



# AMIR HOLDS CRISIS TALKS WITH SAUDI CROWN PRINCE, UAE LEADER

## Amir meets Crown Prince, top officials

KUWAIT CITY, June 22, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received on Sunday at Seif Palace His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah.

His Highness the Amir also received His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.

His Highness also received First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah and Minister of Defense Sheikh Abdullah Ali Abdullah Al-Sabah.

Continued on Page 5

# Kuwait sees no radiation threat after US bombs Iran nuke sites



His Highness the Prime Minister and Chairman of the Supreme Defense Council Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah chairs on Sunday a meeting of the Supreme Defense Council at Seif Palace.

## Finance Ministry activates emergency plan

- Second evacuation flight lands in Kuwait
- Kuwait readies 900-person shelters
- Bahrain activates remote working policy

By Munif Naif

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff and Agencies

KUWAIT CITY, June 22: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah on Sunday received a phone call from Saudi Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman Al-Saud.

Continued on Page 5



Left: The second batch of Kuwaiti citizens arrives on Sunday from Iran via Turkmenistan within the Foreign Ministry's plan to ensure their safe return amid escalation in the region. Right: Vice Chief of Staff of the Kuwaiti Army Air Vice Marshal Sheikh Sabah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah conducts a field visit at the Amiri Guard on Sunday.



## Kuwait eyes regional aviation hub status

### Civil aviation key to national development: DGCA chief

KUWAIT CITY, June 22, (KUNA): Acting Director-General of Kuwait's Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) Duajj Al-Otaibi has said that the civil aviation sector is considered a vital and strategic pillar of national development plans.

Addressing a one-day conference on the future of aviation in Kuwait on Saturday, organized by the Kuwait Aircraft Engineers & Pilots Association (KAEP), Al-Otaibi said the sector is also deemed one of the core pillars of promoting the economy and diversifying income sources.

He added that Kuwait attaches much attention to civil aviation as one of the vital sectors that promotes the country's status.

He noted that the coming stage requires intensive efforts to develop the air transportation sector involving infrastructure, fleet and logistical services.

Al-Otaibi went on saying that the trend of promoting Kuwait's position as a regional aviation center requires concerted efforts and investment in available potential to attain regional and global excellence and competitiveness.

The DGCA chief boasted that Kuwait has already injected ap-



Opening of the conference on the future of aviation in Kuwait.

proximately five billion US dollars to revamp the infrastructure and build mega and significant projects, which means upgrading operational efficiency, establishing a new runway, specialized buildings, a new

watchtower and developing ground services.

For his part, Board Chairman of Kuwait Aircraft Engineers & Pilots Association (KAEP) Mohammad

Continued on Page 5

## Citizenship of 130 revoked by decree

KUWAIT CITY, June 22: Five decrees have been issued to revoke Kuwaiti citizenship from a total of 129 individuals, in addition to one person who had acquired it dependently, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

Decree No. 108/2025 ordered the revocation of citizenship from one individual, and Decree No. 109/2025 did the same for another. Decree No. 110/2025 included the names of four women whose citizenship was revoked. Decree No. 111/2025 revoked the citizenship of ten individuals. Decree No. 112/2025 listed 114 individuals whose citizenship was revoked.

## Temperatures to soar between 44 and 47 degrees Celsius

### Kuwait to swelter under dust, heat through Wednesday

KUWAIT CITY, June 22, (KUNA): The Meteorological Department announced on Sunday that Kuwait will be affected by an extension of a surface air depression combined with a hot, dry air mass, bringing active winds and dust storms starting Monday.

Director Dhirar Al-Ali told KUNA that northwesterly winds will be moderate to brisk, reaching speeds of 20 to 65 kilometers per hour, reducing horizontal visibility to less than 1,000 meters in some areas on Tuesday and Wednesday.

He added that temperatures will soar between 44 and 47 degrees Celsius during the day, with nighttime lows ranging from 32 to 35 degrees Celsius.

Sea conditions are expected to be rough, with wave heights between 3 and 7 feet, accompanied by hot weather and strong winds continuing into Tuesday and Wednesday evenings.

Residents are advised to take precautions against heat and dust as the weather system impacts the region.

## S.Korea storage eyed

# Kuwait warned to brace for \$100 oil if conflict escalates

By Najeh Bilal

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 22: While the ongoing Israeli-Iranian war has led to a rise in the price of crude oil, several parties expect oil prices to reach \$100 if the war escalates and the Strait of Hormuz is closed, but this possibility was ruled out by the experts that the newspaper interviewed recently.

Economic expert Salah Al-Jimaz said it is in Iran's interest to continue the passage of oil tankers through the Strait of Hormuz; considering its closure will cause a huge financial loss for Iran, because its tankers pass through the Strait, especially after its oil production in the first quarter of this year reached 3.5 million barrels per day. He pointed out that it is difficult for Iran to sacrifice these revenues, particularly since the current war has cost and will continue to cost

it a great deal from the State treasury, and it may suffer an economic decline for several years as a result of the war. He thinks the Iranian-Israeli war could raise oil prices to more than \$100 per barrel if Israel targets strategic oil sites or Iranian refineries, or if the Strait of Hormuz is closed. "However, realistically, Israel and Iran do not want this war to take on economic dimensions that could impact the oil commodity and its prices; because the victims will not only be Iran or Israel, but all other countries throughout the world. If Israel targets Iranian oil sites, this will be a provocation of the entire world," he explained.

He advised the Kuwaiti oil sector to expand oil storage projects near countries that primarily import Kuwaiti oil, especially since the sector has numerous previous experiences in this regard. He stated that in April, the country exported the first shipment of Kuwaiti oil to South Korea under a previous agreement between Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) and Korea National Oil Company, allowing the storage of four million barrels of Kuwaiti oil.

Moreover, economic expert and former advisor to Chevron Dr. Ali Al-Hababi revealed that oil prices have been gradually rising since the beginning of the Iran-Israel war. He stressed the need to take all precautions in light of the war.

He warned that attacking the Iranian

Continued on Page 5

## Newswatch

**KUWAIT CITY:** Kuwait Airways expressed its sincere gratitude and appreciation to all passengers for their cooperation amid the current regional challenges, which have resulted in longer flight times due to aircraft rerouting, rescheduling of certain flights, and adjustments to exceptional destinations, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The airline affirmed that it is exerting every effort to operate scheduled flights as smoothly as possible, prioritizing safety and security to ensure passengers reach their destinations with ease and comfort.



**2** Al-Jarallah, Japanese envoy discuss aspects to boost media cooperation

**8** Markaz exited over USD100 mln of industrial real estate projects in the US and Europe over the past few months

**9** ABK extends partnership with Emirates Skywards to elevate customer experience in Kuwait



Prayer Timings			
Fajr .....	03:14	Asr .....	15:24
Sunrise ..	04:49	Maghrib ..	18:51
Zohr .....	11:50	Isha .....	20:23

# Local

**Expected weather for next 24 hrs:**  
**By Day:** Very hot with light to moderate freshening at times northwesterly wind, with speeds of 15-55 km/h causing rising dust and some high clouds will appear later on.  
**By Night:** Hot to rather hot with

Weather			
light to moderate freshening at times over coastal areas northwesterly wind, with speeds of 12-45 km/h.			
Station	Max Exp	Min Rec	
Kuwait City	46	36	
Kuwait Airport	46	28	
Abdaly	47	26	
Jahra	47	29	
Salmiyah	41	34	
Ahmadi	40	33	
Nuwaisib	44	28	
Wafra	45	28	
Salmi	45	29	
Managish	47	31	

## Al-Jarallah, Japanese envoy discuss aspects to boost media cooperation



Editor-in-Chief of Arab Times and Al-Seyassah newspapers Ahmed Al-Jarallah welcomed the Japanese Ambassador to Kuwait Mukai Kenichiro who was accompanied by Second Secretary Japan Embassy Rie Korihara. Managing Editor of Arab Times Marlon Aquino Malinao and colleague Mohammad Al-Farhan were present at the meeting.



Editor-in-Chief of Arab Times and Al-Seyassah newspapers Ahmed Al-Jarallah in talks with the visiting Japanese Ambassador to Kuwait Mukai Kenichiro.

KUWAIT CITY, June 22: Dean of Kuwaiti Journalism Ahmed Al-Jarallah, the Editor-in-Chief of Al-Seyassah and Arab Times newspapers, met with Japanese Ambassador to Kuwait Mukai Kenichiro in his office on Sunday.

During the friendly visit, they discussed various aspects of media cooperation between the two sides and ways to strengthen it in the coming period.

They talked about a number of regional and international issues of mutual interest; as well as the important role that the press plays in strengthening relations between peoples, particularly through effective and balanced media

coverage.

Kenichiro expressed his deep appreciation for the efforts exerted by Al-Seyassah and Arab Times newspapers in covering the activities of the Japanese Embassy, and highlighting the importance of bilateral relations between Kuwait and Japan. He affirmed that the Kuwaiti press plays an important role in strengthening the bonds of understanding and rapprochement between the two countries.

Al-Jarallah welcomed the visiting ambassador while praising the level of Kuwaiti-Japanese relations, and the role of the embassy in supporting cul-

tural and media initiatives. He emphasized the commitment of the Kuwaiti press, particularly Al-Seyassah and Arab Times newspapers, to an approach of openness and cooperation with diplomatic missions in the country.

Second Secretary at the Embassy Rie Kurihara, Managing Editor of the Arab Times Marlon Aquino Malinao and colleague Mohammad Al-Farhan also attended the meeting.

They engaged in an extensive discussion about the importance of cooperation between the media and embassies in forging mutual understanding and depicting a true picture of the political, cultural and economic reality.



KUWAIT CITY, June 22: Kuwait's Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Al-Yahya meets his Somali counterpart Abdisalam Abdi Ali. KUNA photo

## Kuwaiti, Somali FM's discuss latest situation in 'Mideast'

ISTANBUL, June 22, (KUNA): Kuwait's Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Al-Yahya met his Somali counterpart Abdisalam Abdi Ali on the sidelines of the 51st session of Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) Foreign Ministers' Council which opened in Istanbul, Turkey, on Saturday.

They discussed the latest developments of the situation in the Middle East and beyond as well as the close relations between their two sisterly countries, according statement from Kuwait's Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

# MoE to hire expat graduate teachers for '25/'26 session

'Walk-in interviews for applicants must'

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

KUWAIT CITY, June 22: Acting Undersecretary of the Ministry of Education, Mansour Al-Dhafiri has approved the receiving of applications for several vacant teaching positions for the 2025/2026 academic year. These positions are open to non-Kuwaitis with university degrees to work in public schools in various disciplines, subject to specific terms and conditions.

- The required specializations are the following:
- Male Teachers - Applicants applying for Arabic and music education positions must be children of Kuwaiti women. For French, English, mathematics, science, chemistry, physics, biology, and geology, applicants are not required to be children of Kuwaiti women.
  - Female Teachers - Applicants applying for

English, mathematics, computer science, and music education must be children of Kuwaiti women. For Arabic, French, English, mathematics, science, chemistry, physics, biology, and geology, there is no such requirement.

The ministry clarified that applications are open to both genders, provided that applicants meet the following conditions:

- A minimum overall GPA of "Good" in the university degree.
  - Age not exceeding 45 years.
  - Compliance with the experience requirement - three years for non-teaching qualifications and two years for graduates of teaching qualifications, with certification from official authorities.
- Exemptions from the experience requirement apply to PhD holders with a grade of "Very Good" or higher, master's degree holders with a grade of "Excellent," as well as graduates of the College of Education at Kuwait University and the College of Basic Education at the Public Authority for Ap-

plied Education and Training (PAAET).

The Ministry of Education confirmed that science-related positions for non-Kuwaiti men are limited to graduates of the College of Basic Education within Kuwait only. All recent graduates, without exception, must pass a personal interview.

The ministry explained that any application failing to meet the requirements or lacking the necessary documents will not be accepted. Applications from individuals holding entry visas or those with work permits not designated for the position of "Teacher" will also be rejected.

Applicants must attach the following documents to their application - a valid passport and civil ID, a personal photo, academic certificates, a transcript certified by the relevant authorities and Kuwaiti cultural offices, and a certificate of good conduct.

After passing the interview, applications must be submitted electronically via the Ministry of Education's official website - [www.moe.edu.kw](http://www.moe.edu.kw)

Upon acceptance, applicants will be contacted to visit the Human Resources Department - Customer Service Lounge - at the ministry building in South Surra. They must bring all the required documents. Candidates will then undergo an interview in accordance with approved regulations.

### Other Voices

## Reality of Israel's swelling ambitions and its agents

By Ahmad alsarraf

MANY people are increasingly convinced that Israel harbors expansionist ambitions beyond its current borders. These beliefs are rooted in religious ideologies, several statements by political leaders, policies implemented on the ground, and symbols adopted by various Israeli groups.

The concept of "Greater Israel" (Eretz Israel HaShlema) serves as the cornerstone of discussions about Israeli ambitions and is supported by Christian Zionists in America.

Although there is no unified agreement on the precise borders of this territory, the most common narrative suggests it extends from the Nile to the Euphrates. This is referenced in Genesis 15:18, "On that day the Lord made a covenant with Abram, saying, "To your descendants I give this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the Euphrates"."

The two blue stripes on the Israeli flag are said to symbolize the Nile and Euphrates rivers, with the star between them representing the Jewish state.

Many also view Israel's actual policies as the strongest evidence of its expansionist intentions, regardless of official statements. The ongoing expansion of Israeli settlements in the territories occupied since 1967, which are recognized by the international community as Palestinian land, amounts to "creeping annexation" and represents a practical step toward realizing "Greater Israel," at least in its Palestinian dimension.

The annexation of the occupied Syrian Golan Heights in 1981 further demonstrates that Israel is disregarding internationally recognized borders in pursuit of expanding its sovereignty. Israel has also openly expressed ambitions toward the Litani River in Lebanon, has occupied parts of it, and controlled the Sinai Peninsula for decades.

The Likud Party's charter, which is the platform of Israel's most powerful political party, states that "the right

of the Jewish people to the Land of Israel is non-negotiable." This originally included Jordan as part of the Land of Israel, though this was later amended. Nevertheless, this ideology continues to influence the party's leadership.

Far-right and religious movements and parties, which have become influential components of Israeli governments, openly call for the annexation of the entire West Bank (referred to biblically as Judea and Samaria) and the imposition of Israeli sovereignty over it. These parties regard this as a religious duty.

Despite denials from some of our allies, Israel's expansionist ambitions, settlement policies, and annexation of territories remain policies upheld by influential factions within the country and are evident in their actions on the ground.

In light of these facts, some Israeli agents argue that Israel's relatively small population disqualifies it from ruling over Egypt, Syria, Jordan, Iraq, and the Gulf states, whose combined population is approximately 250 million. However, Zionist agents overlook the example of British colonial expansion, which reached its peak after World War I, controlled 70 territories and countries with a population of 460 million, despite Britain's own population being only around 43 million at the time. Britain's success was due to its technological, military, and intelligence superiority, coupled with the weakness and backwardness of the colonized peoples, as well as the presence of mercenaries who aided British rule in their own countries.

Therefore, dismissing talk of Israeli ambitions as "nonsense" and claiming it is impossible for seven million Israelis to occupy and rule hundreds of millions of Arabs is itself pure nonsense and a lie. Mercenaries are tasked with downplaying the Zionist threat.

Meanwhile, given the exceptional circumstances the region is currently facing and in anticipation of uncertain developments, I commend the decision of the First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior to close the Husseiniyas during the upcoming Ashura and relocate the ceremonies to safer venues.

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### Bid opening begins

## Reverse osmosis project to boost water quantity

By Mohammad Ghanem  
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 22: The bid opening date for Doha West Seawater Reverse Osmosis Desalination Plant, along with equipment to increase the alkalinity of the produced water (Phase II) , will be on July 22, sources from the Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy say.

Sources pointed out that if the project bids are opened and the deadline is not postponed, the Central Agency for Public Tenders (CAPT) will refer the bids to the ministry for review and preparation of technical recommendations within one month of the award date.

Based on the recommendation, a decision will be made on the company with the best bid and the required conditions and specifications, sources explained.

Sources added that the award decision of CAPT will pave the way for sending the tender documents to the State Audit Bureau (SAB) for study, review and audit . Sources confirmed that the bureau will then approve the contract to start the implementation of the project, which the ministry is counting on to increase the strategic reserve of fresh water to meet the growing demand for water.

Sources expect the station to increase the strategic water reserve by 60 million imperial gallons per day of potable water without the need to mix it with groundwater -- an advantage of reverse osmosis technology.

Sources also confirmed the commitment of the ministry to implement all of its development projects, particularly those related to electricity and water production, in order to meet the increasing demand for electricity and water annually.

## Load-shedding could be averted if 10% stick to saving power

KUWAIT CITY, June 22: The Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy confirmed that the implementation of programmed power outages (load-shedding) could be avoided if at least 10 percent of the consumers commit to the rationalization of electricity consumption during peak hours in summer, reports Al-Jarida daily quoting sources.

Sources told the daily that the highest electrical load disconnected under the scheduled power outage plan this year reached 909 megawatts in April; which is equivalent to less than 10 percent of the highest recorded load of 17,640 megawatts in the same

month. They pointed out that 10 percent of the highest recorded load saves around 1,764 megawatts; which means achieving this savings through voluntary rationalization of consumption is sufficient to avoid resorting to the scheduled power outage. They emphasized that this goal is achievable through the concerted efforts of government agencies and the public.

Sources also affirmed that the ministry is continuing its public awareness efforts to encourage individuals and production and service sectors to take simple and effective conservation measures; such as setting

air conditioning temperature to 24 degrees Celsius, turning off unnecessary appliances during peak hours, and using energy-saving lighting.

Sources stressed that everyone's adherence to these instructions will contribute to the stability of the electricity grid and ensure uninterrupted service despite the rising temperatures and increased demand for energy in summer. They added the ministry is closely monitoring the electricity grid and consumption, reiterating that collective conservation remains the optimal and least costly option for safely overcoming the peak periods.



Farwaniya Governor Sheikh Athbi Nasser Al-Athbi Al-Sabah receives Head of the Farwaniya Governorate's Strategic Stockpile Emergency Team Saleh Al-Enezi. Farwaniya Governorate photo

## How much food do we have in Farwaniya coop societies?

KUWAIT CITY, June 22: Farwaniya Governor Sheikh Athbi Nasser Al-Athbi Al-Sabah received at his office on Sunday the Head of the Farwaniya Governorate's Strategic Stockpile Emergency Team Saleh Al-Enezi.

According to a press release issued by Farwaniya Governorate, the meeting focused on the status of the strategic stockpile in cooperative societies within the governorate. It also included a detailed presentation on the work mechanism and emergency response plan in place for potential crises. The governor praised the vital role played by the Ministry of Social Affairs, represented by its emergency team, in reassuring citizens and residents.

He commended their dedicated efforts to strengthen the strategic stockpile and ensure food security. At the end of the meeting , Al-Enezi expressed his gratitude to Sheikh Athbi Nasser for the warm reception and for his constant commitment to ensuring the provision of essential services and supplies to the residents of Farwaniya Governorate through coordination with the relevant authorities.



# diwaniya

A DIGEST OF PUBLIC OPINION

## How can Kuwait benefit from this round of feud?

“THIS question arises in the minds of those who are following the current situation in the Middle East - What are the possible outcomes of the confrontations between Israel and Iran? Can either side achieve a decisive victory? There is no doubt that the nature of the ongoing conflict changes over time, influenced by shifting developments on the ground. However, the military, economic, political, and demographic capacities of each side play a crucial role and must be taken into account. These are essential and consistent factors in any serious analysis,” columnist Eng. **Adel Al-Jarallah Al-Kharafi** wrote for *Al-Seyassah* daily.



Adel Al Kharafi

“To predict the triumph of one side over the other without considering these factors would be overly simplistic and short-sighted. Moreover, this conflict is shaped by unique geographical and demographic dynamics, in addition to the presence of various actors waiting on the sidelines, ready to capitalize on the eventual outcomes. It is true that Israel holds several strategic advantages, but they are not decisive on their own. Superiority in air power, missiles, and technology does not, by itself, determine the outcome of a war. Pursuing a decisive nuclear option would have catastrophic consequences that neither Tel Aviv nor other global powers are willing to accept, as it would mark the end of the project of a Jewish state in the region.

“Iran also has winning cards, but they are difficult to use. Utilizing them requires massive capabilities and geographical advantages, many of which were compromised following the decline of the Assad regime in Syria. Iran must now focus on preserving its winning assets that would allow it to negotiate from a position of strength, without suffering devastating losses or weakening its regime to the point of collapse in the aftermath of any major conflict.

“As a result, the balance of power between the two sides remains relatively even, and the potential losses on both sides appear comparable. The slogans raised by both parties are far from realistic. The notion of a “new Middle East” and a transformed world, as envisioned by the Israeli Prime Minister, is unrealistic. Similarly, the rhetoric coming from Iran lacks practical grounding. Therefore, the involvement of a major external power on either side could tip the balance of the conflict, but it would also further complicate the situation. This is particularly true in the case of the United States, which at times appears inclined toward resolving the matter through overwhelming military force.

“Despite these dynamics, diplomacy continues to play a pivotal role. Iran seeks to counter Israeli influence by manipulating international positions. In contrast, Israel aims to strengthen its stance through strategic alliances with both Western and Arab countries. These competing efforts contribute to a complex and evolving picture that could shape the trajectory of the conflict. We must act wisely to navigate the consequences of this round of conflict. It is important to maintain Kuwait’s neutrality, ensure greater freedom of movement, and to take advantage of regional developments to strengthen Kuwait’s economic and political decision-making in the future.”

### Also:

“Situated at the heart of the State of Kuwait, Farwaniya Governorate stands out as one of the most vibrant and diverse regions in terms of population and vital infrastructure. Given its vast potential, I firmly believe it is the most deserving candidate to be named Kuwait’s “Capital of Sustainability”, not just as a symbolic title, but as a practical, actionable, and measurable development initiative led by an active governor Sheikh Athbi Nasser Al-Athbi, who is deeply connected to the community and capable of turning vision into reality.” Sustainability expert **Dr. Sami Al-Adwani** wrote for *Al-Seyassah* daily.

“Farwaniya is much more than a central governorate by location but it is a vibrant social and developmental hub. It hosts several sovereign and service facilities of national significance, from the international airport that welcomes visitors from around the world, to The Avenues, the largest shopping mall in the region. The governorate is home to the newly built Farwaniya Hospital, meeting international standards, the second-largest mosque after the Grand Mosque in terms of capacity, and Kuwait University, which is an academic landmark and national pride.

“It also has several applied institutes that serve vocational education, the iconic Jaber Stadium which is a focal point for sports and youth activities, and green spaces supporting sustainable agriculture managed by the Public Authority for Agriculture Affairs and Fish Resources. On the civil society front, it has the Environmental Protection Society, which is the oldest environmental organization in the Arabian Gulf and the region.

“These diverse facilities, among others, highlight the many dimensions through which Farwaniya can

be seen from a sustainability perspective, helping to transform the initiative from a mere idea into a project. The complementary roles and combined efforts create a model that can inspire other governorates. The concept of “sustainability,” as adopted by the United Nations in the 2030 Agenda, extends beyond the environmental aspect to include economic development, social justice, quality of life, good governance, and strengthened partnerships.

“When examining the 17 Sustainable Development Goals, it is clear that Farwaniya possesses the material, human, and structural resources to achieve many of them locally. These include, for example, Goal 3: “Good Health”, Goal 4: “Quality Education”, Goal 8: “Decent Work and Economic Growth” reflected in the governorate’s vibrant commercial and service sectors, Goal 11: “Sustainable Cities and Communities” through effective urban planning and neighborhood development, and Goal 17: “Partnerships”, supported by the presence of established civil and charitable organizations alongside an active volunteer community.

“I entrust this initiative to the leaders and important figures of the governorate to make “Farwaniya 2030: Capital of Community Sustainability” a reality. This vision aims to transform Farwaniya into a living model of the sustainability agenda by developing its green spaces, enhancing health and community prevention programs, implementing green building standards, engaging religious leaders and guides, encouraging volunteer initiatives, and opening new horizons for innovators and creators. Through these efforts, Farwaniya Governorate can become a national laboratory for public policies in sustainability.

“Like any other region, Farwaniya faces its own challenges. To avoid being overwhelmed by constraints and problems, we must take proactive steps to drive success by building on the resources and assets the governorate already possesses. What is needed is not new inventions, but a realignment of priorities fueled by a spirit of participation and innovation.

“Let this article serve as an opening for reflection and a call to serious societal and official action, marking the launch of the first local Kuwaiti experiment under the ambitious title of “Farwaniya... Capital of Sustainability”.

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“In light of the recent amendment to Article 26 of the Personal Status Law, I will highlight some important issues related to the marriage contracts,” Kuwaiti writer **Saqr Mohammad Al-Majim** for *Al-Seyassah* daily.

“According to Article 1 of the Personal Status Law, marriage is defined as “a contract between a man and a woman, legally permissible to him, with the purpose of establishing a stable family under the care of the husband.” This contract must be concluded between two clearly identified parties, based on a proposal made by the woman’s representative and with the mutual consent of both parties. Under Sunni doctrine, the validity of the contract also requires the presence of a guardian (wali) for the woman if she is a minor. However, her consent is essential to ensure that the contract is not compromised by any defect.

“Two witnesses known for their fairness and integrity must be present to ensure the validity of the contract and to prevent any potential tampering. It is worth noting that the dowry is a mandatory component of the marriage contract. While it is a condition for the contract’s validity, it may be specified either at the time of the contract or determined later. The recent amendment to the Personal Status Law raised the minimum legal age for marriage from 17 years for men and 15 years for women to 18 years for both parties.

“Before addressing the issue of the validity of marriage for individuals under the specified age, it is important to note that Kuwaiti laws, particularly those related to personal status, are derived from Islamic Sharia. The recent amendment to the law serves primarily as a directive for relevant state agencies, specifically by prohibiting the official documentation of marriage contracts involving individuals under the age of eighteen.

“This amendment, however, does not affect the validity of the marriage contract under Islamic law, as age is not a factor that nullifies the contract according to Sharia. Nonetheless, from the state’s perspective, the documentation process is significant. It plays a crucial role in monitoring an individual’s social status and assessing its practical implications for government institutions.

“The amendment reflects the Kuwaiti legislator’s commitment to protecting the family, in line with the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which is related to the rights and protections of individuals under the age of 18. Countries that have signed this convention are obligated to protect children from early marriage and to work toward eliminating all forms of discrimination against women.”

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



Checking in progress.

## 38 juveniles held, 24,983 tickets in traffic swoops

By Munif Nayef

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 22: The General Traffic Department continued its traffic campaigns in all governorates.

These campaigns resulted in the issuance of 24,983 traffic tickets, impoundment of 27 vehicles, and referral of 38 juveniles to the Public Prosecution for driving without a license.

The weekly statistics of the department revealed that four motorcycles were impounded, 46 individuals were referred to traffic police stations, 67 vehicles wanted by the judiciary were seized, 42 individuals wanted by law were arrested, 87 expatriates were found to be holding expired residency permits, two individuals were in abnormal condition, and some street vendors were apprehended.

# Nationality fraud roots widespread

Living a fake ‘luxury’ life

**KUWAIT CITY, June 22: Registration procedures for a police training course led to the discovery of a forged citizenship case involving 39 individuals, reports Al-Rai daily.**

The case came to light during the police training course admissions process in February. At the time, applicants were required to submit detailed family information, including the names of paternal and maternal uncles. One applicant raised suspicion when he said he did not know an individual listed in his file as his uncle.

This prompted the Nationality Affairs Investigation Department to summon the applicant’s father and his uncles for questioning; during which they confirmed that the supposed uncle is not a relative and revealed that their father added the individual to their nationality file.

Investigations divulged that the supposed uncle is currently residing outside Kuwait. Authorities collected DNA samples from the family members, as well as from one of the fugitive’s sons. The results confirmed that the applicant’s father and uncles were indeed biological siblings, while the alleged uncle has no genetic ties to them.

The investigation further revealed that the individual with forged citizenship was fraudulently registered in the nationality file and was connected to 39 individuals who obtained affiliation through this falsified entry.

Authorities are continuing investigations to determine the legal status of everyone involved in the case.

Meanwhile, in another case of dual identity fraud involved a man who holds Kuwaiti and another Gulf nationality under different names with identical photo-

graphs, and the forgery extended to his children; such that authorities have identified a total of 13 individuals involved in the case, reports Al-Rai daily quoting sources.

Sources disclosed that the Nationality Investigations Department received information about a Gulf citizen who fraudulently obtained Kuwaiti citizenship. He and his children were reportedly entering and exiting Kuwait using their Gulf identity cards, not their Kuwaiti documents.

Sources explained that the purpose of using Gulf identification cards at borders was to create the illusion that the family remained in Kuwait; thereby, allowing them to continue illegally receiving labor support from Kuwaiti authorities.

Investigators obtained documents belonging to the father and two of his sons. Upon examination, it was found that while the names on the Gulf and Kuwaiti documents differed, the photographs were identical. A forensic expert confirmed that the images on both sets of documents belonged to the same individual.

Once border officials documented the fraudulent activity -- photographing and archiving the relevant evidence, the father and his sons sensed imminent exposure and fled the country using their Gulf identification cards.

The case, which involves 13 individuals tied to the forged nationality, was submitted to the Supreme Committee for Nationality Affairs. Based on the findings, the committee recommended revoking the Kuwaiti citizenship of the father and his dependents involved in the forgery. All parties were referred to the Public Prosecution for legal action.

This case highlights ongoing efforts to crack down on fraudulent citizenship schemes and misuse of State benefits, aided by enhanced document verification and cross-border security cooperation.

## Customs launches advanced pallet checking device at Nuwaiseeb Port

KUWAIT CITY, June 22: The General Administration of Customs has officially launched a state-of-the-art pallet inspection device at Nuwaiseeb Port, further enhancing its advanced inspection infrastructure, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

In a statement, Customs emphasized that the newly installed device represents cutting-edge technology in the field of precision security screening. It is designed to significantly boost the administration’s ability to detect and monitor goods, playing a crucial role in thwarting smuggling operations and safeguarding national security.

The statement also highlighted that similar advanced systems have already been deployed at Shuwaikh Port, Doha Port, Air Cargo Customs, the Sulaibiya Customs Administration, and the Vegetable Market. This expansion reflects the administration’s ongoing commitment to equipping all customs outlets with high-tech security solutions.

Manufactured by Smiths Detection—a global leader in inspection and screening systems—the new device aligns with Customs’ broader strategy to modernize its infrastructure using the most effective security and technological tools available.



A truck undergoes a check at the border post.

As part of efforts to oversee the implementation and functionality of the new system, Director General of the General Administration of Customs, Fatima Al-Qallaf, accompanied by Deputy Director General for Research and Investigation Affairs, Sami Al-Kandari, conducted an inspection tour of several customs facilities. These included the Land Customs Department, the Vegetable Market, and the Customs Antiquities Department.



KFF photo

The fire brigade at the site.

## No injuries in Farwaniya apartment fire, says KFF

KUWAIT CITY, June 22: Fire broke out in an apartment inside a building in Farwaniya recently. No casualties were reported.

According to a press release issued by Kuwait Fire Force (KFF), firefighters from Farwaniya and Shuwaikh fire stations rushed to the location and extinguished the fire within a short time.

## Municipality cuts power to 16 Firdous properties

KUWAIT CITY, June 22: The Public Relations Department of Kuwait Municipality announced that the Engineering Audit and Follow-up Department in Farwaniya Governorate carried out a field inspection to monitor violations related to bachelor housing, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

Legal action was taken against the violators, in line with regulatory compliance efforts.

The department noted that the campaign led to power being cut off at 16 properties in Firdous, following the issuance of prior warnings to the property owners.

□ □ □

**Tour conducted:** Director General of Kuwait General Administration of Customs (KGAC) Fatima Al-Qallaf, accompanied by Deputy Director General for Customs Investigation Sami Al-Kandari, conducted an inspection tour at the Airport Customs and Air Cargo Customs departments to assess the operational procedures in dealing with travelers and the entry and exit of goods through air cargo, reports Al-Anba daily.

In a statement released by KGAC, Al-Qallaf stressed the importance of continually enhancing performance and raising the quality of customs services. She reaffirmed the commitment of KGAC to strengthen oversight at the customs ports and fully support the customs personnel to ensure optimal readiness and efficiency.

### Offers exploit families

## Fraud, deception rise with onset of summer

By Munif Naif

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 22: With the arrival of the summer season and families heading to water parks, fraud and deception are on the rise as unscrupulous individuals exploit the season to lure their victims by posting ads selling discounted water park tickets and special offers.

Scammers exploit online platforms to create websites called “water park” or social media accounts that mimic official portals, promoting tickets at discounted prices. Once the agreed amount is paid, the person disappears. In other ways, victims receive fake tickets or their bank accounts are hacked after the payment is completed.

Scammers make fake offers to families, such as “buy five tickets, get two free” or reduced entry prices for families to these water parks. They also post pictures of these parks as WhatsApp backgrounds, using Kuwaiti numbers, most of which are operated outside Kuwait.

A citizen confirmed on his X account that he was scammed after booking tickets to a water park for his children for KD200. The citizen agreed with a person who posted a picture of the park on WhatsApp through social media ads to lure victims. He urged citizens and expatriates to book tickets through official channels to avoid being subjected to fraud.

In a related context, a security source confirmed that the Cybercrime Department at the Interior Ministry continuously warns against dealing with fake websites and accounts with fake offers. He called on citizens and expatriates to use official channels for bookings and report any fraudulent activities to the department.

□ □ □

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# Calls grow to relocate ministry’s exam control center from Faiha

Traffic, noise and parking chaos spark resident complaints

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

KUWAIT CITY, June 22: A number of residents in Faiha have expressed dissatisfaction over the continued presence of the Ministry of Education’s Science Department Control Center in a school located in the heart of the residential area, adjacent to the cooperative society and the clinic.

This leads to traffic jams and overcrowding in parking lots, especially during the end-of-year exam period.

In complaints that the newspaper received, resi-

dents indicated that dozens of correctors and staff flock to the center daily -- from the early morning hours until the evening. This creates unprecedented pressure in the area, negatively impacting residents’ comfort and hindering the entry and exit of clinic visitors and beneficiaries of the services of the cooperative.

Residents emphasized that the school is not qualified to be a permanent headquarters for the secondary school control center in terms of location or services. They explained that using schools located in residential neighborhoods for this purpose causes daily traffic congestion and disrupts daily life in the area. “It would have been more appropriate to allocate a separate, fully equipped building outside residential areas to host such intensive educational activities,” they suggested.

They called on the relevant authorities at the min-

istries of Education and Interior to urgently consider their concerns and relocate the center to a more suitable site. They pointed out that the issue is not just a matter of nuisance, as it has a direct impact on public services and the safety of passersby and residents in the area.

They affirmed their understanding of the importance of the center in the context of the educational process, but there should be a balance between the requirements of educational work and the right of residents to a peaceful and safe residential environment.

They stressed the need to adopt a clear policy for managing locations for such a center in the future -- away from residential neighborhoods, in order to ensure everyone’s comfort and the smooth administration of the educational process and examinations.

‘City deserves parks, not empty lots’

Council member pushes park expansion in Jaber Al-Ahmad

**By Inaas Awadh**  
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 22: Municipal Council member **Fahad Al-Abduljader** recently put forth a proposal to develop public parks in Jaber Al-Ahmad City.

This initiative entails designating and transforming existing government lots into green spaces -- a process that requires collaboration with the concerned government bodies.

The proposal aligns with the role of the council in urban planning, city beautification, and establishing regulations that enhance the aesthetic appeal of the city. This effort directly supports the objective of Kuwait Vision 2035 to foster sustainable and flourishing urban environments.

Al-Abduljader pointed out that Jaber Al-Ahmad City currently suf-

fers from shortage of green spaces and public parks, taking into consideration its dense population. He said these areas are crucial for improving the quality of life in residential areas; as they enhance the urban landscape, support mental and physical well-being, and provide families and children safe with natural recreational venues.

The proposal states the allocation of unused government plots in the city as public parks, in coordination with relevant authorities, notably the Public Authority for Agriculture Affairs and Fish Resources (PAAAFR).



Al-Abduljader

## Scientific Center champions sustainability during Environment Week 2025

# ‘Environmental Dialogues’ returns with a call for new choices

KUWAIT CITY, June 22: The Scientific Center, an affiliate of Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences (KFAS), launched the fourth edition of its ‘Environmental Dialogues’ event; coinciding with Environment Week 2025.

The theme of the event this year -- “New Choices” -- is inspired by the World Environment Day theme, which focuses on reducing plastic pollution and encouraging the adoption of environmentally friendly alternatives.

This event is part of a series of activities organized by the Scientific Center during Environment Week, reaffirming its commitment to spread environmental awareness and instill concepts of sustainability among members of society.

Since its establishment, the center has adopted a clear vision of making environmental protection an essential part of its educational and awareness-raising mission through its ongoing programs and specialized initiatives.

‘Environmental Dialogues’ is a scientific and educational event that aims to shed light on current environmental challenges and propose viable solutions. It hosts a group of experts and specialists from various entities concerned with environmental affairs in Kuwait, promoting constructive scientific discussion and the exchange of



Group photo during the ‘Environmental Dialogues’ event.

Photo by Rezk Tawfiq

practical experiences.

In his opening remarks at the event, Deputy Director General for Visitor Experience at the Scientific Center Mohammed Al-Sanousi pointed out “we believe that environmental awareness can only be achieved through integrated efforts and building true partnerships in all sectors of the country. The ‘Environmental Dialogues’ event embodies this approach. It is an interactive space where we present challenges and showcase successful experiences and practices, all serving a common goal -- a cleaner environment and a

more aware society.”

He added “through this year’s theme, ‘New Choices,’ we are sending a message to the community about the importance of adopting sustainable alternatives that limit the use of plastic and reduce environmental impact, in addition to promoting a culture of recycling as an effective solution to waste reduction. We hope this event will contribute to instilling responsible environmental behaviors that support the national drive towards sustainability and achieve the goals of Kuwait Vision 2040.”

Meanwhile, acting Chairperson of the Environment Public Authority (EPA) Dr. Nouf Behbehani emphasized in her speech on this occasion that “organizing such events is in line with the efforts of EPA and the strategic plans of the State to address environmental challenges; particularly combating desertification, protecting biodiversity, promoting sustainability concepts in various sectors, and spreading environmental awareness in society.”

At the conclusion of the event, the Scientific Center reiterated its call to all entities and institutions to strengthen cooperation in the environmental field; stressing that sustained impact requires effective partnerships and integration between governmental, academic and community efforts.

# JUNE

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NOW	NOW
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Promo period from 15<sup>th</sup> June to 30<sup>th</sup> June 2025      Terms & conditions apply\*

## Subiya plant bid deadline extended

# MEW finalizes new organizational framework to streamline services

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

KUWAIT CITY, June 22: The Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy has completed the organizational structure of its sectors.

Sources revealed the new organizational structure will be presented to the undersecretary to pave the way for approval by Minister Dr. **Subaih Al-Mukhaizeem**, and then for submission to the Civil Service Commission (CSC). Sources said the new structure includes the integration of departments in sectors with similar working conditions and overlapping tasks in order to reduce burdens and ensure a smooth workflow.

In a related development, the ministry is studying the mechanism for the shift work for employees in various sectors in preparation for a discussion with the CSC in this regard.

Meanwhile, the drop in temperature -- which ranged from 44 to 45 degrees Celsius, along with strong and dust-raising winds -- reduced the electricity consumption rates recently with the load index recording 15,300 megawatts.

Official spokesperson of the ministry Fatima Hayat confirmed the ministry remains committed to the promotion of a culture of rationalizing electricity and water consumption among members of society. She said the ‘Wafer’ pavilion, currently located in Al-Khiran Mall opposite Entrance No. 2, is part of the ongoing efforts to raise public awareness on the importance of preserving natural resources.

In a press statement, Hayat said the ministry urges citizens and expatriates to visit the pavilion to fully understand the most common sources of electricity and water wastage, and to learn the practical and simplified mechanisms for reducing such



Dr Al-Mukhaizeem

wastage. She asserted this will contribute to increasing efficiency, without affecting comfort or service quality.

She explained that rationalization means achieving optimal consumption for the benefit of customers, while reducing the burden on national resources. She added “members of the media and the rationalization awareness team are present at the pavilion from 10:00 am to 10:00 pm to provide guidance and advice on the best daily practices that can be adopted in homes and various facilities.”

She pointed out that the campaign’s slogan, “Less becomes more with your saving,” reflects the importance of conscious consumer behavior in reducing bills and promoting sustainability. She called on the public to seize this opportunity to visit the ‘Wafer’ pavilion and benefit from the information and methods on display to achieve optimal consumption and contribute effectively to building a sustainable future for the country.

Also, the Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy has officially written to the Central Agency for Public Tenders (CAPT) requesting an extension of the deadline for submitting bids for the supply, installation, operation and maintenance of combined-cycle gas turbine units to increase electrical power by 900 megawatts at the Subiya Power and Water Distillation Plant (Phase IV) by one month -- until July 24, instead of June 24.

In its letter, the ministry stated that “after the approval of CAPT to publish the minutes of the preliminary meeting for the aforementioned tender; and since the bidding companies need more time to solicit quotes from the main manufacturers of gas turbines, steam turbines and boilers due to the large scope of the tender, we kindly request that you extend the deadline for submitting bids until July 24.”

Reliable sources indicated that the ministry is counting heavily on the completion of this vital project, which will enhance the production capacity of the electricity grid.

## Fahaheel intersection and ramp to Kuwait City closed for 10 days

KUWAIT CITY, June 22: The General Traffic Department announced the closure of the Fahaheel intersection from Fahaheel Roundabout on Road 212 heading towards Sabahiya, as well as the ramp leading to King Abdulaziz bin Abdulrahman Al Saud Road (Fahaheel Road 30) towards Kuwait City, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

It stated that the closure will begin at dawn on Sunday and last for ten days.

# PADA registrants reached 69,029

KUWAIT CITY, June 22: The Public Authority for Disability Affairs (PADA) announced that according to the latest statistics the number of people registered with the authority has reached 69,029, reports Al-Anba daily.

The authority indicated that these people are under the following disability categories: 11,712 physical; 5,350 visual; 18,800 mental; 14,926 motor; 7,867 educational; 1,915 developmental; 5,534 hearing; 2,486 psychological and 439 unspecified.

Sources revealed to the daily that the authority, through Sahel application, notifies people with disabilities three months before the expiration of their disability certificates; allowing those concerned to obtain a new medical report and submit a request for review by the concerned committees.

The authority urged people with disabilities and their guardians to take the necessary steps within the three-month period to update their information, and then submit a request for the new disability certificate.



Legal framework set for foundation operations

Official gazette publishes new regulations for charities issued by MoSA

KUWAIT CITY, June 22: The official gazette “Kuwait Al-Youm” published Decision No. 122/2025 issued by the Minister of Social Affairs, Family and Childhood Affairs, Dr. Amthal Al-Huwailah, concerning the issuance of regulations for charitable foundations, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The regulations include the following provisions: Chapter One - Definitions and General Provisions

- Article 1:**
- Minister: Minister of Social Affairs
  - Ministry: Ministry of Social Affairs
  - Administration: Department of Charitable Societies and Foundations

■ Law: Law No. 24/1962 regarding clubs and public benefit associations, and its amendments

■ Applicant: Any natural or legal person who submits an application to establish a charitable foundation

■ Foundation: A charitable foundation registered in accordance with the provisions of Law No. 24/1962 and its amendments concerning clubs and public benefit associations

**Article 2:**

The founders and members of the Board of Directors of the foundation shall adhere to the provisions of Law No. 24/1962 and its amendments concerning clubs and public benefit associations, as well as its implementing decisions. They must also comply with the Labor Law No. 6/2010 regarding work in the private sector. The Model Bylaws for Charitable Endowments, issued under Ministerial Resolution No. 48/1999, shall serve as a guiding framework.

**Article 3:**

Charitable foundations subject to these regulations must comply with all regulatory directives and safety and security procedures issued by the ministry, in coordination with the relevant authorities.

**Article 4:**

The applicant is strictly prohibited from engaging in any charitable or social activity unless the foundation is officially declared in accordance with the relevant regulations and procedures. Also, the applicant may not enter into any contracts or conduct any transactions on behalf of the foundation prior to its formal declaration by the ministry.

The foundation may not change its location, alter its specifications, or establish a branch without obtaining prior written approval from the ministry.

The foundation is obligated not to solicit or invite donations from the public in any form without first securing the ministry’s approval.

Chapter Two - Provisions and Procedures for Charity Publicity

**Article 5:**

The following conditions must be met for the official publicity and registration of a charitable foundation:

1. The number of founders must not be fewer than ten.
2. All founders must be at least 21 years old at the time of submitting the publicity application.
3. Each founder must be a Kuwaiti citizen of good conduct, with no prior conviction of a felony or a misdemeanor involving moral turpitude or dishonesty.
4. Candidates for membership on the charity’s Board of Directors must be at least 30 years old at the time of their selection.

5. Security clearance must be obtained, with no security objections to the foundation’s publicity.

6. All necessary approvals must be secured from the relevant official authorities for licensing the charity’s operation, including from Kuwait Municipality, Kuwait Fire Force, and the Real Estate Registration Department at the Ministry of Justice.

7. The founders or their authorized representatives must submit a bank certificate confirming a deposit of KD 10,000 in the name of the charity at a local bank.

**Article 6:**

The procedures for publicizing a charitable foundation shall include the following steps:

1. An application for the publicity of the charitable foundation shall be submitted by the founders or their authorized representatives. The application must include a formal statement expressing the founders’ intent to establish and publicize the foundation in accordance with the provisions of the law.

2. The following documents must be attached to the application:

■ Two copies of the foundation’s bylaws, prepared in accordance with the model bylaws for charitable foundations.

■ Minutes of the founders’ meeting, including the election of the foundation’s Board of Directors and an official letter authorizing one of the founders to represent them in all publicity-related procedures.

■ Copies of valid civil ID cards for all founders.

3. Upon completion of the application, the ministry shall coordinate with the Ministry of Interior to obtain security clearance for the founders.

4. The application shall then be submitted to the ministry’s Publicity Committee for initial review and approval.

5. The ministry shall contact the relevant government entities - Kuwait Municipality, Kuwait Fire Force, and the Real Estate Registration Department at the Ministry of Justice - to secure the necessary operational licenses and to authenticate the foundation’s bylaws.

6. The concerned department in the ministry shall prepare and submit a memorandum to the minister, detailing the charity’s registration request and the procedures undertaken, accompanied by a draft ministerial decision for its registration.

7. The registration decision and a summary of the foundation’s bylaws shall be published in the official gazette “Kuwait Al-Youm”.

**Article 7:**

Following publication in the official gazette, the charity shall acquire legal personality and shall be authorized to carry out activities in pursuit of its stated objectives.

**Article 8:**

The ministry reserves the right to reject the registration of a charity within one month from the date of submission of a complete registration application, provided that the reasons for rejection are clearly stated. The ministry also retains the right to amend the foundation’s bylaws. The applicant has the right to appeal the decision of rejection or the proposed amendments to the minister within one month from the date of receiving the notification.

**Article 9:**

After the charity is officially publicized, it may commence its operations at its approved headquarters, provided it has

obtained all necessary approvals from the relevant authorities.

**Article 10:**

The charity must display an identification plate at its approved headquarters, clearly showing the organization’s name and the number of the ministerial decision by which it was publicized.

Chapter Three - Management of Charitable Endowments

**Article 11:**

The endowment shall be managed by a Board of Directors composed of five to nine members, each of whom must be at least 30 years old and hold a university degree or a diploma of no less than two years following high school.

**Article 12:**

The Board of Directors shall manage the endowment in accordance with the powers and responsibilities outlined in the Model Bylaws for Charitable Endowments and the endowment’s own bylaws.

**Article 13:**

The Board of Directors is required to submit an annual financial report, certified by the external auditor appointed by the endowment, along with an administrative report detailing the endowment’s activities and achievements, to the ministry within the deadlines specified in the bylaws.

**Article 14:**

The Board of Directors shall establish regulations governing the endowment’s operations, with particular emphasis on financial and administrative regulations.

**Article 15:**

The endowment shall open nominations for membership in the Board of Directors for a period of at least 15 days, beginning no less than one month before the end of the current board’s term. This announcement shall be posted on the bulletin board at the endowment’s headquarters, and registered letters with acknowledgment of receipt shall be sent to members.

**Article 16:**

The members of the endowment shall elect the Board of Directors by secret ballot, conducted under the supervision of the current Board of Directors.

**Article 17:**

The ministry shall be provided with the list of names of the newly elected Board members, in accordance with the above procedures.

Chapter Four - Supervision and Oversight

**Article 18:**

The ministry shall supervise associations registered under the provisions of the law through employees of the competent administration. These employees have the right to inspect the association at any time without prior notice. They may enter the association’s premises and review all records, data, and information related to the association’s activities.

**Article 19:**

If it is proven that the association has violated any provisions of the law or the related decisions, employees of the competent administration shall have the authority to issue a citation against the association using the designated form.

Chapter Five - Penalties

**Article 20:**

In addition to the penalties stipulated by the law or any other applicable legislation, if the association violates the

provisions of the law or the related decisions, the following measures shall apply:

■ A formal notification of the violation shall be served to the association.

■ If the violation is not rectified within one week of notification, the charity’s bank accounts will be suspended and will remain frozen until the violation is corrected.

**Article 21:**

The ministry has the right to suspend the charity’s registration in the following cases:

■ The charity commits serious violations, persists in violating after the ministry’s notification, or repeatedly breaches the law.

■ The charity fails to submit its financial statements and administrative reports for two consecutive years.

■ The charity conceals any financial information or data requested by the ministry, manipulates data, or deliberately provides false information intended to mislead the ministry and obstruct its oversight duties.

**Article 22:**

The Council of Ministers may, upon the recommendation of the Minister of Social Affairs, dissolve the charity in any of the following cases:

■ If its membership falls below the minimum number stipulated in Article 5 of this law.

■ If the charity becomes unable to meet its financial obligations.

■ If it violates the provisions of this law or the charity’s bylaws, or engages in activities beyond its stated objectives.

■ If it fails to carry out any effective activity to achieve its objectives.

■ If dissolution is deemed necessary in the interest of public security or public welfare.

**Article 23:**

The Minister of Social Affairs may, by decision, dissolve the charity’s Board of Directors and appoint an interim board or director for a specified renewable period. The appointed director shall assume the powers of the Board of Directors in the following cases:

1. Violation of the provisions of this law or the charity’s bylaws.

2. If the number of board members is insufficient to hold a valid meeting.

3. If it is necessary to protect the interests of the members or the social objectives of the charity.

**Article 24:**

In the event of the association’s dissolution, the minister shall issue a decision to form a committee to liquidate its assets, and specify the method of liquidation, the duration of the liquidation process, and the liquidators’ fees. The term of the committee may be renewed as necessary until the liquidation is complete.

**Article 25:**

Upon completion of liquidation, the association’s remaining assets shall revert to the ministry, which will determine the entity to which these assets shall be allocated.

**Article 26:**

Following a dissolution decision, the association’s Board of Directors is required to hand over all movable and immovable assets, as well as all documents and records, to the liquidation committee.

Continued from Page 1

What else

This question is not only raised by the West and the United States but also by Iran’s friends and neighbors. Because the answers are unconvincing, ambiguity has become a core element of the issue. Even after the 2015 nuclear agreement was signed, Tehran failed to reassure the other parties involved. Consequently, the world witnessed that as soon as Washington withdrew from the agreement in 2018, Tehran rapidly increased its uranium enrichment to higher levels, threatening global peace and bringing Iran closer to possessing a nuclear bomb.

Allowing inspectors from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) access to Iran’s nuclear reactors was insufficient, and surveillance cameras proved ineffective, as many nuclear facilities were undisclosed. This situation fueled doubts and suspicions that the Tehran regime has yet to dispel. Furthermore, a mere religious fatwa forbidding the possession and use of nuclear weapons is not enough to reassure the international community, especially since such fatwas can be quickly revoked or amended, as recent reports circulating from Iran indicate.

It is true that some countries have possessed nuclear weapons but have not used them, except for the United States, which dropped nuclear bombs on Japan in 1945 and has since come to understand the horrific consequences of their use.

Moreover, the world does not tolerate any country being subjected to an existential threat, especially when that country already exists, is internationally recognized, and enjoys the support of many Western and international nations, namely, Israel.

Therefore, when former US President Trump stated that “Iran is raising the slogan of annihilating Israel and the United States,” it represents a serious threat to Western consciousness that cannot be dismissed or minimized as mere rhetoric for domestic audiences.

This issue has placed the current Iranian regime in a critical position and has become a major obstacle to any solution that could reassure the international community.

This explains the muted international response to the US bombing of Iranian nuclear sites. Tehran still looks to the example of isolated North Korea, which possesses nuclear weapons, yet the world collectively agrees to prevent their use, due to North Korea’s limited capabilities on one hand, and the reluctance of its own allies to permit the use of nuclear weapons on the other.

All of this stems from an Eastern culture of ambiguity, whereas what is truly needed is clarity in positions. Some may argue that Israel practices strategic ambiguity regarding its possession of weapons of mass destruction.

However, this policy cannot be justified. Tel Aviv fully understands that any attempt to use nuclear weapons would provoke global condemnation, especially from the United States, which would be the first to punish Israel for crossing the red lines set by Washington and the West.

Ultimately, Israel is a functioning state that cannot make unilateral decisions without consulting its allies, and those who are perceptive will understand this reality.

Amir meets

Also on Sunday, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah received Sunday at Seif Palace His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.

His Highness also received First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah and Minister of Defense Sheikh Abdullah Ali Abdullah Al-Sabah.

Kuwait warned

Bushehr reactor located in Bandar Abbas, which is overlooking the Gulf, will lead to extremely dangerous water pollution; especially since Kuwait and the rest of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries depend on its water. He underscored the importance of expanding Kuwaiti storage facilities, in cooperation with the private sector, to ensure adequate water and food supplies for use in such hot conditions.

He called on the oil sector to take all the necessary measures in the event that the Strait of Hormuz is closed, as such closure will halt Kuwaiti oil supplies to Asian countries. He added the Red Sea is not really safe as well, indicating the regional developments will inevitably lead to a huge increase

in oil prices as a result of the dependence of most countries -- including Europe -- on Gulf oil. He cited as evidence the role of Saudi Arabia in the 1973 War when King Faisal made his historic decision to ban the export of oil in the heat of that war, which led to the cessation of the use of cars in Europe and made the residents of European countries return to riding bicycles.

Civil aviation

Al-Ayar that the Kuwaiti future aviation holds bright prospects should it be invested and utilized according to an integrated strategic vision that enhances Kuwait’s position as a regional hub in the passenger and air cargo sectors.

He underlined the significance of boosting the number of aircraft operated by Kuwaiti companies, whether for passengers or cargo, and broadening the network of international destinations to fulfill the growing demand amid the growing reliance of citizens and residents on foreign airlines.

Kuwait sees

During the telephone call, they touched on the solid ties between the two countries and the latest developments in the Middle East; particularly the ongoing conflict between Iran and the usurping Israeli entity.

His Highness the Amir also received a phone call from President of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al-Nahyan on the same day.

The two sides reviewed the brotherly relations between the two countries; and discussed the latest developments in the Middle East, the conflict between Iran and Israel, and the regional and international developments.

On the other hand, His Highness the Prime Minister and Chairman of the Supreme Defense Council Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah on Sunday presided over the meeting of the Supreme Defense Council at Seif Palace, during which they tackled the most recent regional developments.

The council members followed the coordination by authorities to ensure swift action and enhance their level of preparedness.

The council decided to be in session to follow up the regional developments.

Meanwhile, as part of the State of Kuwait’s commitment to guarantee the safety of its citizens abroad and their safe return to the homeland, the second batch of flights arrived Sunday to evacuate Kuwaiti citizens from Iran.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is implementing this evacuation plan through the Republic of Turkmenistan in coordination with the concerned authorities.

The concerned authorities are working round the clock to complete the evacuation phases and provide all the necessary facilities to the evacuees, in accordance with the directives of the political leadership and the ongoing commitment to ensure the safety of citizens abroad and their safe return to the country.

In addition, Kuwait expressed its deep concern over the latest developments in Iran, specifically the targeting of Iranian nuclear facilities.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs reaffirmed Kuwait’s position as outlined in its statement issued on June 13, 2025; condemning the aggression against the sovereignty of Iran and the violation of international laws and conventions.

It also urged the international community and the United Nations Security Council to assume their responsibilities toward halting these violations in order to maintain security and stability in the region.

The ministry called for immediate halt to all forms of escalation and all military actions, and for resorting to dialogue, as well as intensifying efforts aimed at finding political solutions that can ensure regional security and stability.

Kuwait National Guard (KNG) announced on Sunday that radiation levels in the air and water throughout the country remain stable, confirming that the situation is “normal.”

In a press statement, the Moral Guidance Directorate at KNG said the Sheikh Salem Al-Ali Al-Sabah Center for Chemical Defense and Radiation Monitoring carries out accurate and continuous radiation level readings through its monitoring networks, installed in various parts of the country.

Earlier, the US launched military strikes on the nuclear facilities in Iran with President Donald Trump deeming the operation as “successful”.

Vice Chief of Staff of the Kuwaiti Army Air Vice Marshal Sheikh Sabah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah conducted a

field visit at the Amiri Guard on Sunday to personally look into the level of readiness at the Army, and ensure combative ability and bolster State security.

Major General Bader Al-Sahloul and Amiri Guard Commander Major General Adel Al-Kandari welcomed Sheikh Sabah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah during the visit.

He was briefed on readiness levels and the duties of Amiri Guard units, and was taken to a number of sites to look into the latest security and preventative measures. He commended the discipline and efforts of Amiri guard personnel in performing their duties.

Furthermore, Abdally border has received more than 39,000 people since Saturday -- easing their entry and departure to their countries through Kuwait, as per the directive of First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah to facilitate the passage of travelers stranded in Iran due to the regional developments.

Director of the border Colonel Waleed Al-Azmi confirmed that Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef issued instructions to facilitate entry and departure procedures through the border for all Kuwaiti travelers, citizens and residents of Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries, members of diplomatic missions and embassy staff.

Al-Azmi disclosed in an interview with Al-Akhbar Channel that some humanitarian exceptions have been made at the border, in coordination with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, to overcome all difficulties for the entry of certain nationalities. He said these exceptions include granting them a seven-day transit visa to pass through the border to Kuwait International Airport and then travel to their home countries. “This is in addition to travelers who entered the country through the airport and then crossed through Abdally border,” he stated.

He added that, in cooperation with the Ministry of Health, comprehensive medical services have been provided at the border; indicating ambulances are available round the clock and a doctor is on duty to examine patients arriving at the border. “This is part of the government’s emergency plan under the current circumstances. Some patients have been transferred to hospitals,” he revealed.

In light of the rumors and misinformation circulating on unofficial social media, he urged the public to obtain information from official and reliable sources to ensure the accuracy and integrity of the information.

Also, in a press statement Sunday, the Ministry of Finance confirmed the activation of its emergency plan to ensure financial service continuity with high efficiency and to maintain government performance under all circumstances.

The ministry indicated that it has taken a number of precautionary measures; such as equipping shelters in the eastern and southern ministries complex with full technical and service capabilities to accommodate about 900 people. These shelters are classified as C4 and are in excellent condition. Storage facilities in the eastern parking lot are also allocated for use when needed.

The measures include activating the financial systems (Oracle and GFMS) using alternative devices, while enabling remote work in a secure electronic environment through specialized protection programs.

In addition, Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Secretary General Jassem Mohammad Al-Budaiwi stressed that targeting Iranian nuclear facilities by the US will escalate tensions and affect the security and stability in the region.

He said the GCC affirmed the contents of the statement issued at the 48th Extraordinary Ministerial Meeting of the GCC Ministerial Council regarding developments in the region, and the GCC’s condemnation of everything that threatens the security and stability of the region.

He also underscored the need for an immediate ceasefire, for all parties to exert joint efforts to de-escalate tensions, adopt diplomacy as an effective means of resolving conflicts, and exercise the highest level of self-restraint to spare the region and its people the dangers of war.

Elsewhere, Bahrain activated on Sunday a remote working policy for 70 percent of employees in ministries and government entities, citing regional tensions.

The decision excludes sectors where physical presence is essential or which have specific procedures in place for emergencies, as reported by the Bahrain News Agency. The policy will be implemented in line with public safety requirements until further notice.

Meanwhile, Bahrain’s Interior Ministry urged the public on social media platform X to use main roads only when necessary, so as to maintain public safety and allow the relevant authorities to use the roads efficiently.

Additionally, the Bahraini Education Ministry activated digital platforms for educational activities as a precautionary measure under an approved plan for all educational institutions.

The United States inserted itself into Israel’s war against Iran early Sunday by dropping 30,000-pound bombs on an uranium enrichment site buried under a mountain, a risky gambit that aimed to destroy the Islamic Republic’s nuclear program after months of failed diplomacy. The attack prompted fears of a wider regional conflict as Iran lashed out at the U.S. for crossing “a very big red line.”

The U.S. also fired dozens of missiles, and President Donald Trump said in a televised address from the White House that the combination of strikes “completely and fully obliterated” three nuclear sites. However, U.S. defense officials said an assessment of the damage wrought by the attack still was ongoing.

Hours later, Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said the time for diplomacy had passed and that his country had the right to defend itself. Araghchi said he would immediately fly to Moscow to coordinate positions with its ally, Russia.

“The warmongering and lawless administration in Washington is solely and fully responsible for the dangerous consequences and far-reaching implications of its act of aggression,” he told reporters in Turkey in the first comments by a high-ranking Iranian official since the strikes. “They crossed a very big red line by attacking nuclear facilities.”

The Atomic Energy Organization of Iran confirmed that attacks took place on the Fordo and Natanz enrichment facilities as well as its Isfahan nuclear site, but it insisted that its nuclear program will not be stopped. Both Iran and the U.N. nuclear watchdog said there were no immediate signs of radioactive contamination around the three locations following the strikes.

Countries around the globe are calling for diplomacy and no further escalation.

It was not clear whether the U.S. would continue attacking Iran alongside its ally Israel, which has been engaged in a war with Iran for nine days. But U.S. Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth said the U.S. does not “seek war” and that the operation would not be “open-ended,” though Trump earlier warned there would be additional strikes if Tehran retaliated against U.S. forces. “There will either be peace or there will be tragedy for Iran,” said Trump, who acted without congressional authorization.

With the attack, the United States has inserted itself into a war it spent decades trying to avoid because of the dizzyingly high stakes. Success would mean ending Iran’s nuclear ambitions once and for all and eliminating the last significant threat to Israel’s security. But failure - or overreach - could plunge the U.S. into the vortex of another long and unpredictable conflict in the Middle East.

For Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, this is the culmination of a decadeslong campaign to get the U.S. to strike Israel’s chief regional rival and its disputed nuclear program. For Iran’s supreme leader, the 86-year-old Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, it could mark the end of a similarly ambitious campaign to transform the Islamic Republic into a regional power and counterweight to the West.



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Workers stand handcuffed after being arrested by US Immigration and Customs Enforcement, ICE, at Delta Downs Racetrack, Hotel and Casino in Calcasieu Parish, near Vinton, La., on June 18. (AP)



A broken tree lays in a yard from the previous night's severe thunderstorms in Bismarck, ND on June 21. (AP)

North Dakota tornado kills 3

Powerful winds - including a tornado - that swept across parts of the upper Midwest left three people dead and a regional airport heavily damaged, while nearly 150 million Americans were under a heat advisory or warning as the weekend warmed up in much of the US.

A complex storm system wreaked havoc in parts of North Dakota, northern Minnesota and northern Wisconsin, with tornadoes, large hail and strong wind gusts, according to Brian Hurley, meteorologist with the National Weather Service's Weather Prediction Center.

Cass County Sheriff Jesse Jahner said at a news conference Saturday that two men and a woman were killed late Friday at two locations around the town of Enderlin, about 40 miles (60 kilometers) southwest of Fargo. Thousands of households lost power.

Hours earlier the National Weather Service in Grand Forks said on the social platform X that two deaths were attributed to a tornado that hit a home.

Timothy Lynch, lead forecaster with the NWS office in Grand Forks, said the storm was confirmed as a tornado but crews were still working to determine its strength and highest wind speeds. He said the storm impacted the neighboring counties of Cass and Ransom. (AP)

ORLANDO, Fla., June 22, (AP): Randolph Bracy and LaVon Bracy Davis are taking sibling rivalry to a new level as the brother and sister run against each other in a race for a Florida state Senate seat on Tuesday.

Not only that, one of their opponents for the Democratic nomination in the district representing parts of metro Orlando is Alan Grayson, a combative former Democratic US congressman who drew national attention in 2009 when he said in a House floor speech that the Republican health care plan was to "die quickly."

The headline-grabbing candidates are running in the special primary election for the seat that had been held by Geraldine Thompson, a trailblazing veteran lawmaker who died earlier this year following complications from knee-replacement surgery. A fourth candidate also is running in the Democratic primary - personal injury attorney Coretta Anthony-Smith.

The winner will face Republican Willie Montague in September for the general election in the Democratic-dominant district. Black voters make up more than half registered Democrats in the district.

Both siblings have experience in the state legislature. Bracy Davis was a state representative, and Bracy was a former state senator. Adding to the family dynamics was the fact that the siblings' mother, civil rights activist Lavon Wright Bracy, was the maid of honor at Thompson's wedding and

Many Americans witnessing immigration arrests for first time and reacting

SAN DIEGO, June 22, (AP): Adam Greenfield was home nursing a cold when his girlfriend raced in to tell him Immigration and Customs Enforcement vehicles were pulling up in their trendy San Diego neighborhood.

The author and podcast producer grabbed his iPhone and bolted out the door barefoot, joining a handful of neighbors recording masked agents raiding a popular Italian restaurant nearby, as they yelled at the officers to leave. An hour later, the crowd had grown to nearly 75 people, with many in front of the agents' vehicles.

"I couldn't stay silent," Greenfield said. "It was literally outside of my front door."

More Americans are witnessing people being hauled off as they shop, exercise at the gym, dine out and otherwise go about their daily lives as President Donald Trump's administration aggressively works to increase immigration arrests. As the

raids touch the lives of people who aren't immigrants themselves, many Americans who rarely, if ever, participated in civil disobedience are rushing out to record the actions on their phones and launch impromptu protests.

Greenfield said on the evening of the May 30 raid, the crowd included grandparents, retired military members, hippies, and restaurant patrons arriving for date night. Authorities threw flash bangs to force the crowd back and then drove off with four detained workers, he said.

"To do this, at 5 o'clock, right at the dinner rush, right on a busy intersection with multiple restaurants, they were trying to make a statement," Greenfield said. "But I don't know if their intended point is getting across the way they want it to. I think it is sparking more backlash."

Previously, many arrests happened late at night or in the pre-dawn hours by agents waiting outside people's homes as they left for work or outside their work sites when they finished their day. When ICE raided another popular restaurant in San Diego in 2008, agents did it in the early morning without incident.

White House border czar Tom Homan has said agents are being forced to make more arrests in communities because of sanctuary policies that limit cooperation with ICE in certain cities and states. ICE enforces immigration laws nationwide but seeks state and local help in alerting federal authorities of immigrants wanted for deportation and holding that person until federal officers take custody.

Vice President JD Vance, during a visit to Los Angeles on Friday, said those policies have given agents "a bit of a morale problem because they've had the local government in this community tell them that they're not allowed to do their job."

'Sibling showdown'

Brother and sister compete for Florida state senate seat



Representative LaVon Bracy Davis holds a news conference along with the family of recently deceased Sen Geraldine F. Thompson, to announce her run for Senator Thompsons' seat in the Florida congress in front of the Wells Built Museum in Orlando, Fla on March 21. (AP)

was one of her oldest friends. She has endorsed her daughter over her son.

The siblings' family has been active in Orlando's civic life for decades. Their father, Randolph Bracy Jr., was a local NAACP president, a founder of a Baptist church in Orlando and director of the religion department at Bethune-Cookman University.

It wasn't the first time the family has been caught up in competing endorsements. When Bracy and Thompson ran against each other for the Democratic primary in a state senate race last year, Bracy Davis endorsed Thompson over

her brother. Campaign fliers sent out recently by a Republican political operative start with "Bracy Yourself!"

Bracy, 48, who one time played professional basketball in Turkey, told the Orlando Sentinel that it was "disappointing and hurtful" for his sister to run after he had announced his bid. But Bracy Davis, 45, an attorney by training, said she was running for the people in state senate District 15, not against any of the other candidates. She said that she intended to continue Thompson's legacy of pushing for voters' rights and increasing pay for public schoolteachers. Thompson's family has endorsed Bracy Davis.

Grayson was elected to Congress in 2008 and voted out in 2010. Voters sent him back to Congress in 2012, but he gave up his seat for an unsuccessful 2016 Senate run.

**Also:**

**WASHINGTON:** Former Texas Republican US Rep **Blake Farenthold**, who left Congress amid harassment allegations, has died. He was 63.

He died in a Corpus Christi hospital and suffered heart and liver problems in recent years, **Steve Ray**, his former longtime political consultant, said. Farenthold's wife, **Debbie Farenthold**, confirmed that he died Friday.

Blake Farenthold was elected in 2010, upsetting long-serving Democratic US Rep **Solomon Ortiz**. Seven years later, Farenthold announced that he wouldn't seek reelection.

In a video he posted on his campaign's Facebook page at the time, he denied a former aide's three-year-old accusations, which included that he'd subjected her to sexually suggestive comments and behavior and then fired her after she complained. He apologized for an office atmosphere he said included "destructive gossip, offhand comments, off-color jokes and behavior that in general was less than professional."

He said in the video that if he stayed in Congress, he would have spent months trying to vindicate himself.

Ukraine receives at least 20 bodies of Russian soldiers in recent exchanges

KYIV, Ukraine, June 22, (AP): Ukraine's president said that Russia repatriated at least 20 of its own dead soldiers in recent exchanges with Ukraine, describing it as a result of Moscow's disorganization in carrying out large swaps of wounded POWs and remains of troops.

Volodymyr Zelenskyy said that an Israeli citizen was among the dead Ukraine had received in recent exchanges. He spoke to journalists on Friday but his comments were embargoed until Saturday. Officials did not disclose the identities of the bodies.

"They threw the corpses of their citizens at us. This is their attitude toward war, toward their soldiers. And this is already documented. Sometimes these bodies even have Russian passports," he said.

He said the Russian side insisted the dead were all Ukrainians.

Journalists were shown a Russian passport and ID belonging to one of the 20 dead Russians. According to the document, the man came from the Moscow region.

The exchanges of the dead and wounded soldiers are the only tangible result of direct peace talks in Istanbul. In June, Ukraine and Russia agreed to exchange the bodies of fallen soldiers in a 6,000-for-6,000 format during the second round of negotiations. Ukraine was concerned that the number was too high and that the sides did not have enough time for forensic examinations and checking the identities of the dead.

Zelenskyy said he suspected Russia's plan was to play along with peace talks to appease the U.S. and stave off more sanctions but without ending the war that Russian President Vladimir Putin believes he is winning.



A freed Ukrainian soldier waves to Ukrainians holding photos of their missing relatives as he arrives after a POW exchange with Russia in the Chernyhyr region of Ukraine on June 20. (AP)

He said that because of this, Ukraine would be "in a really difficult situation" of deciding whether to continue the talks in Istanbul.

Zelenskyy said Ukraine was against Iran acquiring nuclear weapons, because of its military partnership with Russia, but stopped short of expressing explicit support for Israel's strikes. He repeated that the new war in the Middle East will affect Ukraine indirectly.

"Iran gave the Russians everything to kill us. They gave them martyrs, they gave them missiles, and they gave them licenses. The fact that their production capacities have now become weaker is (a) positive for us. But at certain points it may already be too late," he said, also citing Russia's military cooperation with North Korea.

Russia has modified Iran-made Shahed drones and has used them, often hundreds at a time, in barrages targeting Ukraine.

Zelenskyy said 39 Russian companies were involved in the production of Oreshnik, an intermediate-range ballistic missile capable of carrying a nuclear warhead. He said 21 of them are not under sanctions. "And therefore it is absolutely incomprehensible why sanctions should not be imposed urgently," he said.

Russia attacked Ukraine with the missile in November, marking a serious escalation in the war and Russia's capabilities.

Zelenskyy dispelled reports that Patriots air defense systems were destroyed in recent Russian drone and missile barrages. He also said Ukraine has started using domestically produced interceptors to shoot down Shahed drones and is seeking financing from Germany to ramp up the weapon's production.

He added he sent signals to Western partners asking them to give up 0.25% of their GDP to support Ukraine's local defense industry.

Zelenskyy said it's likely he would attend a NATO summit later this week, but that he would make a final decision on Monday.

Though Zelenskyy did not meet Trump who had left early the Group of Seven summit in Canada last week, Ukraine's Economy Minister Yulia Svyrydenko and the head of the president's office, Andriy Yermak, gave U.S. Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent a list of weapons Ukraine is hoping to purchase. "We will wait feedback," Zelenskyy said, adding the package of weapons included Patriot systems.



Refugees and migrants carrying children and belongings flee a fire burning at the Moria camp on the northeastern Aegean island of Lesbos, Greece on Sept 9, 2020. (AP)

Ten years after Europe's migration crisis, fallout reverberates in Greece and beyond

LESBOS, Greece, June 22, (AP): Fleeing Iran with her husband and toddler, Amena Namjoyan reached a rocky beach of this eastern Greek island along with hundreds of thousands of others. For months, their arrival overwhelmed Lesbos. Boats left apart, fishermen dove to save people from drowning, and local grandmothers bottle-fed newly arrived babies.

Namjoyan spent months in an overcrowded camp. She learned Greek. She struggled with illness and depression as her marriage collapsed. She tried to make a fresh start in Germany but eventually returned to Lesbos, the island that first embraced her. Today, she works at a restaurant, preparing Iranian dishes that locals devour, even if they struggle to pronounce the names. Her second child tells her, "I'm Greek."

"Greece is close to my culture, and I feel good here," Namjoyan said. "I am proud of myself."

In 2015, more than 1 million migrants and refugees arrived in Europe - the majority by sea, landing in Lesbos, where the north shore is just 10 kilometers (6 miles) from Turkey. The influx of men, women and children fleeing war and poverty sparked a humanitarian crisis that shook the European Union to its core. A decade later, the fallout still reverberates on the island and beyond.

For many, Greece was a place of transit. They continued on to northern and western Europe. Many who applied for asylum were granted international protection; thousands became European citizens. Countless more



Afghan migrants arrive on the shores of the Greek island of Lesbos after crossing the Aegean sea from Turkey on an inflatable dinghy on Sept 25, 2015. (AP)

were rejected, languishing for years in migrant camps or living in the streets. Some returned to their home countries. Others were kicked out of the European Union.

For Namjoyan, Lesbos is a welcoming place - many islanders share a refugee ancestry, and it helps that she speaks their language. But migration policy in Greece, like much of Europe, has shifted toward deterrence in the decade since the crisis. Far fewer people are arriving illegally. Officials and politicians have maintained that strong borders are needed. Critics say enforcement has gone too far and violates fundamental EU rights and values.

"Migration is now at the top of the political agenda, which it didn't use to be before 2015," said Camille Le Coz Director of the Migration Policy Institute Europe, noting changing EU alliances. "We are seeing a shift toward the right of the political spectrum."

In 2015, boat after boat crowded with refugees crashed onto the doorstep of Elpiniki Laoumi, who runs a fish tavern across from a Lesbos beach. She fed them, gave them water, made meals for aid organizations.

"You would look at them and think of them as your own children," said Laoumi, whose tavern walls today are decorated with thank-you notes.

From 2015 to 2016, the peak of the migration crisis, more than 1 million people entered Europe through Greece alone. The immediate humanitarian crisis - to feed, shelter and care for so many people at once - grew into a long-term political one.

Greece was reeling from a crippling economic crisis. The influx added to anger against established political parties, fueling the rise of once-fringe populist forces.

EU nations fought over sharing responsibility for asylum seekers. The bloc's unity cracked as some member states flatly refused to take migrants. Anti-migration voices calling for closed borders became louder.

While illegal migration to Greece has fluctuated, numbers are nowhere near 2015-16 figures, according to the International Organization for Migration. Smugglers adapted to heightened surveillance, shifting to more dangerous routes.

Poland PM appoints gov't spokesperson

WARSAW, June 22, (Xinhua): Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk announced on Friday that Adam Szlapka, currently serving as Minister for the European Union (EU), will assume the newly created role of government spokesperson.

At a press conference, Tusk stressed that the appointment reflects his administration's recognition of the urgent need for a more coherent and transparent communications strategy.

Szlapka will begin his new duties on July 1, one day after Poland concludes its six-month presidency of the EU Council, Tusk said.

Szlapka said that his main priorities as spokesperson will be to highlight the government's achievements and to fight misinformation. "There is a clear need for strong and effective communication," he stated.



Google and Alphabet CEO Sundar Pichai, (left), and Poland's Prime Minister Donald Tusk, (right) meet for talks about involving artificial intelligence into the energy and cybersecurity sectors in Poland, at the Google Startup Campus in Warsaw, Poland, on Feb 13. (AP)



Asia

**Singaporean PM to visit China:** Singaporean Prime Minister Lawrence Wong will pay an official visit to China from June 22 to 26 at the invitation of Chinese Premier Li Qiang, a Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson announced on Friday.

Prime Minister Lawrence Wong chooses China as his first visit destination outside ASEAN since taking office in May, and this fully demonstrates the great importance he attaches to the development of China-Singapore relations, spokesperson Guo Jiakun told a regular press briefing.

During the visit, Chinese President Xi Jinping will meet with Wong. Premier Li Qiang will hold talks with Wong, and Zhao Leji, chairman of the National People's Congress Standing Committee, will meet with him. The two sides will engage in an in-depth exchange of views on China-Singapore relations, as well as international and regional issues of mutual concern, Guo said.

Under the strategic guidance of the leaders of both countries, China-Singapore relations have maintained positive momentum, Guo said, adding that in 2023, the leaders of the two countries announced the establishment of an all-round high-quality future-oriented partnership between China and Singapore, which provides direction for the development of bilateral relations in the new era. (Xinhua)

**Power fully restored in south China county:** Huaiji County, which is administered by Zhaoqing City in south China's Guangdong Province, has essentially achieved full power restoration after floods affected 118,000 households, the Guangdong branch of China Southern Power Grid Co., Ltd. (CSG) said on Saturday.

Severe flooding has recently struck Guangdong, with Zhaoqing among the hardest-hit areas. As of noon on Wednesday, continuous heavy rainfall had affected approximately 300,000

residents of Huaiji, and about 70,000 people had been relocated to safer areas, according to local authorities.

"Power facilities in the county seat were severely damaged by the torrential rain disaster," said Li Yangpo, deputy general manager at the power supply bureau of Zhaoqing under the Guangdong branch of CSG. (Xinhua)

**Cambodia closes 2 more border checkpoints:** Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Manet said on Sunday that two more border crossings with Thailand were completely shut down amid an ongoing border dispute between the two ASEAN member states.

Hun Manet said the Thai army Saturday night informed the governor of Cambodia's Oddar Meanchey province about its unilateral decision to close Choub Korki border checkpoint from Sunday onwards.

"I agreed with the governor's response that we will also close that border checkpoint permanently," Hun Manet said in a post on his official social media platforms. (Xinhua)

**1 dead, 3 hospitalized in Sydney car crash:** A woman has died and three more people have suffered serious injuries in a two-vehicle crash north of Sydney in the Australian state of New South Wales (NSW).

Police said in a statement that officers were conducting a routine patrol on Newcastle Road in a suburb of Newcastle, 115 km north of Sydney, when they sighted a car with unauthorized license plates just after 2:40 am local time on Sunday.

Police were called to the scene of an accident following reports that the car had crashed head-on with a second car traveling in the opposite direction. The passenger of the second vehicle, a woman believed to be aged 55, died at the scene. The 28-year-old female driver of that vehicle was treated at the scene by ambulance paramedics before being taken to the hospital in a serious condition. (Xinhua)



Facilities damaged by floods on a riverbank in Huaiji County, south China's Guangdong Province on June 19. (Xinhua)

Ishiba rules out dissolving lower house for now: media

Japan and S.Korea mark 60 years of ties despite lingering tension, political uncertainty

TOKYO, June 22, (Agencies): Japan and South Korea are marking the 60th anniversary of the normalization of their diplomatic relations Sunday. The two Asian powers, rivals and neighbors, have often had little to celebrate, much of their rancor linked to Japan's brutal colonial rule of Korea in the early 20th century.

Things have gotten better in recent years, but both nations - each a strong ally of the United States - now face political uncertainty and a growing unease about the future of their ties.

Here's a look at one of Northeast Asia's most crucial relationships, from both capitals, by two correspondents from The Associated Press.

South Korea's new liberal president, Lee Jae Myung, is determined to break sharply from the policies of his disgraced predecessor, Yoon Suk Yeol, who now faces a trial on charges of leading an insurrection over his imposition of martial law in December.

Relations with Japan, however, are one area where Lee, who describes himself as a pragmatist in foreign policy, may find himself cautiously building on Yoon's approach.

Before his removal from office in April, the conservative former president tried to repair relations with Japan. Yoon wanted to also tighten the countries' three-way security cooperation with Washington to counter North Korean nuclear threats.

In 2023, Yoon announced a South Korea-funded compensation plan for colonial-era forced laborers. That decision caused a strong backlash from victims and their supporters, who had demanded direct payments from Japanese companies and a fresh apology from Tokyo.

Yoon's outreach boosted tourism and business ties, but there's still lingering resentment in South Korea that Japan failed to reciprocate Seoul's diplomatic concession by addressing historical grievances more sincerely.

While advocating for pragmatism and problem-solving in foreign policy, Lee has also long criticized Japan for allegedly clinging to its imperialist past and blamed that for hurting cooperation between the countries.

Some experts say the stability of the countries' improved ties could soon be tested, possibly around the Aug 15 anniversary of Korea's liberation from Japanese colonial rule at the end of World War II, when Lee is expected to publicly address the nation's painful history with Japan.

Some in Seoul want Japanese Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba to mark the anniversary with a stronger statement of remorse over Japan's wartime past to put bilateral ties on firmer ground.

While wartime history will always linger in the background of Seoul-Tokyo relations, Lee and Ishiba may face a more immediate concern: US President Donald Trump's rising tariffs and



Japanese Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba, (left), and South Korean President Lee Jae Myung, (right), shake hands ahead of a bilateral meeting on the sidelines of the G7, in Kananaskis, Alberta, on June 17. (AP)

other America-first trade policies.

South Korea's Hankyoreh newspaper in an editorial this week called for South Korea and Japan to "collaborate immediately" on a joint response to Trump's policies, arguing that the proposed US tariffs on automobiles pose similar threats to both countries' trade-dependent economies.

Ishiba, eager to improve ties with Seoul, has acknowledged Japan's wartime aggression and has shown more

empathy to Asian victims than his recent predecessors.

His first encounter with Lee seemed positive, despite worries in Japan about South Korea's stance under a liberal leader known for attacks on Japan's wartime past.

Lee, in that meeting with Ishiba at the G7, likened the two countries to "neighbors sharing the same front yard" and called for building a future-oriented relationship that moves be-

yond their "small differences and disagreements."

Ishiba and Lee agreed to closely communicate and to cooperate on a range of issues, including North Korea's nuclear and missile development.

Under a 1965 normalization treaty, Japan provided \$500 million in economic assistance to South Korea, saying all wartime compensation issues were settled.

However, historical issues including forced labor and sexual abuse of Korean women during the war have disrupted ties over the decades, while South Korea has become an Asian power and a rival to Japan, and while Tokyo, especially during the late Prime Minister Shinzo Abe 's rule, has promoted revisionist views.

Japan has since offered atonement money twice for the so-called "comfort women," an earlier semi-private fund and a second one unilaterally dissolved by former South Korean President Moon Jae-in's liberal government.

**Also:**

**TOKYO:** Japanese Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba ruled out dissolving the House of Representatives for now, ensuring that elections for both chambers of parliament will not take place on the same day in July, Kyodo News reported.

The decision came as Yoshihiko Noda, leader of the main opposition

Constitutional Democratic Party of Japan, said he will not submit a no-confidence motion against Ishiba's cabinet.

After talks with Noda, Seiji Maehara, co-head of the opposition Japan Innovation Party, quoted him as saying that a political vacuum should be avoided amid concerns over higher U.S. tariffs and intensifying tensions in the Middle East, the report said.

Ishiba has previously expressed readiness to dissolve the powerful lower house for a snap election if Noda's party submits a no-confidence motion during the ordinary Diet (parliament) session.

With criticism growing that postponing the no-confidence motion showed weakness, Noda said at a press conference later in the day, "This is about crisis management," adding, "It is not about appearing fragile, but about acting responsibly," the report said.

Noda's party is the only opposition force with the numbers to independently submit such a motion, but it would need support from others for it to pass. Some parties have been reluctant to face a general election as they are not fully prepared.

The ruling coalition led by Ishiba's Liberal Democratic Party currently lacks a majority in the lower house. A no-confidence motion, if passed, would require the prime minister to dissolve the 465-member chamber or the cabinet to resign en masse within 10 days.

UN peacekeeping mission condemns attack on peacekeepers in Central African Republic

YAOUNDE, June 22, (Agencies): The UN peacekeeping mission in the Central African Republic (CAR) on Saturday strongly condemned a deadly attack on its Friday patrol in the country's north that killed a Zambian peacekeeper.

The patrol, part of the UN Multi-dimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA), came under fire from unidentified gunmen. Two Zambian peacekeepers were seriously injured and one of them later died from his injuries, the agency said in a statement.

"This is the third deadly attack on MINUSCA patrols since the beginning of 2025," it said, noting the agency's head, Valentine Rugwabiza, warned that attacks on UN peacekeepers "may constitute war crimes under international law."

Rugwabiza, also the UN secretary-general's special representative for the Central African republic, called on the country's authorities "to make every effort to identify the perpetrators of these acts so that they can be swiftly brought to justice," said the statement, extending condolences to Zambia.

The Central African Republic has recently seen a spike in serious security incidents. In separate attacks in February and March, a Tunisian and a Kenyan peacekeeper were killed.

**Also:**

**KAMPALA:** More than 500 military personnel from Uganda and the Central African Republic (CAR) on Friday



An aerial view of Bangui, Central African Republic, is seen on March 8, 2024. (AP)

completed a five-month joint training program in the eastern Ugandan city of Jinja, the Ugandan military said in a statement.

According to the statement, a total of 378 soldiers, including 78 from the CAR, completed the senior non-commissioned officers (NCO) course, while 179 personnel undertook the instructors course level III. The training was conducted at the Uganda People's Defense Forces (UPDF) Non-Commissioned Officers Academy in Gaddafi Barracks.

The program is part of a 2024 bilater-

al agreement aimed at professionalizing the CAR's armed forces and building their operational capacity to combat insecurity and promote peace and regional stability, the statement said.

Wycliffe Keita, UPDF joint chief of staff for training and doctrine, who presided over a graduation ceremony, urged the CAR graduates to apply their new skills in service to their country.

"This joint training with the CAR is a continuation of our collaboration that strengthens peace and security in the region while advancing the pan-African spirit," said Keita.

Lat/Am

**Panama, Venezuela to restore consular services:** Panama and Venezuela will restore consular services in each other's countries in the coming days, Panama's Foreign Affairs Ministry said, nearly a year after Panama suspended them following questionable Venezuelan elections that reelected President Nicolás Maduro.

"Due to the imperative need to attend to the consular issues of their citizens," the two countries agreed to reactivate their consular services, the ministry said in a statement.

The diplomatic break came July 29, 2024, when Panama pulled its diplomats from Caracas and announced it was suspending relations with Venezuela. It followed elections the day before in which the opposition declared fraud and offered evidence that Maduro had been roundly defeated.

Panama President José Raúl Mulino gave his support to the Venezuelan opposition candidate Edmundo González Urrutia, who had visited Panama weeks earlier.

Venezuela suspended flights between both countries, including those by Panamanian national carrier Copa Airlines. Flights were reestablished May 22 this year. (Xinhua)

**Nicaraguan opposition figure shot to death:** A retired Nicaraguan military officer turned outspoken critic of President Daniel Ortega was shot to death Thursday at his home in Costa Rica, authorities said.

Roberto Samcam, 67, had been living in exile since July 2018 when paramilitaries assaulted his home in Nicaragua.

Police say a man entered the condominium complex where Samcam lived northeast of the Costa Rican capital of San Jose and went directly to the retired major's home around 7:30 a.m.

Without saying a word, the man shot Samcam multiple times with a 9mm pistol, according to Costa Rica's Judicial Investigation Organization. The shooter escaped.

Word of Samcam's killing spread rapidly among the hundreds of thousands of Nicaraguans who have sought



Maduro

refuge in Costa Rica since Ortega cracked down on widespread protests in 2018.

In 2020, Samcam served as chain-of-command expert for the Court of Conscience, organized by Costa Rica's Arias Foundation for Peace and Human Progress, to collect testimony of those who suffered torture and other abuses at the hands of the government.

The exercise was in part to build cases to eventually take to regional and international human rights bodies.

"We are documenting each case so that it can move on to a trial, possibly before the Inter-American Court of Human Rights," Samcam said at the time. He said government officials were involved in the abuses.

In 2022, Samcam published a book titled "Ortega: El calvario de Nicaragua" roughly "Ortega: Nicaragua's torment." Last year, he published another text describing in detail how he watched Ortega build a dictatorship. (AP)

**Lawyer wins judge post in Mexico:** Lawyer who once represented drug kingpin Joaquín "El Chapo" Guzmán won a judgeship in the northern state of Chihuahua in Mexico's historic judicial elections this month, according to the vote count concluded.

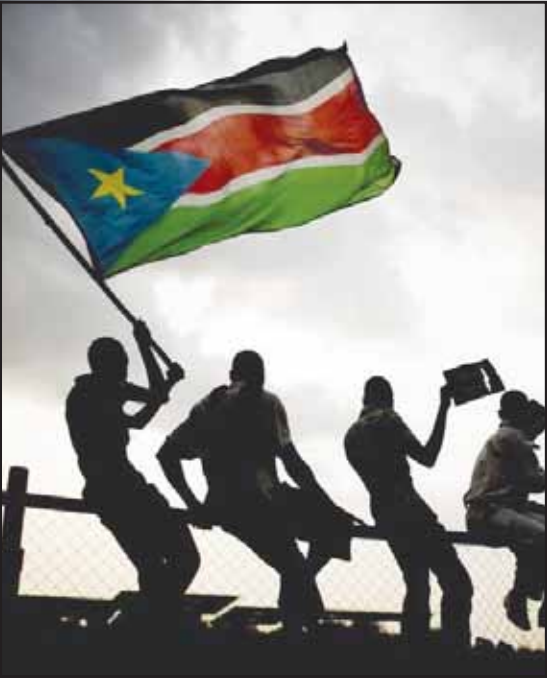
Silvia Delgado García won a spot as a criminal court judge in Ciudad Juárez, across the border from El Paso, Texas. The winners were scheduled to have their results certified on Thursday.

In 2016, Delgado García was a member of Sinaloa cartel leader Guzmán's legal team when he was temporarily held in a prison in Ciudad Juárez before being extradited to the United States. He was eventually tried, convicted and sentenced to life in prison in the US.

Some critics of electing judges, and a human rights litigation group called Defensorxs, had labeled Delgado García "high risk" before the June 1 vote, because "she defends alleged drug traffickers."

Hailed as a way to make corrupt judges accountable to the people and clean up Mexico's judiciary by former President Andrés Manuel López Obrador, the historic elections that covered more than 2,600 positions ranging up to the country's Supreme Court, drew only a paltry 13% voter participation.

Critics feared it would politicize the judiciary and offer organized crime an easier to influencing judicial decisions. Mexico's governing Morena party was poised to gain control of the Supreme Court as a majority of the winners had strong ties to the party or were aligned ideologically. (AP)



In this July 10, 2011 photo, Southern Sudanese wave the national flag in the capital Juba. (AP)

Subcontinent

**Two officers killed in Pakistan:** Two policemen were shot dead in a gun attack by unidentified assailants in Pakistan's northwest Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, local police said Saturday.

The incident took place late Friday in the jurisdiction of the IDS Gadoon Police Station in Swabi district, where two motorcycle-borne attackers opened fire on the officers while they were dining at a local hotel, a spokesperson for the provincial police told Xinhua.

The assailants fled the scene after the shooting, the spokesperson said.

Security forces arrived at the site shortly after the attack and launched a search operation in the surrounding area.

The bodies were shifted to Tehsil Headquarters Hospital in Topi town for legal formalities. An investigation into the incident is underway, police said.

Pakistani Prime Minister **Shehbaz Sharif** strongly condemned the attack and expressed deep sorrow over the martyrdom of the police personnel. (Xinhua)



Sharif

**Two dead as boat capsizes in Pakistan:** At least two women were killed and three others went missing after a

tourist boat capsized in Pakistan's northwest Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) province, rescue officials said on Sunday.

According to state-run rescue organization Rescue 1122, the incident occurred on Saturday evening in the scenic Shahi Bagh area, a remote mountainous site about 2.5 hours from the main Kalam bazaar, when a recreational boat carrying men, women, and children overturned due to engine failure.

"At least two women were confirmed dead, and three people, including two children and a teenager, are still missing," Bilal Ahmad Faizi, spokesperson for Rescue 1122 KP, told Xinhua. (Xinhua)

**India vehicle collision kills 9:** At least nine people were killed Friday after a car they were traveling in collided head-on with a truck in the eastern Indian state of West Bengal, police said.

The accident took place near Namshol in the Balarampur police station area in Purulia district, about 284 km west of Kolkata, the capital city of West Bengal.

A car collided head-on with a speeding truck on National Highway 18 near Namshol in the Balarampur police station area, killing all nine occupants inside the car, a police officer said, adding all the victims were immediately taken to the nearest health facility, where doctors declared them dead.

According to police, the victims were returning from a wedding ceremony in the adjacent Jharkhand state.

The vehicle was severely damaged due to the collision. Preliminary investigations showed that the car lost control and rammed into the truck that was heading in the opposite direction. (Xinhua)



# Business

## Markaz exited over USD100 mln of industrial real estate projects in the US and Europe over the past few months

KUWAIT CITY, June 22: Kuwait Financial Centre “Markaz” has announced the recent exit of several industrial real estate projects in the United States and Europe over the past few months. Executed by its International Real Estate team, in partnership with global players like Panattoni and Scannell Properties, the transactions marked successful exits across key global markets, reinforcing Markaz’s position as a trusted investment partner and a prominent leader in the international real estate sector. Collectively, these projects represent over USD 100 million in asset value and reflect Markaz’s extensive experience in structuring real estate investments across both development and credit strategies.

The exited projects include industrial developments in Europe and the US, and a mezzanine financing investment for an Industrial Portfolio with Scannell Properties in the US. Each investment was selected and executed following rigorous research and market analysis, guided by macroeconomic trends and local market dynamics, with

a strong emphasis on safeguarding client interests and delivering stable, long-term returns.

Despite significant economic headwinds and global real estate market repricing, the returns on investment reflect Markaz’s deep research capabilities, disciplined investment strategy, and ability to navigate volatility while protecting and growing investor capital. The exited projects highlight Markaz’s active role in both real estate development and structured credit strategies.

Commenting on this achievement, Sami Shabshab, Managing Director, International Real Estate at Markaz, said: “These strategic exits highlight our disciplined investment approach, centered on resilience and long-term fundamentals throughout market cycles. Our recent focus on the industrial sector, driven by sustained demand for logistics and warehousing, has delivered stability and growth despite global uncertainties. We carefully timed these exits to align with market conditions, preserving and enhancing investor value in a complex environ-



Abdullatif Al-Nusif

ment. Our execution capabilities are supported by strong collaborations with international well-established partners, which are essential for effective risk management and project delivery. This combination of sector focus, market



Sami Shabshab

insight, and operational collaboration underscores Markaz’s commitment to delivering sustainable and resilient returns for our clients.”

Abdullatif Al-Nusif, Managing Director, Wealth Management and

Business Development at Markaz, added: “At Markaz, our clients’ interests remain at the forefront of every decision we make. The recent exits underscore the strength of our international real estate team in executing complex strategies and identifying strategic opportunities. Building on a 50-year legacy of market insight and disciplined investment strategies, we continue to focus on constructing resilient portfolios that are designed to withstand evolving conditions and deliver sustainable performance. Through selective exposure to high-conviction sectors and proactive asset management, Markaz remains committed to supporting our clients in achieving their financial goals with confidence and clarity.”

Markaz has been an active investor in the US real estate market since 1977 and continues to execute its international real estate investments in the market through Mar-Gulf Management, its international real estate arm, since 1988. Over the past 37 years, Markaz has participated in the acquisition, development, and management

of assets across the industrial, storage, retail, residential, and office segments.

Looking ahead, Markaz remains dedicated to adopting a selective, forward-looking investment strategy, focusing on development and value-add opportunities within the industrial and living sectors, while expanding its real estate credit services. Additionally, Markaz will continue to prioritize senior debt and mezzanine structures to optimize capital efficiency and diversify return streams.

With expectations of improving credit conditions and a potentially more favorable interest rate environment in 2025, Markaz aims to position its portfolio for long-term growth. This strategy will emphasize partnerships with high-quality partners and target high-demand markets, ensuring resilient and sustainable performance.

As it marks 50 years of pioneering investment excellence, Markaz remains committed to creating long-term value for its clients through global insight, innovative strategies, and a foundation of trust and performance.

## KIB signs strategic partnership with IE Business School under Waed program

KUWAIT CITY, June 22: Kuwait International Bank (KIB) announced the signing of a strategic partnership with IE Business School to provide mid-level management employees with year-round training. The initiative reflects KIB’s strong commitment to fostering a culture of continuous learning, strengthening the skills of national talent, and empowering the next generation of leaders. The official signing ceremony was held at the Bank’s headquarters, attended by senior representatives from both organizations, including Feras Al-Darmi, General Manager of the Human Resources Department at KIB, and William Davila, Global Head of Corporate Relations at IE University.

This new collaboration is part of KIB’s Waed talent program, which aims to develop Kuwaiti talent across all levels of the Bank. Under this program, a select group of Kuwaiti employees from various departments are chosen to enhance their skills and prepare for effective leadership roles. This comprehensive approach reflects KIB’s ongoing commitment to talent development and its dedication to driving positive, sustainable change within the organization.

IE Business School, a globally renowned institution and part of Spain’s IE University, was founded in 1973 in Madrid. It is recognized as one of Europe’s leading business schools and was ranked among the top 10 in its field in Europe by the Financial Times in 2024.



Feras Al-Darmi, General Manager of the Human Resources Department at KIB, and William Davila, Global Head of Corporate Relations at IE University, during the signing ceremony.

adds momentum to KIB’s education and development initiatives and aligns seamlessly with the Bank’s global outlook, spirit of entrepreneurship, and leadership approach centered on personal and professional growth. He further noted that this collaboration reflects a shared commitment to excellence, innovation, and continuous learning, stressing that “the knowledge and expertise offered by IE Business School, combined with its innovative teaching methods, will be pivotal to the success of the Waed program and in achieving its ambitious objectives.”

It is worth noting that KIB remains firmly committed to investing in the future of Kuwait’s banking sector and strengthening its position under its main slogan “Bank for Life” through strategic partnerships with leading institutions in education and development. Through the development of Kuwaiti talent, the Bank aims to ensure its workforce is fully equipped to meet the evolving demands of the banking sector and to contribute effectively to the realization of Kuwait’s economic vision. KIB also places strong emphasis on building a highly skilled, innovative, and forward-thinking team capable of driving economic growth and contributing to the country’s ongoing development.

Available through KFHOnline app

## KFH offers numerous benefits to money transfer users in co-op with Western Union

KUWAIT CITY, June 22: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) offers local and international money transfer services via the KFHOnline mobile application, in cooperation with Western Union. The service offers numerous advantages to its users, most notably saving time and effort and enabling money transfers in cash or to bank accounts to specified beneficiaries in the desired locations.

Within the scope of the Western Union network around the world, customers can easily and securely use the KFHOnline application, and conduct transfers according to specific and quick steps, debiting their bank accounts abroad via Western Union, which is one of the largest money transfer networks approved in most countries of the world, and has a retail network in more than 200 countries and regions for cash collection. Customers can also make payments to billions of bank accounts and millions of digital wallets and cards globally.

This service contributes to providing reliable and fast transfers that meet the expectations of thousands of customers. It gives customers access to the full scope of the Western Union network for local



KFHOnline app flyer.

and international transfers. It also expands the capabilities of digital applications to meet needs and ensures access to financial services for all. This has led to significant customer demand for its many advantages.

KFH’s e-banking services are also highly efficient, as evidenced by the number of e-banking transactions customers

perform via KFHOnline on the mobile app, or the website.

Electronic banking operations include opening an additional bank account online for citizens and residents without visiting a branch, local and international money transfers, the WAMD service, creating deposits, adding beneficiaries, balance inquiries, requesting a checkbook, opening a gold account, and conducting sales, purchases, and trading transactions.

Gold, financing requests, Al Khair Card requests, viewing the PIN for credit and debit cards, activating new bank cards, reporting a lost credit or debit card, knowing financial obligations and the number of installments, reviewing investment plans, obtaining a summary of account balances and deposits, managing children’s accounts through the “My Children” service, and many other electronic banking services.

KFH also offers Live FX Pricing, instant transfers to KFH Turkey using RippleNet, and digital wallets via mobile phones and smartwatches, offering the latest smart digital payment methods with the highest advanced security standards in collaboration with Garmin, Fitbit, and Samsung.

By National Bank of Kuwait

**Market Commentary**

Markets this week were shaped by dovish central bank signals, weak U.S. data, and rising Middle East tensions. The Fed held rates steady but projected two cuts by year-end, while the Swiss National Bank cut rates and the Bank of England stayed on hold. U.S. retail sales fell 0.9% in May, underscoring softer consumer demand.

Geopolitical risk intensified after strikes on Iranian nuclear sites pushed oil up over 4% midweek, though prices later eased as President Trump signaled a two-week pause on U.S. military action before deciding to strike Iran on the early hours of Sunday. Equities slipped, Treasury yields fell, and rate cut bets firmed. In FX, the dollar gained on safe-haven flows, the yen and franc saw brief support before retreating, and commodity currencies weakened alongside oil volatility.

**Commodities**

Oil Prices Fluctuate Amid Geopolitical Uncertainties

Oil prices surged this week, with Brent crude climbing roughly 4%, peaking near \$78.85, and WTI reaching around \$77.20, driven largely by escalating Israel Iran tensions. On June 13, Israeli strikes on Iranian nuclear sites triggered a sharp 7–11% jump in oil. However, markets eased after President Trump announced he would delay decision on U.S. military action against Iran by up to two weeks. Trump also praised the strikes as “excellent” and warned Iran to “make a deal now” or face “more brutal” consequences. His strong rhetoric earlier in the week, including a demand for Iran’s “unconditional surrender,” had previously driven a midweek spike. Following the ease in oil prices, President Trump ordered the U.S. military to strike targets inside Iran, including the Fordow uranium enrichment facility. Its effect on the market remains to be seen, however it is expected to drive oil prices higher amid heightened tensions.

Brent crude oil was last seen trading at \$77.01.

**United States**

U.S. Retail Sales Fell More than Expected

U.S. consumer spending dropped significantly in May, driven by falling gasoline sales and growing concerns about the economic outlook, according to Commerce Department data released Tuesday. Retail sales fell by 0.9%, exceeding expectations of a 0.6% decline, and followed a slight 0.1% dip in April. Excluding auto sales, retail sales also disappointed, slipping 0.3% instead of the anticipated 0.1% rise. While spending spiked in March ahead of President Trump’s tariff announcement, it has generally remained sluggish throughout the year.

In May, sales at building and garden stores declined by 2.7%, gasoline station revenue dropped 2% due to lower energy prices, and motor vehicle and parts sales fell 3.5%. Bars and restaurants also saw a 0.9% decrease.

However, there were gains in certain sectors, including a 2.9% rise in miscellaneous retail, 0.9% growth in online sales, and a 1.2% increase at furniture stores. Despite the spending slowdown, consumer sentiment slightly improved in May from previously low levels, aided by a temporary easing in trade tensions during a 90-day negotiation window.

**Fed Holds Rates Steady**

The Federal Reserve kept interest rates steady at 4.25%–4.50% for the fourth straight meeting, reflecting a cautious approach as policymakers assess the economic effects of President Trump’s policies, especially those concerning tariffs, immigration, and taxes. While uncertainty around the economic outlook has lessened, it remains elevated. The Fed still expects two rate cuts later this year, however updated projections show slower GDP growth, with forecasts for 2025 and 2026 revised down to 1.4% and 1.6%, respectively. The unemployment rate is projected to hold at 4.5% through 2026. Inflation, measured by the PCE rate, is expected to reach 3.0% in 2025, then gradually fall to 2.4% in 2026 and 2.1% in 2027.

**United Kingdom**

UK Inflation Decreased in May

UK inflation eased slightly to 3.4% in May 2025, down from 3.5% in April. The main downward drivers were transport costs, which dropped sharply (0.7% vs 3.3%) due to lower air fares and falling fuel prices, influenced by the timing of Easter and school holidays. A data correction to Vehicle Excise Duty also contributed to the decline. Housing and household services inflation softened slightly (6.9% vs 7%), as did services inflation (4.7% vs 5.4%). However, food prices rose (4.4% vs 3.4%), especially for chocolate, confectionery, and ice cream, and furniture and household goods inflation hit its highest level since December 2023 (0.8%).

**Bank of England Maintains Policy Rate**

The Bank of England kept interest rates steady at 4.25% but signaled potential cuts later this year as the economy slows and

unemployment rises. Governor Andrew Bailey noted that rates are on a “gradual downward path,” citing early signs of labor market weakness. However, he stressed the global outlook remains uncertain, making it hard to predict when cuts will occur. Markets anticipate the first rate cut in August to 4%, with a possible drop to 3.75% by year-end. The Bank’s report highlighted weak business investment and stagnant GDP growth, forecasting just 0.25% growth per quarter for the rest of the year. Inflation is expected to temporarily rise due to energy prices before easing as wage growth slows.

**UK Retail Sales**

UK retail sales volumes saw their steepest decline since December 2023, falling 2.7% in May, far worse than the 0.5% drop expected, according to the Office for National Statistics. Compared to last year, sales were down 1.3%, marking the biggest annual fall since April 2024 and sharply missing forecasts of 1.7% growth. The drop followed strong spending in April on food, summer clothing, and home improvements. ONS attributed May’s decline to weak performance in food and alcohol sales, lower clothing store traffic, and reduced demand for DIY goods, as many consumers had already completed projects earlier before the dry weather.

The GBP/USD currency pair was last seen trading at 1.3449.

**Switzerland SNB Lowers Rate**

The Swiss National Bank (SNB) lowered its policy interest rate by 25 basis points to 0% on Thursday, marking its sixth consecutive rate cut since March 2024. The move was in line with market expectations and comes in response to declining inflation, pressure from an appreciating Swiss franc, and heightened global economic uncertainty, particularly tied to the U.S. administration’s unpredictable trade policies. The SNB noted that inflation has dropped below its 0–2% target range, with annual inflation in May turning negative for the first time in four years. It said the rate cut was aimed at countering this weakening inflationary pressure. The central bank acknowledged the challenges of negative interest rates, particularly for savers and pension funds, and pointed to rising property prices as a potential side effect. In its forward outlook, the SNB projected slowing global economic growth, with U.S. inflation expected to rise and European inflation to decline further. It emphasized that the global economic outlook remains highly uncertain, with the potential for further trade barriers worsening the slowdown.

The USD/CHF currency pair was last seen trading at 0.8174.

**Asia-Pacific**

Bank of Japan Holds Rate Steady

The Bank of Japan held its key interest rate steady at 0.5% in June, matching market expectations. The decision reflected a cautious approach due to ongoing geopolitical tensions and uncertainty over U.S. tariffs. Trade talks between Japan and the U.S. will continue after no agreement was reached at the G7 Summit. As part of its slow policy normalization, the BoJ confirmed it will reduce government bond purchases by JPY 400 billion per quarter through March 2026, then by JPY 200 billion quarterly until March 2027, aiming for a monthly pace of around JPY 2 trillion, indicating a gradual exit from its ultra-loose monetary stance.

**People’s Bank of China Kept Rates Unchanged**

China kept its benchmark lending rates unchanged on Friday, maintaining the 1-year loan prime rate at 3.0% and the 5-year rate at 3.5%, in line with expectations. This decision follows last month’s monetary easing, which included the first rate cut since October and deposit rate reductions by commercial banks to protect margins.

The move comes as trade tensions with the U.S. ease, after both sides agreed to uphold a U.S. agreement that temporarily lifts tariffs and allows rare earth and tech trade. The trade truce has reduced economic pressure, giving Beijing room to support the yuan and avoiding further stimulus for now. Chinese officials have expressed confidence in the current policy stance, with the offshore yuan recovering over 2% this year, rebounding from the April lows triggered by aggressive U.S. tariffs.

The USD/CNY currency pair was last seen trading at 7.1785.

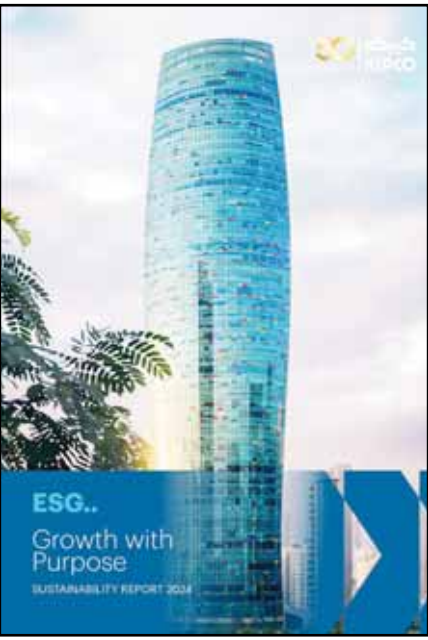
**Kuwait**

Kuwaiti Dinar

USD/KWD closed last week at 0.30625

Rates – June 22nd, 2025

Currencies	Previous Week Levels				This Week's Expected Range		3-Month Forecast
	Open	Low	High	Close	Minimum	Maximum	
EUR	1.1535	1.1445	1.1614	1.1522	1.1485	1.1560	1.1592
GBP	1.1554	1.1390	1.1622	1.1449	1.1390	1.1515	1.1496
JPY	143.86	143.43	146.21	146.07	145.40	147.50	144.57
CHF	0.8099	0.8085	0.8215	0.8174	0.8130	0.8220	0.8079



KIPCO Sustainability Report - 2024

‘We are preparing our companies for integrated corporate disclosure & sustainable institutional practices’

## KIPCO publishes its 2024 Sustainability Report

KUWAIT CITY, June 22: KIPCO – Kuwait Projects Company (Holding) – published its 2024 Sustainability Report. This is the company’s fourth report and is in line with the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI), taking into account national and international sustainability frameworks. The report outlines KIPCO’s achievements and progress in the environmental, social and governance (ESG) areas for the year 2024.

On this occasion, Ms Eman Al Awadhi, Group Senior Vice President – Corporate Communications and Investor Relations at KIPCO, said:

“We are delighted to release our fourth Sustainability Report, which highlights KIPCO’s ongoing commitment to sustainable institutional practices. This report reflects our vision of aligning our business operations with corporate sustainability goals and embodies our efforts to enhance engagement across our Group to make a tangible and meaningful impact. We believe that



Eman Al Awadhi — Group SVP, Corporate Comms & IR

the increased participation of our Group companies in sustainability practices is a step that strengthens our ability to meet future requirements responsibly and efficiently. It also serves

to prepare our Group companies for the next phase of integrated corporate disclosure, in line with modern regulatory trends aimed at enhancing sustainability reporting for listed companies.”

The report reviews KIPCO’s progress in implementing its sustainability strategy across its subsidiaries. This includes the formation of a Sustainability Task Force by the Sustainability Committee – a committee of the Board of Directors – comprising Group representatives to enhance coordination towards achieving common goals. The report also reflects an expansion in the scope of environmental disclosure to include both direct and indirect emission sources, thereby reinforcing transparency and promoting a comprehensive understanding of the environmental impact of the Group’s activities.

Additionally, the report highlights the stability of resource consumption indicators across the company’s operations, with relatively low

rates of electricity, water and paper consumption. This demonstrates operational efficiency and confirms the limited direct environmental impact of the company’s activities. The report also underscores various social initiatives, including the ENBAT program, which prepares fresh graduates for the labor market, and working with Loyac, which provided young women the opportunity to participate in a leadership program in the UK. In the area of empowerment, the report notes a female representation rate of 24.2% in senior management positions, 36.5% within the total workforce, and 20% in Board of Directors membership.

KIPCO affirms its commitment to continuously promote a sustainability culture at all levels, with a focus on achieving long-term value that positively reflects on shareholders and stakeholders, based on corporate responsibility, efficiency and transparency.



# ABK extends partnership with Emirates Skywards to elevate customer experience in Kuwait

KUWAIT CITY, June 22: Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) has proudly announced the extension of its long-standing partnership with Emirates Skywards, the award-winning loyalty programme of Emirates and flydubai. The renewed collaboration between the two partners reflects their shared commitment to enhancing travel and lifestyle experiences for ABK’s customers in Kuwait.

Launched in 2002, the partnership between ABK and Emirates Skywards has been a cornerstone in providing unparalleled value to customers. ABK remains the only bank within the Kuwaiti market to offer customers renowned benefits via Emirates Skywards, available through its ABK Visa Infinite Emirates and ABK Visa Signature Emirates credit cards. These cobrand cards have been meticulously designed to cater to the needs of discerning travellers, offering them exclusive benefits and a gateway to a world of unique experiences.

**Abdulla Al Sumait**, Acting Group Chief Executive Officer at ABK, conveyed his enthusiasm about the



Abdulla Al Sumait, Acting Group Chief Executive Officer

partnership’s renewal, “Our partnership with Emirates Skywards signifies more than just an alliance; it represents our unwavering dedication to delivering unparalleled benefits and superior value to our esteemed customers. By aligning with such a premium airline, ABK reinforces its promise to enhance the travel journeys of our cardholders, turning their travel dreams into realities with extraordinary ease and excep-

tional benefits.”

Dr. Nejjib Ben Khedher, Divisional Senior Vice President, Emirates Skywards, said, “We’re delighted to renew our long-standing and successful partnership with ABK. Emirates Skywards has set the standard with world-class privileges, and we look forward to continue delivering exceptional, and exclusive benefits to our members in Kuwait.”

Additionally, Mohamed Reyad, Visa’s Country Manager for Kuwait, added, “At Visa, we are dedicated to creating more seamless and rewarding payment solutions for our cardholders both at home and when they travel abroad. Our continued collaboration with ABK and Emirates symbolizes our mission to deliver world-class payment experiences and exclusive travel benefits that set new standards in the market and support our partners in providing exceptional value for their customers.”

Through this partnership, ABK Visa Emirates credit cardholders are positioned to enjoy a comprehensive suite of elite travel privileges. Benefits



A group photo with Abdullah Al-Sumait, Ahmed Al-Duwaisan, Mohammed Al-Qattan, and Johair Marafi.

include access to over 1,000 airport lounges globally, generous allocations of bonus Skywards Miles, and specially curated travel and lifestyle offers, all designed to provide an enriching and seamless journey. Cardholders will also enjoy worldwide acceptance

at Visa’s more than 150 million merchant partners. Whether for business or leisure, cardholders can expect a premium experience complemented by Emirates’ renowned hospitality.

ABK invites its customers to explore the myriad of benefits accompa-

nying their ABK Visa Emirates credit cards.

For more information, please follow ABK’s website and social media pages to stay updated on the latest services, offers, and promotional campaigns launched throughout the year.

# Buffer capacity and demand concerns trim crude oil war premium

By KAMCO INVEST

Crude oil prices reached the highest level since mid-January-2025 led by fears of a wider fall-out of the ongoing war in the Middle East. The price rise mainly reflected fears that an escalation of the war would result in the closure of the Strait of Hormuz.

International shipping companies also expressed fear to their shipments and said to avoid the route during the ongoing war. In addition to the war risk premium, the expected loss of output from Iran due to attacks on its oil facilities also provided a boost to crude oil prices.

That said, gains were capped by ample buffer production capacity with other OPEC+ members as well as in the US. A report that China has record inventory of crude oil and would not be forced to stock more oil also capped gains.

Also, the failure to impose a lower price cap on Russian crude oil from USD 60/b to USD 45/b by the EU also resulted in muted gains.

Meanwhile, the Strait of Hormuz carries around 15-20% of global crude oil supplies or around 15 to 20 mb/d. Reports showed that in the even of the closure of the route, only a fraction of the output could be shifted to pipelines.

This resulted in fears of a supply shortage if the war continues.

However, oil producers in the region continued to pump oil and in fact accelerated shipments in order to push out as much supplies as possible on floating tankers before the window narrows or closes.

This blunted the rise in crude oil prices during the last week. The market is factoring in supply disruptions only in extreme cases and expects ample crude oil in the market this year.

Some comments from the industry also showed that the route will not close as a closure would affect supplies of crude oil to China and India, Iran’s two biggest crude oil buyers.

On the demand side, the OPEC kept its oil demand growth forecast unchanged for the current year and for 2026. Although the tariff war has taken a back seat due to the war in the Middle East, the additional tariffs are expected to affect global economic growth and oil demand.

Recent economic developments also point to a underwhelming economic growth as US Fed once again kept rates unchanged and lowered forecast for economic growth while in the EU, recent rate cuts shows how regulators and central banks are making efforts to support investments and economy.

In terms of supply, OPEC oil production increased by 200 tb/d during the month. This was the first month when the group implemented its unwinding efforts to raise output.

However, the increase was lower than the announced 411 tb/d as some producers lowered output or kept their output same as previous month to account for previous breach of OPEC+ production quotas. The increase was mainly led by higher output mainly from Saudi Arabia and Libya.

Meanwhile, oil production in the US increased marginally for the sixth consecutive week to reach 13.43 mb/d, but remained below record levels.

**Oil Prices**

Crude oil prices surged 14% following the war in the Middle East involving Iran coupled with threats of supply disruption in the region.

Brent futures prices closed at USD 78.9/b on Thursday after growing concerns that the US would join the war, however, the news that the US would delay the decision by two weeks resulted in the biggest single day decline in prices in over five weeks by 2.3% with oil closing the week at USD 77.0/b.

That said, with the US attacking three nuclear sites in Iran has opened door for further uncertainty in the oil market and has escalated the situation with oil now expected to breach the USD 80/b mark.

Some forecasters suggest that oil could even breach the USD 90/b mark, although ample supplies in the oil market in addition to softer trends on the demand front with the tariff war still a looming threat for the oil market could offset some of the gains in prices.

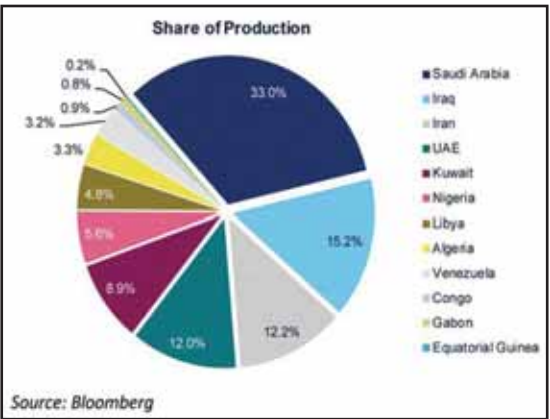
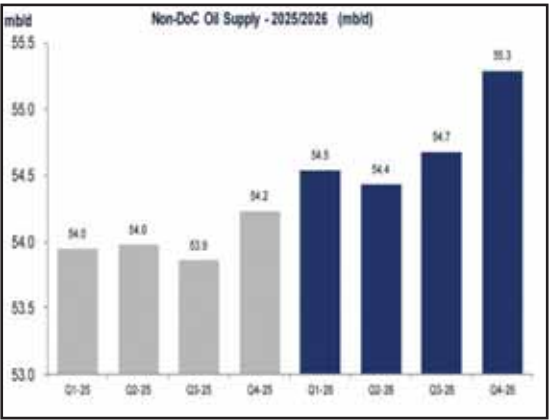
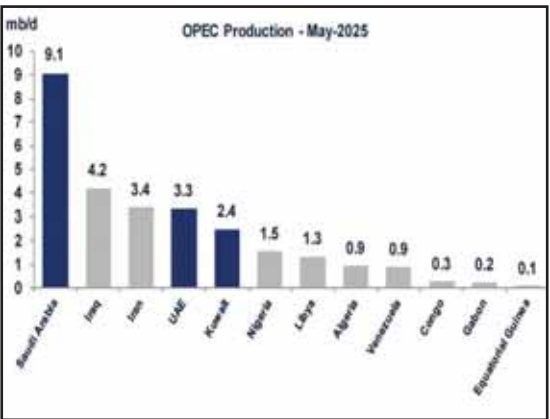
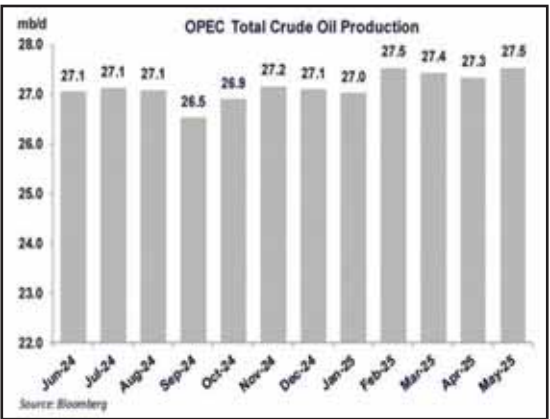
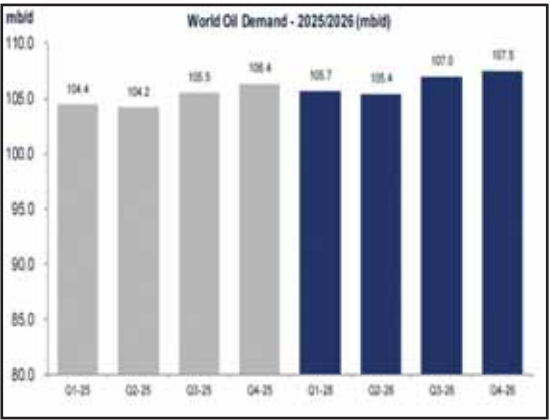
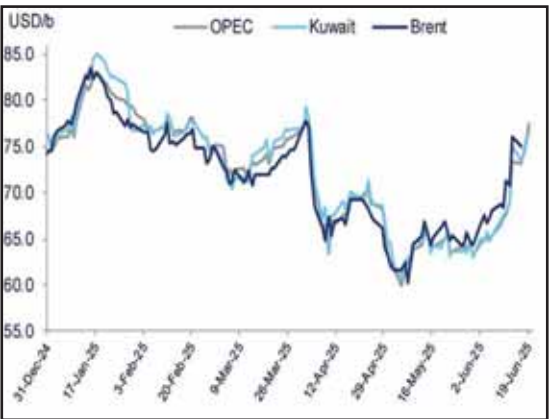
Nevertheless, increasing attacks has kept oil traders alert and this was reflected in the bullish bets on Brent crude.

According to Bloomberg, money manager have increased their net long position on the crude grade with the biggest gain in eight months since early October-2024 and this could see further gains when the market opens on Monday.

In terms of monthly price trend, prices of all crude grades continued to witness steep declines during May-2025 to reach multi year low levels reflecting the fears of demand impact from the tariffs imposed by the US government.

This was also the fourth consecutive month of decline in average crude oil prices. Average spot Brent crude oil price declined by 5.4% to reach USD 64.1/b during May-2025, the lowest monthly average in more than 50 months since the pandemic-led decline as compared to an average of USD 67.8/b during April-2025.

On the other hand, average OPEC reference basket price witnessed a slightly bigger decline of 7.8%, the



Production ('000 b/d)	Apr-25	May-25	Change	Capacity	Spare Capacity
Total OPEC-12	27,340	27,540	200 0.73%	33,640	6,100
Saudi Arabia	8,970	9,080	110 1.2%	12,000	2,920
Iraq	4,180	4,180	0 0.0%	4,800	620
Iran	3,390	3,360	-30 -0.9%	3,830	470
UAE	3,300	3,310	10 0.3%	4,650	1,340
Kuwait	2,430	2,440	10 0.4%	2,820	380
Nigeria	1,500	1,530	30 2.0%	1,600	70
Libya	1,270	1,320	50 3.9%	1,290	-30
Algeria	910	920	10 1.1%	1,060	140
Venezuela	880	870	-10 -1.1%	980	110
Congo	240	250	10 4.2%	300	50
Gabon	220	220	0 0.0%	230	10
Equatorial Guinea	50	60	10 20.0%	80	20
Total OPEC-11	23,160	23,360	200 0.86%	28,840	5,480

biggest decline in two years, to reach USD 63.6/b while Kuwait export grade crude prices witnessed the biggest monthly decline of 9.0% to average at USD 63.9/b during May-2025.

Meanwhile, the consensus estimate for Brent crude showed sharp downward revisions for the next six quarters. The median consensus forecast for Brent crude grade for Q3-2025 stood at USD 66.0/b, according to data from Bloomberg.

**World Oil Demand**

Global oil demand growth forecast for 2025 was kept unchanged in the latest monthly report from OPEC at 1.3 mb/d with demand expected to reach 105.1 mb/d during the year.

However, there were changes at the country level mainly reflecting actual data for Q1-2025. As per the report, there were upward revisions to demand data for Q1-2025 for OECD Americas and the OECD Europe regions. Demand estimates for the US were upgraded by 0.21 mb/d for Q1-2025 while estimates for Europe were upgraded by 0.13 mb/d.

These adjustments were also reflected in forecasts for the full year 2025 with demand in the US higher by 0.062 while for OECD Europe, the demand is expected to be higher by 0.025 mb/d. the overall OECD

region, demand growth was upgraded by 0.07 mb/d for the year.

On the other hand, there were downward revisions to forecasts mainly for Q2-2025 to demand data for key countries in the non-OECD region. This included lowered growth forecasts for both India and China reflecting the impact of the tariffs announced by the US government and the counter tariffs imposed by China on goods coming from the US.

The latest data on crude oil imports in China shows a decline during May-2025. Crude oil imports stood at 10.97 mb/d during May-2025, down from 11.69 mb/d during April-2025. This decline was partially offset by a slightly higher domestic production that stood at 4.35 mb/d during May-2025 vs. 4.31 mb/d during April-2025.

Meanwhile, demand in India remained elevated with refiners importing record amount of crude oil during May-2025, the trend indicates growing consumption of refined products in India, particularly diesel, gasoline and jet fuel.

World oil demand growth forecast for 2026 was also kept broadly unchanged by the OPEC at 1.28 mb/d with demand expected to reach 106.42 mb/d during the year

There were, however, minor adjustments to forecasts for both OECD and non-OECD countries. Longer term forecasts from the IEA showed crude oil demand peaking at 105.6 mb/d in 2029 with China expected to see an early demand peak during 2027 due to growth in EVs.

The agency said that slower adoption of EVs and cheaper gasoline are expected to support consumption in the US.

**World Oil Supply**

World oil supply increased by 0.33 mb/d during May-2025 to reach 105.0 mb/d, according to data from the IEA. The increase was led by higher output from both the OPEC+ and non-OPEC+ producers.

The increase in OPEC+ output reflected recently announced unwinding of voluntary output cuts. OPEC+ production stood at 42.21 mb/d during the month vs. 42.05 mb/d during April-2025, as per IEA estimates.

Forecasts from the IEA showed world oil supply is forecasted to increase by 1.8 mb/d to 104.9 mb/d during 2025 mainly led by an increase in non-OPEC+ output by 1.4 mb/d.

Supply is expected to increase by another 1.1 mb/d in 2026, once again reflecting higher output from non-OPEC+ by 840 tb/d, respectively.

Meanwhile, the OPEC kept its forecast for non-DoC liquids supply growth unchanged for 2025 in its latest monthly report. The supply from the group is expected to grow by 0.81 mb/d this year and average at 54.0 mb/d.

There were revisions at the country level with downward revision to supply forecast for the US that was partially offset by a slight upward revision to supply estimates for OECD Europe and non-OECD supplies.

The supply forecast for the overall Americas region and for the US was once again lowered by 0.03 mb/d, indicating cuts to supply forecast mainly for the US. The lowered forecast for the aligns with the latest report on rig count in the US.

According to Baker Hughes, oil rig count in the US showed eighth consecutive week of decline during the week ended 20-June-2025 to reach 438 rigs, the lowest rig count since October-2021. The decline reflected weak fundamentals in the oil market with crude oil trading at around the USD 65/b before the current geopolitical crisis.

However, the pace of decline in oil rigs have slowed significantly over the last few weeks and could even see an increase after oil prices got a boost from the Middle East situation.

Moreover, improving well productivity was also seen with US crude oil production showing marginal but consistent increase over the last few weeks to reach 13.43 mb/d during the week ended 13-June-2025.

**OPEC Oil Production & Spare Capacity**

OPEC crude oil production increased after two consecutive months of declines during May-2025. The increase reflected unwinding of production cuts by OPEC+ countries in which the group decided to increase production by 411 tb/d. As per Bloomberg data, average OPEC production stood at 27.54 mb/d during the month, the highest in seventeen months, after registering an increase of 0.2 mb/d as compared to the previous month. The increase was led by a broad-based increase in production across producers in the group with only Iran and Venezuela reporting marginal declines while the rest of the countries showed higher production.

On the other hand, data from OPEC secondary sources showed a relatively smaller production growth of 183 tb/d with production averaging at 27.0 mb/d during May-2025. The data from OPEC also showed a broad-based growth in production that was partially offset by marginal decline in production in Iran and Iraq.

Output from the broader DoC producers group showed a production growth of 180 tb/d after output from the non OPEC DoC countries showed a marginal output decline of 3 tb/d during the month. This decline was mainly led by lower output from Kazakhstan that was partially offset by marginal growth in output from South Sudan.

Meanwhile, the OPEC+ once again announced to increase daily crude oil production by the group for the third consecutive month by another 411 tb/d for July-2025. This along with the announced increases for the previous months would mean a total increase of 1.4 mb/d out of the 2.2 mb/d in pledged cuts. There were also speculations on the impact of the ongoing war in the Middle East on the unwinding of the output, with majority of the analysts expected OPEC+ to stick to its decision to increase output.

The higher prices would also enable countries with higher than pledged outputs to comply with their quotas with minimal impact on oil revenues.

At the country level, the biggest increase in production was recorded in Saudi Arabia that produced over 9.0 mb/d during the month. Bloomberg data showed production in the Kingdom at 9.08 mb/d after an increase of 110 tb/d from previous month while OPEC secondary sources showed a much larger production rate of 9.18 mb/d with a monthly increase of 177 tb/d during May-2025. Libya also showed a healthy production growth of around 50 tb/d during the month with production reaching the highest average monthly rate in 12 years at 1.32 mb/d.



Tesla to build grid-side energy storage station in Shanghai

# Musk’s ‘robotaxi’ dream stalls at the starting line



In this undated handout photo provided by Zoox, Zoox robotaxis are assembled at a 220,000-square-foot factory located in Hayward, California. (AP)

“Musk’s tendency to push up the stock high with a bit of hyperbole is well known among investors.”

NEW YORK, June 22, (Agencies): Elon Musk promised in 2019 that driverless Tesla “robotaxis” would be on the road “next year,” but it didn’t happen. A year later, he promised to deliver them the next year, but that didn’t happen either.

Despite the empty pledges the promises kept coming. Last year in January, Musk said, “Next year for sure, we’ll have over a million robotaxis.”

Would you settle for 10 or 12?

Musk appears to be on the verge of making his robotaxi vision a reality with a test run of a small squad of self-driving cabs in Austin, Texas, starting Sunday. Reaching a million may take a year or more, however, although the billionaire should be able to expand the service this year if the Austin demo is a success.

The stakes couldn’t be higher, nor the challenges.

While Musk was making those “next year” promises, rival Waymo was busy deploying driverless taxis in Los Angeles, San Diego, Austin and other cities by using a different technology that allowed it to get to market faster. It just completed its 10 millionth paid ride.

Boycotts related to Musk’s politics have tanked Tesla’s sales. Rival electric vehicle makers with newly

competitive models have stolen market share. And investors are on edge after a \$150 billion stock wipeout when Musk picked a social media fight with a U.S. president overseeing federal car regulators who could make the robotaxi rollout much more difficult. The stock has recovered somewhat after Musk said he regretted some of his remarks.

Tesla shareholders have stood by Musk over the years because he’s defied the odds by building a successful standalone electric vehicle company - self-driving car promises aside - and making them a lot of money in the process. A decade ago, Tesla shares traded for around \$18. The shares closed Friday at \$322.

Musk says the Austin test will begin modestly enough, with just 10 or 12 vehicles picking up passengers in a limited area. But then it will quickly ramp up and spread to other cities, eventually reaching hundreds of thousands if not a million vehicles next year.

Some Musk watchers on Wall Street are skeptical.

“How quickly can he expand the fleet?” asks Garrett Nelson, an analyst at CFRA. “We’re talking maybe a dozen vehicles initially. It’s very small.”

Morningstar’s Seth Goldstein says Musk is being classic Musk: Promising too much, too quickly.

“When anyone in Austin can download the app and use a robotaxi, that will be a success, but I don’t think that will happen until 2028,” he says. “Testing is going to take a while.”

Musk’s tendency to push up the stock high with a bit of hyperbole is well known among investors.

In 2018, he told Tesla stockholders he had “funding secured” to buy all their shares at a massive premium and take the company private. But he not only lacked a written commitment from financiers, according to federal stock regulators who fined him, he hadn’t discussed the loan amount or other details with them.

More recently, Musk told CNBC in May that Tesla was experiencing a “major rebound” in demand. A week later an auto trade group in Europe announced sales had plunged by half.

Musk has come under fire for allegedly exaggerating the ability of the system used for its cars to drive themselves, starting with the name. Full Self-Driving is a misnomer. The system still requires drivers to keep their eyes on the road because they may need to intervene and take

control at any moment.

Federal highway safety regulators opened an investigation into FSD last year after several accidents, and the Department of Justice has conducted its own probe, though the status of that is not known. Tesla has also faced lawsuits over the feature, some resulting in settlements, other dismissed. In one case, a judge ruled against the plaintiffs but only because they hadn’t proved Musk “knowingly” made false statements.

Musk says the robotaxis will be running on an improved version of Full Self-Driving and the cabs will be safe.

He also says the service will be able to expand rapidly around the country. His secret weapon: Millions of Tesla owners now on the roads. He says an over-the-air software update will soon allow them to turn their cars into driverless cabs and start a side business while stuck at the office for eight hours or on vacation for a week.

“Instead of having your car sit in the parking lot, your car could be earning money,” Musk said earlier this year, calling it an Airbnb model for cars. “You will be able to add or subtract your car to the fleet.”

Musk says Tesla also can move

fast to deploy taxis now because of his decision to rely only on cameras for the cars to navigate, unlike Waymo, which has gone a more expensive route by supplementing its cameras with lasers and radar.

“Tesla will have, I don’t know,” Musk mused in an conference call with investors, “99% market share or something ridiculous.” Given Waymo’s head start and potential competition from Amazon and others, dominating the driverless market to that extent could be a reach.

But Dan Ives, a Wedbush Securities analyst and big Musk fan, says this time Musk may actually pull it off because of Tesla’s ability to scale up quickly. And even skeptics like Morningstar’s Goldstein acknowledge that Musk occasionally does gets things right, and spectacularly so.

He upended the car industry by getting people to buy expensive electric vehicles, brought his Starlink satellite internet service to rural areas and, more recently, performed a gee-whiz trick of landing an unmanned SpaceX rocket on a platform back on earth.

“Maybe his timelines aren’t realistic,” Goldstein says, “but he can develop futuristic technology products.”

**Also:**

**SHANGHAI:** U.S. carmaker Tesla on Friday inked a deal with Chinese partners to build a grid-side energy storage station in Shanghai using its Megapack energy-storage batteries.

The deal, with a total investment of 4 billion yuan (about 556 million U.S. dollars), marked Tesla’s expansion into China’s burgeoning energy storage market, paving the way for its facility to connect with the country’s vast power grid, the largest in the world.

The gigawatt-hour-scale energy storage station is to be located in the Lin-gang Special Area of China (Shanghai) Pilot Free Trade Zone, as per the deal signed by Tesla, the administrative committee of the Lin-gang Special Area, the people’s government of Shanghai’s Fengxian District, and China Kangfu International Leasing Co., Ltd.

It will be Tesla’s first grid-side energy storage station to be built on the Chinese mainland.

Dong Kun, general manager of Tesla China’s energy business, said the station, once launched, will participate in electricity spot trading, helping balance peak and off-peak power demand in the local grids and enhance grid stability.

Also, Tesla is set to enhance its collaboration with China Kangfu to roll out the zero-carbon energy solution globally.

In February this year, Tesla’s new Megafactory in the Lin-gang Special Area, its second plant in Shanghai after the Gigafactory, started production of Megapack batteries.

Tesla anticipates a year-on-year increase of 50 percent in energy storage deployments in 2025.

Goldman Sachs’ ‘Prominent 10’ signal China’s market shift

# China’s booming tech sector redraws investment map

“China’s AI breakthroughs highlight its supply chain and innovation strengths, supported by a robust ecosystem of infrastructure, data, talent and energy”

BEIJING, June 22, (Xinhua): China’s surging technology innovation is rewriting the playbook for foreign investors, with the country’s booming tech sector having reshaped expectations regarding its long-term growth potential.

The latest example came as Goldman Sachs unveiled a list of what it has identified as China’s Prominent 10, a move reminiscent of the Magnificent Seven, a group of high-performing and influential stocks in the U.S. tech sector.

The top 10 Chinese stocks, most of which are affiliated with tech giants, are expected to significantly expand their share of China’s equity market over the coming two years.

Among these 10 are internet behemoth Tencent, e-commerce giant Alibaba, smartphone maker Xiaomi, electric car manufacturer BYD, digital shopping platform Meituan and pharmaceutical company Hengrui.

They “embody the theme of AI tech development, self-sufficiency, going global, services and new forms of consumption, and China’s improving shareholder returns,” according to the investment bank’s research findings.

Behind the stock picks spreadsheets of Wall Street economists lies a deeper recalibration, with those observers who once declared “peak China” now overhauling their models, and transitioning to a view which sees tech innovation as driving a new wave of substantial expansion in China.

Last month, MSCI added five A-share stocks, including VeriSilicon, Baili-Pharm and APT Medical, to its China Index. These new constituents are mostly in tech and biotech sectors, reflecting global index compilers’ recognition of China’s economic transformation.

Top global investors, including Goldman Sachs and JP Morgan, have turned bullish on China’s market -- driven by global investor interest in Chinese equities due to the country’s AI push, led by DeepSeek. This month, notably, major investment banks have raised their growth forecasts for the Chinese economy.

As of May 29, the Hang Seng Tech Index had surged over 40 per-

cent year on year, outperforming major global tech indices. Of the top ten most actively traded Hong Kong stocks, seven are Hang Seng Tech constituents, with the three most active being Tencent, Alibaba and Xiaomi.

China’s AI breakthroughs highlight its supply chain and innovation strengths, supported by a robust ecosystem of infrastructure, data, talent and energy, said Xing Ziqiang, Morgan Stanley’s chief economist for China.

“China’s tech innovations are shifting from isolated breakthroughs to systematic integration, with many fields experiencing their ‘DeepSeek moment’ and some emerging tech firms achieving a global presence from the start,” said Wu Qing, head of the China Securities Regulatory Commission, at a forum in east China’s Shanghai on Wednesday.

Additionally, tech stars like DeepSeek and Huawei weren’t included in Goldman Sachs’ stock picks only because they’re not publicly traded. Beyond these giants, many Chinese startups are rising to prominence.

China now has more than 400 unicorn companies, nearly one-third of the global total.

The country’s recent economic data also support such an outlook.

Data from the National Bureau of Statistics shows that China’s high-tech manufacturing added value grew by 8.6 percent in May, outpacing the overall growth of large-scale industrial added value by 2.8 percentage points.

Within this sector, production of 3D printing equipment, industrial robots and new energy vehicles increased by 40.0, 35.5 and 31.7 percent, respectively.

China is not only the largest market but arguably also the world’s innovation hub, propelling cost efficiencies and next-gen robotics development, said a Morgan Stanley research note recently.

“It is becoming apparent that national support for ‘embodied AI’ may be far greater in China than in any other nation, driving continued innovation and capital formation,” said Zhong Sheng, Morgan Stanley’s head of industrials research.

“The continuing AI and technology breakthroughs have rewritten the narrative and brightened the growth prospects” for China’s privately-owned enterprises, who also lead the charge of “China’s ‘Going Global’ ambition,” according to the Goldman Sachs report.

This year, overseas demand for China’s AI-driven tech products has surged. Data from AliExpress reveals that during its March promotion, sales of ARVR glasses, led by brands like XREAL and Rokid, had jumped 600 percent from the previous month.

“Last year, our AR glasses’ overseas business accounted for nearly 70 percent of total sales, with overseas sales growing by 30 percent year on year,” said Zhang Longjie, global sales head of consumer-grade AR glasses firm XREAL.

Despite global uncertainties, China’s high-tech product exports performed strongly in the first five months of 2025 -- rising 6.1 percent year on year in U.S.-dollar terms, according to the General Administration of Customs data.

editor’s choice





Fans celebrate with animal costume race

## New Hampshire city in ‘Jumanji’ marks 30th anniversary

KEENE, N.H., June 22, (AP): Madeline Murphy remembers the instructions she was given on the set of “Jumanji” when she was an extra some 30 years ago: “Pretend you’re frightened and you’re screaming because an elephant’s coming after you.”

So, that’s what she did in the Central Square of Keene, New Hampshire, running back and forth, over and over, on a long day in November 1994.

“I was pretty tired by the end of the day, and it was cold,” said Murphy, 61. She got a check for \$60.47 - and several seconds of screen time.

Murphy was one of about 125 extras cast in the classic Robin Williams film, which is marking its 30th anniversary. It has spawned several sequels, including one planned for next year. The city of about 23,000 people in the southwestern corner of the state celebrated its ties to “Jumanji” this weekend.

The festivities included a parade, scavenger hunt and a “Rhino Rumble Road Race” saluting the film’s stampede scenes of elephants, rhinos and zebras. Runners in inflatable animal costumes sprinted about a quarter mile (less than half a kilometer) around the square Saturday.

Juniper Thurston and her daughters Elska and Madison Christgau wore rhino costumes, which they said were difficult to run in but better ventilated than expected. Thurston, who lives in nearby Hancock, was 13 when “Jumanji” was filmed, and she remembers visiting Keene to watch her friends perform as extras.

“It was literally right here -- it was amazing,” Thurston said. “It was just wild, and to be here today and be able to have a small part our own stampede is kind of awesome.”

Elska Christgau, 9, said everyone in her family loves the film, and that her fa-



Crowds dressed in inflatable costumes participate in the ‘Rhino Rumble Road Race’ to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the film ‘Jumanji’ in downtown Keene, N.H. on Saturday, June 21. (AP)

vorite part is “the mystery and the Jumanji game” itself. Based on the 1981 children’s book by Chris Van Allsburg about a mysterious

jungle adventure board game, the movie version of “Jumanji” is set in the fictional small town of Brantford, New Hampshire.

Veteran location manager Dow Griffith was crisscrossing New England in search of the right spot. A coffee lover who grew up in Seattle, he recalled feeling desperate one day for a good brew. He was a bit east of Keene at the time, and someone suggested a shop that was near the square.

“I took my cherished cup of double dry cappuccino out to the front porch, took a sip, looked to my left - and by God - there was the place I had been looking for!” he told The Associated Press. “So really, we have coffee to thank for the whole thing.”

Scenes were filmed at the square that fall and the following spring. The fall scenes show a present-day town that had declined. Extras played homeless people and looters, in addition to panicked runners fleeing from the jungle animals.

Joanne Hof, now 78, had needed her son’s help to spot herself behind the elephants, running with her hands up. Hof, a reading specialist, bought a videotape of “Jumanji” and showed it to the kids she worked with.

“They were very impressed that I was in the movie,” she said.

The spring scenes, appearing early in the film, depict the town in 1969. Extras drove classic cars around the pristine-looking square and others walked around, dressed for that time period.

“I told the makeup person, ‘Do you know how to do a French twist?’” recalled Kate Beetle, 74, of Alstead, who said she can be seen for “a microsecond” crossing a street. “They just found me the right lady’s suit and right flat shoes, and then the hair is kind of what I suspect did it.”

### Kids’ Choice Awards



Jack Black, winner of the award for favorite movie actor for ‘A Minecraft Movie’, gets slimed again during the Nickelodeon Kids’ Choice Awards on Saturday, June 21, at The Barker Hangar in Santa Monica, Calif. (AP)



Auli’i Cravalho accepts the award for favorite female animated voice from a movie for ‘Moana 2’ during the Nickelodeon Kids’ Choice Awards. (AP)



Host Tyla appears during the Nickelodeon Kids’ Choice Awards on Saturday, June 21, at The Barker Hangar in Santa Monica, Calif. (AP)



Benny Blanco accepts the award for favorite viral song for ‘Bluest Flame’ during the Nickelodeon Kids’ Choice Awards. (AP)



Kira Kosarian, (from left), Maya Le, Jack Griffo, and Kinley Cunningham accept the the award for favorite kids TV show for ‘The Thundermans: Undercover’ during the Nickelodeon Kids’ Choice Awards. (AP)



Kira Kosarin accepts the award for favorite female TV star (kids) for ‘The Thundermans: Undercover’ and Jack Griffo, (left), accepts the award for favorite male TV star (kids) for ‘The Thundermans: Undercover.’ (AP)



Haley Kalil arrives at the Nickelodeon Kids’ Choice Awards. (AP)



Terry Crews accepts the the award for favorite reality TV show for ‘America’s Got Talent’ during the Nickelodeon Kids’ Choice Awards. (AP)



KATSEYE performs ‘Gnarly’ during the Nickelodeon Kids’ Choice Awards on June 21, at The Barker Hangar in Santa Monica, Calif. (AP)



Samantha Lorraine arrives at the Nickelodeon Kids’ Choice Awards. (AP)

### Variety

**BEIJING:** Highly anticipated crime thriller “She’s Got No Name,” starring **Zhang Ziyi**, launched in China this weekend, earning 90 million yuan (12.55 million U.S. dollars) on Saturday, its opening day.



Zhang

Maoyan now projects it could ultimately gross around 570 million yuan. (Xinhua)

**ASTANA:** President of Xinhua News Agency Fu Hua met with Raushan Kazhibayeva, director of the Kazakh president’s TV and radio complex, here on Sunday. During the meeting, the two sides signed a cooperation agreement.

Fu noted that the global information landscape is undergoing profound changes. He affirmed Xinhua’s readiness to work with the Kazakh president’s TV and radio complex to build consensus, strengthen mutual trust and mutually beneficial cooperation, enhance technology and personnel exchanges, and expand all-round communication and cooperation through platforms such as the China-Central Asia News Agency Forum. (Xinhua)

### Film

Film offers empathy, adventure but misses some magic

## A lonely boy’s space odyssey in Pixar’s ‘Elio’

LOS ANGELES, June 22, (AP): Elio is a lonely 11-year-old just looking for big answers about life.

He’s recently lost his parents, the only people who understood him and wanted him, and the one thing that seems to give him comfort and hope is the idea that we’re not alone in the universe. So, in Pixar’s latest, he starts waging a campaign for aliens to abduct him. Mostly, this involves laying down on the beach and waiting, his sand notes getting ever more desperate. Then one day it works.

It’s a solid premise that, viewed one way, has all the makings of a classic Pixar film. It’s existential but cute. It might make you cry and also want to buy a cuddly Glordon toy. Glordon (Remy Edgerly) is the toothy, slug-like young alien with no eyes who befriends Elio (Yonas Kibreab).

From a more cynical vantage point, however, it also doesn’t stray far from the formula. It’s another kid realizing that the things that make him different might just be his secret power played out on a heightened, fantastical scale. It’s safe and familiar, but also perhaps getting a little tired. “Elio” might even be the film that will have you wishing that Pixar would tone down the self-help sessions. Dead parents and a kid with a single tear running down his face is a brutal way to start an intergalactic adventure movie for the whole



This image released by Disney/Pixar shows Elio, voiced by Yonas Kibreab in a scene from ‘Elio.’ (AP)

family. We’ve cared about protagonists with far less immediate trauma.

Elio and his aunt Olga (Zoe Saldana) are barely holding on when we meet them living on an army base. She’s had to abandon her dreams of being an astronaut to be Elio’s primary caregiver, and he is a tricky subject - consumed with grief that he can’t quite verbalize and channeling all of his energies into a quest to communicate with extraterrestrials. Olga

is trying but overwhelmed and Elio feels like a burden. On top of it all, he can’t seem to stay out of trouble, whether it’s his own making or in self-defense against a local bully. It’s no wonder he wants to flee for a world of infinite knowledge, voice powered anti-gravity devices and spectacular colors.

But life in the cosmos is no walk in the park either. Elio gets immediately entangled in a web of lies, in which he

convinces the (we’re told) wise aliens of the CommuniVerse that he is the leader of Earth. Fake it until you make it, Pixar-style? He’s sent to negotiate with Lord Grigon (Brad Garrett), a warmongering leader who wants to lead the CommuniVerse, and learns techniques like “start from a position of power” and to use a “bargaining chip.” Like most Pixar movies, it’s building towards a message of empathy. But for a good long while it

we’re also being taught something akin to the art of the deal.

“Elio” is the work of many people - there are three credited directors, Adrian Molina ( “Coco” ), who left the project but retains the credit, Madeline Sharafian and Domee Shi ( “Turning Red” ), and three credited screenwriters involved. And the story stretches in a lot of different directions, making the overall experience a little disjointed and strained. It’s most fun when it lets its kid characters be kids - Elio and his new pal Glordon have a ball just playing around in the CommuniVerse. But the film just takes so long to get there. Dazzling visuals will only get you so far. And those are not without their pleasures and irreverent homages to film tropes in various genres. One of the more questionably intense sequences involves a bit of clone body horror, but perhaps that’s an adult projecting a horror element onto something that a kid might just find funny.

There’s a nice overriding message about parental acceptance and unconditional love - there always is. But in playing it so safe and so familiar, “Elio” is missing a bit of that Pixar wonder, and mischief. “Elio,” a Walt Disney Company released in theaters Friday, is rated PG by the Motion Picture Association for “thematic elements, some action and peril.” Running time: 99 minutes. Two and a half stars out of four.





Performers and musicians take part in Giacomo Puccini's 'Turandot' dress rehearsal by the Greek National Opera at the Odeon of Herodes Atticus during the 70th Athens Epidaurus Festival in Athens, Greece, May 30, 2025. (AP)

Odeon of Herod Atticus to close for 3-year restoration

Athens' theater hosts final festival before closure

ATHENS, Greece, June 22, (AP): For visitors to Athens, the ancient Odeon of Herod Atticus is the must-see theater at the foot of the Acropolis. Artists revere it for the majestic stage where legends have performed. And for the Greek capital's residents it is the touchstone of their summer cultural calendar.

The Odeon of Herod Atticus recently opened the 70th season of the annual Athens Epidaurus Festival, a cherished annual tradition for many Greeks. But this edition marks the last before the theater that's more than 18 centuries old shuts down for maintenance and restoration work that is expected to last at least three years.

While theater and dance grace its stage, music is its cornerstone. Renowned artists who have performed here include Luciano Pavarotti, Frank Sinatra, Coldplay, and Greece's own Maria Callas.

Its closure will be a profound loss for spectators who have long enjoyed first-class performances under the stars in one of the world's most iconic open-air theaters.

"When (people) think of the Athens cultural scene, everyone thinks of the festival and Herodion," said Katerina Evangelatos, the festival's artistic director since 2019, calling the theater by its commonly used Greek name. "It has become a synonym of the festival. It is the heart of the festival."

When the Greek National Opera opened this season's festival with Giacomo Puccini's opera Turandot, it erected temporary structures behind the Roman-era odeon's arched walls to expand available space for performers' dressing rooms. The permanent underground facilities weren't enough.

The production also needed more space inside the venue to accommodate the scale of the production.

To meet the opera's scenic and casting demands, a crew constructed a wooden, balcony-like platform to partially extend over the orchestra pit.

This adaption allowed space for the large cast and complex staging, including the emblematic scene in which the emperor, Turandot's elderly father, is ceremonially rolled out in his towering throne to watch

suitors attempt to solve his daughter's riddles - at the risk of execution. The scene requires significant simultaneous on-stage presence by multiple performers.

Giorgos Koumendakis, the Greek National Opera's artistic director, describes the Herod Atticus Odeon as "a strained, fatigued space" which still commands widespread veneration.

"People who are conscious, cultivated, educated - who understand what this space is, its historical significance, the importance of the festival, and the history of the Greek National Opera - respect it deeply and enter it almost reverently," said Koumendakis. "It's like entering a temple - a temple of art - and it truly has an impact. I can see it from the singers and the orchestra, too. When they come here, they genuinely want to give their all."

During previous restoration and conservation projects, the Herod Atticus Odeon had surfaces cleaned, cracks filled with grout and new seating installed. This time, the scope of the work will depend on findings from the studies still underway.

Fashion

Dolce & Gabbana embrace wrinkled charm for SS26

Armani's global aesthetic shines in Bohemian show

MILAN, June 22, (AP): Giorgio Armani's admiration for other cultures and global aesthetic was on full display at his latest Emporio Armani show, but the designer himself was notably absent.

Armani, 90, skipped the customary bow at the Emporio Armani menswear preview for Spring-Summer 2026 during Milan Fashion Week on Saturday, as he recovers at home. His fashion house confirmed his convalescence in advance but did not provide details about his condition.

Despite his absence, Armani was deeply involved in shaping the collection, his fashion house said, working closely with Leo Dell'Orco, his longtime menswear director, who took the final bow. Normally, Armani would have posed with the models at the end of the show - another signature moment missing.

The Emporio Armani collection carried a free-spirited, Bohemian air - a vision for the youthful adventurer who balances comfort with style, ornament with utility. Models sported braids or silver beads in their hair, and layered accessories: beaded necklaces, charms, tassels, and fringes.

Jackets ranged from softly tailored with sweeping scarf collars - ideal for wind and sun protection - to intricately detailed styles with feather-light touches or loose weaves.

Natural fabrics like crepe and linen, often left rough to the touch, contrasted with silky prints inspired by Moroccan mosaics. Trousers varied from gently pleated to dramatically ballooned, paired with long, embroidered tunics.

The traveler's ensemble was completed with crossbody bags, tapestry duffels, vintage-style suitcases, woven slippers, and straw hats worn low over the eyes, conjuring the image of a man journeying through sun-soaked lands.



A model wears a creation as part of the men's Simon Cracker Spring-Summer 2026 collection, that was presented in Milan, Italy, Sunday, June 22. (AP)



A model displays a creation as part of the men's Emporio Armani Spring-Summer 2026 collection. (AP)



A model wears a creation as part of the men's Emporio Armani SS 2026 collection. (AP)



Models wear Emporio Armani's creations. (AP)



A model wears a creation by Dolce & Gabbana. (AP)



A model wears a creation from Dolce & Gabbana SS 2026 collection. (AP)

Orlando Magic.

Dolce & Gabbana

Dolce & Gabbana beckoned the warm weather with crumpled, take-me-anywhere comfort in their menswear collection for spring-summer 2026, previewed during Milan Fashion Week on Saturday.

The show opened and closed with a relaxed pajama silhouette - deliberately rumpled and effortless - in a clash of stripes, with both shorts and long trousers.

The Beethoven soundtrack belied designers Domenico Dolce and Stefano Gabbana's more deliberate intent, underscoring the de-

pink pinstriped PJ pants encapsulated the classic summer dilemma: work vs. pleasure.

Raw knitwear, or furry overcoats, added texture. Boxers peeked out of waistbands, and big shirt cuffs out of jacket sleeves, challenging formal and casual codes.

Nothing was cleaner on the runway than a crisp striped pajama top in sky-blue and white stripes tucked into white leather Bermuda shorts - good for work and for play.

The designers' finale featured pajama suits, shorts and pants, with beaded floral patterned embroidery for an evening seaside shimmer, worn with fuzzy sliders. Twin cameo brooches gave an antique accent.

The crowd outside got to share in the fun when the finale models took the looks onto the streets, taking a full lap outside the designers' Metropool theater. Front-row guests included actors Zane Phillips, Theo James, Lucien Laviscount and Michele Morrone.



A Napoleon hat is on display in an exhibition of Napoleon's belongings created by French designer Jean-Charles de Castelbajac at the Sotheby's auction house in Paris Thursday, June 19, in Paris. (AP)

Major auction

Napoleon relics go on 'display'

PARIS, June 22, (AP): After the Hollywood epic "Napoleon" exposed the legendary emperor to a new generation two years ago, over 100 relics - which shaped empires, broke hearts and spawned centuries of fascination - are on display in Paris ahead of what experts call one of the most important Napoleonic auctions ever staged.

His battered military hat. A sleeve from his red velvet coat. Even the divorce papers that ended one of history's most tormented romances - with Josephine, the empress who haunted him to the end.

Two centuries after his downfall, Napoleon remains both revered and controversial in France - but above all, unavoidable. Polls have shown that many admire his vision and achievements, while others condemn his wars and authoritarian rule. Nearly all agree his legacy still shapes the nation.

"These are not just museum pieces. They're fragments of a life that changed history," said Louis-Xavier Joseph, Sotheby's head of European furniture, who helped assemble the trove. "You can literally hold a piece of Napoleon's world in your hand."

The auction - aiming to make in excess of 7 million euros (\$7.5 million) - is a biography in objects. The centerpiece is Napoleon's iconic bicorne hat, the black felt chapeau he wore in battle - with wings parallel to his shoulders - so soldiers and enemies could spot him instantly through the gunpowder haze.

"Put a bicorne on a table, and people think of Napoleon immediately," Joseph said. "It's like the laurel crown of Julius Caesar."

The hat is estimated to sell for at least over half a million dollars.

Throne

For all the pageantry - throne, swords, the Grand Eagle of the Legion of Honor - the auction's true power comes from its intimacy. It includes the handwritten codicil of Napoleon's final will, composed in paranoia and illness on Saint Helena.

There is the heartbreakingly personal: the red portfolio that once contained his divorce decree from Josephine, the religious marriage certificate that formalized their love and a dressing table designed for the empress. Her famed mirror reflects the ambition and tragedy of their alliance.

"Napoleon was a great lover; his letters that he wrote are full of fervor, of love, of passion," Joseph said. "It was also a man who paid attention to his image. Maybe one of the first to be so careful of his image, both public and private."

The auction's timing is cinematic. The recent biopic grossed over \$220 million worldwide and reanimated Napoleon's myth for a TikTok generation hungry for stories of ambition, downfall and doomed romance.

The auction preview is open to the public, running through June 24, with the auction set for June 25.

Not far from the Arc de Triomphe monument dedicated to the general's victories, Djamal Oussedik, 22, shrugged: "Everyone grows up with Napoleon, for better or worse. Some people admire him, others blame him for everything. But to see his hat and his bed, you remember he was a real man, not just a legend."

"You can't escape him, even if you wanted to. He's part of being French," said teacher Laure Mallet, 51.

The exhibition is a spectacle crafted by celebrity designer Jean-Charles de Castelbajac, famed for dressing Lady Gaga and Pope John Paul II.

"I wanted to electrify history," Castelbajac said. "This isn't a mausoleum, it's a pop culture installation. Today's collectors buy a Napoleon artifact the way they'd buy a guitar from Jimi Hendrix. They want a cabinet of curiosities."

Variety

**PARIS:** A year after it captivated crowds during the Paris Olympics, a centerpiece of the summer Games made a comeback Saturday to light up the French capital's skyline.

The iconic helium-powered balloon that attracted myriads of tourists during the summer Games has shed its Olympic branding and is now just called the "Paris Caudron." It rose again into the air later Saturday, lifting off over the Tuileries Garden just as the sun was about to set.

Now anchored in the center of the drained Tuileries pond, the cauldron's return is part of French President Emmanuel Macron's effort to preserve the Games' spirit in the city, as Paris looks ahead to the 2028 Olympics in Los Angeles.

Despite the suffocating hot weather in Paris, around 30,000 people were expected to attend the launch, which coincided with France's annual street music festival - the Fete de la Musique, the Paris police prefecture said.

And it won't be a one-time event. After Saturday's flight, the balloon will lift off into the sky each summer evening from June 21 to Sept. 14, for the next three years.

The cauldron's ascent may become a new rhythm of the Parisian summer, with special flights planned for Bastille Day on July 14 and the anniversary of the 2024 opening ceremony on July 26. (AP)



Macron

for Bastille Day on July 14 and the anniversary of the 2024 opening ceremony on July 26. (AP)

**KYIV, Ukraine:** Hundreds of Ukrainians observed the longest day of the year on Saturday with a midsummer celebration of some of their oldest traditions, a display of cultural perseverance in a nation threatened by war.

Rooted in Ukraine's ancient past of Slavic paganism the event, Ivana Kupala, features rituals and symbolism to honor the summer solstice, related to fertility, nature, purity and renewal - values that predate the region's Christianization at the end of the first millennium.

At the open-air National Museum of Folk Architecture and Ukrainian Life on the outskirts of Kyiv, participants in embroidered shirts and blouses strolled among thatched-roof cottages, wooden churches and windmills dating to the 18th and 19th centuries. Women and girls wore vinoks - wreaths made from wildflowers - as they took part in folk dances, games and craft workshops. (AP)

**LONDON:** As the sun rose Saturday on the longest day of the year in the Northern Hemisphere, a crowd erupted in cheers at Stonehenge where the ancient monument in southern England has clocked the summer solstice over thousands of years.

The orange ball crested the northeast horizon behind the Heel Stone, the entrance to the stone circle, and shone its beam of light into the center of one of the world's most famous prehistoric monuments. The solstice is one of the few occasions each year when visitors are allowed to walk among the stones, which are otherwise fenced off.

The crowd gathered before dawn at the World Heritage Site to mark the start of summer in the Northern Hemisphere, beating the heat during the UK's first amber heat-health alert issued since September 2023. Temperatures later topped 33 degrees Celsius (91.4 degrees Fahrenheit) in Surrey, 80 miles (128 kilometers) east of Stonehenge, the hottest temperature recorded in the UK so far this year.

About 25,000 sun devotees and other revelers, including druids, pagans, hippies, locals and tourists, showed up, according to English Heritage which operates the site. More than 400,000 others around the world watched a livestream. (AP)



Care denial concerns

How insurers use AI to control health coverage

By Jennifer D. Oliva  
Indiana University

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

Over the past decade, health insurance companies have increasingly embraced the use of artificial intelligence algorithms. Unlike doctors and hospitals, which use AI to help diagnose and treat patients, health insurers use these algorithms to decide whether to pay for health care treatments and services that are recommended by a given patient’s physicians.

One of the most common examples is prior authorization, which is when your doctor needs to receive payment approval from your insurance company before providing you care. Many insurers use an algorithm to decide whether the requested care is “medically necessary” and should be covered.

These AI systems also help insurers decide how much care a patient is entitled to - for example, how many days of hospital care a patient can receive after surgery.

If an insurer declines to pay for a treatment your doctor recommends, you usually have three options. You can try to appeal the decision, but that process can take a lot of time, money and expert help. Only 1 in 500 claim denials are appealed. You can agree to a different treatment that your insurer will cover. Or you can pay for the recommended treatment yourself, which is often not realistic because of high health care costs.

As a legal scholar who studies health law and policy, I’m concerned about how insurance algorithms affect people’s health. Like with AI algorithms used by doctors and hospitals, these tools can potentially improve care and reduce costs. Insurers say that AI helps them make quick, safe decisions about what care is necessary and avoids wasteful or harmful treatments.

**Evidence**

But there’s strong evidence that the opposite can be true. These systems are sometimes used to delay or deny care that should be covered, all in the name of saving money.

Presumably, companies feed a patient’s health care records and other relevant information into health care coverage algorithms and compare that information with current medical standards of care to decide whether to cover the patient’s claim. However, insurers have refused to disclose how these algorithms work in making such decisions, so it is impossible to say exactly how they operate in practice.

Using AI to review coverage saves insurers time and resources, especially because it means fewer medical professionals are needed to review each case. But the financial benefit to insurers doesn’t stop there. If an AI system quickly denies a valid claim, and the patient appeals, that appeal process can take years. If the patient is seriously ill and expected to die soon, the insurance company might save money simply by dragging out the process in the hope that the patient dies before the case is resolved.

This creates the disturbing possibility that insurers might use algorithms to withhold care for expensive, long-term or terminal health problems, such as chronic or other

debilitating disabilities. One reporter put it bluntly: “Many older adults who spent their lives paying into Medicare now face amputation or cancer and are forced to either pay for care themselves or go without.”

Research supports this concern - patients with chronic illnesses are more likely to be denied coverage and suffer as a result. In addition, Black and Hispanic people and those of other nonwhite ethnicities, as well as people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender, are more likely to experience claims denials. Some evidence also suggests that prior authorization may increase rather than decrease health care system costs.

Insurers argue that patients can always pay for any treatment themselves, so they’re not really being denied care. But this argument ignores reality. These decisions have serious health consequences, especially when people can’t afford the care they need.

**Algorithms**

Unlike medical algorithms, insurance AI tools are largely unregulated. They don’t have to go through Food and Drug Administration review, and insurance companies often say their algorithms are trade secrets.

That means there’s no public information about how these tools make decisions, and there’s no outside testing to see whether they’re safe, fair or effective. No peer-reviewed studies exist to show how well they actually work in the real world.

There does seem to be some momentum for change. The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, or CMS, which is the federal agency in charge of Medicare and Medicaid, recently announced that insurers in Medicare Advantage plans must base decisions on the needs of individual patients - not just on generic criteria. But these rules still let insurers create their own decision-making standards, and they still don’t require any outside testing to prove their systems work before using them. Plus, federal rules can only regulate federal public health programs like Medicare. They do not apply to private insurers who do not provide federal health program coverage.

Some states, including Colorado, Georgia, Florida, Maine and Texas, have proposed laws to rein in insurance AI. A few have passed new laws, including a 2024 California statute that requires a licensed physician to supervise the use of insurance coverage algorithms.

But most state laws suffer from the same weaknesses as the new CMS rule. They leave too much control in the hands of insurers to decide how to define “medical necessity” and in what contexts to use algorithms for coverage decisions. They also don’t require those algorithms to be reviewed by neutral experts before use. And even strong state laws wouldn’t be enough, because states generally can’t regulate Medicare or insurers that operate outside their borders.

In the view of many health law experts, the gap between insurers’ actions and patient needs has become so wide that regulating health care coverage algorithms is now imperative. As I argue in an essay to be published in the Indiana Law Journal, the FDA is well positioned to do so. (AP)

Study links night-time artificial light exposure to depression

Pope Leo flags AI impact on kids’ development

ROME, June 22, (Agencies): Pope Leo XIV warned Friday that artificial intelligence could negatively impact the intellectual, neurological and spiritual development of young people as he pressed one of the priorities of his young pontificate.

History’s first American pope sent a message to a conference of AI and ethics, part of which was taking place in the Vatican in a sign of the Holy See’s concern for the new technologies and what they mean for humanity.

In the message, Leo said any further development of AI must be evaluated according to the “superior ethical criterion” of the need to safeguard the dignity of each human being while respecting the diversity of the world’s population.

He warned specifically that new generations are most at risk given they have never had such quick access to information.

“All of us, I am sure, are concerned for children and young people, and the possible consequences of the use of AI on their intellectual and neurological development,” he said in the message. “Society’s well-being depends upon their being given the ability to develop their God-given gifts and capabilities,” and not allow them to confuse mere access to data with intelligence.

“In the end, authentic wisdom has

more to do with recognizing the true meaning of life, than with the availability of data,” he said.

Leo, who was elected in May after the death of Pope Francis, has identified AI as one of the most critical matters facing humanity, saying it poses challenges to defending human dignity, justice and labor. He has explained his concern for AI by invoking his namesake, Pope Leo XIII. That Leo was pope during the dawn of the Industrial Revolution and made the plight of workers, and the need to guarantee their rights and dignity, a key priority.

Toward the end of his pontificate, Francis became increasingly vocal about the threats to humanity posed by AI and called for an international treaty to regulate it. Francis said politicians must take the lead in making sure AI remains human-centric, so that decisions about when to use weapons or even less-lethal tools always remain made by humans and not machines.

A new study has revealed that chronic exposure to artificial light at night can trigger depression-like behaviors by activating a specific neural pathway in the brain.

The study, conducted on tree shrews -- diurnal mammals genetically close



Pope Leo XIV delivers his blessing as he recites the Regina Coeli noon prayer from the window of his studio overlooking St. Peter's Square, at the Vatican, Sunday, June 22. (AP)

to primates, offers critical insights into how nighttime light may disrupt mood regulation. It has been published in the journal Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences.

The research team, led by researchers from the University of Science and Technology of China, the Kunming Institute of Zoology (KIZ) of

the Chinese Academy of Sciences, and the Hefei University, exposed tree shrews to blue light for two hours each night for three weeks. Following this exposure, the animals exhibited clear depression-like symptoms, including a 20-percent reduction in sucrose preference, diminished exploratory behavior and deficits in long-term memory.

Using advanced neural tracing techniques, the researchers identified a previously uncharted visual circuit. Specialized retinal ganglion cells were found to send signals directly to the perihabenular nucleus (pHb), which in turn projects to the nucleus accumbens -- a key center in the brain for mood regulation.

Notably, when the pHb neurons were chemically silenced, the tree shrews no longer developed depression-like behaviors in response to light exposure at night. Further analysis through RNA sequencing revealed that these changes corresponded to altered activity in depression-related genes, suggesting potential long-term effects.

As light pollution and screen exposure become ever more pervasive in modern life, this study raises important questions about the impact of artificial illumination on psychological well-being and the implications for modern lifestyles.

‘Children will begin to die of thirst’

UNICEF warns of deadly water crisis in Gaza amid ‘man-made drought’

GENEVA, June 22, (KUNA): The United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) warned on Friday of the imminent risk of children dying of thirst in Gaza as vital water systems collapse under what it described as a “man-made drought”.

Speaking from Amman during a press briefing in Geneva UNICEF spokesperson James Elder said this was caused by the ongoing blockade and fuel crisis imposed by the Israeli occupation forces threatening the lives of more than two million people.

He added that only 40 percent of Gaza’s 217 drinking water production facilities remain functional cautioning that these too could shut down entirely within weeks due to the lack of fuel.

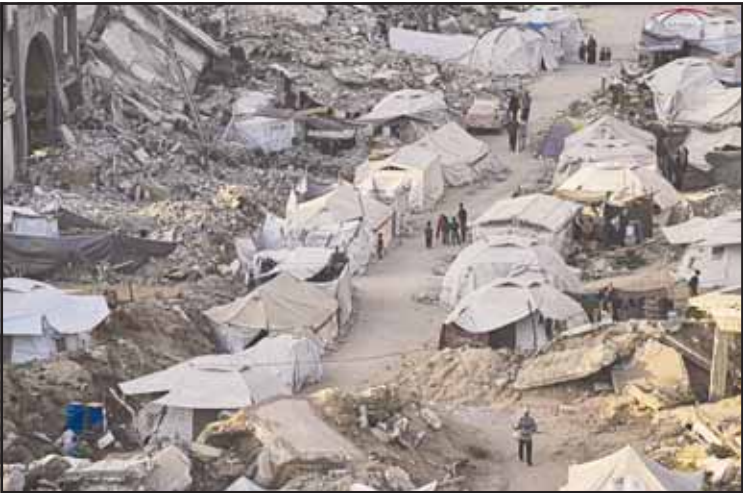
“In a war already defined by its brutality Gaza now teeters at its deadliest edge” Elder stated. “Without fuel every one of these facilities will stop operating. Since all the electricity to Gaza was cut after the 7 October 2023 fuel became essential to produce treat and distribute water to more than two million Palestinians.”

He stressed that unless the more than 100-day Israeli occupation blockade on fuel deliveries into Gaza is lifted “children will begin to die of thirst. Diseases are already advancing and chaos is tightening its grip.”

Elder noted that Gaza is experiencing what amounts to a “man-made drought” as water infrastructure collapses. “Because this is man-made it can be stopped. None of these problems are logistical or technical. They are political. Denial has become policy,” he said.

“If there is political will the water crisis will be eased overnight fuel would mean that water flows from hundreds of groundwater wells and restores supply within a day. But time is running out.”

He added that desalination plants already operating at reduced capacity will soon cease completely causing serious damage to critical equipment. Fuel shortages are also halting the transportation of water with donkey carts replacing trucks in a desperate last resort.



A tent camp for displaced Palestinians stretches among the ruins of buildings destroyed by Israeli bombardments in west of Gaza City, Saturday, June 21. (AP)

“A donkey cart can barely carry 500 litres. A truck 15,000. And even the donkeys are slowing there’s barely enough food to keep them moving,” he noted.

He regretted that fuel is also critical for Gaza’s devastated healthcare system. “Without it hospital generators stop oxygen production stops and life-support machines fail. Ambulances can’t move. Incubators go dark. Denying fuel doesn’t just cut off supply it cuts off survival.”

As for sanitation, Elder warned that broken sewerage systems are causing sewage to overflow into shelters and tents with suspected outbreaks of Hepatitis (A) and (E) both highly infectious.

**Also:**

**ABU DHABI, UAE:** During BIO International Convention in Boston USA, the Department of Health - Abu Dhabi (DoH), the regulator of the healthcare sector in Abu Dhabi, and Abbott, the global healthcare leader, entered a landmark partnership to localise manufacturing of pharmaceuticals in Abu Dhabi and advance digital health solutions. Leveraging Abu Dhabi’s ad-

vanced life sciences infrastructure, this milestone reflects the emirate’s proactive preparedness to reduce dependency on imports, strengthen supply chain resilience, and foster a sustainable, self-sufficient healthcare ecosystem.

H.E. Dr. Noura Al Ghaithi, Undersecretary of the Department of Health - Abu Dhabi, said: “Following the recent launch of the Health, Endurance, Longevity and Medicine (HELM) Cluster in Abu Dhabi, the emirate proved to be equipped with a holistic, integrated infrastructure that fosters local manufacturing and R&D, positioning it as a regional healthcare gateway and leader in life sciences. By integrating our strategic vision with Abbott’s expertise, we aim to accelerate the development and deployment of innovative healthcare products and solutions, reducing time-to-market, improving healthcare outcomes, and ensuring that breakthrough therapies reach patients faster. This approach positions Abu Dhabi as a regional leader in fostering an agile, innovation-driven healthcare ecosystem that directly translates scientific advancements into tangible benefits for our community.”

Depression

‘Ball heading’ impacts brain

SYDNEY, June 22, (Xinhua): Heading a soccer ball can cause subtle changes in the brain, even when no immediate symptoms or cognitive impairment are detected, new research has revealed.

The study is the first randomized controlled trial to use magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) scans to assess the impact of heading on adult soccer players, according to a recent news release from the University of Sydney, where the research project was undertaken.

Fifteen male players participated in the experiment, each heading a ball 20 times over 20 minutes, with balls launched at a constant speed to ensure consistency. MRI scans revealed measurable changes in brain chemistry and decreased electrical conductivity in several regions, particularly those involved in motor control, the news release said.

No participants experienced short-term cognitive impairment, but the findings added to growing evidence that even routine, symptom-free heading may disrupt brain cells at a microstructural level, said the study published in Sports Medicine - Open.

With dementia concerns rising among ex-footballers, the United States and Britain have restricted heading for young players, while Australia is still considering similar measures, according to the study.

**Mental health:** Poor mental health has become the norm for half of Australian women, according to a new report released by the Liptember Foundation, in collaboration with the Sydney-based George Institute for Global Health.

The survey of over 7,000 Australian women found 52 percent experience depression, 44 percent anxiety, 39 percent body image issues, and 30 percent insomnia, a media release based on the report from the George Institute for Global Health said on Saturday.

The main factors driving mental health issues among women are low self-esteem, financial pressures, feelings of low self-worth, and ongoing sleep deprivation, the media release said.

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Sundowns-Ulsan game stands out as the low point so far

Crowds have wildly fluctuated, from swathes of empty seats to ‘hostile’ atmospheres

MIAMI, June 22, (AP): As kickoff approached it was clear - the fans weren’t coming. The Club World Cup, soccer’s shiny, new competition, has been billed as the event to breathe new life into the world’s most popular sport.

It began a week ago in the United States, where sports stadiums of monumental capacity and steep tickets prices awaited the rowdy crowds seen at grounds across the world.

But rows and rows of empty seats inside Inter&Co Stadium in Orlando, Florida, on Tuesday told another story.

“It’s like playing football during lockdown,” observed one fan on social media.

For days, world governing body FIFA didn’t register the attendance for the game between Mamelodi Sundowns and Ulsan on its official website. It took until Friday for a figure of 3,412 to be acknowledged on the site, but by rough count, there were less than 1,000 fans in the stands as the game got underway.

At the other end of the spectrum, more than 80,000 watched Champions League winner Paris Saint-Germain vs. Atletico Madrid at the massive Rose Bowl in Pasadena, California.

The opening week for the monthlong tournament across the U.S. has seen some wildly fluctuating attendances.

The Mamelodi Sundowns-Ulsan game stands out as the low point so far for FIFA and its president, Gianni Infantino, who is banking on the Club World Cup becoming one of the most popular and valuable competitions in sport.

So sparse was the crowd that the word “ORLANDO” - spelled out in yellow seats on one of the main stands at Inter&Co Stadium - was almost completely unobstructed. Crowd control stewards stood by the sidelines and monitored vast areas of empty spaces in the 25,500-capacity venue.

The home of MLS team Orlando City - among the smallest stadiums chosen to host games for the tournament - was still massively oversized for the match, even with ticket prices falling to \$23.

A group game between largely unheralded teams from South Africa and South Korea was never likely to be a big seller. And storms, which forced kickoff to be delayed by more than an hour, may have led to no-shows.

Still, it was an uncomfortably low turnout and one of three games in the opening week that drew less than 10,000 fans.

There were also swathes of empty seats for Chelsea’s game against Los Angeles FC in Atlanta. It was an afternoon kickoff on a weekday, but one of the Premier League’s most popular teams vs. an opponent from MLS couldn’t manage to fill a third of the 71,000-capacity stadium, with 22,000 fans showing up.

“I think the environment was a bit strange. You know, the stadium was almost empty,” Chelsea coach Enzo Maresca said, and even with Lionel Messi in town for the second game in Atlanta - Inter Miami’s win against Porto - the crowd was far from capacity at 31,783.

Uncertainty over ticket sales had been a point of debate in the build up to the tournament, with prices falling dramatically before the opening game between Miami and Al Ahly last Saturday. An impressive crowd of nearly 61,000 watched that game at Hard Rock Stadium in Miami Gardens, Florida, though it is not known how many paid anyone near the \$349 that tickets were being quoted at in December.

As of Tuesday, FIFA said 1.5 million tickets had been sold and more than 340,000 fans had attended the first eight games.

Infantino proudly proclaimed the Club World Cup was growing into “the undisputed pinnacle of global club football.”

Numbers in Miami have been good - nothing lower than 55,000 and topping out at a near-capacity 63,587 for Bayern Munich vs. Boca Juniors. Bayern forward Harry Kane described the atmosphere inside a stadium dominated by Boca fans as “hostile.”

Crowds have still come to Miami in a week when the Florida Panthers were

playing in the Stanley Cup Final. Boca and Real Madrid fans queued up for hours in sweltering heat after arriving early for games.

The biggest crowd of the opening week was 80,619 for PSG vs. Atletico Madrid in LA.

For context, that is just short of the 84,163 who watched the English FA Cup final at Wembley Stadium and well above the 64,327 attendance for the Champions League final - European club soccer’s biggest game.

While there was not a sellout game in the opening week, 10 of the first 24 matches have seen crowds in excess of 40,000, for an average of around 36,000.

The average for the Champions League last season was just under 46,000, according to soccer data website Transfermarkt, but like-for-like comparisons are difficult, given this is a totally new format bringing club teams from around the world to the U.S.

At the 2022 men’s World Cup in Qatar there was an average attendance of just under 50,000 per game for the opening week. Of the 20 games played over that period, the highest attendance was 88,103 and all but two of those games had crowds in excess of 40,000.

Focus on the Club World Cup has been intense for more than one reason.

There is still uncertainty over how much of an appetite there is among fans for another elite soccer tournament and it was unknown how many would be prepared to follow their team to the U.S. According to FIFA, the biggest take up of tickets from abroad was from Brazil, Argentina and Mexico.

Perhaps more significant is what this tournament says about the men’s World Cup, which is largely being staged in the U.S. next year. The Club World Cup could be seen as a gauge of how America’s interest in soccer has grown since last hosting the planet’s biggest sporting event in 1994.

In that sense, it’s not just about statistics, but optics as well. Which is why FIFA will hope to avoid a repeat of the scenes at Mamelodi Sundowns vs. Ulsan.

Curacao draws with Canada



Curacao’s Joshua Zimmerman (13) trips Canada’s Tani Oluwaseyi (12) during a CONCACAF Gold Cup soccer match in Houston, Texas. (AP)

Wright to miss rest of CONCACAF Gold Cup

HOUSTON, June 22, (AP): Jeremy Antonisse scored in stoppage time and Curacao tied Canada 1-1 on Saturday night to remain in contention to advance to the knockout stage of the Gold Cup.

Nathan Saliba opened the score in the ninth minute, and Antonisse leveled things in the 94th.

The 21-year-old Saliba, playing in his fifth international match, scored for the second game in a row.

Canada, which started the tournament with a 6-0 win over Honduras, has four points and leads Group B. Honduras is second with 3 points. Curacao is third with two points.

Curacao is second with two points. Honduras edged Salvador 2-0 in a late match, which has 1 point.

The Canadians will close the group stage facing El Salvador on Tuesday, also in Houston.

A win against the Salvadorians would secure first place in the Group B for the Reds and a match in the quarterfinals against the second-best squad from Group A, currently Costa Rica.

Canada is trying to capture its second Gol Cup title despite missing his star winger Alphonso Davies, who tore his right ACL during the CONCACAF Nations League third-place game against the U.S. on March 23.

Curacao could progress to the next round with a win over Honduras on Tuesday.

Canada pulled ahead after Saliba scored with a shot inside the box low



El Salvador’s Diego Flores (5) attempts to kick past Honduras’ Luis Santamaria (26) during a CONCACAF Gold Cup soccer match in Houston, Texas. (AP)

across to the far post.

The Caribbean team dominated the second half and appear to level things with a Jürgen Locadia goal in the 68th minute but after a VAR review it was invalidated for offside.

Antonisse scored the equalizer on a breakaway play.

Meanwhile, U.S. forward Haji Wright will miss the rest of the CONCACAF Gold Cup because of an injured left Achilles.

A 27-year-old from Los Angeles, Wright scored in the 84th minute of last weekend’s opening 5-0 win over Trinidad and Tobago, 11 minutes after entering. He did not play in Thursday’s 1-0 victory over Saudi Arabia and the U.S. Soccer Federation said Saturday he will return to

Coventry City for evaluation and treatment.

U.S. coach Mauricio Pochettino said Wright arrived from the League Championship season with the Achilles problem.

Wright cannot be replaced on the tournament roster. The U.S., which already has clinched a quarterfinals berth, plays Haiti on Sunday in the Americans’ group stage finale.

“The problem increased the pain,” Pochettino said.

It’s unclear whether midfielders Tyler Adams and Johnny Cardoso will be healthy enough to start Sunday. Adams (turf toe) and entered in 62nd minute against Saudi Arabia and Cardoso (illness) entered in the 89th.

Three days after Juventus players, including Americans Tim Weah and Weston McKennie, stood behind President Donald Trump during an Oval Office media briefing, Pochettino said in jest that he hopes the national team gets a White House invite.

“Very jealous because we didn’t receive an invitation,” Pochettino joked. “Maybe we will have the luck and they will invite, one day for sure.”

Juventus players stood behind Trump during a 16-minute briefing.

“It was all a surprise to me, honestly - they told us that we have to go and I had no choice but to go,” Weah was quoted as saying after a 5-0 victory over Al-Ain that night in the Club World Cup. “I was caught by surprise, honestly. It was a bit weird. When he started talking about the politics with Iran and everything, it’s kind of like, I just want to play football, man.”

Seated aside Pochettino, American defender Chris Richards was asked what he felt like having to answer questions about international events.

“I think what makes America beautiful is we can all have different opinions, but kind of strive for the same thing, which is freedom in the prosperity,” Richards said. “In this tough political time, there’s a lot of stuff going on in the Middle East and things like that, but I think one thing that we can do is kind of give hope to people. That’s all we can do at this point, and we’re not politicians for a reason.”

Lynx routs Sparks without Collier

Mercury sets franchise record for 3-pointers in game in win over Sky

CHICAGO, June 22, (AP): Sami Whitcomb hit five of the Mercury’s franchise-record 17 3-pointers and finished with 17 points, Kahleah Copper scored 16 and the Phoenix Mercury beat the Chicago Sky 107-86 on Saturday.

Kalani Brown hit a 3 - the second of the 6-foot-7 center’s career - with 25.6 seconds left to break the Mercury’s previous record of 16.

Six different Phoenix players hit at least two 3-pointers, tying the WNBA single-game record.

Angel Reese finished with nine points and a career-low two rebounds for the Sky.

Phoenix (11-4) set a season high for points in a game and has won five in row, including an 89-81 win over defending WNBA champion New York on Thursday, for the first time since the Mercury won 10 straight in 2021.

Satou Sabally scored 15 points for the Mercury and Alyssa Thomas had 11 points and eight assists. Brown and Kitija Laksa added 11 points apiece.

Chicago (3-9) has lost five of six. Kamilla Cardoso and Michaela Onyenwere led the Sky with 17 points apiece.

Phoenix made 35 of 68 shots from the field, 17 of 35 from 3-point range, 20 of 24 from the free-throw line and finished with 25 assists.

Kayla McBride scored 15 of her season-high 29 points in the fourth quarter, Courtney Williams added 18 points and the Minnesota Lynx beat the Los Angeles Sparks 82-66 for their third straight win.

Napheesa Collier did not play for the Lynx (12-1). The 2024 WNBA defensive player of the year, Collier left early in the third quarter of Minnesota’s 76-62 win over Las Vegas on Tuesday and did not return.

McBride made 9 of 13 from the field, 5 of 7 from 3-point range, and Williams finished with six assists and four steals. Maria Klundikova had 12 points, eight re-



Golden State Valkyries guards Carla Leite, right, and Veronica Burton, left, celebrate after a basket during the first quarter of a WNBA basketball game against the Indiana Fever during a WNBA basketball game in San Francisco. (AP)

bounds, three steals and two blocks for Minnesota.

Sarah Ashlee Barker hit a 3-pointer that gave the Sparks a 59-58 lead with 7:43 remaining in the game. Klundikova answered with a layup 24 seconds later, McBride added a 3-pointer and a three-point play and Williams made a pull-up jumper with 4:48 left that gave Minnesota a nine-point lead. Dearica Hamby made a layup to cut the deficit to seven before Alanna Smith and McBride hit 3s 31 seconds apart about a minute later.

Kelsey Plum scored 11 of her 15 points in the first half, including a layup with 0.2 second left in the second quarter that gave the Sparks a 35-34 lead at halftime. Hamby finished with 13 points and four steals and Azura Stevens had 11 points and nine rebounds.

Los Angeles (4-10) has lost 16 of its last 18 against the Lynx, who beat the Sparks 89-75 in Los Angeles on May 18 and 101-78 at home last Saturday.

Seattle tops struggling Royals

WASHINGTON, June 22, (AP): Emeri Adames scored two goals in the second half and the Seattle Reign beat the Utah Royals 4-1 in the National Women’s Soccer League.

It was the first multi-goal game of Adames’ career, and at 19 years and 79 days old, she became the second-youngest player to ever score two goals in an NWSL match.

Elsewhere in the NWSL on Saturday, Gotham FC beat Bay FC 2-1 at home, the North Carolina Courage won 2-1 at home against the Houston Dash, and the Portland Thorns edged the Chicago Stars 1-0 to stay undefeated at Providence Park.

At America First Field in Utah, the Reign (6-4-3) jumped out to an early 2-0 lead.

Ji So-Yun scored from 14 yards out after a headed pass from Maddie Dahlien in the sixth minute. Ji then returned the favor and played Dahlien through on goal for the Reign’s second goal in the 16th.

Bianca St-Georges scored for the Royals in the 31st as the Canadian forward tapped in from close range after Ally Sentnor’s strike rebounded off the post.

Ji got her second assist of the match when she slipped the ball to Adames in the 66th and the youngster found the corner with a swift left-footed shot from 12 yards to make it 3-1.

Adames converted a penalty kick in the 90th. She leads Seattle with four goals this season.

It was the first time the Reign scored four in a game since May 2023.

The Royals (11-10-2) extended their winless streak to eight and remain in last place in the NWSL standings as the league heads into a monthlong break.

Esther Gonzalez scored her 10th goal of the season and Gotham came from behind to defeat Bay. The Spaniard is the top scorer in the NWSL and has already surpassed her total of nine from the 2024 season.

Gotham (5-5-3) won its second home match of the season.

Penelope Hocking put Bay up 1-0 in the 11th minute. Hocking latched onto a looping pass from Hannah Bebar and poked the ball past Ann-Katrin Berger in the Gotham goal.

Gonzalez got Gotham’s equalizer in the 29th when she pounced on a loose pass in the box by Alyssa Malonson.

Rising star of Chinese volleyball finds inspiration in legendary Zhao

HONG KONG, June 22, (Xinhua): A heartfelt moment unfolded on June 18 during the FIVB Women’s Volleyball Nations League in Hong Kong when 17-year-old Wang Aoqian, affectionately known as “Little Zhao Ruirui,” met her idol, the legendary Zhao Ruirui.

After the Chinese team triumphed over the Czech Republic, Wang dashed to the sidelines, throwing herself into Zhao’s arms. Laughter mingled with tears as the two shared a heartfelt moment reminiscent of long-lost relatives reuniting after years apart.

Zhao later took to social media, sharing six photos of their embrace along with a touching message: “When little Aoqian ran into my arms, her voice quiv-

ering with tears, saying ‘I finally met you,’ I was nearly brought to tears myself. Zhang Na, sitting beside me, joked, ‘Little tadpole is looking for her mom!’” Zhao Ruirui and Zhang Na were teammates during the Chinese national team’s historic victories at the 2003 World Cup and the 2004 Athens Olympics. Their shared history adds weight to the significance of this new generation of players.

Three days later, Wang reflected on their meeting with lingering excitement. “Seeing Sister Ruirui made me incredibly happy. It felt like we’d met before, even though it was our first time in person.” Fans have drawn parallels between the two athletes, noting their striking resemblance despite a 26-year

age gap. Wang, who stands at 1.96 meters - just one centimeter shorter than Zhao - acknowledges their similarities but emphasizes that it’s not solely about appearances.

“What matters more is my potential and determination to bring more glory to the Chinese women’s volleyball team, just like Zhao Ruirui did.” Wang made headlines last year by helping the under-18 team clinch the Asian Championship title for the first time in 19 years, earning the accolade of Best Middle Blocker. This April, she became one of the youngest members of the national team, echoing Zhao Ruirui’s own journey, as both made their national debuts at the age of 17.

In her recent matches in Hong Kong, Zhao Ruirui has been a constant presence, sitting in the front row as a spectator but sometimes offering private coaching to Wang after each game.

“She tells me to think more while playing, to trust my judgment, and to take every opponent seriously,” Wang said. “Seeing her gives me a sense of security. She’s always teaching me and pointing out my issues, which I find incredibly helpful for my personal development.” When asked about the nickname “Little Zhao Ruirui,” Wang expressed gratitude, saying, “It’s a recognition of my abilities. Thank you, everyone. I will strive to follow in the footsteps of my predecessor.”



Bublik defeats Medvedev in Halle Open final

# Vondrousova beats Chinese qualifier Wang to win Berlin Open

BERLIN, June 22, (AP): Former Wimbledon champion Marketa Vondrousova put months of injuries behind her to beat Chinese qualifier Wang Xinyu 7-6 (10), 4-6, 6-2 and win the Berlin Open on Sunday.

For the 25-year-old Vondrousova, who had dropped to 164 in the rankings



Kazakhstan's Alexander Bublik returns the ball to Russia's Daniil Medvedev during their men's single final of the Halle tennis tournament, Germany. (AP)

after undergoing surgery on her left shoulder, it's her first title in her first final since winning Wimbledon in 2023.

"We were all working really hard to get me back and I felt like, you know, we came here to try to win the first match and now this is happening. So I'm just very grateful to be standing here and very grateful for you guys," Vondrousova told her team.

Vondrousova defeated top-ranked Aryna Sabalenka 6-2, 6-4 in the semi-finals to reach the showdown with Wang, who was playing her seventh match in nine days after coming through the qualifiers.

The 23-year-old Wang defeated former champion Liudmila Samsonova in the semifinals to reach her first final. Earlier, she ousted Daria Kasatkina, Coco Gauff and Paula Badosa after qualifying.

"It's been an unbelievable week for us. And I just, we keep on building and looking forward for the next one," said Wang, who only had 10 wins this year before appearing at the grass-court tournament.

Alexander Bublik defeated Daniil Medvedev 6-3, 7-6 (4) on Sunday to win the Halle Open for the second time.

The Kazakhstani player, who also won the grass-court tournament in 2023, is just the third player to claim the title more than once after three-time winner Yevgeny Kafelnikov and 10-time champion Roger Federer.

It was his first win in seven matches with Medvedev. Bublik defeated top-ranked Jannik Sinner in the second round.



Winner Czech Republic's Marketa Vondrousova poses with the trophy after winning the singles final at the Grass Court Championships, in Berlin. (AP)

# Asian Championship 'experience' key for Kuwait squash rising stars



The Kuwait squash team.

KUNA photo

## Team wraps up its participation

**SARAWAK, Malaysia, June 22:** Kuwait team wrapped up its participation in the 23rd Asian Men's Squash Championship, which began last Monday in Sarawak, Malaysia.

The team was led by Adel Al-Gharib, member of the Kuwait Squash Federation's Board of Directors, and included players Athbi Al-Jamaan, Abdulrahman Al-Maghribi, Jassim Al-Gharib, and Khaled Al-Fawzan.

Commenting on the competition, Al-Gharib said, "The participation of 86 players from 16 Asian countries highlights the tournament's

high caliber and fierce competitiveness, especially with many players ranked among the continent's elite." He emphasized that Kuwait's participation with young players under the age of 19 was a strategic move to build for the future.

Al-Gharib noted that upon returning to Kuwait, the players will follow a structured training program designed to prepare them for upcoming continental events. This initiative is part of the Federation's long-term strategy to develop a golden generation capable of elevating Kuwait's standing in international squash.

He also highlighted the professionalism of the participating athletes, pointing out that many represent federations operating under

comprehensive professional systems and are ranked globally, not just regionally. "I am proud of our players," he added. "Even if the results don't reflect our aspirations, this is just the beginning of a promising journey. We believe in the potential of our young athletes."

Al-Gharib extended his gratitude to the Public Authority for Sports and the Federation for their continued support. He also congratulated the Qatari Squash Federation on its achievements.

In his role as Vice President of the Asian Squash Federation, Al-Gharib had the honor of presenting an award to Qatari player Abdulla Al-Tamimi for securing second place in the championship.

## 'Syd' was an inspirational figure'

# England's 1st British-born Black cricketer dies at 61

GLOUCESTER, England, June 22, (AP): David 'Syd' Lawrence, the first British-born Black cricketer to play for England, has died. He was 61.

Lawrence's family made the announcement on Sunday in a statement through Gloucestershire, where Lawrence was the club president.

He announced a year ago he had motor neurone disease.

"It is with great sadness that we announce the passing of Dave Lawrence MBE following his brave battle with motor neurone disease," the family said. "'Syd' was an inspirational figure on and off the cricket field and no more so than to his family who were with him when he passed."

"A proud Gloucestershire man, Syd took on every challenge with everything he could and his final contest with MND was no different. His willingness to encourage and think of others right up to the end was typical of the man he was."

He played five tests for England from 1988-92, taking 18 wickets. His international career prematurely ended at 28 when he broke his knee cap after falling awkwardly when running in to bowl against New Zealand on the final



In this file photo, David 'Syd' Lawrence of Gloucestershire County Cricket Team, the first British-born black cricketer to play for England, smiles on June 2, 1998. Lawrence has died at the age of 61. (AP)

day of a test in Wellington.

A strapping fast bowler who was renowned for being one of the quickest on the English county circuit, Lawrence was beginning to establish himself in tests and a five-for against the West Indies in 1991 helped England seal a series-levelling win at the Oval, with Viv Richards among

his haul.

Lawrence also played a sole one-day international against the West Indies at Lord's in 1991, taking 4-67.

For Gloucestershire, he grabbed 625 wickets in 280 matches.

The England and India teams gave Lawrence a moment's silence on Sunday in Leeds before the third day's play in the first test.

Lawrence became a competitive bodybuilder following his retirement and he was also a nightclub owner in Bristol.

After he detailed his experiences of racism during his playing career, Gloucestershire issued an unreserved apology in September 2021, and six months later he became the county's first Black president.

Only last week, Lawrence received an MBE in King Charles III's birthday honors for outstanding services to cricket.

At the time, he said, "As a proud Gloucester man who achieved his dream to play for England on the cricket field, it means a great deal to me and to my family who have supported me with all their love during some difficult times. I have always put my heart and soul into any challenge I have faced and

that is how I have approached things since my diagnosis with motor neurone disease."

He was fundraising to fight MND as recently as Friday, when Gloucestershire honored him during a Twenty20 game.

Lawrence was also recently named an honorary life vice president of the England and Wales Cricket Board, and chair Richard Thompson paid tribute.

"David 'Syd' Lawrence was a true trailblazer of English cricket and a man of immense courage, character, and compassion," Thompson said on Sunday.

"His impact on the game extended far beyond the boundary ropes. As a fast bowler, he thrilled crowds with his pace and passion. As a leader and advocate, he broke barriers and inspired change, becoming a powerful voice for inclusion and representation in our sport."

"Even in the face of his illness, David showed extraordinary strength and dignity, continuing to uplift others with his resilience and spirit. He leaves behind a legacy that will endure in the hearts of all who love cricket. Our thoughts are with his family, friends, and the entire cricketing community at this time."

## Mirandes beaten on aggregate

# Santi Cazorla leads Oviedo back to top flight in Spain

MADRID, June 22, (AP): With veteran **Santi Cazorla** leading the way 20 years after he left the club, Oviedo made it back to the first division of the Spanish league.

The club owned by Mexico's Grupo Pachuca since 2022 secured its return to the top flight with a 3-2 aggregate victory over Mirandes in the final of the promotion playoffs.

After a 1-0 first-leg loss, it won 3-1 in extra time with Cazorla scoring one of the goals.

Cazorla, the former Spain and Arsenal playmaker, converted a 39th-minute penalty for Oviedo, which sealed its promotion for the first time since the 2000-01 season thanks to Francisco Portillo's goal in extra time after erasing the first-leg deficit with a 2-1 win in regulation.

Oviedo, coached by former Serbian player Veljko Paunovic since March, had been in the second division since 2015-16, and spent a few seasons in the third tier before that.



Cazorla

"At 40 years old I think this is the greatest thing I've ever experienced," Cazorla said. "I've been lucky enough to experience great things with Spain and with the clubs that I've been with, winning many trophies, but nothing compares to this."

Oviedo, based in northwestern Spain, is Cazorla's boyhood club. He rejoined Oviedo in 2023 after playing in Qatar.

"I have a special feeling for this club," Cazorla said. "I played in this youth academy when I was 9 years old. I grew up here, I have my friends, my family. I'll be an Oviedo fan all my life. This makes it very special."

Cazorla, who dealt with serious injuries throughout his career, also thrived with Villarreal in Spain. He was a major contributor for Arsenal under Arsene Wenger from 2012-18.

Grupo Pachuca recently made headlines as two of its clubs in Mexico, Leon and Pachuca, qualified for the Club World Cup but only Pachuca was allowed to compete because of regulations around multi-club ownership.

Mirandes, based in northern Spain, was trying to make it to the first division for the first time.

## Best of the Rest

**Liberty center Jones out 4-6 weeks:** Liberty center Jonquel Jones will be out four to six week after spraining her right ankle, the team announced Saturday.

Jones sprained her ankle during the second quarter of an 89-81 loss to the Phoenix Mercury on Thursday night.

"After further imaging and evaluation, Jonquel avoided long-term injury, and she is projected to return to game action in approximately four-to-six weeks," the team said in a statement.

Jones had to be helped off the court after injuring the same ankle on June 5 against Washington. She missed two games after that injury.

□ □ □

**Artistic swimming event concludes:** The 2025 Artistic Swimming Elite Extraganza & Macao Open Competition came to a close on Sunday at Macao's Olympic Sports Center.

The Sunday event featured 12 performances by China's National Artistic Swimming Team, alongside teams from Beijing and Guangdong.

Olympic champions Wang Liuyi and Wang Qianyi, the twins who claimed gold in the duet event at the 2024 Paris Olympics, shared memories of competing in similar open events when they were at the beginning of their professional careers.

Following the performance, a training session brought together athletes and coaches from the three teams for in-depth exchanges with Open participants on techniques, performance styles and training methods. (Xinhua)

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Mamelodi Sundowns' Keanu Cupido, left, and Borussia Dortmund's Serhou Guirassy (9) battle for the ball during the Club World Cup Group F soccer match between Mamelodi Sundowns and Borussia Dortmund in Cincinnati. (AP)

# Sports

## Last-gasp Inter ends Urawa Club World Cup hopes

Dortmund, Fluminense hit four

NEW YORK, June 22, (Xinhua): Fluminense, Inter Milan, and Borussia Dortmund all recorded crucial wins at the FIFA Club World Cup, while River Plate was held to a goalless draw by Monterrey.

At the MetLife Stadium in New Jersey, Brazil's Fluminense recovered from 2-1 down to beat South Korean side Ulsan 4-2.

Colombian midfielder Jhon Arias opened the scoring for Fluminense with a fizzing 25-yard free-kick, but Lee Jin-hyun equalized from a tight angle after Um Won-sang's cross.

Lee returned the favor as his pass from the left wing allowed Um to score with a diving header just before halftime.

Gustavo Nunato levelled with a low finish after intercepting Milosz Trojak's clearance, and Juan Pablo Freytes made it 3-2 by slotting home from the edge of the six-yard box.

Keno put the result beyond doubt with a looping stoppage-time header following Arias' cross.

Fluminense is now top of Group F with four points, ahead of Borussia Dortmund on goal difference. Ulsan is last and has no chance of progressing.

"We lost our focus at the end of the first half and they made us pay," Fluminense manager Renato Gauchito told reporters. "We came back with a different attitude in the second half and the win gives us peace of mind. Tomorrow we'll start thinking about the last match [against Mamelodi Sundowns], which we need to win."

In Seattle, Lautaro Martinez and



Inter Milan's Nicola Zalewski, left, attempts a shot on goal as Urawa Red Diamonds' Samuel Gustafson tries to block during the Club World Cup Group E soccer match between Inter Milan and Urawa Red Diamonds in Seattle. (AP)

Valentin Carboni scored for Inter Milan as the Italian side rallied late to overcome Japan's Urawa Red Diamonds 2-1.

Ryoma Watanabe gave the J1

League outfit an early lead by sweeping home from 10 yards after Takuro Kaneko's clever run and cross from the right flank.

It took until the 78th minute for In-

ter to equalize as Martinez struck with an acrobatic volley following Nicolò Barella's corner.

The Serie A club suddenly had the momentum, and Carboni gave his side

the lead in the 92nd minute by pouncing on a loose ball and drilling a low effort past Shusaku Nishikawa.

"The result is almost secondary," Carboni said. "It was difficult out

there. They defended in a very compact fashion, and we had few opportunities. But we have the three points, and it is important to move on."

The victory leaves Inter second in Group E with four points while Urawa is last and cannot qualify for the knockout stage.

In Cincinnati, Germany's Borussia Dortmund stayed in contention for a place in the last 16 with a 4-3 win over South African side Mamelodi Sundowns.

Lucas Ribeiro, Iqraam Rayners and Lebo Mothiba were on target for the Pretoria-based side. At the same time, Felix Nmecha, Serhou Guirassy, and Jobe Bellingham scored for the Bundesliga outfit, which also benefited from a Khuliso Mudau own goal.

Borussia Dortmund is now second in Group F with four points, one ahead of third-placed Mamelodi.

"I was expecting more, to be honest," Borussia Dortmund boss Niko Kovac said. "We gave the ball away too easily and played too slowly. On the positive side, we scored four goals. We're satisfied with the result given the difficult conditions. As a top team, you have to aim to score plenty of goals, but you also can't afford to concede so many. That annoys me, but I try to stay pragmatic."

In Saturday's late match, Argentina's River Plate drew 0-0 with Mexican side Monterrey at the Rose Bowl in Pasadena.

River Plate looked more likely to score but could not find a way past Monterrey's Argentine goalkeeper Esteban Andrada, who made six saves.

The Buenos Aires outfit finished the match with 10 men after Colombian midfielder Kevin Castano was sent off for a second bookable offense.

River remains top of Group E with four points, ahead of Inter Milan on goal difference, while Monterrey is third, two points further back.

## Double podium for Kuwait, Al-Ajmi wins gold



Gulf Youth archery champions in Doha.

KUNA photo

DOHA, June 22, (KUNA): Kuwaiti shooter Hussein Al-Ajmi claimed first place in the third Gulf Traditional Archery Championship, which concluded in the Qatari capital. Fellow Kuwaiti shooter Issa Al-Kandari also secured a podium finish, taking third place in the same event. The championship, held at the Simaisma and Al-Dha'ayen Youth Centers, featured 60 participants from Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries and was one of the main sporting events of Gulf Youth Day 2025.

Expressing his joy, Al-Ajmi said he was honored to achieve first place in a competition that reflects the heritage and values of Gulf society. He stressed the importance of participating in such regional championships, which help build competitive spirit, foster athletic development, and provide valuable experience for upcoming tournaments.

Al-Ajmi also extended his sincere appreciation to the State of Qatar for its warm hospitality and successful organization of the championship.

## No middlemen

## Scout platform opens new path for Arab athletes to reach clubs

KUWAIT CITY, June 22: Former Al-Jahra Club Board Member Tawari Madloul has announced the launch of Kashaf (Scout), a digital platform designed to streamline the discovery and development of sports talent in Kuwait and the wider Arab world.

Madloul described Kashaf as a "non-profit initiative" created to bridge the gap between talented athletes and sports clubs or institutions seeking to nurture and invest in future stars. "The goal of the platform is to make it easier for clubs to access emerging talents, and for talented players to present their skills in an organized and professional manner," he said.

Each player registered on the platform will have a dedicated profile page, showcasing their abilities along with relevant statistics, videos, and background information—essential tools to prepare them for potential trials or club contracts.

Madloul emphasized that Kashaf eliminates the need for intermediaries and commission-based agents. "Clubs can browse talents directly and select players that match their needs without any extra cost or complications," he explained. "This approach not only



Tawari Madloul

saves time and effort but also promotes transparency and accessibility in talent scouting."

He added that Kashaf is a forward-thinking step toward building a stronger sports infrastructure in the region. "Our vision is to support the sports movement across the Arab world by making talent identification simple,

digital, and efficient."

Concluding his statement, Madloul invited sports clubs, institutions, and aspiring athletes to explore the Kashaf platform and take advantage of its features. "We are proud of this innovation and confident it will play a vital role in developing sports talent across our region."

## 'Football doesn't belong exclusively to Europe'

## Bayern officials back expanded FIFA Club World Cup amid criticism

BERLIN, June 22, (Xinhua): German football legend and Bayern Munich board member Karl-Heinz Rummenigge has voiced strong support for the newly expanded 32-team FIFA Club World Cup, calling it a necessary evolution despite skepticism surrounding the tournament's sporting value.

The 69-year-old former striker and European champion told Welt am Sonntag that the growth of the tournament was "inevitable" and praised FIFA president Gianni Infantino for "pushing it through."

"As a player, I would be happy to experience something new," said Rummenigge, who won the European Cup twice with Bayern Munich.

"The tournament gains momentum when it reaches the knockout stage - that's always the case with major competitions." Rummenigge also drew parallels with the recent revamp of the UEFA Champions League group stage, which had faced initial skepticism.

"There was unprecedented excitement around the final matchdays," he said, suggesting similar enthusiasm could develop for the Club World Cup.

Current Bayern coach Vincent Kompany echoed the sentiment after his side's 2-1 win over Boca Juniors. "If you look past the revenue and consider the side benefits, this format is extremely interesting," said the 39-year-old Belgian.

"We've opened a lot in football, but this goes beyond. New horizons open." Kompany praised the intensity of the clash with the Ar-



Bayern Munich's Harry Kane, right, attempts a shot on goal challenged by Boca Juniors' Lautaro Di Lollo during the Club World Cup Group C soccer match between Bayern Munich and Boca Juniors in Miami Gardens, Fla. (AP)

gentinian outfit and noted the unique challenge for European teams playing against South American opposition. "The atmosphere against Boca

Juniors was great," he said.

"It's a valuable experience for the players." While much of the German media remains critical - particularly over reports of low attendance - sports magazine Kicker offered a more favorable view.

In a recent commentary, the publication described the tournament as "a unique chance for smaller clubs from all continents to face elite teams," and emphasized the value of international exchange and experience.

Hans-Joachim Watzke, vice president of the German Football Association and former Borussia Dortmund CEO, also welcomed the expanded format.

"Football doesn't belong exclusively to Europe," Watzke told Kicker. "There's immense demand in Africa, South America and Asia to play against clubs like Real Madrid and Bayern." Watzke called the tournament "a football highlight every four years" and argued that it fills a longstanding gap in the global game. "Before this expansion, the statistics were unbalanced," he said. "There was no true club-level equivalent to the World Cup for national teams." He added that the new format elevates the tournament's quality and global relevance. "This initiative from FIFA opens doors for higher-level international club competition," Watzke said.

The 2025 edition marks the first time the Club World Cup is held in its new expanded format, with teams from all six continental confederations competing across a month-long tournament in the United States.