-created TV drama "The Oval" has filed a lawsuit alleging Perry leveraged his industry power to repeatedly sexually assault and harass him while keeping him quiet.

The lawsuit filed in Los Angeles Superior Court by actor Derek Dixon, who appeared on 85 episodes of the BET series, seeks at least \$260 million in damages.

Mr. Perry took his success and power and used his considerable

influence in the entertainment industry to create a coercive, sexually exploitative dynamic with Mr. Dixon - initially promising him career advancement and creative opportunities, such as producing his pilot and casting him in his show, only to subject him to escalating harassment, assault and battery, and professional retaliation," the lawsuit says.

The lawsuit was filed Friday and first reported Tuesday by TMZ.

Perry's attorney, Matthew Boyd, said its allegations are false.

"This is an individual who got close to Tyler Perry for what now appears to be nothing more than setting up a scam," Boyd said in a statement Tuesday. "But Tyler will not be shaken down, and we are confident these fabricated claims of harassment will fail."

The lawsuit says that Perry first noticed Dixon in 2019 when Dixon was part of the event staff at a Perry party, and later offered an audition.

Dixon would first appear in a small role on the Perry series "Ruthless" before getting the bigger role on the political drama "The Oval."

Perry soon began sending unwanted text messages to Dixon, according to the lawsuit, which includes screenshots of several of them.

The lawsuit says Perry offered Dixon an increasingly prominent role on the show as his sexual advances became more aggressive.

The actor says he tried to remain friendly while maintaining boundaries.

"Dixon did his best to tiptoe around Mr. Perry's sexual aggression while keeping on Mr. Perry's good side," the lawsuit says. "Mr. Perry made it clear to Dixon that if Dixon ignored Perry, Dixon's character would 'die.'"

The lawsuit says Perry eventually sexually assaulted Dixon on "multiple occasions," including an instance where he "forcibly pulled off Mr. Dixon's clothing."

Dixon clearly told Perry "No," but was initially ignored until he was able to de-escalate the situation and change the subject, according to the lawsuit.

The following day, Perry apologized, and told Dixon he would work with Dixon on a TV pilot Dixon was seeking to produce.

Dixon later received a raise that the lawsuit suggests was part of an attempt to keep him quiet.

He said the fear of his character dying kept him quiet as intended.

Perry also produced and bought the rights to the pilot, called "Losing It," but the lawsuit alleges Perry had no intention of selling the show and was using it only for leverage over Dixon.

The lawsuit describes several other assaults, including one where Dixon was staying in a guest room of Perry's house when Perry entered the room uninvited and behaved inappropriately, the lawsuit alleges..

Dixon would eventually move from Atlanta, home to Perry's production studio, to Los Angeles to put distance between the two of them.

### Film



This image released by Apple TV+ shows Damson Idris as Joshua Pearce, (left), and Brad Pitt as Sonny Hayes in a scene from 'F1 The Movie.' (AP)

#### Brad Pitt powers the film with calm and cool charisma

## 'F1' brings full-throttle Formula One drama

LOS ANGELES, June 18, (AP): The wide-screen spectacle of Formula One gets a gleaming, rip-roaring workout in Joseph Kosinski's "F1," a fine-tuned machine of a movie that, in its most riveting racing scenes, approaches a kind of high-speed splendor.

Kosinski, who last endeavored to put moviegoers in the seat of a fighter jet in "Top Gun: Maverick," has moved to the open cockpits of Formula One with much the same affection, if not outright need, for speed. A lot of the same team is back. Jerry Bruckheimer produces. Ehren Kruger, a co-writer on "Maverick," takes sole credit here. Hans Zimmer, a co-composer previously, supplies the thumping score.

And, again, our central figure is an older, high-flying cowboy plucked down in an ultramodern, gas-guzzling conveyance to teach a younger generation about old-school ingenuity and, maybe, the enduring appeal of denim.

But whereas Tom Cruise is a particularly forward-moving action star, Brad Pitt, who stars as the driving-addicted Sonny Hayes in "F1," has always been a more arrestingly poised presence. Think of the way he so calmly and half-interestedly faces off with Bruce Lee in Quentin Tarantino's "Once Upon a Time ... in Hollywood." In the opening scene of "F1," he's sleeping in a van with headphones on when someone rouses him. He splashes some water on his face and walks a few steps over to the Daytona oval, where he quickly enters his team's car, in the midst of a 24-hour race. Pitt goes from zero to 180 mph in a minute.

Sonny, a long-ago phenom who crashed out of Formula One decades earlier and has since been racing any vehicle, even a taxi, he can get behind the wheel of, is approached by an old friend, Ruben Cervantes (Javier Bardem) about joining his flagging F1 team, APX. Sonny turns him down at first but, of course, he joins and "F1" is off to the races.

The title sequence, exquisitely timed to the syncopated rhythms of Zimmer's score, is a blistering introduction. The hot-shot rookie driver Noah Pearce (Damson Idris) is just running a practice lap, but Kosinski, his camera adeptly moving in and out of the cockpit, uses the moment to plunge us into the high-tech world of Formula One, where every inch of the car is connected to digital sensors monitored by a watchful team. Here, that in-



This image released by Apple TV+ shows Brad Pitt, (left), and Kerry Condon in a scene from 'F1 The Movie.' (AP)

cludes technical director Kate McKenna (Kerry Condon) and Kaspar Molinski (Kim Bodnia), the team's chief.

Verisimilitude is of obvious importance to the filmmakers, who bathe this very Formula One-authorized film in all the sleek operations and globe-trotting spectacle of the sport. That Apple, which produced the film, would even go for such a high-priced summer movie about Formula One is a testament to the upswing in popularity of a sport once quite niche in America, and of the halo effects of both the Netflix series "Formula 1: Drive to Survive" and the much-celebrated driver Lewis Hamilton, an executive producer on "F1."

Whether "F1" pleases diehards I'll leave to more ardent followers of the circuit. But what I can say definitively is that Claudio Miranda knows how to shoot it. The cinematographer, who has shot all of Kosinski's films as well as wonders like Ang Lee's "Life of Pi," brings Formula One to vivid, visceral life. When "F1" heads to the big races, Miranda is always simultaneously capturing the zooming cars from the asphalt while back-grounding it with the sweeping spectacle of a course like the UK's fabled Silverstone Circuit.

OK, you might be thinking, so the racing is good; is there a

story? There's what I'd call enough of one, though you might have to go to the photo finish to verify that. When Sonny shows up, and rapidly turns one practice vehicle into toast, it's clear that he's going to be an agent of chaos at APX, a low-ranking team that's in heavy debt and struggling to find a car that performs.

This gives Pitt a fine opportunity to flash his charisma, playing Sonny as an obsessive who refuses any trophy and has no real interest in money, either. The flashier, media-ready Noah watches Sonny's arrival with skepticism, and two begin more as rivals than teammates. Idris is up to the mano-a-mano challenge, but he's limited by a role ultimately revolving around - and reducing to - a young Black man learning a lesson in work ethic.

A relationship does develop, but "F1" struggles to get its characters out of the starting blocks, keeping them closer to the clichés they start out as. The actor who, more than anyone, keeps the momentum going is Condon, playing an aerodynamics specialist whose connection with Pitt's Sonny is immediate. Just as she did in between another pair of headstrong men in "The Banshees of Inisherin," Condon is a rush of naturalism.

If there's something preventing "F1" from hitting full speed, it's its insistence on having its characters constantly voice Sonny's motivations. The same holds true on the race course, where broadcast commentary narrates virtually every moment of the drama. That may be a necessity for a sport where the crucial strategies of hot tires and pit-stop timing aren't quite household concepts. But the best car race movies - from "Grand Prix" to "Senna" to "Ferrari" - know when to rely on nothing but the roar of an engine.

"F1" steers predictably to the finish line, cribbing here and there from sports dramas before it. (Tobias Menzies plays a board member with uncertain corporate goals.) When "F1" does, finally, quiet down, for one blissful moment, the movie, almost literally, soars. It's not quite enough to forget all the high-octane macho dramas before it, but it's enough to glimpse another road "F1" might have taken.

"F1," an Apple Studios productions released by Warner Bros., is rated PG-13 by the Motion Picture Association for strong language and action. Running time: 155 minutes. Three stars out of four.

### Variety

**NEW YORK:** The possibility that music mogul Sean "Diddy" Combs might testify at his federal sex trafficking trial all but vanished Tuesday after his lawyer predicted a defense presentation lasting as little as two days and the judge said jurors could be deliberating next week.

Attorney Marc Agnifilo told Judge Arun Subramanian that the defense presentation could last less than two days and not more than five, an estimate that would likely not apply if Combs testified. Testimony by two of his former girlfriends consumed two of the trial's six weeks.

Combs, 55, has pleaded not guilty to sex trafficking and racketeering conspiracy charges. He has been jailed at a federal lockup in Brooklyn since his September arrest at a Manhattan hotel.

Assistant US Attorney Maureen Comey said prosecutors expected to rest Friday.

Earlier in the trial, Combs' ex-girlfriends Casandra "Cassie" Ventura and a woman who testified under the pseudonym "Jane" told jurors that Combs used threats and monetary incentives to coerce them into frequent multi-day party marathons where Combs watched, directed and sometimes filmed them engaging with male workers. Both women said they just wanted to be with Combs.

On Tuesday, the jury was shown nearly 20 minutes of explicit video recordings of those "tense" encounters from 2012 and 2014 as a defense lawyer cross examined a law enforcement agent about the tapes. Ventura's relationship with Combs lasted from 2007 to 2018 while Jane dated him from 2021 until his arrest last fall.

As the recordings were played, one juror seemed to turn away from his video screen for most of the time although he kept on earphones carrying the sound to jurors. Spectators were blocked from seeing or hearing the graphic evidence. Other jurors sat back in their seats as the recordings played on the screens in front of them.

A day earlier, prosecutors had shown jurors about two minutes of snippets of the recordings. (AP)



**NEW YORK:** The Asian Art Museum in US San Francisco is looking to deepen international collaboration and contribute to global cultural exchanges.

The museum is well positioned to engage in global conversations on identity, heritage, and artistic innovation, said its director and CEO Soyoung Lee at a media roundtable in New York on Monday.



Combs

"Asia is not just a region, it's half the world and all of time," she said.

Upcoming exhibitions will focus on shared cultural themes such as ritual, trade, and material traditions, highlighting how Asian societies are historically and culturally connected.

"Instead of presenting art strictly by modern nation states, we are exploring ways to show how different Asian cultures are connected," Lee said.

The museum is also addressing local and institutional challenges, including declining international tourism and generational identity gaps. To respond, it has expanded free admission days, education programs, and community partnerships across San Francisco.

Lee noted that many second- and third-generation Asian Americans may not speak their heritage languages or feel strong cultural ties. The museum, she said, aims to offer multiple points of access for visitors to explore identity on their own terms. "People are looking for connection and belonging," she said. "The museum should be a space for that."

Museums are also reassessing how success is measured, with growing emphasis on long-term engagement and community impact over attendance figures. "Museums must be rooted in scholarship," Lee said, "but also responsive to the questions of today." (Xinhua)



Young dancers reclaim ancestral moves

In Türkiye, revival of dance traditions blends old with new

ANKARA, June 18, (Xinhua): Inside a dance studio tucked away in a residential neighborhood of Ankara, the rhythmic pulse reverberates off the mirrored walls. A troupe of Turkish dancers moves in unison, their steps embodying centuries of Anatolian heritage.

Moments later, the same floor might pulse to the rhythm of hip-hop or sway to lively Latin beats, exemplifying a rising cultural phenomenon sweeping through Türkiye's urban centers: the blending of traditional and modern dance styles.

Once confined largely to rural festivals and weddings, traditional Turkish dances such as the Zeybek, Halay, and Horon are finding new life in the heart of big cities.

From Istanbul's multicultural districts to Izmir's seafront studios and Ankara's refined quarters, a new generation is embracing the choreography of their ancestors.

"Especially in the urban landscape, there is significant interest in

dance trends such as hip-hop, Latin, tango, rap, or R&B," said Murat Erdem, a dance instructor and choreographer who runs a dance studio in Türkiye's capital.

"But there is also genuine interest in traditional or folkloric dances, which are our heritage and need to be protected," the seasoned instructor pointed out.

To foster that connection to the past, Erdem's studio offers free Sunday classes dedicated exclusively to traditional dances. Weekday lessons, offered for a fee, draw in a steady crowd eager to learn dances passed down through generations.

"We teach Zeybek and Halay, among others. Some friends warned me that this neighborhood would show no interest in traditional dances. But on the contrary, people keep coming," he said.

What surprises many, including Erdem, is the diversity of those signing up. "It's not just middle-aged people. Younger generations are



People learn to dance in Ankara, Türkiye, on June 12, 2025. (Xinhua)

showing enthusiasm too. They want to reconnect with their heritage. This music makes them feel good," he added. "It's a form of self-expression that's clearly on the rise in big cities."

Beyond personal meanings, dancing holds deep social significance in Türkiye -- especially at weddings, where few cultural practices evoke

more emotional resonance.

In the Turkish psyche, a wedding is incomplete without dancing. With summer in full swing, it's wedding season in Türkiye. No matter the age or mood, guests are swept into a communal celebration that dissolves formality and channels unfiltered joy.

"Traditional dances are at the essence of our weddings," said Sibel Vural, a 46-year-old education consultant who has been taking lessons at Erdem's studio.

"I love to dance, so I wanted to learn more and practice for these wedding festivities," she explained.

During the learning process, Vural, like many of her classmates, rediscovered dance not only as a cultural tradition but also as a means of emotional and physical rejuvenation. "Dancing lessons have opened a whole new life for me," she said. "It brought me physical healing, and I'm very happy."

Vural's feeling is resonating with

more people. Across Türkiye, especially during the wedding season from May to October, dance floors fill with celebrants moving to the infectious beats of traditional rhythms: the spirited and communal Halay line dances, the proud and slow steps of the Zeybek, and the fast-paced Horon from the Black Sea region.

Although dance styles differ across regions, they hold the same importance in preserving Türkiye's culture and traditions.

This joyful expression is now being deliberately cultivated in urban spaces, where traditional culture might once have been at risk of fading in the face of modernization.

In many dance studios, the line between history and contemporary trends is blurred: a class on the Halay might be followed by Latin salsa or hip-hop. Dancers switch from modern styles to traditional ones.

"People want to keep up with modern trends without forgetting their cultural heritage," Erdem said.

Variety

**MILAN:** Francesco Risso is stepping down as Marni creative director after a decade, the OTB Group announced Tuesday, marking yet another high-level creative shift in the fashion world.

OTB Chairman Renzo Rosso called Risso "a unique designer and an artist at heart," adding, "I wish him only the best for the future." The statement did not say when a new creative director would be announced.

It comes amid a number of high-level creative director shifts in the fashion world, including at Gucci, Chanel and Balenciaga, but also within the relatively small OTB group based in the northern region of Veneto and controlled by Diesel founder Rosso.. (AP)



Risso

**WASHINGTON:** Supreme Court Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson received more than \$2 million last year for her best-selling memoir, "Lovely One," according to her annual financial disclosure, released Tuesday.

Jackson's outside income exceeded that of her court colleagues combined, the reports showed. Justice Neil Gorsuch reported \$250,000 for the book he published last year, while Justice Sonia Sotomayor said she received \$134,000 in royalties and an advance for a new book due out next year.

The annual reports paint a partial picture of the justices' finances, as they are not required to reveal the value of their homes or, for those who are married, their spouses' salary. Their investments also are reported in ranges. (AP)

**BEIJING:** Under trending topic "Velu Peter Gana has passed away," fans of the renowned musician have gathered to grieve his death, leaving countless mournful and touching messages on Chinese social media.

The family of the 82-year-old musician on Tuesday announced in an online obituary that he had passed away peacefully on June 14 in the city of Chengdu, southwest China's Sichuan Province.

"The old gentleman's videos used to be a fixture of my social media feed. However, it had been a while since I'd seen an update from him. I had been wondering until I saw today's obituary. I thank him for his effort in spreading Chinese culture and striving toward national reunification," a netizen from Hubei Province posted on the Weibo social media platform. (Xinhua)

**LITTLE ROCK, Ark.:** A convicted murderer and former police chief known as the "Devil in the Ozarks" pleaded not guilty Tuesday to a charge stemming from his recent escape from an Arkansas prison.

Grant Hardin, who was captured June 6, appeared at the hearing via video. He pleaded not guilty to second-degree escape, was found to be indigent and was appointed a public defender.

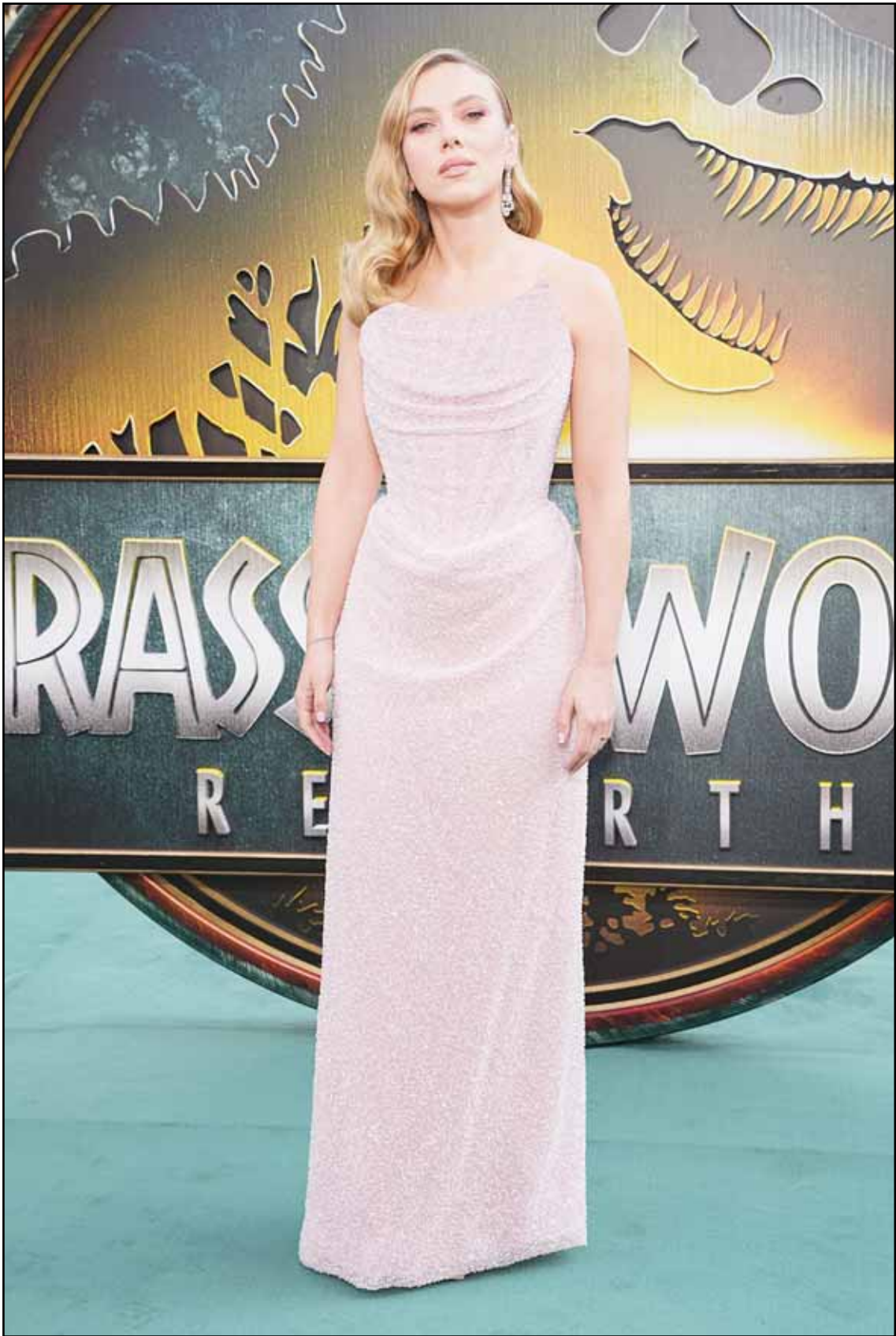
Hardin was captured 1.5 miles (2.4 kilometers) northwest of the Calico Rock prison from which he escaped on May 25. Authorities said he escaped by donning an outfit designed to look like a law enforcement uniform. (AP)

**ROME:** An 80-year-old man drove a compact luxury Mercedes-Benz A Class sedan down the landmark Spanish Steps in Rome early on Tuesday before getting stuck part way down, municipal police said in a statement.

The man tested negative for alcohol, and was cited on the spot for driving down the monument in Rome's historic center, police said. Police said the man, a resident of Rome, was at a loss to explain how he had wound up driving down the famed steps. They did not release his name and it was unclear if the car was his.

The small sporty car was later removed by firefighters using a crane. Police did not respond to requests for more details about the dynamics of the apparent accident. (AP)

Film



Scarlett Johansson poses for photographers upon arrival at the premiere of the film 'Jurassic World Rebirth' on Tuesday, June 17, in London. (AP)

Stiefvater's unique take on WWII

'Listeners' blends history, human drama

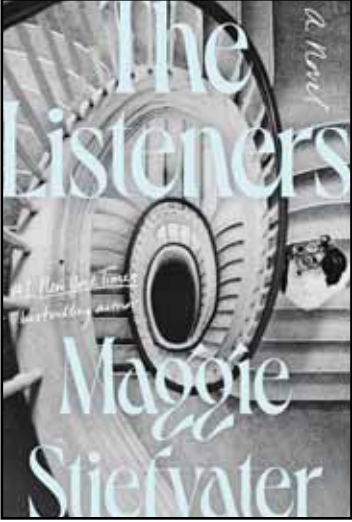
LOS ANGELES, June 18, (AP): Maggie Stiefvater has brought her magical prose with her to her first adult novel.

"The Listeners" takes place at a luxury hotel in West Virginia as World War II begins. In need of a place to store their foreign nationals - i.e. Axis diplomats and their families - the US government takes over the Avallon Hotel, forcing its manager and her staff to scramble to balance hospitality and hedonism.

June Porter Hudson, the hotel's general manager, is a self-assured woman, wholeheartedly devoted to the Avallon Hotel at the cost of her identity. Tucker Minnick is a tough but emotionally wounded FBI agent, responsible for diplomatically monitoring his hostages and any accomplices. When June and Tucker meet, their logistical tug-of-war serves as mutual annoyance, entertainment and self-discovery.

Humanizing and detail-oriented, "The Listeners" is a story about both people management and self-regulation. It's a unique, domestic take on World War II that showcases the encroaching nature of war as men are drafted, families are torn apart and rations are enforced. At the same time, the novel shows how class divide fosters privilege - and ignorance - in the rich, especially during dark times.

When the reality of the conflict finally hits the hotel, both the reader



The cover image released by Viking shows 'The Listeners' by Maggie Stiefvater. (AP)

and the narrators have no choice but to reckon with the gray area that exists during wartime: Enemies can be likable; friends can be unsavory.

In her afterword, Stiefvater revealed that "The Listeners" was inspired by real people, events and attitudes, which made the novel that much more impressive. It was well-researched and tactful, handling dark issues with sensitivity and embedding colorful detail onto each page.

The many threads opened at the beginning of the book in the form of letters, hotel room orders, oddly specific details and mismatched characters begged the question, "Will this come together?"

By the third half of the novel, the conflict was waiting to bubble over.

But character development came full circle, loose plot threads tied up and previous hints were unveiled as June and Tucker formed a quaint alliance, wrestling to protect the most vulnerable at the Avallon. The result of their efforts was unexpected yet undeniably satisfying.

Stiefvater is not afraid of using punctuation in unconventional ways. She demonstrates yet again that rebelling against conventional writing standards can allow creativity to flourish. The prose maintained a sense of magic and possibility, while maturing respectively from her previous young adult work like "The Raven Cycle" and "The Dreamer Trilogy."

"The Listeners" could've been more grounded at times, the supernatural properties of the mountain sweetwater distracting from the novel's historical fiction genre.

Altogether, "The Listeners" lived up to the literary finesse Stiefvater has established in her previous work, this unique take on World War II delivering a beautifully developed setting, riveting plot twists and vivid characters.

Obituary

TV chef found dead

Food Network star Anne Burrell passes away at 55

NEW YORK, June 18, (AP): TV chef Anne Burrell, who coached culinary flumblers through hundreds of episodes of "Worst Cooks in America," died Tuesday at her New York home. She was 55.

The Food Network, where Burrell began her two-decade television career on "Iron Chef America" and went on to other shows, confirmed her death. The cause was not immediately clear, and medical examiners were set to conduct an autopsy.

Police were called to her address before 8 a.m. Tuesday and found an unresponsive woman who was soon pronounced dead. The police department did not release the woman's name, but records show it was Burrell's address.

Burrell was on TV screens as recently as April, making chicken Milanese cutlets topped with escarole salad in one of her many appearances on NBC's "Today" show. She faced off against other top chefs on the Food Network's "House of Knives" earlier in the spring.

"Anne was a remarkable person and culinary talent - teaching, competing and always sharing the importance of food in her life and the joy that a delicious meal can bring," the network said in a statement.

Known for her bold and flavorful but not overly fancy dishes, and for her spiky platinum-blonde hair-



Anne Burrell arrives at the James Beard Foundation Awards Gala on May 6, 2013, in New York. (AP)

do, Burrell and various co-hosts on "Worst Cooks in America" led teams of kitchen-challenged people through a crash course in savory self-improvement.

On the first show in 2010, contestants presented such unlikely personal specialties as cayenne pepper and peanut butter on cod, and penne pasta with sauce, cheese, olives and pineapple. The accomplished chefs had to taste the dishes to evaluate them, and it was torturous, Burrell confessed in an interview with The Tampa Tribune at the time.

Alfred Brendel, renowned pianist and poet, dies at 94

LONDON, June 18, (AP): Alfred Brendel, a pianist and poet renowned for his refined playing of Beethoven over a six-decade career, died Tuesday at his home in London. He was 94.

Brendel's death was announced by the public relations agency Bolton & Quinn.

Born in what is now the Czech Republic, Brendel gave his first recital in Graz, Austria, in 1948 at age 17. His final concert was with the Vienna Philharmonic at the Musikverein on Dec. 18, 2008.

"I grew up in a family that was not musically inclined, not artistically inclined and not intellectual, so I had to find out a lot of things for myself," he said in a 2012 interview for the Verbier Festival. "I was a young person who in the early 20s did not think I have to achieve something within five years but I thought I would like to be able to do certain things when I'm 50. And when I was 50 I said to myself I have actually done most of the things I want to do."

Brendel also was praised for his interpretations of Mozart, Schubert, Liszt and Haydn. He recorded the 32 Beethoven piano sonatas three times, and he played them over a month at New York's Carnegie Hall in 1983,

among 77 recitals in 11 cities during the 1982-83 season. He repeated the sonatas again at Carnegie over three seasons in the 1990s.

"With winks to the audience and demonstrative hand movements, he has a playful manner that offsets his serious, contemplative interpretations," The Associated Press wrote during the 1990s cycle.

Born on Jan. 5, 1931, in Wiesenberg, northern Moravia, Brendel studied piano in Zagreb, Yugoslavia, with Sofia Dezelic and then at the Graz Conservatory with Ludovika von Kaan. He also took composition lessons with Artur Michl. His studies were interrupted when he and his mother fled as the Russian army invaded during World War II.

"When I turned 16, my piano teacher told me I should now continue on my own and give a first public recital," he recalled during a lecture after his retirement. "I should also audition for the great Swiss pianist Edwin Fischer, which I did the following year. Three of his masterclasses that I attended during the Lucerne festivals made an impact that lasts to this day. I also met Eduard Steuermann, the pupil of Busoni and Schoenberg. Apart from these encounters, I studied on my own."



Austrian pianist Alfred Brendel performs at the piano with the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra at the Lucerne Festival in Lucerne, Switzerland on Sept. 5, 2006. (AP)



Tips to prevent heatstroke, skin damage, and respiratory issues

Expert advice on staying healthy, active during summer

KUWAIT CITY, June 18: During summer, temperatures rise as the sun’s rays become stronger, while the chances of dust and humidity increase – all these changes make some people vulnerable to sunburn, heat exhaustion, respiratory and skin problems, and other risks, reports Al-Qabas daily.

Dr. Ahmad Abdulmalik, a family physician and health awareness specialist, emphasized in an interview with the daily that summer should not be considered an opportunity to rest from exercise or physical activity.

He said many people stop exercising during summer due to the harsh outdoor conditions or they consider this period a summer vacation for rest, inactivity and prolonged sleep.

“However, exercise is not only very important in maintaining a strong immune system, weight and physical health; as it is also important for enhancing psychological well-being and relieving stress.

“Those who are accustomed to exercising at the gym must continue doing so and choose a suitable time that they can commit to. Those who are accustomed to exercising outdoors, such as walking in a residential area, should visit air-conditioned shopping malls,” he stressed.

He also recommended the following to prevent dehydration and heat exhaustion:

1. Avoid exercising outdoors in the morning hours during summer when the sun’s rays are strong and vertical (to avoid sunburn), even if you exercise under the shade. If the temperature reaches 40 degrees Celsius or higher, it can cause

heat exhaustion.

2. Remember that the temperature at night can exceed 40 degrees Celsius, so it is recommended not to go out and exercise at night as well to avoid heat exhaustion, because the body sweating in such conditions will not be able to cool down to compensate for the increase in temperature, leading to heat exhaustion.
3. Elderly people are advised to avoid walking in high temperatures. It is preferable not to walk to the mosque.
4. Make sure to drink plenty of water and fluids, and eat fruits, especially summer fruits such as watermelon, watermelon and apricots, as they contain a large amount of water.

Some people suffer from negative effects on their respiratory system and sinuses during summer. Inhaling hot, dry air, sometimes accompanied by dust, can irritate the mucous membranes lining the nose and sinuses; leading to increased mucus secretion, irritation and inflammation.

This increases the risk of colds allergies, chest infections and asthma attacks for those affected. Continuous use of air conditioners to cool the air at home, in the car, and other enclosed spaces can cause health problems if the necessary precautions are not taken as follows:

1. Choose a moderate air conditioning temperature (not too cold). Excessive cold air increases the risk of drying out the sinus membranes, leading to irritation.
2. Clean the air conditioner filter periodically. Air conditioners are a fertile environment for the accumulation of dust and the germs they carry (viruses, fungi and bac-

teria). Their presence in the air conditioner increases the risk of chest infections, colds, coughs, runny nose and allergies.

3. Avoid sudden changes in temperature (from very cold to very hot), such as when leaving a cold room for a very hot outdoor environment. This increases the risk of allergies, colds, sore throat, coughing, runny nose and other respiratory illnesses.

One of the most important things to avoid during summer is sunstroke or sunburn. Abdulmalik explained it is true that the sun is the secret to life and enhances the body’s production of vitamin D and positive emotional compounds; but it can also pose health risks, so it is recommended to follow these preventive guidelines:

1. Avoid going out during peak hours (11:00 am to 2: pm). It is preferable to postpone going out until after 5:00 pm.
2. Drink plenty of water and fluids and frequently moisturize your skin.
3. Applying sunscreen to all areas of skin exposed to the sun is essential for men, women and children. It is sufficient to use a sunscreen with an SPF of 30. Apply it half an hour before going out in the sun and reapply it every two hours if you are still outdoors.
4. Wear light-colored clothing that reflects the sun’s heat. It should be made of cotton and lightweight, allowing air to circulate and allow the body to sweat.
5. Wear sunglasses to protect your eyes from UV rays.
6. Walk in the shade or use an umbrella to avoid direct sun exposure.

7. Carry a bottle of water at all times and drink plenty of water.

It is also important to prevent drowning by following these guidelines:

1. Safety and security are a top priority, so it is essential not to leave children in the pool or sea without an adult. Drowning accidents cause the death of several children every summer. It is important to take safety measures, such as installing safety gates to close the pool area and requiring an adult to be present when children are swimming.
2. Remember that swimming is a sport and physical activity that causes sweating and dehydration. Therefore, it is essential to drink fluids and water regularly, especially for children, to avoid heat exhaustion and dehydration.
3. Apply sunscreen specifically designed for swimming to all exposed skin and reapply it every two hours.
4. Avoid swimming in the sea or in an uncovered pool during peak hours; instead, delay swimming until the afternoon. However, it is safe to swim in an indoor pool any time.
5. Remember that the chlorine used in swimming pools can severely dry out the skin. Therefore, shower and wash your skin immediately after leaving the pool, then apply a thick moisturizer, especially for children and those with sensitive skin or eczema.

Tips during dust storms:

1. Avoid going out during a dust storm and always wear a mask when you must.
2. Close windows and cover openings with a damp cloth to prevent the passage of dust.

Child behavior risks cited

Two major US food firms to remove artificial dyes

NEW YORK, June 18, (AP): Two major food producers say that they will be pulling artificial dyes from their US products starting in 2027.

The shift comes nearly two months after US health officials said that they would urge foodmakers to phase out petroleum-based artificial colors.

Kraft Heinz said Tuesday that it will be removing artificial dyes from its US products beginning in 2027 and will no longer roll out new products with the dyes. Hours later, General Mills announced that it plans to remove artificial dyes from all of its US cereals and all foods served in K-12 schools by the summer of 2026. It is also looking to eliminate the dyes from its full US retail portfolio by the end of 2027.

Kraft Heinz said Tuesday that almost 90% of its US products already don't contain food, drug & cosmetic colors, but that the products that do still use the dyes will have them removed by the end of 2027. FD&C colors are synthetic additives that are approved by the US Food and Drug Administration for use in food, drugs and cosmetics.

Kraft Heinz said that many of its US products that still use the FD&C colors are in its beverage and desserts categories, including certain products sold under brands including Crystal Light, Kool Aid, Jell-O and Jet Puffed.

The company said that it will instead use natural colors for the products.

“The vast majority of our products use natural or no colors, and we’ve been on a journey to reduce our use of FD&C colors across the remainder of our portfolio,” Pedro Navio, North America President at Kraft Heinz, said in a statement.

Kraft Heinz stripped artificial colors, flavors and preservatives from its maca-

roni and cheese in 2016 and said it has never used artificial dyes in its ketchup.

The company plans to work with licensees of its brands to encourage them to remove the dyes.

General Mills said that the changes it is making only impacts a small portion of its K-12 school business as almost all of its school items are already made without artificial dyes. In addition, 85% of the company’s US foods that are sold retail are already made without dyes.

“Across the long arc of our history, General Mills has moved quickly to meet evolving consumer needs, and reformulating our product portfolio to remove certified colors is yet another example,” Chairman and CEO Jeff Harmening said in a statement.

In April Food and Drug Administration Commissioner Marty Makary said at a news conference that the agency would take steps to eliminate the synthetic dyes by the end of 2026, largely by relying on voluntary efforts from the food industry.

Health advocates have long called for the removal of artificial dyes from foods, citing mixed studies indicating they can cause neurobehavioral problems, including hyperactivity and attention issues, in some children. The FDA has maintained that the approved dyes are safe and that “the totality of scientific evidence shows that most children have no adverse effects when consuming foods containing color additives.”

The FDA currently allows 36 food color additives, including eight synthetic dyes. In January, the agency announced that the dye known as Red 3 - used in candies, cakes and some medications - would be banned in food by 2027 because it caused cancer in laboratory rats.

Over 41,000 US seniors died from falls in 2023

Increasing number of older adults in the US die from accidental falls

NEW YORK, June 18, (AP): Older US adults are increasingly dying from unintentional falls, according to a new federal report published Wednesday, with white people accounting for the vast majority of the deaths.

From 2003 to 2023, death rates from falls rose more than 70% for adults ages 65 to 74, the report from the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said. The rate increased more than 75% for people 75 to 84, and more than doubled for seniors 85 and older.

“Falls continue to be a public health problem worth paying attention to,” said Geoffrey Hoffman, a University of Michigan researcher who was not involved in the new report. “It’s curious that these rates keep rising.”

The CDC researchers did not try to answer why death rates from falls are increasing. But experts say there may be a few reasons, like gradually improving our understanding of the role falls play in deaths and more people living longer - to ages when falls are more likely to have deadly consequences.

More than 41,000 retirement-age Americans died of falls in 2023, the most recent year for which final statistics based on death certificates are available. That suggests that falls were blamed in about 1 of every 56 deaths in older Americans that year.

More than half of those 41,000 deaths were people 85 and older, the CDC found, and white people accounted for 87% of deaths in the oldest category.

Falls can cause head injuries or broken bones that can lead to permanent disability and trigger a cascade of other health problems. A number



A woman uses a walker as she heads to her room at a senior care home in Calistoga, Calif., on Dec. 5, 2019. (AP)

of factors can contribute to falls, including changes in hearing and vision and medications that can cause lightheadedness.

Death rates varied widely from state to state. In 2023, Wisconsin had the highest death rates from falls, followed by Minnesota, Maine, Oklahoma and Vermont. Wisconsin’s rate was more than five times higher than the rate of the lowest state, Alabama.

Ice and wintry weather may partly explain why fatal falls were more common in states in the upper Midwest and New England, but experts also pointed to other things at play, like differences in how well falls are reported and to what extent they are labeled a cause of death.

“We’ve yet to unravel why you see such differences in state rates,” said Hoffman, who studies falls among the elderly.

Researchers also can’t yet explain why white seniors die of falls at higher rates than people in other racial and ethnic groups. In the 85-and-up age group, the death rate for white Americans is two or three times higher than any other group, while older Black people had the lowest fall-related death rate.

“Kind of a flip of the traditional disparity lens,” Hoffman said, referring to the fact that for most other rates of illness and injury, people of color are disproportionately affected.

Staying active can help people avoid falls, experts say.

Mental health

Study reveals teen struggles

SYDNEY, June 18, (Xinhua): Nearly one in four high school students experience serious psychological distress, with depression and anxiety surging as they progress through adolescence, an Australian study has found.

Girls experienced higher levels of distress, anxiety, and depression than boys from the start of high school, with symptoms worsening more rapidly over time, especially among those from disadvantaged backgrounds, according to a release from the Public Health Association of Australia on Wednesday.

The research followed more than 6,600 students from 71 schools, surveying them annually from Year 7 to Year 10. By Year 10, nearly 30 percent of Australian teens surveyed showed signs of major depression, and almost one in four reported high psychological distress or moderate-to-severe anxiety, the release said.

The prevalence of mental health issues is “alarmingly common,” and symptoms worsened as students aged, said the study’s lead author Scarlett Smout from the University of Sydney’s Matilda Center for Research in Mental Health and Substance Use.

□ □ □

**Smartphone:** The Dutch government on Tuesday released its official guidelines aimed at limiting children’s use of smartphones and social media.

The Guidelines for Healthy and Responsible Screen and Social Media Use recommend that children under the age of 15 avoid using social media platforms such as TikTok and Instagram. Additionally, it advises that smartphone use should not begin until the final year of primary school, typically around ages 11 to 12.

The guidelines were introduced by State Secretary for Youth, Prevention and Sport Vincent Karremans, who warned of the growing risks linked to excessive screen exposure.

“Social media can be fun and connecting, but its addictive nature also has a significant dark side,” Karremans said. “Nearly 13 percent of young people are at risk of problematic social media use.”

The guidelines provide age-specific recommendations for parents and educators. For children under two years old, screen exposure is entirely discouraged. For adolescents aged 12 and above, daily screen time should be limited to no more than three hours.

UK to decriminalize abortion over concerns for women

LONDON, June 18, (AP): British lawmakers voted Tuesday to decriminalize abortion in England and Wales after a lawmaker argued it was cruel to prosecute women for ending a pregnancy.

The House of Commons approved an amendment to a broader crime bill that would prevent women from being criminally punished under an antiquated law.

Labour MP Tonia Antoniazzi, the Labour member of Parliament who introduced one of the amendments, said the change was needed because police have investigated more than 100 women

for suspected illegal abortions over the past five years, including some who suffered natural miscarriages and stillbirths.

“This piece of legislation will only take women out of the criminal justice system because they are vulnerable and they need our help,” she said. “Just what public interest is this serving? This is not justice, it is cruelty and it has got to end.”

The amendment passed 379-137. The House of Commons will now need to pass the crime bill, which is expected, before it goes to the House of Lords, where it can be delayed but not blocked.

Under current law, doctors can legally carry out abortions in England, Scotland and Wales up to 24 weeks, and beyond that under special circumstances, such as when the life of the mother is in danger. Abortion in Northern Ireland was decriminalized in 2019.

Changes in the law implemented during the COVID-19 pandemic allow women to receive abortion pills through the mail and terminate their own pregnancies at home within the first 10 weeks.

That has led to a handful of widely publicized

cases in which women were prosecuted for illegally obtaining abortion pills and using them to end their own pregnancies after 24 weeks or more.

Anti-abortion groups opposed the measures, arguing it would open the door to abortion on demand at any stage of pregnancy.

“Unborn babies will have any remaining protection stripped away, and women will be left at the mercy of abusers,” said Alitheia Williams, public policy manager for the Society for the Protection of Unborn Children, which describes itself as the U.K.’s biggest pro-life campaign group.

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Gill is overseeing top-notch bowling attack but untested batting lineup

# India aims to end 18-year series drought in England under new captain

LONDON, June 18, (AP): India has not won a test series on English soil since 2007.

A generation of cricket greats failed to take series honors on England’s fabled fields, including the likes of Virat Kohli, Rohit Sharma, Gautam Gambhir, Harbhajan Singh, Jasprit Bumrah, Ravichandran Ashwin, Ravindra Jadeja, Cheteshwar Pujara, and Rishabh Pant.

They came closest on the last tour. India led 2-1 in 2021 but the pandemic forced the fifth and final test at Edgbaston to be postponed for 10 months to mid-2022, and India lost control of it with an ordinary second innings. The series was drawn.

India and England begin another five-test series for the rebranded Tendulkar-Anderson Trophy from Friday in Leeds.

So what makes India think it can win this time?

South Africa.

The Proteas’ triumph in the World Test Championship final at Lord’s last week-end should inspire all underdogs. A world-class bowling attack combined with a modest batting lineup gradually minimized their fear of failure and overcame a star-studded Australia.

India’s team has bigger reputations than South Africa’s but the comparison is apt for now because India is in transition after the retirements of past captains Kohli and Sharma, and former No. 1-ranked test bowler Ashwin.

The reins have been passed to Shubman Gill. He’s 25 and yet to flourish as a test batter, with a 35 average. England white-ball star Jos Buttler, who played under Gill in the recent Indian Premier League, believes Gill’s captaincy will be a mix of Kohli’s in-your-face energy and Sharma’s cool and calculating demeanor.



India’s Shubman Gill, Shardul Thakur and Nitish Kumar Reddy during a nets session at Headingley, Leeds, England. (AP)

“He’s pretty calm and measured when he speaks, but (it’s) interesting. I feel like on the field he’s got a bit of fight about him, a bit of intensity, quite passionate,”

Buttler told the podcast For the Love of Cricket.

Gill is overseeing a top-notch bowling attack but an untested batting lineup.

The top order is expected to roll out first-time England tourist Yashasvi Jaiswal, senior batter Lokesh Rahul, debutant Sai Sudharsan and Gill.

The middle order features Karun Nair - one of the great comeback stories - wicketkeeper Pant and ace spinner Jadeja. The tail has Shardul Thakur or Nitish Kumar Reddy as the fast bowling allrounder, Arshdeep Singh on debut or Prasidh Krishna as the third seamer, and Mohammed Siraj and Jasprit Bumrah.

Nair debuted against England in late 2016 and in his third test he scored 303 not out, only the second Indian to achieve a triple century. But within three months he was axed, and according to him, without explanation. Sustained domestic excellence - a first-class average of nearly 50 - earned Nair a recall at age 33, and this month he warmed up with 204 for India A against England Lions.

Reddy played in India’s most recent tests, the Border-Gavaskar Trophy in January, but didn’t bowl much in the IPL. Meanwhile, Thakur did. The latter hasn’t played a test for 18 months but Thakur gave one last good audition by scoring a century against India in the intra-squad game last week in Beckenham.

Bumrah led the 2021 series with 23 wickets in five tests (Siraj had 18). But Bumrah is playing only three tests this time, and definitely Headingley, to keep his back healthy. Bumrah was favored to replace Sharma as captain but with limited availability, he ruled himself out of the job. Whichever three tests he plays, the world’s best fast bowler will still be England’s biggest threat.

England’s tag as the series favorite - home advantage, Joe Root - would be up-graded from marginal to overwhelming if its bowling arsenal wasn’t so depleted.

# Clark shines, Fever clinches spot in Commissioner’s Cup



Minnesota Lynx forward Alanna Smith (8) blocks a shot by Las Vegas Aces guard Jackie Young (0) during a WNBA basketball game in Minneapolis. (AP)

Liberty rallies past Dream

INDIANAPOLIS, June 18, (AP): Caitlin Clark had 20 points, six assists and four 3-pointers and the Indiana Fever beat the Connecticut Sun 88-71 on Tuesday night in a physical game that included three late ejections.

With 46.1 seconds left in the fourth quarter, Connecticut guard Jacy Sheldon made a steal and raced the other way before being wrapped up by Sophie Cunningham under the basket for a hard foul. Sheldon got up quickly and got into a shoving match with Cunningham, leading to Cunningham, Sheldon and Lindsay Allen all getting ejected.

Sheldon was also the center of another official review in the third quarter after she poked Clark in the eye and then Marina Mabrey came in late to shove Clark to the floor. Three technical fouls were called, leading to Clark’s three free throws for a 58-45 lead.

**Liberty 86, Dream 81**

In New York, Sabrina Ionescu had her second consecutive 34-point game, and New York rallied from a 17-point deficit in the second half to edge Atlanta.

The Liberty trailed 62-47 midway through the third quarter before taking over behind Ionescu’s 15 points



Indiana Fever guard Kelsey Mitchell (0) grabs a rebound in front of Connecticut Sun guard Jacy Sheldon (4) in the first half of a WNBA basketball game in Indianapolis. (AP)

and Breanna Stewart’s 11. The game marked the end of the Commissioner’s Cup games. Both teams entered with 3-1 records, tied with Indiana.

**Mystics 79, Sky 72**

In Chicago, Brittney Sykes scored 32 points on 13-of-24 shooting and Washington overcame a 12-point halftime deficit to beat Chicago. The Mystics trailed 44-32 at halftime before doubling up Chicago in the third quarter, 24-12, to tie it at 56-all

entering the fourth.

Sykes converted a three-point play with 2:17 left for a 74-70 lead. Washington forward Shakira Austin blocked Kamilla Cardoso’s shot at the other end and Sonia Citron grabbed the defensive rebound and made two free throws to seal it.

**Wings 80, Valkyries 71**

In Arlington, Paige Bueckers scored 20 points, Arike Ogunbowale added 19 points, six assists and three steals, and

Dallas won their first home game of the season, over Golden State.

Dallas (2-11) snapped a seven-game losing streak with its first victory since beating Connecticut 109-87 on May 27.

Bueckers sank a jumper from the free-throw line with 4:06 left in the fourth quarter and Ogunbowale nailed a long 3-pointer on their next possession for a 75-70 lead.

**Lynx 76, Aces 62**

In Minneapolis, Courtney Williams scored 18 of her 20 points in the second half to rally Minnesota to a spot in the Commissioner’s Cup final with a win over Las Vegas despite losing Napheesa Collier to a bad back early in the third quarter.

The Lynx, who won the Commissioner’s Cup, last year, will be home against the Indiana Fever on July 1 in a game that does not count in the standings but gives players a financial bonus.

**Storm 98, Sparks 67**

In Los Angeles, Nneka Ogwumike scored a season-high 26 points on 12-of-16 shooting and Gabby Williams set a club record for steals as Seattle coasted past injury-plagued Los Angeles.

Skylar Diggins and Eric Wheeler added 15 points each and reserve Alysha Clark hit 4 of 5 3-point attempts for 14 points for the Storm (7-5). Williams, who had 11 points, eight steals and seven assists, limped off the court with an ankle sprain with eight minutes remaining.

## Rutgers’ Ace skips workouts

Bailey may slip to late in draft lottery

WASHINGTON, June 18, (AP): Ace Bailey has been pegged as a can’t-miss prospect, an athletic 6-foot-8 forward who can score like few players in this year’s NBA draft.

His decisions leading up to the draft may send him slipping further down the lottery.

Once projected as a top-three pick, Bailey could find himself waiting a bit longer than his Rutgers teammate Dylan Harper after opting to decline workouts with several teams within his projected draft range.

Bailey might not see a freefall like Colorado quarterback Shedeur Sanders in the NFL draft, but his actions could be causing doubt among NBA executives heading into the June 25 draft.

Fresh off trading away Luka Doncic, the Mavericks luck into a versatile 6-foot-8, 221-pound forward who led the Blue Devils to the Final Four while becoming only the fourth freshman named AP men’s college basketball national player of the year. He can thrive as a scorer (Atlantic Coast Conference freshman-record 42 points against Notre Dame) or playmaker (team-best 4.2 assists). His length and competitive edge can impact games defensively (team highs of 1.4 steals and 1.4 blocks). And he has an all-around game more advanced than his age with room to develop as he turns 19 in December.

The son of former NBA guard Ron Harper offers size at the point (6-5, 213 pounds) and averaged 19.4 points, 4.6 rebounds and 4.0 assists as a freshman. He could join NBA rookie of the year Stephon Castle in the backcourt for star Victor Wembanyama. Still, there’s an awkward question of how a team with Harper and fellow one-and-done prospect Ace Bailey went just 15-17.

The only benefit to injury-riddled seasons for stars Joel Embiid and Paul George was landing a high pick for a team that still has designs on contending in the Eastern Conference. The 6-4,



Bailey

193-pound Edgcombe, who turns 20 in July, could help with two-way potential, rim-attacking athleticism and 3-point shooting.

The 6-3, 180-pound combo guard averaged 17.1 points, 4.1 rebounds and 4.1 assists in his lone college season. Highlights included a four-point play to beat a ranked Michigan team, along with scoring 57 points in two SEC Tournament games. He also got to the line 6.3 times per game while ranking tied for 11th in Division I by making 183 free throws. But he made just 28.4% of his 3s and must add bulk.

It’s a simple selling point for the league’s worst team: the 6-5, 190-pound freshman can score. He averaged 19.9 points to lead the Southeastern Conference and all freshmen nationally while shooting 39.7% on 3s. He broke Durant’s freshman Longhorns record when he scored 39 points against Arkansas in February.

The Wizards need help in multiple areas after winning 18 games. The 6-7, 217-pound Knueppel is an efficient scorer who was named ACC Tournament MVP while Flagg was sidelined by injury. Knueppel shot 40.6% on 3-pointers and ranked sixth in Division I by shooting 91.4% at the foul line. The freshman also had 10 games with at least four assists to show potential as a secondary playmaker for a Final Four team.

The 6-8 forward is a versatile athlete capable of stretching defenses (five January games with at least four made 3s) and tools to develop defensively. He averaged 17.6 points and 7.2 rebounds, though for a losing team despite featuring Bailey and Harper as the NBA-bound headliners. Should he drop this far in the draft, the Pelicans will certainly be thrilled to add one of the of the most talented players in the draft.

With four first-round picks, the Nets could start with a long-term bet on the 7-1, 253-pound South Sudanese big man to hit his potential as a rim-protecting lob threat. Maluach had the combine’s biggest wingspan (7-6 3/4) and showed stretches of capably defending guards on switches in his lone college season. He shot 71.2% largely on dunks and putbacks, so he’ll need time to refine a raw offensive game.

## No win for King Charles III and Queen Camilla at Royal Ascot



Britain’s King Charles reacts as he presents trophies to the owners of the King Charles II Stakes, winning horse American Affair, on the first day of the Royal Ascot horse race meeting at Ascot, England. (AP)

ASCOT, England, June 18, (AP): King Charles III and Queen Camilla endured disappointment on the opening day of Royal Ascot as their horse, Reaching High, failed to back up his status as favorite in one of the big races.

Going off at odds of 3-1, Reaching High got stuck near the rail and was never in contention to win the Ascot Stakes, finishing in ninth place under jockey Ryan Moore.

He was the only runner for the king and queen on the first day of the prestigious, high-end meeting that mixes elite sport on the course with style and fashion off it.

Hours earlier, the monarchs arrived at the course at the head of the traditional carriage procession in front of tens of thousands of racegoers.

The royal procession is celebrating its 200th anniversary, with the tradition beginning during the reign of George IV in 1825 when the monarch was accompanied by the Duke of Wellington.

Writing in Royal Ascot’s official program, the king and queen said: “Having experienced the thrill of victory at Royal Ascot ourselves in 2023, we can only wish all those competing this week the very best of luck and that everyone watching has a most enjoyable five days.” They will have to wait for their own winner, though, with Ascending triumphing at 20-1.

The late Queen Elizabeth II was a passionate owner and breeder of thoroughbreds and had more than 20 Royal Ascot winners during her 70-year reign.

Charles and Camilla have taken on her stable of horses and enjoyed their first Royal Ascot winner in 2023, when Desert Hero triumphed in the King George V Stakes.

‘It’s hard to picture a winner if this goes to the mat’

# Federal judge calls on NASCAR, teams to settle acrimonious antitrust battle

CHARLOTTE, N.C., June 18, (AP): A federal judge urged NASCAR and two of its teams, including one owned by retired NBA great Michael Jordan, to settle their increasingly acrimonious legal fight that spilled over into tense arguments during a hearing on Tuesday.

U.S. District Judge Kenneth Bell of the Western District of North Carolina grilled both NASCAR and the teams - 23XI Racing, which is owned by Jordan and three-time Daytona 500 winner Denny Hamlin, and Front Row Motorsports, owned by entrepreneur Bob Jenkins - on what they hoped to accomplish in the antitrust battle that has loomed over the stock car series for months.

“It’s hard to picture a winner if this goes to the mat - or to the flag - in this case,” Bell said. “It scares me to death to think about what all this is costing.”

23XI and Front Row were the only two organizations that refused to sign a take-it-or-leave-it offer from NASCAR



In this file photo, Bob Jenkins, owner of Front Row Motorsports, and Michael Jordan, co-owner of 23XI Racing, pose before a NASCAR Cup Series auto race at Talladega Superspeedway in Talladega, Ala. (AP)

of a franchise model, with each charter guaranteeing entry to the lucrative Cup Series races and a stable revenue stream; 13 other teams signed the agreements last fall, with some contending they had little choice.

The nearly two-hour hearing was on the teams’ request to toss out NASCAR’s countersuit, which accuses Jordan business manager Curtis Polk of “willfully” violating antitrust laws by orchestrating anticompetitive collective conduct in negotiations. NASCAR said it learned in discovery that Polk in messages among the 15 teams tried to form a “cartel” type operation that would include threats of boycotting races and a refusal to individually negotiate.

One of NASCAR’s attorneys even cited a Benjamin Franklin quote Polk allegedly sent to the 15 organizations that read: “We must all hang together, or most assuredly we shall all hang separately.”

Jeffrey Kessler, an attorney representing the teams, was angered by the revelation in open court, contending it is privileged information only revealed in discovery. Kessler also argued none of NASCAR’s claims in the countersuit prove anything illegal was done by Polk or the Race Team Alliance during the charter negotiation process.

“NASCAR knows it has no defense to the monopolization case so they have come up with this claim about joint negotiations, which they agreed to, never objected to, and now suddenly it’s an anti-trust violation,” Kessler said outside court. “It makes absolutely no sense. It’s not going to help them deflect from the monopolizing they have done in this market and the harm they have inflicted.”

He added that “the attacks” on Polk were “false, unfounded and frankly beneath the dignity of my adversary to even make those type of comments, which he should know better about.”



Man United hosts Arsenal

Liverpool starts Premier League title defense against Bournemouth

LONDON, June 18, (AP): Liverpool will launch the 2025-26 Premier League season with a home match against Bournemouth to begin its title defense, while Manchester United hosts Arsenal in a marquee game elsewhere in the opening round.

Liverpool will be bidding for a third league championship in six years, likely with Germany playmaker Florian Wirtz in its squad, and will play the first match of the season in a Friday night start at Anfield on Aug. 15.

A tough first month for Arne Slot's champions includes matches against fellow Champions League qualifiers - Newcastle away in the second round, followed by a home match against Arsenal a week later.

Arsenal, which finished second for a third straight year last season, heads to Old Trafford for its first game and will

play Liverpool, Manchester City and Newcastle in its opening six matches.

United will be looking to improve on its disappointing 15th-place finish last season and has a difficult start, with a Manchester derby away to City in the fourth round of games and a home match against Chelsea in the fifth round.

The Premier League released its fixture schedule for the 2025-26 season on Wednesday, giving teams and their fans a chance to start planning less than a month since the last campaign finished.

It was a big day for Everton, which bade farewell to its long-time home at Goodison Park at the end of last season and found out who'll be the first opponent in its new state-of-the-art, 53,000-capacity stadium at Bramley-Moore Dock. That's Brighton on Aug. 23, in the second round of games.

Thomas Frank 's first Premier League game in charge of Tottenham after replacing Ange Postecoglou will be at home to promoted Burnley on Aug 16.

That comes three days after Frank's competitive debut with Tottenham - the Europa League champion - against Champions League winner Paris Saint-Germain in the UEFA Super Cup.

Sunderland's first Premier League game since the 2016-17 season is at home to West Ham, while Leeds hosts Everton first after returning to the top flight following a two-year absence.

Liverpool vs. Arsenal (weekend of Aug 30-31)  
Manchester City vs. Manchester United (weekend of Sept 13-14)  
Arsenal vs. Manchester City (weekend of Sept 20-21)

Liverpool vs. Manchester United (weekend of Oct. 18-19)  
Manchester City vs. Liverpool (weekend of Nov. 8-9)  
Arsenal vs. Liverpool (midweek of Jan. 6-8)  
Manchester United vs. Manchester City (weekend of Jan. 17-18)  
Liverpool vs. Manchester City (weekend of Feb. 7-8)  
Manchester City vs. Arsenal (weekend of April 18-19)  
Manchester United vs. Liverpool (weekend of May 2-3)  
Manchester City and Chelsea are currently playing at the Club World Cup, which means they might be in action in the United States up to the final in mid-July. In that case, they'll have barely a month's break until the Premier League season starts. This coming season sits between the Club World Cup and the men's World Cup, also in north America, so some players will have little rest.

Sri Lanka struggles, Bangladesh builds solid lead in opening test



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

Mushfiqur digs deep to score masterful 163

**GALLE, Sri Lanka, June 18, (AP): Bangladesh rode on the broad shoulders of their veteran Mushfiqur Rahim to pile up a mammoth 484 for nine on a rain-curtailed day 2 of the first Test against Sri Lanka in Galle.**

It is their fourth highest total in the longer format against Sri Lanka.

On a pitch that's expected to break up, Mushfiqur dug in deep putting together a masterful 163 that lasted more than eight hours. He faced 350 deliveries, blending granite-like defense with the occasional flourish to lead the charge. The old warhorse stitched together two crucial stands that wrested the momentum away from the hosts. First came a record-breaking 264-run partnership with captain Najmul Hossain Shanto, who looked in sublime touch during his knock of 148. Shanto, though, fell against the run of play - lured into a false stroke by Asitha Fernando and holing out to Angelo Mathews at mid-off, a sharp catch.

Undeterred, Mushfiqur then forged



Sri Lanka's Asitha Fernando successfully appeals for the wicket of Bangladesh's Mushfiqur Rahim during the second day of the first cricket test match between Sri Lanka and Bangladesh in Galle, Sri Lanka. (AP)

another valuable stand - this time worth 149 runs - with the free-spirited Litton Das, whose shot-making added zip to the innings. However, both set batters were dismissed in the space of nine deliveries just as they threatened to push Bangladesh past 500.

Sri Lanka resorted to bowling a negative line, peppering the leg-side and starving the batters of scoring opportunities. It was a tactic born of desperation, but it bore fruit. Das was dismissed trying to reverse sweep debutant Tharindu Rathnayake - the top

edge ballooning to the keeper.

The old ball started reverse swinging and brought some late cheer for the hosts. Milan Rathnayake, the bustling right-arm seamer, picked up three wickets in a post-tea spell as Bangladesh lost five wickets for 26 runs - a collapse that gave Sri Lanka some hope.

Fernando, fresh off a county stint in the UK with Glamorgan, returned three wickets as well. Though not operating at full throttle following a recent illness, he showed why he's Sri Lanka's pace spearhead, mixing up sharp bouncers with pinpoint yorkers to good effect.

Rathnayake, the debutant, had three scalps to his name, but the biggest letdown was Prabath Jayasuriya. The usually reliable left-arm spinner toiled for 48 wicketless overs, finding neither bite nor bounce on a surface that usually suits him.

Despite Sri Lanka's late fightback, the day - and perhaps the match - belonged to Mushfiqur. His love affair with Galle continues to bloom, with 482 runs in four innings at the venue. Only Pakistan's Younis Khan (497) and Australia's Usman Khawaja (490) have scored more at the ground among visiting batters.

Preliminary round concludes

Handball Association Cup heats up

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



Khaled Melhem

KUWAIT CITY, June 18: The preliminary round of the 57th Kuwait Handball Association Cup wraps up today with Group Two matches at the Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Sports Complex. The day's fixtures include Sulaibikhat vs. Al-Arabi at 4:30 pm, Khaitan vs. Burgan at 6:00 pm, and Al-Fahaheel vs. Al-Qadsiya at 7:30 pm.

The tournament, which began yesterday, is set to conclude with the final match on June 28. The draw divided participating clubs into two groups. Group One features defending champions Kuwait SC, who were exempt from the preliminary round and will face the winner of yesterday's Al-Qurain vs. Al-Sahel match in the quarter-finals. The group also includes Yarmouk, Al-Tadamon, Al-Nasr, and Al-Salmiya.

Group Two includes last season's runner-up Kazma, along with Sulaibikhat, Al-Arabi, Khaitan, Burgan, Al-Fahaheel, and Al-Qadsiya. Kazma will meet the winner of the Sulaibikhat vs. Al-Arabi match in the next stage.

Assistant Treasurer of the Kuwait Handball Federation, Mishal Al-Qabandi, emphasized the historic value of the tournament, call-

ing it one of Kuwait's oldest and most prestigious handball competitions. He noted that the federation is committed to its continued development.

Al-Qabandi also highlighted the readiness of participating clubs, pointing out that the tournament's timing - right after the league season concluded - has left players in peak physical condition. He encouraged fans to attend and support their teams.

Meanwhile, national coach and technical analyst Khaled Melhem praised the competitive spirit of the 57th edition, citing high-level performances and the presence of standout professionals. Melhem said Kuwait Club remains the favorite but expects strong competition from Al-Qadsiya or Burgan, while noting that the unpredictable nature of the tournament could pave the way for a new champion.

Al-Salmiya expresses strong interest

Al-Arabi in talks to retain Al-Shatti

By Hassan Mosa  
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 18: Al-Arabi Club and head coach Nasser Al-Shatti are still in discussions over his future with the team, following a meeting held that ended without a final decision. Both sides, however, reached a preliminary agreement to continue, contingent on aligning key views.

The meeting focused on reviewing the previous season, including challenges related to foreign players, performance gaps, and areas needing improvement. Both Al-Shatti and the club's board agreed that adjustments are necessary to compete more effectively for championships.

A follow-up meeting is expected either today or tomorrow to finalize the decision.

Under the leadership of Nasser Al-Shatti and his assistant coach - his brother Maitham - Al-Arabi had a strong campaign last season, finishing second in the Zain Premier League and as runner-up in the Crown Prince Cup. The team also reached the final of the Amir's Cup, which has been postponed due to regional circumstances.



Nasser and Maitham on the touch-lines.

Meanwhile, Al-Shatti has also been in advanced talks with Al-Salmiya Club. The two parties reportedly agreed on most contractual terms, although no official signing has taken place yet.

The coming days are expected to be decisive in determining whether Al-Shatti remains at Al-Arabi or makes a move to Al-Salmiya ahead of the new season.

'Completely counter-intuitive' to sign vet, even for 4 weeks'

Not even Saudi Arabia or FIFA could get Ronaldo to the Club World Cup

MIAMI GARDENS, Fla., June 18, (AP): In the end, not even Saudi Arabia or Gianni Infantino could engineer a way to get Cristiano Ronaldo to the Club World Cup.

FIFA president Infantino certainly tried - last month making a public appeal ahead of the tournament.

"If any club is watching and is interested in hiring Ronaldo for the Club World Cup ...," he teased during an interview with YouTuber iShowSpeed.

Ronaldo's contract with Saudi Arabian club Al-Nassr was due to expire and FIFA's decision to create a specially-made mini transfer window for its newest competition meant the path was clear for the Real Madrid great to sign a short-term deal with a new team just in time to take part.

Given his connection to Saudi Arabia, where he was the face of the oil-rich kingdom's spectacular drive to sign some of soccer's biggest stars in recent years, rumors began to circulate about a move to Al Hilal - the country's most successful team and its sole representative at the Club World Cup.

The problem was that Al Hilal and Al-Nassr are cross-city rivals in Riyadh. And even if Saudi Arabia's sovereign wealth fund majority

owns both teams - along with others - that was a step too far.

"As much as I respect Ronaldo as a huge player, as we all recognize he is, it's certainly completely counter-intuitive that you bring the biggest player of your biggest opponent to play with you," Al Hilal chief executive Esteve Calzada told the BBC. "Even more when it's only for three to four weeks."

Maybe so, but Saudi Arabia, with its vast wealth, has a made habit out of turning the improbable into the



Portugal's Cristiano Ronaldo holds the trophy after winning the Nations League soccer championship at the Allianz Arena in Munich, Germany. (AP)

possible. And the very fact the prospect of a short-term move between clubs was even rumored, points to the boundaries it has been able to push while making its big play to become a force in global sport.

It has, after all, already changed the face of golf and virtually cornered the market for big time boxing. F1 racing is a fixed event and top class tennis has been lured, as well.

It's ambitions in soccer have been the most spectacular of all - winning the right to host the 2034 World Cup, buying one of the Premier League's most iconic teams in Newcastle and luring a slew of superstar players to a league that has nothing like the profile of those in Europe or Latin America.

Most recently it has played a role in helping to fund the Club World Cup - either directly or indirectly - with a reported \$1 billion investment in tournament broadcaster DAZN and a commercial partnership with FIFA, which has put up a \$1 billion prize pot for teams competing.

The Club World Cup is the chance for Saudi Arabia to make a latest statement on the international stage in its first chance test one of its elite clubs against the best from around the globe - starting with 15-time

European champion Real Madrid at Miami's Hard Rock Stadium on Wednesday. That is why it is surprising there wasn't more of a push to furnish Al Hilal with the type of marquee signing Saudi Arabian clubs have been collecting since Ronaldo's move opened the floodgates at the end of 2022.

The four-time Asian champion even released Brazil great Neymar in January after an ACL injury reduced him to just seven appearances following his \$94 million move from Paris Saint-Germain in 2023.

A move was made for Manchester United captain Bruno Fernandes just before the Club World Cup, but the Portugal midfielder rejected the offer. There was also reported interest in striker Victor Osimhen and Darwin Nunez, though no major deals were secured before the team flew out to the United States.

"The club is working in order to improve the team, and I believe this will be done. Now it's pointless to talk about market because the market is closed," coach Simone Inzaghi Tuesday. And he still has big money recruits from overseas in the form of players like Aleksandar Mitrovic, Joao Cancelo, Kalidou Koulibaly and Ruben Neves.

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Canada's Richie Laryea (22) and Honduras' Cristopher Melendez (6) collide as they vie for the ball during the first half of a CONCACAF Gold Cup soccer match in Vancouver. Canada won 6-0. (AP)

# Sports



Dhari Bati, silver medalist with officials.



Kuwaiti Paralympic champion Faisal Sorour celebrates with the national flag. KUNA photos

Bati secures silver in discus, Faraj qualifies for Worlds

## Golden double for Sorour as Kuwait excels at Tunis Para Athletics Meeting

TUNIS, June 18, (KUNA): Kuwaiti Paralympic champion Faisal Sorour clinched the gold medal in the shot put (F42) event, while fellow athlete Dhari Bati secured the silver medal in the discus throw (F37) during the Tunis International Para Athletics Meeting, held at Rades Olympic City from June 16 to 18.

In another achievement for the team Nasser Faraj qualified for the 2025 World Para Athletics Championships, set to take place in India this September. These accomplishments came as part of the tournament's second day of competitions.

Nasser Al-Ajmi, head of the Kuwaiti delegation, congratulated the medalists and expressed appreciation to the technical staff, led by coach Ahmad Al-Harbi, for their role in enhancing the athletes' performance. He also commended the Kuwait Paralympic Committee's Board of Directors and the Kuwait Disabled Sports

Club's administration for their unwavering support of para athletics.

Al-Ajmi praised Sorour's consistent performance, noting that he also won a gold medal in the discus throw event on the tournament's opening day, Monday. He confirmed the Kuwaiti team's readiness for the competition, highlighting their strong physical and technical form thanks to intensive recent training.

The Kuwaiti delegation is represented by nine athletes: Faisal Sorour, Dhari Bati, Abdullah Al-Saif, Abdullah Al-Enezi, Nasser Faraj, Khaled Al-Rashidi, Abdullah Al-Saleh, Mohammed Al-Azmi, and Abdullah Al-Uthaina.

This year's edition of the Tunis International Para Athletics Meeting has set a new participation record, featuring 500 male and female athletes competing across various disciplines.

## Al-Qadsia re-signs Al-Mutawa

By Hassan Mosa  
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 18: Al-Qadsia has officially announced the renewal of veteran star Bader Al-Mutawa's contract, solidifying his legacy with the "Yellow" club where he began his football journey in 2001. The move allows the 39-year-old icon to continue his illustrious career into a 24th season.

Widely regarded as the most prominent figure in Kuwaiti football over the past two decades, Al-Mutawa remains a symbol of loyalty and excellence. Despite Al-Qadsia not securing any titles last season, Al-Mutawa left a noticeable impact with his performance and leadership on the pitch.

In a statement on its official "X" platform, Al-Qadsia wrote:

"In a time when loyalties have changed and jerseys have been swapped, the legend Bader Al-Mutawa has remained loyal to Al-Qadsia, which has known no other home and held no other heart. There is still time for glory."

The club aims to leverage Al-Mutawa's experience as it prepares for upcoming domestic and international competitions. His continued presence is expected to provide not only technical value but also serve as inspiration to younger players.

Al-Mutawa has amassed a remarkable list of honors with Al-Qadsia, including:

9 Kuwait Premier League titles; 7 Amir Cups; 8 Crown Prince Cups;



Bader Al-Mutawa

6 Super Cups; 1 AFC Cup; 1 Gulf Clubs Cup; 1 Gulf Cup for national teams (2003)  
Individual Accolades:  
World's Top Scorer (2010); AFC's Second Best Player (2006, 2010); All-time top scorer in Kuwaiti domestic competitions; FIFA-recognized all-time international caps record holder (2022)  
Top Kuwaiti scorer in both AFC Champions League and AFC Cup; Scored his 300th goal for Al-Qadsia in May 2021  
Al-Mutawa also had brief stints abroad with Al-Nassr (Saudi Arabia) and Qatar SC but always returned to his home club, maintaining an unmatched career defined by loyalty, leadership, and longevity.

# Panthers repeat as Stanley Cup champions

Bennett named playoff MVP

SUNRISE, Fla., June 18, (AP): Stanley's stay in South Florida is getting extended.

The Florida Panthers repeated as Stanley Cup champions by beating the Edmonton Oilers 5-1 in Game 6 of the final, becoming the NHL's first back-to-back winners since Tampa Bay in 2020 and '21 and the third team to do it this century.

Sam Reinhart scored four goals, becoming just the sixth player in league history and first since Maurice Richard in 1957 to get that many in a game in the final. His third to complete the hat trick sent rats, along with hats, flying onto the ice. Matthew Tkachuk, one of the faces of the franchise, fittingly scored the Cup clincher.

More rats were part of the victory celebration when the clock hit zero. Panthers players mobbed in the corner, while the Oilers watched in dismay.

"Good evening, South Florida," Commissioner Gary Bettman said before presenting the trophy to captain Aleksander Barkov. "It feels like we just did this."

Sergei Bobrovsky stopped 28 of the 29 shots he faced, closing the door on a rematch with the same end result. The only goal came from fellow Russian Vasily Podkolzin in garbage time, long after the outcome was decided, and the NHL put a bow on a remarkable season that included Alex Ovechkin's milestone as the all-time leading goal scorer and Olympics-like buzz around the 4 Nations tournament in February.

There were chants of "We want the Cup!" as the final moments ticked away. The Panthers already had it.

Now they get to keep it.

Not long after the Lightning made three trips to the final in a row, Florida has done the same and now has the makings of a dynasty. The Panthers have won 11 of 12 playoff series since Tkachuk arrived by trade and Paul Maurice took over as coach in the summer of 2022.

The only time they have been on the wrong side of a handshake line was the final in Vegas in 2023, only after several key players were banged up and gutting through significant injuries.

From the core of Tkachuk, Reinhart, Barkov, and Sam Bennett on down the roster, they were much healthier this time around and were boosted by key trade deadline additions Brad Marchand and Seth Jones. Bennett led all goal-scorers this postseason with 15, and Marchand had six in the final alone.

Bennett won the Conn Smythe Trophy as playoff MVP. Barkov handed the Cup to first-time champion Nate Schmidt, and all the others winning it for the first time got it soon after.

Getting depth contributions from throughout the lineup allowed them to overpower Connor McDavid, Leon Draisaitl, and the Oilers, who struggled with Florida's ferocious forecheck and switched goaltenders multiple times in the final. Stuart Skinner got the nod in Game 6 and was again done in by mistakes in front of him that ended with the puck in the net behind him and had his own blunder on Reinhart's second goal.

McDavid tried to take over but was again stymied by Barkov, Jones, and Bo-



The Florida Panthers celebrate with the Stanley Cup after defeating the Edmonton Oilers in Game 6 of the NHL hockey Stanley Cup Final in Sunrise, Fla. (AP)

brovsky. He finished with seven points in his second career trip to the final, again denied his first title. The Panthers spent more time leading during this Stanley Cup Final than any previous team in history, 255:49 minutes in all.

Canada's Stanley Cup drought reached 31 seasons and 32 years dating to Montreal in 1993. Teams in the U.S. Sun Belt have won it five of the past six times, four of them in Florida.

## Kuwait Club retains Al-Dhafiri and Al-Hoshan

By Hassan Mosa  
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 18: Kuwait Club has officially renewed the contracts of veteran midfielder Ahmed Al-Dhafiri and standout goalkeeper Saud Al-Hoshan, though the club has not disclosed the duration or financial terms of the agreements.

Al-Dhafiri, 33, has been a consistent performer for



In this file photo, Ahmed Al-Dhafiri controls the ball as opponents look on.

the "Whites" since joining from Al-Qadsia three seasons ago. His experience and leadership played a crucial role in Kuwait Club's historic treble in the 2024-2025 season, which included the Super Cup, Zain Premier League title, and the Crown Prince Cup. He also helped the team reach the final of the Amir Cup, which was postponed due to current regional circumstances.

Previously, Al-Dhafiri enjoyed a long stint with Al-Qadsia from 2013 to 2022, including a loan move to Saudi Arabia's Al-Qadsia in 2017. On the international stage, he has earned 63 caps with the Kuwait national team, scoring three goals.

Throughout his club career, Al-Dhafiri contributed to multiple championship victories. With Al-Qadsia, he secured league titles in the 2013-14 and 2015-16 seasons, the Federation Cup in 2018-19, the Amir Cup in 2014-15, the Crown Prince Cup in 2013-14 and 2017-18, and the prestigious AFC Cup and Super Cup in 2014.

Meanwhile, goalkeeper Saud Al-Hoshan has solidified his place as a key figure in Kuwait Club's starting lineup. His impressive performances have also earned him recent call-ups to the national team, reflecting his growing prominence between the posts.

The renewal of both contracts signals Kuwait SC's commitment to maintaining a stable and competitive squad heading into the new season.

## River cruises, Dortmund and Inter draw

NEW YORK, June 18, (Xinhua): European sides were left frustrated at the FIFA Club World Cup as Borussia Dortmund and Inter Milan shared the points with Fluminense and Monterrey, respectively.

South America's River Plate claimed the day's most emphatic victory with a 3-1 defeat of Urawa Red Diamonds while Mamelodi Sundowns edged Ulsan 1-0.

In New Jersey, Brazil's Fluminense was left to rue its profligacy in a goal-less draw with Germany's Borussia Dortmund.

The Rio de Janeiro outfit looked more likely to score at MetLife Stadium but could not find a way past Swiss goalkeeper Gregor Kobel, who made a series of fine saves. "We showed that we are a great club and that we are going to be difficult opponents for anyone," Fluminense's Colombian midfielder Jhon Arias told reporters.

"We were aware of Borussia's quality and the level of European football, but we were superior for most of the match. That gives us peace of mind and confidence to continue playing



like we did today." Argentina's River Plate began its Group E campaign with a 3-1 victory over Japan's Urawa Red

Diamonds in Seattle.  
The Buenos Aires club opened the scoring when Facundo Colidio timed his run to perfection to meet Marcos Acuna's cross with a thumping header from the edge of the six-yard box.  
Sebastian Driussi doubled the advantage shortly after, nodding home following a defensive miscue.  
Urawa pulled a goal back through Yusuke Matsuo, who converted from the penalty spot after Takuro Kaneko was brought down by Acuna.  
Substitute Maximiliano Meza restored the two-goal cushion, rising to meet Acuna's corner with a bullet header that beat goalkeeper Shusaku Nishikawa at his near post.  
"The most important thing was to win, but we know we have to improve," River Plate manager Marcelo Gallardo said. "We suffered from nerves, which is understandable. But our upcoming matches are going to be more demanding and we have to be ready." In Orlando, a first-half goal from Iqraam Rayners gave South Africa's Mamelodi Sundowns a 1-0 win over South Korean side Ulsan.