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HH Amir, Iraqi leader discuss regional issues

KUWAIT CITY, June 26, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and Iraqi President Abdul Latif Rashid discussed via phone on Thursday ties and ways to develop them in all aspects as well as the recent important happenings in the region and the world.

His Highness the Amir and President Rashid, during the call, exchanged congratulations on the advent of the new Islamic Year, expressing mutual wishes of welfare and prosperity for Kuwait and Iraq.

Kuwait arrests 239 in residency, labor blitz

Interior Ministry warns violators, vows more raids

KUWAIT CITY, June 26, (KUNA): Some 239 violators of residency visas and labor permits were apprehended Wednesday during a nationwide security campaign, said the Interior Ministry on Thursday.

A statement by the Interior Ministry revealed that the campaign

aimed at ridding society from such violators, affirming that it was carried out according to the law and regulations set by the state.

Legal action is now undertaken against violators who would not face due process, the statement asserted, adding that Interior Ministry teams would continue to crackdown on violators.



A woman feeds birds while strolling along a windy, sun-drenched beach in Kuwait on a hot Thursday. Inset: A black-headed gull plunges into the water, merging with its flock in a swift, fluid motion. Photos by Rezk Tawfiq

Kuwait set for 49°C weekend with dust, heat, choppy seas

KUWAIT CITY, June 26, (KUNA): The Meteorological Department forecasts that the country will be affected by the extension of India's seasonal depression, bringing a hot and dry air mass with light to moderate northwesterly winds. These winds, occasionally active and dusty especially in open areas, are expected to cause high sea waves at times, resulting in very hot daytime temperatures and hot nights over the weekend.

Director Dhirar Al-Ali told the Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) that Friday's forecast calls for very hot weather with northwesterly to variable winds blowing lightly to moderately at 10 to 40 km/h, occasionally active. Maximum temperatures will again range from 46 to 48 degrees Celsius, with sea waves between 2 and 5 feet.

Friday evening will be hot, with light to moderate northwesterly winds at 12 to 38 km/h. Minimum temperatures are expected between 30 and 32 degrees Celsius, and sea waves will remain between 2 and 5 feet.

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Gulf states target drug networks with tough new strategy

GCC vows united front against drug threat

RIYADH, June 26, (KUNA): Secretary General of GCC Jassem Al-Budaiwi affirmed on Thursday that the Gulf states prioritize combating drugs, stemming from their commitment to protecting Gulf societies and enhancing the security and safety of the region's citizens from this dangerous scourge.

This came during the celebration of the International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking and the Gulf Anti-Drug Week, which was held at the General Secretariat headquarters in Riyadh, and attended by a number of officials from the Ministries of Interior and relevant authorities in the GCC countries.

In his speech, the Secretary General said that this occasion embodies the commitment of the GCC member states to continue collective and joint Gulf action to protect "our societies

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Group photo during the celebration of the International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking and the Gulf Anti-Drug Week held in Riyadh. KUNA photo

Pharmacists to take bigger role in Kuwait's healthcare shift

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

KUWAIT CITY, June 26: Kuwait Pharmaceutical Association President Dr. Ahmed Taqi has called for the expansion of pharmaceutical services in the country to include clinical pharmacy, supply, storage and drug inspection; aside from dispensing medicines.

In an exclusive interview with the newspaper, Taqi revealed that work is underway to launch a pharmacy consultation room service in hospitals to relieve pressure on doctors assigned in clinics. He explained this will involve pharmacists reviewing simple medical cases and referring other cases to specialists.

He also disclosed that a strategic study is being conducted on the establishment of a public-private partnership for dispensing prescriptions to patients in hospitals and public clinics through private pharmacies. He believes this will enhance competitiveness among private pharmacies and

contribute to alleviating the burden on public pharmacies, in addition to ensuring the provision of medicines and reducing prices in private pharmacies.

He confirmed as well the finalization of a draft of the new Pharmacy Practice Law to guarantee the expansion of pharmaceutical services and broader powers for pharmacists in the country. He said this law is a top priority for the association in the coming period; indicating that the final touches are being put on the draft law, which he expects to be implemented by the end of this year.

He said the existing law was passed in 1996 -- about 30 years ago -- when the number of pharmacist graduates did not exceed 80, and there were no more than 100 private pharmacies. "Now, the number of pharmacists exceeds 2,200 and there are about 600 private pharmacies. This necessitates amending the law and adding new articles to expand pharmaceutical services, as the number of articles in the previous law did not exceed 16," he



Kuwait Pharmaceutical Association President Dr. Ahmed Taqi outlines upcoming plans during an interview with Al-Seyassah.

clarified. He stressed the importance of involving private pharmacies in the country's health system, revealing

that a plan is being studied to dispense government prescriptions in private pharmacies, which could contribute to reducing the burden on patients and public pharmacies as well. He pointed out that this experiment was implemented in neighboring countries years ago, and its implementation in Kuwait is currently being studied. "However, it requires a lot of time and effort to implement a unified electronic prescription system for dispensing medicines, electronically link private and government pharmacies, and other steps that precede the implementation of the experiment.

Following is an excerpt of the interview:

Question: First, tell us about the most important steps you took during your first six months as president of the association.

Answer: After forming the association's Board of Directors at the end of December, we followed a clear strategy to strengthen the relationship of

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8 KOC eyes green economy with net-zero goal by 2050



11 Antonella Salvucci ... weaving dreams between continents and cameras

NewsWatch

RIYADH: Saudi Foreign Minister **Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al-Saud** discussed on Thursday ways to support **Syria** with US envoy to Syria **Tom Barrack**.

A statement by the Foreign Ministry said during his reception of Barrack, Prince Faisal touched on ways to bolster security and stability in Syria, as well as means to boost the recovery of the Syrian economy. (KUNA)

TEHRAN: Iran's Supreme Leader, **Ali Khamenei**, claimed on Thursday that his country had "defeated" both the **United States** and the Israeli occupation under Iranian strikes.

In a televised speech, Khamenei said that the Israeli occupation was nearly crushed under the Iranian military strikes despite all its noise and claims, congratulating Iranian people on the defeat of the occupation forces and the US.

"The US regime entered the war directly because it felt that if it didn't, the Zionist regime would be completely destroyed. It entered the war in an effort to save that regime but achieved nothing," Khamenei added. (KUNA)

TEHRAN: Iran's Guardian Council approved a parliamentary bill on Thursday obligating the Iranian government to suspend cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

Guardian Council spokesperson **Hadi Tahan** told the official Iranian news agency (IRNA) that Tehran is suspending cooperation with the agency until the safety of its nuclear facilities and nuclear scientists is guaranteed.

The Iranian Parliament had approved the bill on Wednesday obligating the government to suspend cooperation with the IAEA. (KUNA)

Prayer Timings			
Fajr	03:15	Asr	15:25
Sunrise ..	04:50	Maghrib ..	18:51
Zohr	11:50	Isha	20:24

Local

Weather			
Expected weather for next 24 hrs:			
By Day: Very hot with light to moderate freshening at times northwesterly wind to light variable wind, with speeds of 10-40 km/h.			
By Night:	Hot to rather hot with light to moderate northwesterly wind, with speeds of 12-38 km/h.		
Station	Max Exp	Min Rec	
Kuwait City	47	35	
Kuwait Airport	47	30	

Abdaly	47	29
Jahra	48	31
Salmiyah	42	34
Ahmadi	42	29
Nuwaisib	48	32
Wafra	45	30
Salmiyah	47	26
Managish	48	28



HH the Amir



HH the Crown Prince



HH the Prime Minister

Amir felicitates Mozambique leader on Independence Day

KUWAIT CITY, June 26, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent on Thursday a cable of congratulations to the President of Mozambique, Daniel Chapo, on his country's Independence Day.

His Highness the Amir wished the President good health and his country more progress and prosperity.

Crown Prince

His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah sent on Thursday a cable of con-

gratulations to the President of Mozambique, Daniel Chapo, on his country's Independence Day.

His Highness the Crown Prince wished the President good health and his country more progress and prosperity.

Prime Minister

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah sent on Thursday a cable of congratulations to the President of Mozambique, Daniel Chapo, on his country's Independence Day.

Other Voices

When silence becomes a strategic risk

By Abdulaziz Mohammed Al-Anjeri

In the Middle East's most volatile corner, the question is no longer if conflict erupts — but when, and how close to home it lands.

The recent exchange of strikes between Iran and Israel wasn't merely symbolic. While not a full-scale war, it revealed new thresholds of risk: drones crossing multiple borders unchallenged, missiles penetrating Israeli defenses, and a precision strike deep inside Iran.

These developments carried a clear message: geography is no longer a shield, and silence is no longer a strategy.

For small Gulf states like Kuwait, staying outside the battlefield today offers no guarantee of safety tomorrow.

As tensions escalated, the need for a

clear national voice — official or symbolic — became urgent. Yet Kuwait remained largely silent.

No statements. No reassurance. No framing of the moment.

Citizens were left adrift in rumors and speculation, with neither institutional guidance nor independent figures stepping in.

This absence is striking. Kuwait once had a reputation for thoughtful voices — retired diplomats, respected academics, and calm, articulate commentators who spoke with authority and perspective. These individuals once projected a national image rooted in prudence and credibility.

But those voices have faded, whether by personal choice, quiet marginalization, or the sense that Kuwait's public space no longer welcomes reasoned expression.

In their place, new voices have risen — more visible, but not necessarily more informed.

Commentary has grown louder, not wiser. The airwaves are filled with reaction

rather than reflection.

As a result, media appearances today often misrepresent Kuwait more than they reflect it.

This is the danger Kuwait now faces: not just external threats, but internal misrepresentation.

When official silence prevails — and the few who speak do so poorly — the damage is twofold.

Silence creates a vacuum. Bad speech fills it.

This is not merely a communications gap. In a region where messaging is a form of strategy, the failure to articulate a coherent national voice carries real risks.

Kuwait has long been admired for its tradition of diplomacy, humanitarian outreach, and intellectual engagement. These assets must not be abandoned at a time when regional clarity is in short supply and global attention is fleeting.

Today, Kuwait must learn that speaking wisely is no longer optional — and that silence may no longer be safe.



Al-Anjeri

Type 3 asphalt to improve quality of roads: minister

Hi-tech instruments guarantee quick work: Al-Mashaan

By Mohammad Ghanem

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 26: Minister of Public Works Dr. Noura Al-Mashaan confirmed that the field teams in her ministry are continuing their work on Khalaf Al-Ahmar Road in Sulaibikhat, as part of efforts to develop infrastructure and improve the efficiency of the road network throughout the country.

In a press statement Thursday, Al-Mashaan disclosed that the engineers are supervising the implementation of the project in accordance with the approved technical specifications; using advanced equipment and machinery to ensure the good quality of imple-



Asphalt is laid on Khalaf Al-Ahmar Road in Sulaibikhat.

mentation and safe operation.

She said the technical teams reported that work is proceeding as per the schedule, taking into account the application of all safety and security standards.

She added that the maintenance and development projects are included in the program of the ministry for the maintenance and repair of internal roads in order to improve the quality of life in residential ar-

reas, reduce road problems, and respond to the comments of the public; in cooperation with the relevant regulatory authorities.

She affirmed the commitment of her ministry to provide a safe and advanced road environment that contributes to smooth traffic flow and reduces risks and accidents, while calling on residents in the area to cooperate and understand the temporary diversion procedures until the project is completed.

On the other hand, Deputy Engineer for Road Maintenance Contract No. 13 in Jahra Governorate Eng. Mamdouh Al-Enezi revealed that "we are on Khalaf Al-Ahmar Road to follow up the progress of the work and look into the latest developments in the implementation of the project, which is included in the new contracts for radical road maintenance. The ongoing work includes laying Type 3 asphalt in accordance with the plan to improve the quality and enhance the efficiency of roads in the country."

'Private sector still on anvil'

'Five new projects aim to develop welfare services'

By Fares Ghaleb

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 26: Minister of Social, Family and Childhood Affairs Dr. Amthal Al-Huwailah has announced five qualitative social care projects that the ministry intends to launch in the second half of this year.

These projects are as follows:

- Caring for the golden generation (the elderly),
- Empowering youths and developing their skills,
- Raising national awareness to reduce delinquency,
- Creating a safe space for wards at the children's home,
- Sports and mental health facilities for residents of welfare homes

In a statement to the newspaper, Al-Huwailah revealed that the series of projects launched by the Social Care Sector aims to develop welfare services and enhance the efficiency of preventive and rehabilitation programs, in line with the vision of the ministry to achieve quality social life for beneficiary groups.



Dr Al-Huwailah

She pointed out that these projects are part of an ambitious strategic plan to modernize services and attain empowerment and comprehensive care for all beneficiary groups, in line with the aspiration of the State to advance social work.

On the plan for new partnerships with the private sector or civil society, she confirmed that there is a comprehensive plan to strengthen partnerships with the private sector and civil society institutions based on the belief in the importance of community integration in developing welfare services and achieving quality of life for the groups benefiting from the services of the sector. She stated that the sector has already begun activating partnerships with multiple entities as follows:

- Cooperation protocol with Zakat House to support the needs of residents and provide living and humanitarian care
- Protocol with the National Guard
- Cooperation with the Secretariat General of Endowments
- Kayan Family Care Society
- Kuwait Charitable Society for the Care and Rehabilitation of the Elderly

She emphasized that the ministry is keen on expanding partnerships in the coming period to include new areas and build an integrated care system based on joint work and social sustainability.

Minor move leads to discovery of 28 carrying fake nationality

KUWAIT CITY, June 26: A request to renew a Kuwaiti passport in 2025 led to the exposure of a long-standing forgery case involving a Gulf national previously convicted in a drug case, reports Al-Rai daily.

The case, which has been dormant since 2008, revealed a forged Kuwaiti nationality and implicated 28 individuals.

Sources disclosed that the case first surfaced in 2008 when Kuwaiti Interpol received a formal request from a Gulf counterpart regarding a Gulf national sentenced to 15 years in prison for drug-related offenses. The individual was suspected of having fraudulently obtained Kuwaiti citizenship.

Following the request, Kuwaiti authorities obtained the suspect's fingerprints from the Gulf state and compared them with those in the Kuwaiti civil records. The results con-

firmed that both identification documents -- the Gulf and Kuwaiti passports -- belonged to the same person, affirming the forgery.

Investigations revealed that the case was initially referred to the Nationality Investigations Department through the Paternity Suits Section, after one of the individual's alleged siblings filed a paternity suit in 2008. However, the case remained unresolved due to incomplete legal procedures.

The case resurfaced in 2025 when the son of the accused submitted a request to renew his Kuwaiti passport. Upon review, inconsistencies between the Kuwaiti and Gulf identities triggered a deeper investigation. Authorities discovered that the names, family connections, and documentation between the two identities were entirely mismatched.

Other Voices

Dennis Ross' dangerous assistants are among us!

By Ahmad alsarraf

American Jewish politician Dennis Ross is considered one of the most prominent diplomats specializing in Middle East peace process. Ross played a crucial role in shaping the American role in the peace process, particularly during the administrations of Presidents George H.W. Bush and Bill Clinton. He worked closely with Secretaries of State James Baker, Warren Christopher and Madeleine Albright.

Ross was a mediator in important agreements, such as the 1995 Oslo II Accord, the 1997 Hebron Agreement, and the Jordan-Israel Peace Treaty.

Ross is an advisor at The Washington Institute for Near East Policy and a Ziegler Fellow. He previously held senior positions in the National Security Council and the US State Department.

In Israeli and American circles, Ross is regarded as one of the most influential figures in the peace process; working silently behind the scenes to promote normalization



alsarraf

and possibly recruit supporters and agents to promote his ideas, which tend toward a Zionist perspective.

Ross already succeeded in building a broad network of relationships with political and media figures in the Middle East.

He organized and participated in numerous conferences in Europe that brought together Arab and Gulf supporters to present his vision for normalization of ties with Israel which, some critics argue, ignores Palestinian rights or calls for accepting that justice is with the strong; whether this is consistent with logic and history or not.

Jordanian colleague Ahmed Atawneh wrote: "Americans, whether in official positions or in research and academic institutions, introduce themselves as exceptional experts and guardians capable of formulating the most appropriate plans, formulas and approaches to international crises. On behalf of the people, they decide what is best for them and determine what — from the American perspective — will guarantee them a secure and prosperous future. Those who do not respond to this ready-made American prescription will face dire consequences."

Ross handles the Palestinian crisis and the current Gaza war with the same ap-

proach; offering endless political proposals and visions for the post-war period, as demonstrated in his article entitled, "Israel Needs a New Strategy," published in The Independent Arabia on March 16, 2024.

Given his extensive experience with the Palestinian issue, Ross suggested that the first step in the strategy should be the establishment of a mechanism to address the humanitarian situation; led by the United States and involving Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Qatar.

He cited Saudi Arabia's expertise in crowd management, and the ability of the UAE and Qatar to finance prefabricated housing.

It is worth noting that many of those who met Ross, collaborated with him or participated in conferences he attended played a broad local and regional role in promoting his vision for peace, which his critics consider biased toward the Israeli vision and seeking to impose solutions that do not meet the aspirations of the Palestinian people.

It is not difficult to identify his 'agents' living among us.



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Ahmadi Governorate photo of Ahmadi Governor Sheikh Hamoud Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah with the committee members.

Ahmadi Gov chairs 1st meeting of 'sustainable greening' panel

KUWAIT CITY, June 26: Ahmadi Governor Sheikh Hamoud Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah held the first meeting of the Sustainable Greening Committee in Residential Areas recently.

According to a press release issued by Ahmadi Governorate, the committee was formed pursuant to Ministerial Resolution No. 58/2025, issued by the Minister of Electricity, Water, and Renewable Energy.

The committee is chaired by the Ahmadi Governor and includes the following members:

- Dr. Muhammad Dawood Al-Ahmad, Vice Chairman
- Acting Director General of Kuwait Municipality Eng. Manal Muhammad Al-As-

four

- Acting Director General of the Public Authority for Agriculture Affairs and Fish Resources (PAAAFR) Eng. Salem Hai Al-Hai
- Acting Undersecretary of the Ministry of Social Affairs Dr. Khaled Al-Ajmi
- Assistant Professor in the Department of Architecture at Kuwait University Dr. Saud Riyadh Al-Khaled
- Representative of the Fatwa and Legislation Department Counselor Fahd Ismail Al-Fahad
- Board Member of PAAAFR Alaa Hamad Al-Roumi
- Engineer Hamad Jassim Al-Kulaib
- Committee Rapporteur Fouad Nasser Al-Salman.

Prayers for all humanity with sincere, pure heart

“WE often hear the sermons of imams during Friday prayers broadcast via satellite and amplified through mosque loudspeakers, as well as the speeches of politicians, particularly during holidays, especially religious ones. These preachers often conclude by praying for the safety, security, and prosperity of Muslims and all Islamic nations,” Kuwaiti journalist **Hassan Ali Karam** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

“This is commendable, if the supplication truly comes from a sincere and pure heart. But I find myself doubting the sincerity of these prayers, and whether they truly reach God, who says in the Qur’an, “And when My servants ask you concerning Me, indeed, I am near. I respond to the invocation of the supplicant when he calls upon Me.”



Hassan Ali Karam

“However, I fear that most of these supplications are little more than words uttered by the tongue, lacking sincerity or true intent. One reason is that many Muslims pray against one another over political or sectarian differences. Some even go so far as to accuse fellow Muslims of disbelief and do not hesitate to pray for their destruction. This is a deeply troubling reality.

“It is worth noting that countless conferences and meetings throughout history, bringing together prominent Muslim scholars, have failed to unite the Muslim world or establish a common platform. In fact, divisions and disagreements often intensify after such gatherings.

“Perhaps the painful truth is that Muslims, regardless of their sects and ideological differences, may never unite on a single platform. And there may never be the sincere will or intent to achieve such unity.

“May God have mercy on our Sheikh, the Mufti of Kuwait and its foremost scholar, Sheikh Yusuf bin Issa Al-Qana’i, who rightly attributed the root of discord to the turbaned men, not the common people. Most ordinary people are simple and well-meaning, but they derive their views and beliefs from those who promote discord and division among the nation of “There is no God but Allah.”

“And so, Muslims remain in this state of disunity, until God wills otherwise.

“The supplications of preachers, mosque imams, and the speechwriters of prominent leaders and politicians often conclude with prayers for security and peace for Muslims and their countries. While this was once reasonable and widely accepted, the world has since changed. With the ease of travel and the rapid spread of communication and transportation, Islam has reached every corner of the globe, and many citizens of non-Muslim countries have embraced the faith and declared their conversion. They, too, are Muslims deserving of the same prayers and concern. In fact, you may be surprised to learn that some non-Muslim, or even secular, countries have more mosques than some Islamic nations.

“However, let us set aside religion and belief for a moment and focus on the human aspect. Physiologically, humanity is one nation.

“When you fall ill, you don’t seek out a doctor simply because they are Muslim, but you seek the best doctor, regardless of their faith or beliefs. That doctor might even be an atheist who doesn’t believe in God. Yet the illness is the same, the treatment is the same, and we all suffer from the same human ailments.

“What I want to convey is that supplication should not be limited to Muslims alone. We are all brothers and sisters, partners on this earth and under the same heaven, in Paradise or in Hell. Not all Muslims are guaranteed Paradise, nor are all others destined for Hell. God has not promised Paradise to Muslims merely by virtue of their identity. Its gates are open to all who do good, and good deeds are many... they go far beyond prayer, fasting, Hajj, or zakat.

“How many people perform deeds they believe will lead them to Paradise, yet they are, in reality, closer to Hell?”

“O believers, O Muslims, O preachers of every sect, let your hearts and tongues be filled with prayers for all of humanity, whether they are your brothers in faith or your brothers in humanity. Let us pray for peace on earth and for all people. And let us remember the words of Jesus Christ (PBUH), “Peace in heaven and on earth.”

Also:

“Yes, this is the same Iran that supported Russia’s blatant invasion of Ukraine in violation of international conventions and the UN Charter,” Kuwaiti writer **Tareq Idris** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

“Tehran not only offered political backing to Moscow but also supplied it with weapons, including advanced drones, missiles, and ammunition. Today, Russia expresses solidarity with the Iranian people amid their crises, whether with their own regime, with Israel, with the United States, or with Western countries at large.

“These contradictory positions and policies expose Iran. It adopts a blatant double standard, condemning actions in words while contradicting them in

practice amid escalating political, economic, and social crises, both internally and externally.

“Actually, Iran is applying double standards, crying out to the world while desperately seeking a way out of its deepening crises. At the same time, it continues to defy its own people, reject international mediation, and challenge both the United States and Israel, disregarding all calls for de-escalation.

“Unfortunately, time has run out. The continued stubbornness of the Iranian government, its political leadership, and its ideological authorities is no longer acceptable. Shouldn’t they heed the divine command of God Almighty, as stated in the Holy Quran: “And if they incline to peace, then incline to it.”

“The Arab and Islamic world, in the midst of this crisis, will stand with Iran if it adheres to the Charter of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, respects United Nations conventions, agrees with the principles of the Non-Aligned Movement, and genuinely strives for peace.

“Will Iran and its oppressed people emerge from the darkness of the political, economic, and social crises that are mounting both internally and externally?”

“We ask God to grant this Islamic neighbor, our sisterly and friendly nation, security and safety for all its diverse peoples and ethnicities.”

□ □ □

“From its inception to the present day, the Muslim Brotherhood has consistently found itself on the wrong side of the events in the region, as if its compass were broken.” Columnist **Hamad Salem Al-Marri** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

“Time and again, the Brotherhood repeats the same mistakes. It supported the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in 1990, expressed solidarity with the late Saddam Hussein, and even extended condolences to Iran over the killing of Quds Force commander Qassem Soleimani, as well as to Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah, both of whom have blood on their hands from the atrocities committed against the Syrian and Iraqi people.

“The Muslim Brotherhood supported Hamas’s reckless operation, which they called the “Al-Aqsa Flood” that led to the deaths of approximately 56,000 people and left around 113,274 wounded, many with permanent disabilities. Gaza was devastated, its infrastructure destroyed, and its people displaced, all in the name of this so-called “flood.” Yet the Brotherhood, with its broken compass, continues to insist that Hamas achieved victory.

“The Muslim Brotherhood has failed to learn from its past mistakes or to correct its course. Instead, it remains defiant, repeating the same errors with unwavering arrogance. Most recently, it issued a statement supporting Iran in its current war with Israel, even praising Iran’s dead as martyrs.

“The Muslim Brotherhood claimed that Israeli aggression against Iran represents a new phase of Israeli attacks on Palestine, suggesting this follows Israel and Western countries being shaken by their defeat on October 7, 2023. But does the Muslim Brotherhood live in our reality? Do they see the devastation that has struck Gaza, the deaths of Hamas’s military and political leaders, and the widespread killing and displacement of Palestinians?”

“Is the Brotherhood so completely disconnected from reality that they regard the reckless actions Hamas took on October 7 as a victory?”

“Has the Muslim Brotherhood finally revealed its true nature, as Iran’s second regional proxy, like Hezbollah, operating under the orders of the mullahs in Tehran? Isn’t the Brotherhood’s General Guide, in fact, little more than a deputy to the Iranian Supreme Leader?”

“Has the Muslim Brotherhood forgotten what Iran has done in the region since the Khomeini Revolution in 1979 up to the present day? Wasn’t Iran involved in the Kuwait oil refinery bombings in 1983, the café bombings in 1985, the hijacking of the Al-Jabriya plane in 1988, the bombing of the Grand Mosque in Makkah in 1989, the Khobar Towers bombing in Saudi Arabia in 1996, the riots in Bahrain in 2011, the discovery of a spy cell in Kuwait in 2010, and its support for the terrorist “Abdali Cell” in 2015?”

“Does the Muslim Brotherhood truly believe that the open insults and curses directed at the companions of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) are just minor sectarian differences that can be overlooked in pursuit of some doctrinal common ground?”

“We do not support any attack on any country, whether Arab or non-Arab. However, at the same time, we do not stand with Iran whose hands are stained with the blood of Arab Muslims in Syria and Iraq, and whose hostile, subversive actions have destabilized the region. Nor do we stand with Israel whose hands are stained with the blood of the Palestinian people.

“We pray to God to bring down the oppressors upon one another and to deliver us safely from among them.”

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



Deputy Chief of Staff of the Kuwaiti Army, Major General (Pilot) Sabah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah being briefed about the recruiting procedure.



KUNA photos Deputy Chief of Staff of the Kuwaiti Army, Major General (Pilot) Sabah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah being welcomed upon arrival at the center.

Army Deputy Chief visits female cadets recruiting center

KUWAIT CITY, June 26, (KUNA): Deputy Chief of Staff of the Kuwaiti Army, Major General (Pilot) Sabah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, paid a visit on Wednesday to the registration center for female applicants enrolling in honorary military service as officer cadets. This marks the first intake of female university graduates into the program.

In a press statement, the Chief of Staff noted that Major General Sabah was briefed on the registration procedures, including the verification of original documents, data validation, and preliminary medical examinations — all aimed at ensuring a smooth and accurate registration process.

Major General Sabah commended the high

level of preparation and organization at the center, highlighting the professionalism and efficiency of the personnel overseeing the recruitment process.

The Deputy Chief of Staff was received at the center by Brigadier General Abdullah Al-Terkait, Commander of Ali Al-Sabah Military College, along with several college officers.

‘Too many cases, judges strained’

Call for urgent legal reform

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

KUWAIT CITY, June 26: In a step that reflects the transparency of judicial work and the effectiveness of the performance of courts; the Statistics and Research Department at the Ministry of Justice revealed that it received more than 2,016,000 cases from Jan 1 to March last year; including 106,000 criminal cases.

The quarterly statistical report issued by the department on the movement of cases in various types of first-instance courts (criminal, non-criminal and performance orders) showed that around 109,000 cases were heard within this period.

The newspaper obtained a copy of the statistics indicating that the number of non-criminal cases referred to first-instance courts in the first quarter of 2025 reached 58,665; in addition to the remaining cases from previous periods, bringing the total number of cases under consideration to 93,057.

The courts adjudicated 49,118 cases and achieved a resolution rate of 52.8 percent -- an affirmation of the rapid progress in achieving justice.

On the number of pending cases, the statistics showed that quasi-civil commercial cases ranked first with 10,393 cases received and 12,696 cases adjudicated. This reflects the volume of commercial

transactions and related disputes. Labor cases followed with 14,527 cases considered and 6,058 of which were adjudicated -- a completion rate of 41.7 percent. Bankruptcy cases recorded the lowest figures, with only 16 cases received and three cases adjudicated.

With regard to criminal cases, the first-instance courts recorded 106,813 pending criminal cases in the first quarter and 37,906 of which were new cases received during the same period; while 39,417 cases were adjudicated -- an overall resolution rate of 36.9 percent.

In terms of the number and types of cases, misdemeanors and common-law violations accounted for the largest number with 76,988 cases received and 29,843 of which were adjudicated, including various offenses such as theft, fights and assaults. The number of appealed misdemeanor cases reached 27,077 and 7,620 of which were adjudicated.

Meanwhile, 2,748 felony cases were adjudicated and the courts issued decisions on 1,954 of these cases -- a high resolution rate of 71.1 percent; reflecting the fact that these are sensitive and priority cases.

In light of the massive number of cases and adjudications in the first quarter of this year; legal experts emphasized the urgent need for a complete digital transformation of litigation, noting that there is increasing pressure on judges and that the matter requires legislative reform.

Attorney Jassim Bandar pointed out that “the large number of pending cases and the limited adjudication of some of these cases raise serious questions about the efficiency of traditional judicial procedures and underscore the need for a complete digital transformation of litigation.”



KFF photo

KFF fire engines at the site of blaze.

Fire in family flat

Animal feed destroyed as blaze erupts in barn

By Munif Nayef
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 26: Firefighters from three fire stations extinguished a massive fire that broke out in a feed warehouse in Kabad, covering an area of 1,200 square meters.

No injuries were reported and the firefighting teams have started an investigation to determine the cause of the fire.

Kuwait Fire Force (KFF) confirmed that firefighters from Kabad, Al-Istiqlal and Al-Isnad fire stations controlled the fire in a barn used as a feed warehouse in Kabad. They put the fire under control in record time.

In another fire incident, firefighting teams from the Farwaniya Fire Station contained a fire that broke out in a residential apartment in a building in Farwaniya.

It has been confirmed that the fire did not result in injuries or casualties.



Al-Anba photo

Bottles of home-made liquor found with the expatriate in Abu Halifa.

Expat liquor peddler to be deported: Mol

KUWAIT CITY, June 26: Ahmadi detectives arrested an expatriate in Abu Halifa after he attempted to flee a police patrol. Upon stopping his vehicle and conducting a search, officers found 21 bottles of locally produced alcohol. The suspect, according to Al-Anba daily, identified as a liquor promoter, was taken into custody. The confiscated alcohol is being destroyed, and the expatriate is set to be deported.

National Guard rehiring old and new personnel

KUWAIT CITY, June 26: The General Presidency of the National Guard has announced that it is now accepting applications for reinstatement to service from former non-commissioned officers and enlisted personnel. This opportunity is subject to a set of general and specific conditions, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

To be eligible for reinstatement:

Applicants must be no older than 40 years.

For individuals who were 35 years old as of June 28 of this year, no more than six years must have passed since their separation from the National Guard.

If the applicant is over 35, no more than one year must have passed since they left service, as of June 28.

All accepted candidates must successfully complete a training course with a minimum duration of four weeks.

In addition to the reinstatement program, the National Guard has also announced the recruitment of a new group of university graduates to serve as field officers. Furthermore, a new intake of officer cadets with a high school diploma is also being launched.



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Jahra clears key projects

Dialysis site, road link get nod

By Inaas Awadh
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 26: The Jahra Governorate Committee in the Municipal Council, chaired by Abdullah Al-Enezi, held its first meeting for the fourth legislative term on Thursday.

During the meeting, the committee approved two out of seven items on its agenda as follows:

- Request of the Public Authority for Roads and Transportation (PART) to amend the design of the road network in order to connect the Special Education Schools Complex with the surrounding roads in South Oyoun;
- Request of the Ministry of Health to change the use of the site of the Pest Control Center located in Block 90 in Jahra to a kidney dialysis center, with border adjustments and an additional area.

The committee referred to the executive branch the request for a comprehensive study to convert the use of some plots in Old Jahra from residential to investment (Block 14 model) and a letter from the Jahra Governor regarding the sustainable model public restroom initiative in Jahra Governorate in order to prepare reports on these matters.

It also referred to the executive branch the proposal of member Abdullah Al-Enezi regarding the construction of two pedestrian bridges on Jahra Expressway (80), opposite Qairawan and Doha, in order to update its response.

It referred to the executive branch the request to change the property use category of a number of plots in Block 91 in Jahra, which was included in the 'New Business' item, for further study.

It kept on its agenda the proposal of member Abdullah Al-Enezi regarding the expansion of Naem Low Cost Housing Project for further study.

PART clears sand from roads

KUWAIT CITY, June 26: After the heavy sandstorm that hit various parts of the country on Wednesday, particularly the southern areas, the Public Authority for Roads and Transportation (PART) has started removing accumulated sand on Wafra and Umm Safaq

roads to ensure smooth traffic flow and the safety of road users, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

In a post on its official account on the X platform, PART confirmed that the field teams continue to exert tremendous efforts day and night to restore the roads.



Participants pose for a group photo during the celebration of the World Refugee Day.

Government and society recognized for steadfast support

UNHCR honors Kuwait's solidarity on World Refugee Day

By Fares Ghaleb
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 26: Representative of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in Kuwait Nisreen Rabiaan stated that Kuwait is a "true friend of the refugee issue," praising the humanitarian and supportive role the country plays at both the official and public levels despite the fact that it does not host refugees.

In a statement during an event marking World Refugee Day at the Mövenpick Hotel & Resort Al Bida'a under the title, "Solidarity with Refugees: Voices from the Field," Rabiaan revealed that the number of refugees and displaced persons around the world has reached more than 123 million; amid the worsening humanitarian conditions and the absence of radical solutions. She pointed out that solidarity is not limited to financial support; as it includes compassion, advocacy, grants, missions and humanitarian aid.

Rabian affirmed that Kuwait embodies all forms of this solidarity. She said "our presence in Kuwait reflects the nature of



Nisreen Rabiaan takes part in the cake-cutting ceremony.



Photos by Rezk Tawfiq
Nisreen Rabiaan during an interactive dialogue with the attendees.

the relationship based on partnership. Kuwait — along with its government, people and civil society — continue to be at the forefront of countries supporting UNHCR's efforts."

She called on the international community not to marginalize the refugee issue or ignore the deteriorating conditions of refugees; warning that the continuous decline in funding will force UNHCR to reduce or even halt basic services like shelter, education and food — services that represent a lifeline for millions of refugees around the world.

The event concluded with an open session to exchange real-life stories narrated by Rabian and Rami Shishan, Head of Strategic Partnerships at UNHCR. This was followed by an interactive dialogue with the attendees, focusing on the need to raise the humanitarian voice in the face of worsening crises and declining international support.

It was held at a time the whole world is witnessing an unprecedented level of forced displacement in the midst of funding challenges that threaten the continuity of relief services.



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44 academic slots available

MoSA pushes ahead with employee development through study missions

By Fares Ghaleb
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 26: The Human Resources Development Center in the Planning and Administrative Development Sector at the Ministry of Social Affairs has announced the opening of applications for a number of vacant study missions for ministry employees.

This is part of the study mission plan for the academic year 2025/2026; aimed at raising the efficiency of employees, and enhancing their academic and professional capabilities.

The center revealed that the available opportunities include 44 vacant missions — postgraduate programs, academic diplomas and bachelor's degrees in several specializations, with paid and free programs, in accordance with the approved study plan.

The center confirmed that a number of missions were filled after the names of a number of employees were approved. "Nevertheless, there are still vacant missions according to the specializations approved by the Civil Service Commission (CSC), allowing other employees to submit their applications to complete their studies under the approved mission plan," it added.

It then invited all those interested to visit the Scholarships and Study Leave Department at the Human Resources Development Center to review the conditions and application process to take advantage of these opportunities.

This step is within the framework of the commitment of the ministry to support the career development of its employees and achieve institutional excellence by investing in national competencies.

Platform improves transparency

MoCI team prepares comprehensive description of commercial activities

KUWAIT CITY, June 26: A team at the Ministry of Commerce and Industry is currently preparing a comprehensive description of commercial activities, including the purposes or objectives of each commercial company; and then it will make the information available to business owners within one or two weeks, reports Al-Jarida daily quoting sources.

Sources pointed out that this move is important, because the comprehensive description is crucial in understanding the activities of companies, their characteristics and objectives. Sources said the detailed description will help investors and those wishing to enter the commercial market to understand each activity, its code and the scope of work. Sources added this is a necessary regulatory framework for understanding the technical obligations of the license holder.

Sources disclosed that the official website of the ministry allows users to inquire about various details; including the activity code, name, sector, and license category (such as professional, freelance, holding or industrial). They said users can also access information on activities permitted for mobile vehicles, activity categories for individual licenses (whether private or joint-stock), the relevant supervisory authority, and whether the activity is linked to municipal functions or includes integrated activities.

Sources expect the total number of commercial activity classifications and descriptions in Kuwait to exceed 3,500 and this number is likely to increase; especially since the interna-

tional classification of activities includes more than 4,000 activities.

Sources confirmed that the ministry studied and filtered these activities, removing those found to be non-compliant with the trade regulations and laws in Kuwait. They quoted the ministry as clarifying that any new activity can be added after being studied by a specialized committee.

The ministry previously issued a decision to standardize the classification of statistical data for economic activities used by government agencies in Kuwait and their equivalents in the Unified Guide for Classifying Economic Activities in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries.

It also urged the concerned government agencies to issue a decision on the activities subject to their oversight, including the conditions and controls for practicing each activity and preparing a description of the activities subject to their oversight and each agency according to its jurisdiction.

It is worth noting that the ministry, along with the complementary steps it took in 2022, issued a decision to amend the licenses of companies and commercial establishments in accordance with the United Nations' International Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities (ISIC). The decision stipulates that holders of licenses issued pursuant to Law No. 111/2013, which regulates the licensing of commercial establishments must adjust their status from local to international.

HH Amir commends exam plan success

Education Minister hails support from top leadership

KUWAIT CITY, June 26, (KUNA): Kuwait Minister of Education Jalal Al-Tabtabai on Wednesday said the political leadership’s congratulation on the successful final examination plan for senior high school students is a “source of pride”.

“The Amiri congratulation is a source of pride and momentum for all staff of the Ministry of Education to carry on working hard to develop the educational process under the direction of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah,” the minister said in a press statement.

The minister also thanked His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah for their congratulatory cables on the end of this school year.

Earlier in the day, His Highness the Amir praised the success of the ministry’s final examination plan for senior high school students, to close out the 2024/2025 academic year.

In a cable he sent to Minister of Education Jalal Al-Tabtabai, His Highness the Amir attributed the success of the examination plan to the diligent efforts of the ministry staff, which resulted in a seamless examination process.



Al-Tabtabai

Kuwait’s HH Amir congratulates Madagascar on Independence Day

KUWAIT CITY, June 26, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent a cable of congratulations on Thursday to the President of Madagascar, Andry Rajoelina, on the occasion of his country’s Independence Day.

His Highness the Amir wished the President good health and his country continued progress and prosperity.

His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah also sent a cable of congratulations on Thursday to President Andry Rajoelina on Madagascar’s Independence Day.

His Highness the Crown Prince wished the President good health and further progress and prosperity for his country.



Photos by Rezk Tawfiq
Sarah Ali Salah Ahmed (left), Hala Walid Ahmed Al-Azzizi (right), top students from New Generation Private School with exceptional science scores.

Top scorers aspire for medicine

Sarah and Hala shine with high science achievements

KUWAIT CITY, June 26: Success and excellence have a long story that began early on with student Sarah Ali Salah Ahmed, who scored 99.26 percent in the Science Section at the New Generation Private School for Girls, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

Sarah confirmed her desire to study Human Medicine in Egypt, specializing in Dermatology or Surgery.

She offered important advice to students who will take the high school exams next year. She stated that “studying must be a daily routine, while ensuring a balance between entertainment and study.”

In response to a question on who she dedicates her success to, Sarah enthused “definitely to the one who has the greatest influence -- my father. He is behind my success in terms of encouragement and providing me with the appropriate place to study.”

Outstanding student Hala Walid Ahmed Al-Azzizi scored 98.87 in the Science Section of the New Generation Private School.

While disclosing that she hopes to study Human Medicine with Dermatology as her specialization, Hala dedicated her success to her parents. She said “my mother supported me and she takes the great credit. My father encouraged me throughout my academic journey. My parents’ constant support is the secret behind my success.”

Hala advised her schoolmates, who are on the cusp of Grade 12, to study hard from the very beginning, to balance study with leisure time, and to put their trust in Allah first, then in their own tireless efforts until the end of the year and the stage is safely passed.

Kuwait champions aid access, worker safety in Geneva event

‘Humanitarian access must be shielded from conflict politics’

By Imen Kherij

GENEVA, June 26, (KUNA): The Permanent Mission of the State of Kuwait to the UN in Geneva organized on Thursday a high-level side event entitled “Humanitarian Access and the Protection of Humanitarian Workers: A Cornerstone for Advancing Human Rights in Conflicts” held within the United Nations Human Rights Council’s 59th session.



KUNA photo
The Permanent Delegation of Kuwait to the United Nations in Geneva organizes a high-level event as part of the 59th session.

The event saw the wide participation from permanent representatives UN experts and officials as well as representatives of humanitarian organizations and diplomatic delegations.

In a statement to KUNA Permanent Representative of the State of Kuwait to the United Nations and other international organizations in Geneva Ambassador Nasser Al-Hayen affirmed Kuwait’s commitment to strengthening international cooperation and fostering partnerships between humanitarian and human rights actors to ensure more effective and dignified responses for people affected by conflicts and disasters.

He stressed that the organization of this event reflects “Kuwait’s deep-rooted humanitarian approach and its steadfast support for multilateral humanitarian action” emphasizing that “protecting humanitarian personnel and ensuring the delivery of aid to those in need are both moral and legal imperatives that the international community must uphold especially amid growing threats to aid workers in conflict areas notably in the Gaza Strip where humanitarian staff face serious violations that hinder relief operations and endanger the lives of besieged civilians.”

UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food Michael Fakhri who participated remotely in the event warned against the alarming increase in the use of starvation as a weapon of war particularly in Gaza calling it a deliberate strategy aimed at humiliating weakening and forcibly displacing civilian populations by destroying food systems agriculture storage infrastructure water pumps and destabilizing markets to provoke inflation.

Fakhri criticized the Security Council’s failure to operationalize its Resolution 2417 (2018) which affirms that starvation is a war crime and the denial of humanitarian access is a grave breach of international law. He called for armed peacekeepers under the UN General Assembly’s “Uniting for Peace” framework to accompany humanitarian convoys into besieged areas such as Gaza.

Humanitarian Access Advisor at the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) Patrick Duplat expressed deep concern over the militarization of aid especially in Gaza where assistance is used to serve political or military objectives.

“Civilians should not die trying to access humanitarian assistance,” he said, adding that militarized aid mechanisms “do not adhere to humanitarian principles and actually hinder the work of humanitarian agencies.”

He urged member states to examine the type of humanitarian funding they provide and ensure that it aligns with international legal and ethical standards.

For his part the Head of the OHCHR’s Asia MENA and Pacific Division Francesco Motta highlighted what he called the “moral and legal collapse” in conflict zones particularly in Gaza. He cited that since October 7 at least 467 humanitarian workers were killed including 323 UN staff (317 from UNRWA one from WHO two from UNDP one from UNDSS and two from UNOPS) 47 staff and volunteers of the Palestinian Red Crescent and 97 NGO staff.

He further reported that 1,581 healthcare workers were killed (1,066 men and 415 women) in addition to 122 civil defense personnel. “No hospital in Gaza is currently functioning at full capacity,” he warned.

According to the May 2025 IPC assessment 1 million people in Gaza are projected to face IPC Phase 4 (emergency) while 470,000 are at risk of IPC Phase 5 (catastrophe) by September out of a population of 2.1 million.

Motta added that in the West Bank ambulances are regularly obstructed from reaching the wounded while requests for specialized treatment are denied or delayed.

Staff hiring in electricity sector drops sharply as focus shifts to project execution

MEW requests more time for complex Subiya Power Plant tender

By Mohammad Ghanem
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 26: The Central Agency for Public Tenders (CAPT) has announced the postponement of the bid opening for the project to supply, install, operate and maintain combined-cycle gas turbine units aimed at increasing electrical output by 900 megawatts at the Subiya Power and Water Distillation Plant (Phase IV).

Originally scheduled for this Tuesday, the bid opening has been rescheduled to July 22 at the request of the Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy -- the main beneficiary of the project.

According to reliable sources, the ministry formally requested the postponement -- its second such request -- citing several reasons. Chief among them is the need for bidding companies to obtain proposals from the primary manufacturers of gas turbines, steam turbines and steam boilers; in addition to the sheer scope and complexity of the project; hence, the need for more preparation time.

Sources affirmed the ministry remains committed to implementing the project, which is seen as essential in bridging the current power supply gap. “This shortfall has forced reliance on electricity imports through the Gulf Cooperation Council Interconnection Authority (GCCIA), and has necessitated scheduled power outages in several areas, especially during peak summer months,” sources pointed out.

Sources said the urgency of the project was underscored during a recent meeting chaired by His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Al-Abdullah with Minister of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy Dr. Subaih Al-Mukhaizeem and senior ministry officials.

Sources revealed the meeting focused on progress updates and the execution status of future projects related to electricity generation and water distillation, highlighting this particular initiative as the fastest to implement among planned developments.

In another development, the latest data from the Statistics Department at the ministry showed a significant decline -- 92 percent -- in the rate of new technical and administrative appointments between January and May last year.

During this period, only 266 employees (an average of 28 per month) were hired, increasing the total staff from 35,388 to 35,654. This is a sharp contrast to the same period in 2022/2023, when 3,105 employees were appointed, averaging 258 per month, according to the department’s most recent annual report.

Continued from Page 1

Kuwait set

Saturday will continue the trend of very hot weather, with northwesterly to variable winds blowing lightly to moderately, sometimes active, at speeds of 10 to 42 km/h. Dust is likely in open areas, with some scattered clouds. Maximum temperatures are forecast between 47 and 49 degrees Celsius, and sea waves will be light to moderate, ranging from 2 to 5 feet.

Saturday evening will be hot, with northwesterly to variable winds at 10 to 38 km/h and a chance of dust in open areas. Minimum temperatures will range from 31 to 33 degrees Celsius, with sea waves between 1 and 4 feet.

GCC vows

and enhance the security and safety of our citizens from the scourge of drugs.”

He pointed out that the Gulf Strategy for Combating Drugs for the years 2025-2028 constitutes an integrated framework for guiding the efforts of the GCC states.

It includes axes for reducing supply and demand, drying up sources, promoting alternative development, developing legislation, combating money laundering, capacity building, training, and joint monitoring, ensuring the integration of preventive, therapeutic, and security dimensions.

He stressed that combating drugs is a collective responsibility that requires integrated action and sustained cooperation between governments, communities, and individuals.

He noted that the General Secretariat is proceeding with implementing the strategy and supporting initiatives that contribute to building drug-free societies.

Al-Budaiwi explained that the family and society represent the first line of defense through conscious upbringing and ongoing care, while educational, religious, media, and civil society institutions contribute to spreading awareness and building a healthy and safe environment.

He noted that schools, media, religious leaders, and civil society institutions have an equally important role in spreading awareness and building a healthy and safe environment that protects youth from falling into these dangers.

In the same context, he stressed the importance of highlighting the societal integration of recovering addicts as a fundamental pillar for ensuring the success and sustainability of recovery and preventing relapse.

Al-Budaiwi expressed his appreciation for the ongoing cooperation with the relevant ministries and agencies in the GCC countries, in addition to customs authorities, the coast guard, national committees, and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime.

Pharmacists to

the association with decision-makers. Our first step was to meet with Minister of Health Dr. Ahmed Al-Awadhi, as he is the head of the health sector. During the meeting, we discussed pharmaceutical challenges, plans and priorities for the next phase.

Our plan is based on working

along three parallel lines. First is the development of human resources -- the pharmacists. We believe that the advancement of the profession begins with the development of the pharmacists. Therefore, our plan relies on investing in pharmacists by providing opportunities for continuing professional education and developing technical skills, such as dealing with the work team and facing challenges, as well as supporting training, management and leadership programs.

The second line is supporting the social aspect of pharmacists to work as a team in order to overcome challenges and realize the aspirations of the pharmacist community.

The third line is coordination with decision-makers to find effective ways to overcome the challenges that the profession is currently facing.

Providing job opportunities for pharmacists is one of the most important challenges that the association is facing now. The current number of Kuwaiti pharmacists is around 2,200; and the number of pharmacy graduates from Kuwaiti and foreign universities this year is expected to reach around 5,000. This is a challenge for the association -- to provide job opportunities for everyone.

Q: Does this mean that the Kuwaiti labor market is suffering from pharmacist saturation?

A: No, the government sector still needs pharmacists. However, our duty as an association is to consider the next steps, especially with the continuous increase in demand for this specialization. Consequently, we are exploring several plans to expand the scope of pharmaceutical services in Kuwait, in cooperation

with the public and private sectors.

We are currently studying the establishment of pharmacy consultation rooms in hospitals and primary healthcare centers. This service entails patients making an appointment to see a pharmacist in the pharmacy consultation rooms in order to view medications and obtain appropriate prescriptions.

We are also studying the expansion of pharmaceutical services provided in several related departments like drug registration, drug inspection, drug control and medical warehouses; because the pharmacist’s role is no longer limited to managing the medicines warehouse, as it has expanded to include diverse functions and tasks.

Q: What about the private sector?

A: We are currently studying several plans and strategies to expand the scope of pharmacist work in the private sector, in coordination with the Pharmaceutical Importers Association and several international companies, to conduct training programs for newly graduated Kuwaiti pharmacists.

Around 90 percent of pharmacists go directly to work in the government sector. Through this coordination, we are trying to create a suitable environment for Kuwaiti pharmacists to gain experience and skills by undergoing training at international companies. This will enhance the graduates’ resumes and provide them with the opportunity to choose between public and private sector employment.

Through this step, we are gradually creating a suitable environment for pharmacists in the private sector and for the betterment of pharmaceutical services in the country; thereby,

leading to quality and sustainability at work.

Q: Some criticize the practice of pharmacists wearing the doctor’s robe. How do you expect to receive patients through the ‘pharmaceutical consulting rooms’ service in view of this criticism?

A: This service is already offered by the geriatric clinic at Ministry of Health hospitals and has been well-received by patients. We hope to expand it to include other patients in all hospitals. This service has been offered in many countries around the world for more than 15 years, including some Gulf countries. In Britain, the government uses pharmacists to review minor medical cases and dispense medications to relieve pressure on other clinics. Pharmacists are qualified to identify serious cases requiring medical attention or dispense medications for minor cases. Pharmacists possess a high level of clinical and pharmacological knowledge, so why not use them to review minor cases that do not require waiting and appointments at clinics?

Q: Do your plans include expanding clinical pharmacy services?

A: Yes. I remember when I started working at Al-Adan Hospital in 2013, I was the first clinical pharmacist at the hospital. At that time, the number of clinical pharmacists in all of Kuwait’s hospitals did not exceed five to six. Today, with the development of Kuwait University’s curricula, the number of pharmacists capable of providing clinical services and managing pharmaceutical services has reached around 150.

Q: Do you have a plan to expand the number of seats allocated to pharmacy students in and outside Kuwait?

A: There is only one College of Pharmacy at Kuwait University, so we hope to establish an auxiliary college to meet the growing demand for this vital specialization. Nevertheless, everyone knows that medical colleges face numerous challenges, including the provision of laboratories, hospitals, training teams, specialized halls, and other requirements that constitute a burden and require time and effort to expand the academic scope.

Regarding external seats, the number of seats allocated to Kuwaiti students abroad ranges between 100 and 200. This, in my opinion, is a very suitable rate to feed the market at a steady pace over the coming period, ensuring that there is no pressure on the health system to employ these outputs.

Q: Citizens always complain about the high prices of medicines in Kuwait compared to other Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries. What is your comment on this?

A: Medicines are of two types: therapeutic and nutritional supplements. Therapeutic medicines are priced according to the law and a clear government mechanism.

As for nutritional supplements, we cannot set the prices due to their diversity; particularly the differences from one company to another. It is well known that setting prices for medicines in countries are subject to several factors, including population density, supply chains and market size.

If we compare medicine prices in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, for example, we find that the population of Kuwait is much smaller than that of Saudi Arabia. Thus, it is natural for medicine prices to be higher in Kuwait than in Saudi Arabia.

Gabbard accuses news media of mischaracterizing testimony

Trump’s latest rejection of intelligence assessments reflects long distrust of spy agencies

WASHINGTON, June 26, (AP): US President Donald Trump’s fights with the intelligence community were a running theme of his first term, as he raged against an investigation into his campaign’s alleged links to Russia. Now, a sequel is playing out as Trump battles to shape the public’s understanding of his foreign policy gamble in Iran.

An early US intelligence assessment said Iran’s nuclear program has been set back only a few months after American strikes on three sites last weekend. Trump has rejected the report and pronounced the program “completely and fully obliterated.”

The dispute is unlikely to fade anytime soon. Top administration officials are pressing Trump’s case, with a news conference set for Thursday at the Pentagon. Briefings also are scheduled for lawmakers on Capitol Hill, though the White House plans to limit the sharing of classified information after the initial intelligence assessment leaked this week.

“Intelligence people strive to live in a world as it is, describe the world as it is, where politicians are all about describing the world as they want it to be,” said Larry Pfeiffer, a 32-year intelligence veteran who held positions including CIA chief of staff and senior director of the White House Situation Room.

Though it’s hardly unheard of for presidents to bristle at what they perceive as bad news from the intelligence community, it’s rare for the conflict to spill into public view as it did this week.

“I don’t think we’ve seen another president push back as strong as this guy has,” Pfeiffer said.

Trump’s suspicion of the intelligence community, particularly when its assessments do not align with his worldview, dates back to even before his first term.

His 2016 campaign was shadowed by an investigation into whether his team had coordinated with Russia to sway the outcome of the election.

He was so infuriated by the scrutiny over a dossier of unverified and salacious claims connecting him to Russia that, one week before he was sworn in, he tweeted: “Intelligence agencies should never have allowed this fake news to ‘leak’ into the public. One last shot at me. Are we living in Nazi Germany?”

Trump disputed the assessment that Russia had interfered in the election on his behalf, decrying as a “hoax” and a “witch hunt” an investigation by special counsel Robert Mueller, which ultimately concluded the Trump campaign had welcomed Moscow’s help but did not find sufficient evidence of a criminal conspiracy.

Trump also openly challenged the judgment of his intelligence agencies alongside Russian President Vladimir Putin at a Helsinki summit in 2018.

“I have great confidence in my intelligence people, but I will tell you that



US President Donald Trump gestures after arriving on Air Force One on June 25, at Joint Base Andrews, Md. (AP)

said Frank Montoya Jr., a former FBI supervisor who served as director of the National Counterintelligence and Security Center.

“It’s really demoralizing because nobody is looking at this stuff from a political perspective. They’re looking at the data and they’re analyzing the data,” he said. “When you get this kind of unfounded criticism, especially from the policymaker in chief, it just destroys morale.”

Trump tapped loyalists to lead America’s intelligence services in his second term - Tulsi Gabbard as director of national intelligence and John Ratcliffe as CIA director. They promised to end what they said was the weaponization of intelligence and root out disloyal officers.

But there have already been conflicts.

Last month, the National Intelligence Council declassified a memo in response to an open records request that said American spy agencies found no coordination between the Venezuelan government and the Tren de Aragua gang, contradicting statements the Trump administration used to justify invoking the Alien Enemies Act and deporting Venezuelan immigrants.

Gabbard later fired the two veteran intelligence officers who led the council because of their perceived opposition to Trump.

More trouble came after the war between Israel and Iran began nearly two weeks ago.

Trump dismissed Gabbard’s testimony to Congress in March that US spy agencies did not believe Iran was actively pursuing a nuclear weapon. Trump insisted Iran was very close.

“I don’t care what she said,” he told reporters last week.

Gabbard later accused the news media of mischaracterizing her testimony, noting that she had mentioned Iran’s large stockpile of enriched uranium that goes beyond levels needed for civilian uses.

Iran maintains that its nuclear program was peaceful, though the head of the International Atomic Energy Agency has repeatedly warned that Tehran has enough highly enriched uranium to make several nuclear bombs if it chooses.

A preliminary report from the Defense Intelligence Agency that emerged this week said that while the US strikes on Iranian nuclear facilities did significant damage, the facilities were not totally destroyed and the program was only set back by a few months.

US senators challenge WH’s proposed cuts to foreign aid and public media

WASHINGTON, June 26, (AP): A Senate panel challenged on a bipartisan basis the merits of cancelling billions of dollars in spending for foreign aid and public media as part of a contentious hearing Wednesday examining the White House’s request for the cuts.

The House has already voted to claw back \$9.4 billion as requested by President Donald Trump. Now, the Senate is preparing to take up the package with a July 18 deadline for action. If the Senate declines to approve a measure by then, the Trump administration must obligate and spend the funds in question.

Russell Vought, director of the White House Office of Management and Budget, defended the proposed cuts, which are part of the administration’s efforts to follow through on work done by the so-called Department of Government Efficiency when it was overseen by billionaire ally Elon Musk.

“A vote for rescissions is a vote to show that the United States Senate is serious about getting our fiscal house in order,” Vought told the lawmakers.

But senators from both parties voiced concerns about the president’s request. Their skepticism suggests that some aspects of the package could be altered through the amendment process, or that perhaps the bill will falter entirely.

Maine Sen. Susan Collins, the Republican chair of the Senate Appropriations Committee, questioned the proposed cuts to both public media and a program that combats the global HIV epidemic. Holding up a bottle of vitamins for pregnant moms and a package of peanut butter-based food supplements for malnourished children, Collins said it was hard to discern



US Capitol Police remove protesters after they began shouting in a Senate Appropriations Committee hearing as Office of Management and Budget director Russell Vought begins to testify on the rescissions package, at the Capitol in Washington on June 25. (AP)

White House sues Minnesota over breaks in higher education for immigrant students

WASHINGTON, June 26, (AP): Minnesota became the latest state Wednesday to face a lawsuit from the Trump administration seeking to force it to give its high school graduates who entered the U.S. illegally as immigrants the same lower tuition rates reserved for in-state citizens.

The US Department of Justice’s lawsuit also seeks to strike down a law that allows the same immigrant students to receive scholarships covering part or all of their tuition under the state’s North Star Promise program. The department filed its case in federal district court in Minnesota, naming Democratic Gov Tim Walz and Democratic state Attorney General Keith Ellison as defendants, along with the state’s Office of Higher Education.

The Justice Department has filed similar lawsuits this month against policies in Kentucky and Texas. Last week, a federal judge in Texas blocked that state’s law giving a tuition break to students living in the U.S. illegally after the state’s Republican attorney general, Ken Paxton, said he supported the legal challenge.

Walz’s office said it is reviewing the lawsuit “to better understand what this means for the state.”

The lawsuit argued that Minnesota is “flagrantly violating” a federal law that prevents states from providing a benefit in higher education to resident students living in the U.S. illegally if U.S. citizens cannot receive the same benefits. States generally set higher



A person walks through the University of Minnesota campus in Minneapolis, April 21, 2020. (AP)



Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, delivers a speech at the Council of Europe after signing the legal instruments necessary to launch the Special Tribunal for the Crime of Aggression against Ukraine, in Strasbourg, eastern France on June 25. (AP)

EU leaders meet to discuss tougher Russia sanctions, US tariffs and Mideast conflicts

BRUSSELS, June 26, (AP): The heads of the European Union’s 27 member nations were to meet Thursday in Brussels to discuss tougher sanctions on Russia, ways to prevent painful new US tariffs, and how to make their voices heard in the Middle East conflicts.

Most of the leaders will arrive from a brief but intense NATO summit where they pledged a big boost in defense spending, and papered over some of their differences with US President Donald Trump.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy to join the EU summit by videoconference, after meeting Trump on Wednesday. US-led NATO down-

graded Ukraine from a top priority to a side player this week, but Russia’s war in Ukraine remains of paramount concern for the EU.

Members will be discussing an 18th round of sanctions against Russia and whether to maintain a price cap on Russian oil, measures that some nations oppose because it could raise energy prices.

Meanwhile, Trump’s threatened tariffs are weighing on the EU, which negotiates trade deals on behalf of all 27 member countries. He lashed out at Spain on Wednesday for not spending more on defense and suggested yet more tariffs. France’s president called

Trump to task for starting a trade war with longtime allies.

Also:
THE HAGUE, Netherlands: Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy formally approved plans Wednesday to set up a new international court to prosecute senior Russian officials for the full-scale invasion of Ukraine.

The special tribunal will be created through an agreement between Ukraine and the Council of Europe, the continent’s top human rights body. Zelenskyy visited the Strasbourg-based organization for the first time as part of the announcement.

Several arrested in Serbia as tensions mount ahead of anti-corruption rally

BELGRADE, Serbia, June 26, (AP): Police in Serbia have arrested several people accused of allegedly plotting to overthrow the government as tensions soared ahead of a major anti-government rally planned this weekend in the capital Belgrade.

Police said six were detained on Wednesday evening, suspected of “preparing criminal acts against the constitutional order and security of Serbia” and “calling for violent change of the constitutional order.”

At least one other university student was arrested earlier this week accused of preparing “an act of terrorism” based on his private conversations over a mobile phone. Hundreds on Thursday demonstrated against the arrest in Belgrade.

Protesting university students have called Saturday’s rally to press their demand for an early election after nearly eight months of almost daily anti-corruption demonstrations that have shaken the populist government of President Aleksandar Vucic.

Persistent protests started in November after a renovated rail station canopy collapsed that killed 16 people and which many blamed on rampant government corruption and negligence in state infrastructure projects. University students have been a key force behind the nationwide movement.

Vucic and his right-wing Serbian Progressive Party have refused the students’ demand for a snap vote, instead



People block a highway during a protest, seven months after a deadly train station tragedy that sparked demonstrations against corruption in Belgrade, Serbia on June 1. (AP)

accusing the protesters of planning to spur violence at Saturday’s gathering.

Police alleged the detained group met last week in a hotel in the central town of Kraljevo to plan a violent change of government and attacks on police and pro-government media outlets. One of the suspects had a gun and ammunition, they said.

No other details were immediately available. Serbian media reported that those arrested include an opposition politician, veteran of the wars of the 1990s, and others.

Authorities made similar arrests back in March, ahead of what was the biggest ever anti-government protest in the Balkan country, which drew hundreds of thousands of people.

Vucic’s loyalists also set up a camp in a park outside his office which still stands. The otherwise peaceful gathering on March 15 came to an abrupt end when part of the crowd suddenly scattered in panic, triggering allegations that authorities used a sonic weapon against peaceful protesters, which they have denied.

Hungary, China hold symposium on international human rights

BUDAPEST, June 26, (Xinhua): Experts, officials, and scholars from China and Hungary convened on Tuesday in Budapest for a symposium on international human rights, emphasizing the importance of dialogue among civilizations and the need for balanced, inclusive approaches to global human rights governance.

Held under the theme “Consensus on International Human Rights: Retrospect of the Past 80 Years and Prospects of the Future,” the event reflected on the evolution of human rights since the founding of the United Nations eight decades ago.

Baima Chilin, president of the China Society for Human Rights Studies, stressed the importance of drawing lessons from history while envisioning the future in a world shaped by complex and shifting dynamics. He called for mutual respect, multilateralism, and cooperation as essential pillars for advancing human rights through development and fostering fair, just, and inclusive global governance.

Chinese Ambassador to Hungary Gong Tao reiterated that both China and Hungary uphold the core principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, while also recognizing the significance of national traditions and sovereignty.



Baima Chilin, president of the China Society for Human Rights Studies, delivers a speech during a symposium on international human rights in Budapest, Hungary on June 24. (Xinhua)

Europe

2 dead, 17 injured in France storms: Two people were killed and 17 injured during torrential storms in France that toppled trees, flooded Paris streets and caused parliament’s roof to spring a leak as the prime minister was speaking.

“Have you noticed that it was raining?” Prime Minister François Bayrou pointed out, looking up at the National Assembly’s leaking domed ceiling after delivering a speech on the Middle East as a deluge fell outside, quickly inundating Paris boulevards on Wednesday evening.

The assembly vice president, Roland Lescure, suspended

the debate so fire officers could check out the problem. When he restarted the session about 15 minutes later, Lescure told lawmakers that absorbent mats were used to patch up the leak. (AP)

Bus plunges into English river: A double-decker bus carrying high school students plunged into a river in England Thursday, sending the driver and two passengers to the hospital and leaving more than a dozen others with minor injuries, officials said.

The bus carrying students from Barton Peveril Sixth Form College, a school for 16- to 18-year-olds, went off a road in Eastleigh, near the south coast. The cause of the crash was under investigation. (AP)

Cambodia ex-leader Hun Sen, Thailand PM make separate visits to tense border areas

PHNOM PENH, Cambodia, June 26, (AP): Cambodia’s powerful former leader Hun Sen and Thailand’s prime minister, Paetongtarn Shinawatra, on Thursday made separate visits to border areas as the two countries remain locked in an ongoing dispute that has resulted in strict land crossing restrictions and several economic boycotts.

Hun Sen and Paetongtarn didn’t meet. Relations between the neighboring nations have deteriorated following an armed confrontation on May 28 in which one Cambodian soldier was killed in contested territory along their border.

While the two sides have agreed to de-escalate their dispute, they have continued to implement or threaten measures that have kept tensions high.

Hun Sen posted on his social media after the visit that more troops and weapons have been mobilized to several border areas between Cambodia and Thailand after the clash. He said that soldiers “are constantly prepared to defend the territory in case of any invasion by the Thai army.”

He did not elaborate on when exactly the reinforcement happened, or how many soldiers and what kinds of weapons were deployed. But days after the dispute erupted, several videos of tanks and armed forces were filmed and posted on social media as they moved past Phnom Penh.

Hun Sen, who ruled Cambodia for nearly four decades, was seen wearing a military uniform, shaking hands with military commanders and government officials who waited to greet him as he got off a military helicopter. It was the first time that he paid a visit to the border since the latest conflict was triggered. Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Manet visited the troops and civilians at the border on Monday.

Hun Sen remains powerful although



In this photo released by Thailand’s Government Spokesman Office, Thailand’s Prime Minister Paetongtarn Shinawatra, (center), talks to a Thai soldier in Sa Kaeo Province, Thailand on June 26. (AP)

he stepped down as Cambodia’s prime minister in August 2023 and handed over power to Hun Manet, his oldest son. Hun Sen continues to hold several major positions in the country, including Senate president. Thai regional army commander Boonsin Padklang, who’s in charge of the area where the clash happened, told reporters earlier this week that he was aware of Cambodia’s reinforcements along the border, and that the Thai forces were also ready to secure the border situation if necessary.

Asia

Vietnam ends death penalty for 8 crimes: Vietnam has lifted the death penalty for eight crimes in legal reforms that may spare the life of a real estate tycoon imprisoned in the country’s largest financial fraud case.

The legal reforms in Vietnam ended the death penalty for eight crimes, including trying to overthrow the government, damaging state infrastructure, making and selling fake medicine, starting wars, spying, drug trafficking, embezzlement, and taking bribes. Vietnamese lawmakers passed the reforms on Wednesday, according to state media.

Truong My Lan, sentenced to death for her involvement in Vietnam’s largest financial fraud case, will be eligible to have her sentence reduced after the reforms, her lawyer said Thursday.

The 67-year-old chair of the real estate company Van Thinh Phat who was facing execution for her involvement in fraud amounting to \$12.5 billion - nearly 3% of the country’s 2022 GDP - will now be “eligible for the exemption for the death penalty” according to the new rules, her lawyer Phan Minh Hoang told The Associated Press.

“We are still waiting for the official instructions of implementing the law amendment for next steps in her case,” Hoang said. The new rules also say that anyone already sentenced to death for these crimes but not yet executed by July 1 will have their sentence changed to life in prison after a final decision by Vietnam’s highest court.

After the legal changes, the maximum punishment for Lan’s crimes will be life imprisonment without parole. Hoang said that they were continuing to work on repaying the damages to get her sentence further reduced.

The law change will likely impact other ongoing trials such as the one that started earlier this week involving the real estate and infrastructure development company Phuc Son Group, whose chairman Nguyen Van Hau is accused of



Truong

paying over \$5 million in bribes to win contracts for major infrastructure projects across three provinces.

Following the change, Vietnam now has the death penalty for 10 crimes like murder, sexual abuse of children, treason and terrorism. (AP)

☐ ☐ ☐

4 killed after landslides strike Indonesia: Four people have been confirmed dead after landslides hit Garut Regency in Indonesia’s West Java province, Hadi Rahmat Hardjasamita, the spokesperson for the provincial disaster management and mitigation agency, said on Thursday.

The landslides struck a house in Girimukti village of Cisewu sub-district at 6:30 p.m. local time on Wednesday, he said.

“The bodies of the four victims have been discovered,” the spokesperson told Xinhua.

High-intensity rainfall over a prolonged period was blamed for the natural disaster, according to him. (Xinhua)

☐ ☐ ☐

Myanmar burns confiscated drugs: Officials in Myanmar’s major cities destroyed about \$300 million worth of confiscated illegal drugs Thursday.

The destroyed drugs included opium, heroin, methamphetamine, marijuana, ketamine and the stimulant known as ice, or crystal meth. Yangon Police Brig. Gen. Sein Lwin said in a speech at a drug-burning ceremony.

The drug burnings came nearly a month after UN experts warned of unprecedented levels of methamphetamine production and trafficking from Southeast Asia’s Golden Triangle region, where the borders of Myanmar, Laos and Thailand meet, and Myanmar’s eastern Shan State in particular.

The production of opium and heroin historically flourished there, largely because of the lawlessness in border areas where Myanmar’s central government has been able to exercise only minimum control over various ethnic minority militias, some of them partners in the drug trade. The U.N. Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) said in a May report that the political crisis across the country after the military takeover in 2021 - that has led to what is now a civil war - has turbocharged growth of the methamphetamine trade. (AP)

Pyongyang may send army construction workers to Russia as early as July or August

North Korea to open biggest tourist site, though it’s not yet welcoming foreigners

SEOUL, South Korea, June 26, (Agencies): North Korea next week will open a signature coastal tourist site that it says will usher in a new era in its tourism industry, though there is no word on when the country will fully reopen to foreign visitors.

The Wonsan-Kalma coastal tourist zone has hotels and other accommodations for nearly 20,000 guests who can swim in the sea, engage in sports and recreation activities and eat at restaurants and cafeterias on site, state media said.

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un toured the site and cut the inaugural tape at a lavish ceremony Tuesday, the official Korean Central News Agency reported Thursday.

Kim said its construction would be recorded as “one of the greatest successes this year” and called the site “the proud first step” toward realizing the government’s policy of developing tourism, according to KCNA.

The Wonsan-Kalma beach resort is North Korea’s biggest tourist site. KCNA said it will begin service for domestic tourists next Tuesday, but the report didn’t say when it will start receiving foreign tourists. Observers say the resort likely required a huge investment from North Korea’s limited budget, so it eventually will have to accept Chinese and other foreign tourists to break even.

Kim has been pushing to make the country a tourism hub as part of efforts to revive the ailing economy, and the Wonsan-Kalma zone is one of his most talked-about tourism projects. KCNA reported North Korea will confirm plans to build large tourist sites in other parts of the country, too.

But North Korea hasn’t fully lifted a ban on foreign tourists that it imposed in early 2020 to guard against the COVID-19 pandemic. Experts say North Korea has been slow to resume its international tourism because of remaining pandemic curbs, a flare-up of tensions with the U.S. and South Korea in recent years and worries about Western tourists spreading a negative image of its system.

Starting from February 2024, North Korea has been accepting Russian tourists amid the booming military and other partnerships between the two countries, but Chinese group tours, which made up more than 90% of visitors before the pandemic, remain stalled. In February this year, a small group of international tourists visited the country for the first time in five years, but tourist agencies said in March that their tours to North Korea were paused.

Kim’s recent foreign policy prioritizes relations with Russia as he’s been supply-



In this photo provided by the North Korean government, North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, (sitting center), with his wife Ri Sol Ju, (rear), and daughter tours the Wonsan-Kalma coastal tourist zone in North Korea on June 24. (AP)

ing troops and conventional weapons to support its war against Ukraine in return for economic and military assistance. But North Korea’s ties with China, which has long been its biggest trading partner and aid benefactor, have apparently cooled as China is reluctant to join an anti-Western alliance with North Korea and Russia, analysts say.

Tuesday’s ceremony that marked the completion of the resort’s construction drew the Russian ambassador to North Korea and his embassy staff, KCNA said. But it didn’t say whether any Chinese diplomats were also invited.

“I think North Korea will soon accept Russian tourists, given the Russian Embassy officials attended the ceremony. Summer business is important” for the

beach resort, said Lee Sangkeun, an expert at the Institute for National Security Strategy, a think tank run by South Korea’s intelligence agency.

“There seems to be issues that North Korea hasn’t yet resolved in its relations with China. But North Korea has put in too much money on tourism and plans to spend more. Subsequently, to get its money’s worth, North Korea can’t help receiving Chinese tourists,” Lee said.

Lim Eul-chul, a professor at Kyungnam University’s Institute for Far Eastern Studies in Seoul, also said that foreign tourism to the Wonsan-Kalma site will begin with Russians. But he said Chinese tours to the zone, a sort of civilian exchange, will also begin soon, adding bilateral trade between China and North Korea has been recovering.

Also:

SEOUL: North Korea’s planned dispatch of thousands of military construction workers and deminers to **Russia’s Kursk** region will likely take place as early as July or August, South Korea’s spy agency told lawmakers Thursday.

After a meeting with North Korean leader **Kim Jong Un in Pyongyang** last week, top Russian security official Sergei Shoigu said Kim decided to send 1,000 sappers and 5,000 military construction workers to help rebuild the war-torn area. North Korea has already provided combat troops and ammunition to support **Russia’s** war efforts against **Ukraine**.

On Thursday, South Korea’s National Intelligence Service told a closed-door parliamentary committee meeting that the dispatch of those 6,000 additional military personnel will likely come as early as July or August, according to Lee Seong Kweun, one of the lawmakers who attended the meeting.

Lee cited the NIS as saying that North Korea has begun recruiting soldiers to be sent to Russia. He told reporters the NIS noted that North Korea’s dispatch of combat troops last year came about one month after Shoigu visited North Korea and signed an agreement with Pyongyang officials.

In April, Pyongyang and **Moscow** announced that their soldiers fought together to repel a Ukrainian incursion into Russia’s Kursk border region. The two countries haven’t disclosed how many North Koreans soldiers have been deployed in Russia, but South Korea, U.S. and Ukraine officials said North Korea last fall sent about 10,000-12,000 troops to Russia. South Korea said North Korea deployed about 3,000-4,000 additional soldiers to Russia earlier this year.

Honduras and US discuss immigration, security after tense start under Trump

TEGUCIGALPA, Honduras, June 26, (AP): Honduras President Xiomara Castro and US Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem discussed immigration and border security in their first meeting Wednesday, after Castro had previously rejected President Donald Trump’s calls for ramped up deportations.

Noem was the first Trump Cabinet member to visit Honduras.

The two leaders did not make comments to the press after their meeting. But Honduras Foreign Affairs Minister Javier Bú Soto later said that Honduras signed a letter of intent toward reaching an agreement on sharing biometric data from people transiting the country with the US government. The US has signed similar agreements with other governments across the region.

The two governments also signed an agreement related to migrants seeking protection in Honduras, he said, though he did not explain what it entailed.

“We are going to continue mutually collaborating on issues of migration security, border security and the fight against drug trafficking,” Bú Soto said.

Noem was headed next to Guatemala where she was scheduled to meet with President Bernardo Arévalo on Thursday.

Relations between the US and Castro’s administration had been tense since she ordered the end of the long-standing extradition treaty last year. It



US Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem waves alongside Honduran Foreign Minister Javier Bu, (center), and presidential private secretary Hector Zelaya at the president’s residence on June 25. (AP)

was under that treaty that Castro sent her predecessor ex-President Juan Orlando Hernández to the United States to be tried on drug trafficking charges.

The U.S. ambassador at the time had angered Castro by criticizing the visit of Honduran officials to Venezuela to meet with that country’s longtime defense minister, Vladimir Padrino López, who has been indicted on drug trafficking charges by the US.

Then in January, Castro raised the possibility of ending Honduras’ cooperation with the U.S. military if Trump

followed through on his promised mass deportations.

The main U.S. military presence in Honduras is at Soto Cano Air Base outside the capital. While it is a Honduran base, the U.S. has maintained a significant presence there since 1983 and it has become a key US launching point for humanitarian and anti-drug missions in Central America.

Castro eventually reversed course earlier this year on the extradition treaty and restored the agreement after negotiations with the Trump administration.

Subcontinent

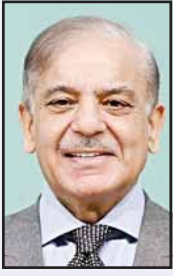
End drug abuse – Pakistan PM: Pakistani Prime Minister **Shebaz Sharif** on Thursday reaffirmed the government’s strong commitment to eliminating drug abuse and illicit trafficking, calling it a global threat that demands collective resolve and coordinated international action.

In his message on the International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking, Sharif said the annual observance on Thursday serves as a reminder of the shared responsibility to protect humanity, particularly younger generations, from the far-reaching harms of illegal drugs.

This year’s theme, “Breaking the Chain: Prevention and Recovery for All,” underscores the need to disrupt every link in the drug supply network, the prime minister said, adding that the issue cannot be addressed in isolation but requires joint efforts from individuals, communities, societies, and states. (Xinhua)

☐ ☐ ☐

Pakistan issues fresh alert for GLOF: Pakistan’s



Sharif

National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) on Wednesday issued a fresh alert for potential glacial lake outburst floods (GLOF) in the country’s northern mountainous regions, citing rapidly rising temperatures and the influence of a western weather system.

The NDMA said that the rapid melting of glaciers in key valleys has heightened the risk of glacial lakes bursting, which could trigger sudden floods and damage to infrastructure, including roads and bridges. (Xinhua)

☐ ☐ ☐

3 dead in north India flash flood: Three people died and at least a dozen are feared missing after being swept away in a flash flood triggered by torrential rains in the north Indian state of Himachal Pradesh, local authorities said on Thursday.

A rescue operation has been launched to trace the missing, said Dinesh Sharma, a local government spokesperson in Kangra. The town is about 18 kilometres (11 miles) from Dharamshala, a popular tourist destination known for its Tibetan culture and as the home of Tibetan spiritual leader, Dalai Lama.

Sudhir Sharma, a lawmaker from Dharamshala, said in a social media post that at least 15 to 20 workers resting in a temporary shed near the site of a hydroelectricity power project were swept away after water levels at a local reservoir rose suddenly late Wednesday. (AP)

Africa

Explosion, stampede kill 29 kids in CAR: An explosion and the stampede that followed killed at least 29 schoolchildren and injured more than 250 at a high school in Central African Republic’s (CAR) capital city, authorities said Thursday.

The explosion occurred Wednesday at the Barthelmy Boganda High School in Bangui when power was being restored to an electrical transformer within the school premises after it malfunctioned, according to the country’s Ministry of National Education.

Most of the victims - including 16 girls - died at the scene

after the explosion resulted in a stampede while others were confirmed dead at the hospital, the Ministry of Health said in a statement.

At least 260 students were injured and being treated in various hospitals, the ministry said. (AP)

☐ ☐ ☐

16 dead in Kenya anti-govt protests: The number of Kenyans who died during Wednesday’s nationwide protests over police brutality and bad governance has doubled to 16, according to the state-funded human rights commission.

Property was also destroyed in the protests that attracted thousands of frustrated young Kenyans. At least two police stations were razed down by angry protesters. (AP)

Kuwait oil drops USD 1.05 to USD 68.29 pb

KUWAIT CITY, June 26, (KUNA): Price of Kuwait crude oil fell by USD 1.05 during Wednesday's trading to reach USD 68.29 per barrel compared with USD 69.34 pb on Tuesday, Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) said Thursday. Brent crude surged by 54 cents to reach USD 67.68 pb and West Texas Intermediate went up 55 cents to USD 64.92 pb.

Business

US agencies will get it under future presidents

Trump gets ‘golden share’ power in US Steel buyout



President Donald Trump dances after speaking at the U.S. Steel Mon Valley Works-Irvin Plant, on May 30, 2025, in West Mifflin, Pa. (AP)

HARRISBURG, Pa., June 26, (AP): President Donald Trump will control the so-called “golden share” that’s part of the national security agreement under which he allowed Japan-based Nippon Steel to buy out iconic American steelmaker U.S. Steel, according to disclosures with the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission.

The provision gives the president the power to appoint a board member and have a say in company decisions that affect domestic steel production and competition with overseas producers.

Under the provision, Trump - or someone he designates - controls that decision-making power while he is president. However, control over those powers reverts to the Treasury Department and the Commerce Department when anyone else is president, according to the filings.

The White House didn’t immediately respond to questions Wednesday about why Trump will directly control the decision-making and why it goes to the Treasury and Commerce departments under future presidents.

Nippon Steel’s nearly \$15 billion buyout of Pittsburgh-based U.S. Steel became final last week, making U.S. Steel a wholly owned subsidiary.

Trump has sought to characterize the acquisition as a “partnership” between the two companies after he at first vowed to block the deal - as former President Joe Biden did on his way out of the White House - before changing his mind after he became president.

The national security agreement became effective June 13 and is between Nippon Steel, as well as its American subsidiary, and the federal government, represented by the departments of Commerce and Treasury, according to the disclosures.

The complete national security agreement hasn’t been published publicly, although aspects of it have been outlined in statements and securities filings made by the companies, U.S. Steel said Wednesday.

The pursuit by Nippon Steel dragged on for a year and-a-half, weighed down by national security concerns, opposition by the United Steelworkers and presidential politics in the premier battleground state

of Pennsylvania, where U.S. Steel is headquartered.

The combined company will become the world’s fourth-largest steelmaker in an industry dominated by Chinese companies, and bring what analysts say is Nippon Steel’s top-notch technology to U.S. Steel’s antiquated steelmaking processes, plus a commitment to invest \$11 billion to upgrade U.S. Steel facilities.

The potential that the deal could be permanently blocked forced Nippon Steel to sweeten the deal.

That included upping its capital commitments in U.S. Steel facilities and adding the golden share provision, giving Trump the right to appoint an independent director and veto power on specific matters.

Those matters include reductions in Nippon Steel’s capital commitments in the national security agreement; changing U.S. Steel’s name and headquarters; closing or idling U.S. Steel’s plants; transferring production or jobs outside of the U.S.; buying competing businesses in the U.S.; and certain decisions on trade, labor and sourcing outside the U.S.

KOC eyes green economy with net-zero goal by 2050

Advancing renewable energy integration

By Najeh Bilal
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 26: Kuwait Oil Company (KOC) is conducting a comprehensive study on the green economy as part of its efforts to transition to clean energy and support the national goal of achieving net-zero carbon emissions by 2050.

Sources told the newspaper that the study focuses on three key areas: the production of green hydrogen using renewable energy, the expansion of carbon capture centers, and the underground storage of carbon dioxide.

Sources said this is one of several practical measures that KOC is pursuing to align its operations with global sustainability targets.

In a related development, the Board of Directors of the Central Agency for Public Tenders (CAPT) has approved the request of KOC to cancel three tenders related to the supply of electrical power for industrial lift pumps and remote vertical manifolds in the southern and

eastern parts of the country. The cancelled tenders were originally intended for the construction of power stations in zones 6, 10 and 12 (first tender); zones 8 and 13 (second tender); and zones 7, 9, and 11 (third tender). The cancellations were made in accordance with Article 55, Clause Seven of Public Tenders Law No. 49/2016.

Sources indicated that this decision reflects the broader policy of Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) to rationalize expenditure and reduce operating costs, particularly given that many of the lift pumps currently rely on diesel-powered engines. “The move also aligns with environmental goals to reduce carbon emissions across the oil sector,” sources added.

Despite the cancellation of these tenders, KOC continues to modernize operations and improve production efficiency through the adoption of advanced global technologies. The company is also intensifying its development drilling program and accelerating the rehabilitation of idle oil wells. Notably, the percentage of idle wells was reduced from 14 percent to five percent over the past year, with approximately 2,107 wells repaired in 2024. This added an estimated 10,000 new wells and current

oil production is averaging around 1,000 barrels per day.

KOC officials have confirmed ongoing efforts to expand renewable energy integration into its operations. Hani Al-Sagabi, a renewable energy specialist at KOC, informed the newspaper that the company has long embraced scientific methods to boost production and reduce energy costs. He highlighted KOC’s early adoption of renewable energy initiatives, including the launch of the Sidra 500 solar project in 2017—one of the region’s pioneering ventures in clean energy.

Ali Al-Harz, Chief Engineer of Technology Management at KOC, added that the company is actively pursuing multiple initiatives focused on solar and wind energy. He emphasized KOC’s commitment to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050, stressing that the company is studying several pathways to ensure the amount of carbon emitted is offset by the amount captured or stored through clean energy technologies. “These efforts position KOC at the forefront of the energy transition efforts of the country, as it seeks to balance traditional oil production with sustainability and environmental responsibility,” he added.



Pumpjacks are seen before sunrise in Hobbs, N.M., Feb. 24, 2025. (AP)

Global share below 30% for first time

Oil prices fall as Mideast tensions highlight energy market changes

WASHINGTON, June 26, (AP): Iran launched missiles at a U.S. military base in Qatar on Monday, threatening to stoke a wider conflict in the Middle East, a region that supplies the world with about a third of the oil used globally every year. That same day, benchmark U.S. crude tumbled more than 7%, one of the biggest single day sell-offs this year. The following day, the same thing happened, driving crude prices down by double digits this week.

The seemingly illogical tumble in energy prices highlighted a new global reality: the world is awash in oil.

Gasoline prices barely moved this week, but experts say motorists will likely see prices at the pump begin to fall, perhaps as early as this weekend.

With the situation in the Middle East still volatile, Iran could try to block the Strait of Hormuz off its coast, through which 20% of the world’s oil passes daily. While few expect Iran to do that because it would cripple the ability to move its own oil, the fact remains that there have been drastic changes in the 50 years since an Arab oil embargo hobbled the U.S. economy and sent energy prices skyrocketing.

Following is a quick rundown of the new forces on supply and demand that have reshaped the global energy landscape, and what you can expect to see as far as prices at the pump this weekend.

Technical innovation in the last two decades has upended global energy markets and made the U.S. the world’s top oil producer, surpassing even Saudi Arabia in 2018. It’s contributed to an extended surplus of oil, and that has consistently driven prices lower.

Gas prices have been in broad decline for roughly three years. That has remained true even during traditional periods of high demand, like the summer travel season just now kicking into high gear.

Part of the reason, according to Patrick De Haan, the head of petroleum analysis for GasBuddy, is that the U.S. announced aggressive tariffs against its trading partners at around the time of year that U.S. gas prices usually begin to rise. That suppressed demand, for both households and businesses, due to anticipation of economic fallout from a broader trade war.

And prices are likely to begin falling again, and fast. Gas stations bought their fuel supplies before crude prices slumped this week, so motorists have not seen gas prices decline due to a typical lag between oil and gasoline prices.

“I think that the national average will probably cease to increase in the next 24 to 48 hours,” Patrick De Haan, the head of petroleum analysis for GasBuddy said Tuesday. “Then it should stabilize for maybe a day or two and then we should start to see prices - at least the national average - to start falling this weekend.”

On Wednesday, the average retail price for a gallon of gas in the U.S. was

\$3.23, down from \$3.47 a year ago. In June of 2022, the average U.S. price for a gallon of gas eclipsed \$5, an all-time high, according to the auto club AAA.

The U.S. is producing record volumes of natural gas and crude. Production has reached such high levels that energy companies are shutting down drilling operations because pulling crude from the ground with prices so low doesn’t make financial sense.

The odds of a U.S. oil company taking action after President Donald Trump’s this week implored them in a social media post to “drill, baby, drill,” is slim to none.

U.S. drilling activity began to slow last year and the number of active oil and gas rigs in the U.S. fell last week to 554, the lowest level since November of 2021. That’s a decline of about 19% from a year ago at this time.

That might lead to short supply and higher prices if it weren’t for producers outside of the U.S. that are currently boosting production. The type of drilling operations run outside of the U.S. can be less nimble and harder to shut off, and revenue demands much greater.

The OPEC+ alliance of oil producing nations this month announced that it was increasing production. This week, S&P Global Commodity Insights raised its 10-year production forecast for the Canadian oil sands, expecting production to reach record levels this year.

Yet these supply forces are colliding with the reality of weakening global demand for oil.

According to the International Energy Agency, oil’s share of global energy demand in 2024 fell below 30% for the first time ever. Overall energy demand has increased, but more so for natural gas and other energy sources, the IEA said in its most recent annual report published in March.

Oil demand grew a meager 0.8% last year, according to the IEA.

Part of the reason is new technology in transportation.

Global sales of electric cars climbed 25% last year, according to the IEA, just the most recent example of the mainstreaming of EVs. One of every five vehicles sold last year was electric. That’s one of the reasons demand for crude is falling, while demand for alternative forms of energy continues to rise. Additionally, fossil fuel powered engines are becoming increasingly efficient, whether they are traveling through the air, by sea, or on the road.

And right now, the same anxiety that has led households to cut down on trips in the car is also impacting airlines, which have reduced their projections for air travel this year due to potential trade wars and the economic unease that comes with them. That has added further downward pressure on oil prices.

New energy technology of course reaches beyond transportation.

GCC eyes greater role at upcoming IMF meeting

RIYADH, June 26, (KUNA): GCC Secretary-General Jassem Al-Budaiwi affirmed Wednesday Gulf Keenness to enhance international presence by attending joint economic events during annual meetings of International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank, due in Washington in October.

Al-Budaiwi mentioned this came during a meeting held via video conference with the Director of the Middle East and Central Asia Department at the IMF, Jihad Azour and the relevant team.

He praised the IMF’s role in strengthening the strategic partnership with the GCC countries, noting the importance of cooperation in confronting global economic challenges, including inflationary pressures and oil price fluctuations.

The ongoing preparations for the joint meeting between the finance ministers and central bank governors of the GCC countries and the managing director of the IMF was discussed, as will the meeting with countries of Central Asia

were a number of economic topics of common interest will also be conversed.

Al-Budaiwi also pointed out the success of the Gulf Economic Event, organized by the council at the World Bank headquarters last year, it contributed to strengthening efforts to prepare for the next event in cooperation with the IMF, for an occasion that aims to enhance dialogue on economic challenges and opportunities in the GCC.

Company reiterates focus on streamlining

Shell rejects report on BP merger interest

LONDON, June 26, (AP): British oil giant Shell on Thursday denied media reports that it is in talks to buy rival BP.

The Wall Street Journal on Wednesday said Shell was holding “early stage talks, to acquire BP, citing people familiar with the matter.

“In response to recent media speculation Shell wishes to clarify that it has not been actively considering making an offer for BP and confirms it has not made an approach to, and no talks have taken place with, BP with regards to a possible offer,” Shell said in a statement to the London Stock Exchange.

Shell has repeatedly denied speculation that it was considering a takeover of its smaller rival BP, saying it was focused on streamlining and simplifying its own business.

Some analysts have suggested BP would be an attractive takeover after a plan to shift its focus to renewable energy, which was abandoned earlier this year, left its shares undervalued in comparison to other oil companies.

BP has also struggled to recover from the



This is the Shell logo in front of a Shell gas station in Pittsburgh, June 25, 2025. (AP)

2010 Deepwater Horizon disaster, which killed 17 workers and forced the company to pay billions of dollars for environmental damage in the Gulf of Mexico.

Volatile times

You just retired or are about to. Now what?

By Christine Benz

If there's a single group of people who are likely to be experiencing the most consternation over recent market events, it's those who have just retired or who are on the cusp of hanging it up.

But as with most things in life, the key for new- and near-retirees making it through this period with their sanity intact is to focus on what they can control.

People who have just retired or are about to do so are vulnerable to sequence-of-returns risk, which means that a bad market shows up early in retirement. And this imperils your portfolio's ability to last throughout your retirement years.

Retirees who are pulling cash flows from their portfolios can address that risk by adjusting spending down to ensure that more of their portfolios are in place to recover when the market eventually does.

In our retirement income research, we found that tweaks like forgoing an inflation adjustment following a bear market help ensure that spending lasts over a 30-year period.

If you haven't yet retired, assess your planned in-retirement spending and identify where you could make cutbacks if needed.

Ideally, you can pull portfolio cash flows from safer assets and leave your stock positions undisturbed.

That's the general logic behind the Bucket approach to portfolio construction. In good years for the stock market, harvest appreciated equity assets for income. In bad ones, don't touch stocks but instead source cash flows from high-quality bonds or cash.

Using that logic, you may even want to reinvest income distributions back into securities that have recently lost value rather than spending them.

If pulling too much from a portfolio during down markets is a bad idea, filing for Social Security might look compelling.

But it could be a mistake to let what we hope will be a short-lived downturn steer you away from the lifetime benefits of delayed Social Security. Delayed filing can be particularly impactful if you're the higher earner in your family and you have a younger spouse who will receive that higher benefit for her lifetime.

In our retirement income research, we found that the benefits of delaying filing until age 70 are greatest if you have other funds to draw from until then. And they're obviously more valuable for people with above-average life expectancies, in that they stand to receive that inflation-protected income for longer.

If you need funds and have to choose between filing for Social Security and pulling from a depressed equity portfolio, consider filing for Social Security and then doing a "withdrawal of benefits" within a year of when you initially filed.

Inflation is a key risk for retiree portfolios, because the income you receive from your safe investments is going to buy you less as you age.

Many retirees focus exclusively on nominal bonds and underrate the value of inflation-protected bonds, but most of the better target-date series stake about a fourth of the bond positions in short-term Treasury Inflation-Protected Securities for people who have just retired.

Another strategy is to build a laddered portfolio of TIPS that will mature and supply you with living expenses throughout your retirement.

Finally, one small silver lining in market volatility is the opportunity to save on taxes.

The early-retirement years are an excellent time to convert traditional IRA balances to Roth. The reason is that without income from work and because you won't be subject to required minimum distributions until you're 73, your income and, in turn, the taxes that you'll owe on conversions will be lower. (AP)



Top & above: Photos from Lulu Hypermarket's official launch of the much-anticipated Tech Festival, Let's Connect.

Lulu Hypermarkets launch 'Let's Connect' – A futuristic tech festival experience in Kuwait

KUWAIT CITY, June 26: Lulu Hypermarkets across Kuwait have officially launched their much-anticipated Tech Festival, Let's Connect, running from June 25 to July 8, 2025. The festival promises unbeatable promotions, interactive experiences, and futuristic showcases tailored for tech enthusiasts of all ages.

The grand inauguration took place at Lulu Qurain outlet, where some of Kuwait's most popular tech vloggers joined Lulu's top management to kick off the event. Powered by HONOR, the festival brings cutting-edge innovations and engaging activities that transform the shopping experience for Lulu customers.

During the festival period, shoppers can enjoy exceptional deals on smartphones, IT gadgets, and accessories at all Lulu outlets across Kuwait. From the latest AI-enabled devices to

must-have gaming gear, Let's Connect delivers the best in modern technology at unbeatable prices.

A standout attraction is the Artificial Intelligence Home, an interactive zone that demonstrates how AI seamlessly integrates into daily life. Visitors can explore real-time smart connectivity through devices such as mobile phones, air conditioners, refrigerators, washing machines, vacuum cleaners, security cameras, smartwatches, and tablets – all connected in a fully functional AI-powered home setup.

To elevate the excitement, Lulu is hosting a series of interactive contests and challenges. The AI-Generated Image Contest invites customers to snap a photo with Lulu Connect and transform it using AI, then post it on Instagram with the hashtag #Aiwithlulukw to enter a prize draw. The Digital Drawing Contest encourages par-

ticipants to create original artwork in just 10 minutes using the HONOR Pad 9, with exciting prizes for the most creative entries. Meanwhile, gaming fans can compete in the PUBG Gaming Challenge live at the venue and earn rewards for their performance.

With interactive robots roaming the aisles and multiple tech zones to explore, Let's Connect combines innovation, entertainment, and unbeatable value in a dynamic retail environment. Whether you're in search of the latest tech, eager to explore AI-driven experiences, or simply looking for a fun and futuristic family outing, Lulu's Let's Connect Festival is the place to be this summer in Kuwait.

Don't miss out – visit any Lulu Hypermarket in Kuwait from June 25 to July 8 and experience the future of technology today!

Former members regroup to promote CAD education

FOCUS Kuwait launches Kerala Chapter in Alappuzha



Top & above: Photos from the event.

KUWAIT CITY, June 26: The Kerala chapter of the Forum of CAD Users (FOCUS Kuwait), an organization established by Malayali professionals in the engineering and design sector in Kuwait with the vision of making CAD education universally accessible, has been officially formed. This new chapter brings together former members of FOCUS who have returned to Kerala from Kuwait.

The inaugural meeting was held at the Haveli Resort auditorium in Alappuzha, presided over by FOCUS Kuwait President Mr. S. Ratheesh Kumar. The session was inaugurated by Mr. Sam Daniel Pynummod, former member of the Loka Kerala Sabha, cultural activist, and a longstanding member of FOCUS.

Mr. Muralee S. Nair delivered the welcome address. Mr. Saveen Chandra, President of Lensfed Alappuzha Area, and Mr. Mathew Thomas, General Secretary, conveyed their best wishes to the newly formed chapter.

Former Presidents Mr. Thomas Chandy, Mr. Salimraj, Mr. Babukutti K. Mathew, Mr. Sasi Thopson, and Mr. Sam Painumood were honored with ceremonial shawls for their contributions. The proposed framework for the new organization's activities was presented by Mr. Salim Raj. Participants in the interactive session included Mr. Thomas Chandy, Mr. Sasi Thopson, Mr. Babukutti K. Mathew, Mr. Mukesh Karayil, Mr. Salim M.N., Mr. Joseph M.T., Mr. Prasannakumar, Mr. Gopakumar, and Mr. Abdul Raheem Khan. The vote of thanks was delivered by Ms. Bindu Santhosh.

An ad-hoc committee was formed, incorporating current office bearers of FOCUS Kuwait, and an advisory council was constituted with the following members:

Mr. Sam Painumood, Mr. Muralee S. Nair, Mr. Salim Raj (Convenor), Ms. Bindu Santhosh (Joint Convenor), Mr. Prasannakumar, Mr. Babukutti K. Mathew, Mr. Mukesh Karayil, Mr. Joseph M.T., Mr. Prasad, Mr. Sugathan, Mr. Thomas Chandy, Mr. Sasi Thopson, Mr. Abdul Raheem Khan and Mr. Manoj Michael.

Balancing innovation and integrity in classroom

How ChatGPT and other AI tools changing teaching profession

WASHINGTON, June 26, (AP): For her 6th grade honors class, math teacher Ana Sepúlveda wanted to make geometry fun. She figured her students "who live and breathe soccer" would be interested to learn how mathematical concepts apply to the sport. She asked ChatGPT for help.

Within seconds, the chatbot delivered a five-page lesson plan, even offering a theme: "Geometry is everywhere in soccer - on the field, in the ball, and even in the design of stadiums!"

It explained the place of shapes and angles on a soccer field. It suggested classroom conversation starters: Why are those shapes important to the game? It proposed a project for students to design their own soccer field or stadium using rulers and protractors.

"Using AI has been a game changer for me," said Sepúlveda, who teaches at a dual language school in Dallas and has ChatGPT translate everything into Spanish. "It's helping me with lesson planning, communicating with parents and increasing student engagement."

Across the country, artificial intelligence tools are changing the teaching profession as educators use them to help write quizzes and worksheets, design lessons, assist with grading and reduce paperwork. By freeing up their time, many say the technology has made them better at their jobs.

A poll released Wednesday by Gallup and the Walton Family Foundation found 6 in 10 U.S. teachers working in K-12 public schools used AI tools for their work over the past school year, with heavier use among high school educators and early-career teachers. It surveyed more than 2,000 teachers nationwide in April.

Respondents who use AI tools weekly estimate they save them about six hours a week, suggesting the technology could help alleviate teacher burnout, said Gallup research consultant Andrea Malek Ash, who authored the report.

As schools navigate concerns over student abuse of the technology, some are also introducing guidelines and training for educators so teachers are aware of avoiding shortcuts that shortchange students.

About two dozen states have state-level AI guidance for schools, but the extent to which it is applied by schools and teachers is uneven, says Maya Israel, an associate professor of educational technology and computer science education at the University of Florida.

"We want to make sure that AI isn't replacing the judgment of a teacher," Israel said.



Art teacher Lindsay Johnson, second from left, teaches students how to ask ChatGPT for help during a summer class at Roosevelt Middle School, Wednesday, June 25, 2025, in River Forest, Ill. (AP)

If teachers are using chatbots for grading they should be aware the tools are good for "low-level" grading like multiple choice tests but less effective when nuance is required. There should be a way for students to alert teachers if the grading is too harsh or inconsistent, and the final grading decision needs to remain with the educator, she said.

About 8 in 10 teachers who use AI tools say it saves them time on work tasks like making worksheets, assessments, quizzes or on administrative work. And about 6 in 10 teachers who use AI tools said they are improving the quality of their work when it comes to modifying student materials, or giving student feedback.

"AI has transformed how I teach. It's also transformed my weekends and given me a better work-life balance," said Mary McCarthy, a high school social

studies teacher in the Houston area who has used AI tools for help with lesson plans and other tasks.

McCarthy said training she received from her school district on AI tools has helped her model proper use for her students.

"If I'm on the soapbox of, 'AI is bad and kids are going to get dumb,' well yeah if we don't teach them how to use the tool," said McCarthy. "It feels like my responsibility as the adult in the room to help them figure out how to navigate this future."

Views on the role of artificial intelligence in education have shifted dramatically since ChatGPT launched in late 2022. Schools around the country initially banned it, but since then many have sought ways to incorporate it into classrooms. Concerns about student overuse and misuse are still prevalent: About half of teachers worry that student use of AI will decrease teens' ability to think critically and independently or to have persistence when problem solving, according to the study.

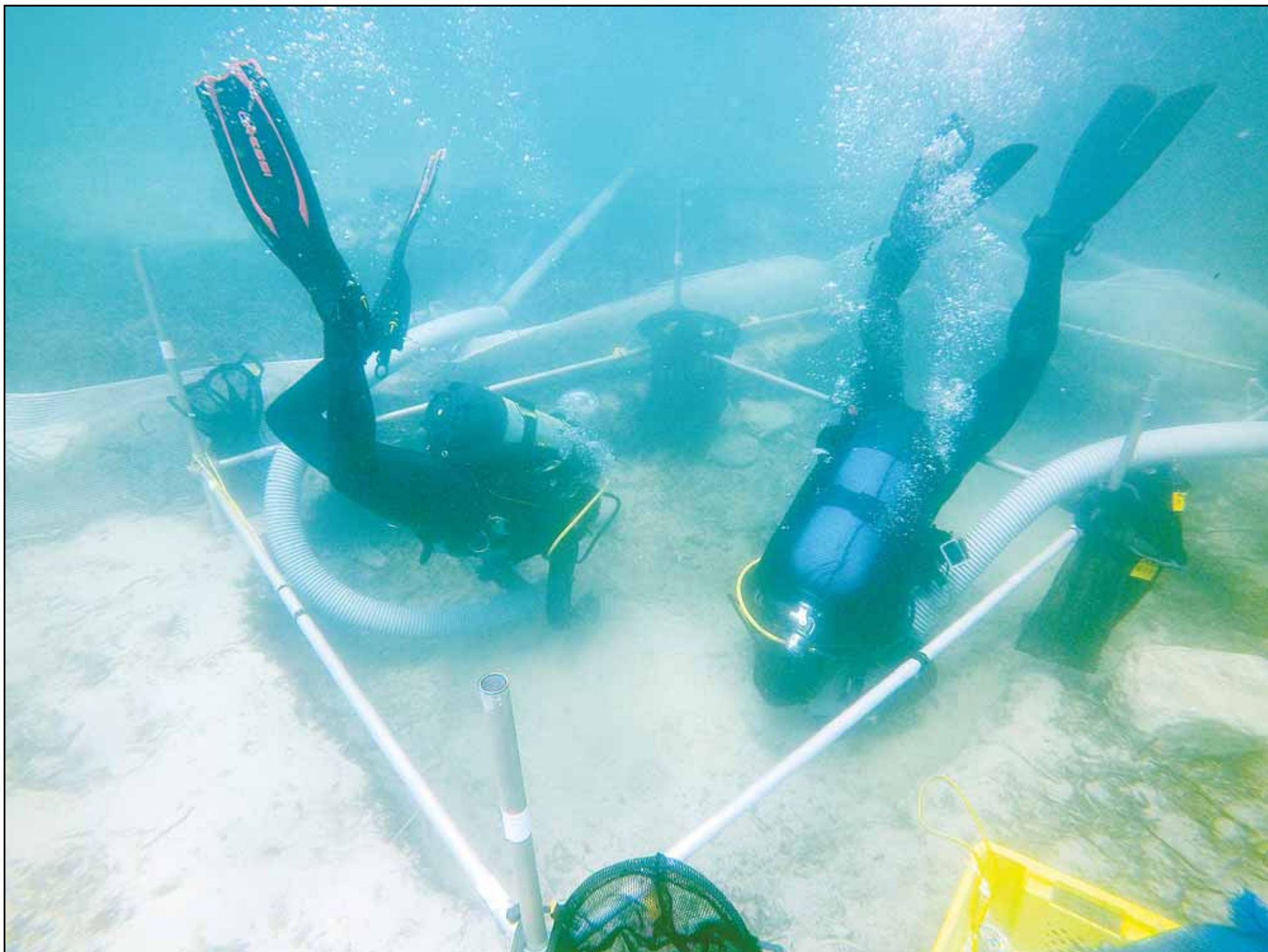
One benefit teachers see in becoming more familiar with artificial intelligence is the ability to spot when students are overusing it.

Clues that assignments are written by AI tools include an absence of grammatical errors and complex phrases in writing, said Colorado high school English teacher Darren Barkett. He said he relies on ChatGPT himself to create lesson plans and grade multiple choice tests and essays.

In suburban Chicago, middle school art teacher Lindsay Johnson said she uses only AI programs vetted by her school and deemed safe to use with minors, for data privacy and other concerns. To ensure students feel confident in their skills, she said she brings the technology in only for later stages of projects.

For her 8th graders' final assessment, Johnson asked them to make a portrait of an influential person in their lives. After students put final touches on their subject's face, Johnson introduced generative AI for those who wanted help designing the background. She used an AI tool within Canva, after checking with her district's IT department that the design software passed its privacy screener.

"As an art teacher my goal is to let them know the different tools that are out there and to teach them how those tools work," she said. Some students weren't interested in the help. "Half the class said, 'I've got a vision, and am going to keep going with it.'"



Kuwaiti researcher joins UNESCO meetings in Paris to explore the future of underwater cultural heritage and climate resilience, as part of the Centre for International Heritage Activities delegation.

Kuwait joins global dialogue on sunken treasures

An advocate's dive into the future of underwater archaeology

By Talal Al-Muhanna

Last week, from June 16-20, I had the privilege of attending a series of meetings about underwater cultural heritage and climate change at the headquarters of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in Paris. This opportunity arose after a meeting in Kuwait with Dr. Robert Parthesius, founder of the Centre for International Heritage Activities (CIE) in the Netherlands, who invited me to join the CIE delegation in Paris as a researcher of maritime and underwater cultural heritage. A former professor of heritage and museum studies at New York University Abu Dhabi, Dr. Parthesius' Amsterdam-based organization is one of approximately twenty non-governmental organizations (NGOs) accredited by UNESCO to directly facilitate the development of underwater archaeology at the national, regional, and international levels. As I am currently undertaking postgraduate research and directing a documentary film about the connections between Kuwait's maritime and underwater cultural heritage and various sectors of Kuwait's economy, the opportunity to join the CIE team in Paris could not be missed.

2001 Convention

UNESCO's 2001 Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage is a landmark convention that aims to guide governments, NGOs, heritage professionals, and all those interested in preserving, protecting, managing, and conserving some of the most vulnerable forms and aspects of tangible cultural heritage. Abbreviated as "UCH," underwater cultural heritage spans many millennia. It encompasses material cultural remains from the prehistoric to the modern era, including human settlements, transport vessels, and cargoes carried by those vessels. It refers to all artifacts, structures, and man-made formations situated in marine environments or inland waterways that have been in place for over 100 years, whether partially or wholly, and whether temporarily or permanently underwater. Fortunately, Kuwait is one of the many Arab countries that are a State Party to the 2001 Convention.

The Meeting of States Parties to the Convention

The Meeting of States Parties to the 2001 Convention takes place every two years, and the 2025 edition, which commenced on June 16, marked the tenth session. Representatives from across the Arab world were in attendance, including those from Gulf countries such as Oman and Qatar, as well as North African countries like Tunisia and Libya. Having the chance to network with like-minded archaeologists and heritage managers, exchange news, and share ideas about the situation of underwater archaeology in the Arab region was invaluable. Regarding the Gulf region, it also sparked conversation about how researchers and authorities in the Gulf Arab states might develop a network for cross-border knowledge exchange,



Talal Al-Muhanna, Dr. Robert Parthesius & Léa Lydie representing the Centre for International Heritage Activities (CIE) at UNESCO HQ in Paris, June 16, 2025.

particularly in relation to the surveying, documentation, and safeguarding of underwater archaeology in the Gulf. At the same time, it was acknowledged that the more expansive Indian Ocean serves as an essential framework for discussion between archaeologists and heritage managers from the GCC and their counterparts in coastal India, Pakistan, and East Africa – places where Gulf Arabs journeyed, conducted trade, and interacted socially, culturally, and politically for centuries. Such a discussion aligns perfectly with the perspective of the Centre for International Heritage Activities, which aims to better understand the impact of heritage practices across interconnected maritime geographies and to foster knowledge exchange that leads to more inclusive cultural futures.

The programme

The programming and events hosted by UNESCO from June 16 to 20 began with two days of official meetings of the States Parties, during which various protocols were observed, amendments to articles were drafted and debated, and progress reports were delivered. This was followed by a day-long session of the Scientific and Technical Advisory Body (or "STAB") – which provides advice in scientific and technical matters while also contributing "to

capacity building, to the development of national action plans, and to guiding States Parties in the implementation process" (UNESCO 2025). An essential indicator of the direction that future strategies appear poised to adopt was that the Secretariat intensified work on climate change and UCH, prioritizing awareness. Along these lines, major scientific conferences are planned for 2025 to foster interdisciplinary cooperation and promote heritage-based climate resilience.

Five takeaways from 5 days at UNESCO

Any attempt to summarize the numerous presentations, panels, and interactive activities that took place at the UNESCO headquarters from June 16 to 20 is bound to fall short in one way or another. However, the following five subject areas were especially compelling for those interested in addressing the challenges facing UCH through mechanisms such as educational programs, cooperative networks, and policy-oriented approaches.

1. Climate crisis

The underwater archaeology community has been slow to integrate climate change science and related modeling into its research, with an overemphasis on discussing the "impacts" of climate change rather

than taking proactive steps to mitigate its ongoing effects. Professor Colin Breen (University of Ulster) was particularly critical of the pace of progress within the field. Breen expressed frustration about the percentage of UCH under threat from coastal development – a situation which Gulf countries have been prone to for many years. The sense of urgency Dr. Breen conveyed was palpable, and he implored delegates to start integrating into other frameworks as a "moral duty".

2. Cross-sector cooperation

Echoing calls for cross-sectoral collaboration, a key takeaway from Dr. Emad Khalil's presentation, the UNESCO Chair on Underwater Cultural Heritage, was that archaeologists should pursue cooperation with the armed forces and oil and gas companies that have jurisdiction in the marine domain being researched. Citing offshore sonar surveys conducted by Oman's navy in Qalhat, Khalil encouraged other maritime archaeologists to adopt similar strategies to advance underwater archaeological research in their territorial waters. South Africa's delegate advocated for integrating heritage policies into Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) and in Marine Protected Areas (MPAs), as issues of heritage were often absent

from such discussions.

3. Education and training

Kalliopi Baika, an underwater archaeologist from Greece, emphasized the importance of education in her presentation, citing the two-year Master's program in Maritime and Coastal Archaeology at Aix-Marseille University in France. Representing Alexandria University in Egypt, Dr. Emad Khalil announced that 58 students had completed its maritime archaeology programs since 2020. Divided between 36 diploma students and 22 MA students, a number of these had accomplished their studies with the support of the Honor Frost Foundation. However, the Egyptian university highlighted is the sole academic institution in the Arab world to offer such courses, indicating the overall weak representation of the underwater archaeology field at the higher education level throughout the Arab world.

4. Conservation

A representative from the Croatia-based International Centre for Underwater Archaeology (ICUA) in Zadar reminded delegates that efforts to bolster conservation science for underwater cultural heritage (UCH) are needed, as the discipline is currently under-served. A pilot project featuring the 'in situ' conservation of a rare,

downed World War II aircraft was presented as an example of an ongoing underwater conservation project with a 15-year research horizon. By attaching magnesium cathodes to the submerged aircraft, the vessel's rate of deterioration has been significantly decreased. Considering the high number of metal aircraft and shipwrecks globally, the importance of retarding deterioration of metal hulls, fuselages, and other parts cannot be understated.

5. Potentially polluting wrecks

According to maritime archaeologist Dr. Benjamin Ferrari, there are at least 8,000 vessels worldwide, primarily from two World Wars, that contain a large amount of oil at risk of being released and which authorities are "not ready to deal with". Since submerged vessels are susceptible to deterioration and collapse, sudden leakages of pollutants, such as oil, chemicals, and munitions, are a significant concern. Despite a considerable amount of finance being associated with emergency oil response, this is mainly for contemporary spills from privately owned vessels and is not specifically geared towards legacy wrecks. As such, existing resources cannot be used to solve the threat of polluting wrecks.

Moving beyond siloed research

Perhaps the main takeaway from the UNESCO-hosted meetings is that protecting our oceans, preserving underwater archaeology, and celebrating maritime cultural heritage are activities that stakeholders should pursue together, rather than in isolation, in the realms of science, academia, or culture. The broader climate crisis, which endangers underwater cultural heritage through sea level rise, more frequent storms of greater intensity, and ocean acidification, can only be addressed through cooperative action on an interdisciplinary basis. Likewise, the grave threat to the marine environment from Potentially Polluting Wrecks (PPW) cannot be prevented or, at the very least, mitigated without cross-sector collaboration among scientists, policymakers, industry, and maritime communities.



Dr. Benjamin Ferrari discusses potentially polluting wrecks (PPW) at UNESCO HQ in Paris.



Session on Underwater Cultural Heritage (UCH) and climate change at UNESCO HQ in Paris, June 19, 2025.



Postcards about accredited NGOs at UNESCO HQ in Paris.

'As I am currently undertaking post-graduate research and directing a documentary film about the connections between Kuwait's maritime and underwater cultural heritage and various sectors of Kuwait's economy, the opportunity to join the CIE team in Paris could not be missed.'

'Regarding the Gulf region, it sparked conversation about how researchers and authorities in the Gulf Arab states might develop a network for cross-border knowledge exchange, particularly in relation to the surveying, documentation, and safeguarding of underwater archaeology in the Gulf.'

Celebrities

An Arab Times exclusive

A star that ignites hearts and screens

Antonella Salvucci



“For me, acting is not just about playing a role – it’s about telling stories that matter. Every rejection, every challenge, became part of my growth. I believe we’re all shaped by different cultures and experiences, and as artists, we have a duty to use our voice to inspire change, empower others, and remind people that resilience and hope can rewrite any script.”

By Marlon Aquino Malinao

With a career that defies borders and genres, Antonella Salvucci stands as a luminous figure in international cinema. From her roots in Italy to her work in Hollywood, Australia, and India, Salvucci’s artistic journey is as diverse as it is inspiring. In this Arab Times exclusive, she shares candid insights into her creative motivations, the lessons learned from both triumph and rejection, her passionate advocacy for women, and her dreams for the future. Her story is not just one of personal success, but of using her platform to inspire and empower others.

A life in motion: The making of a global artist

Born and raised in Italy, Antonella Salvucci first caught the public’s attention as a fashion model, gracing the covers of leading magazines in Italy and France. Yet, as she explains, it was her passion for storytelling and her curiosity about the world that soon drew her to acting—a field in which she has found both challenge and fulfillment.

“I really like the globalization of art,” Salvucci told Arab Times. “I believe that each of us, based on our own background, origins, and experiences, is a kaleidoscope of cultures, languages, and new messages to be transferred. That’s why I never stop in the discovery and human evolution that I try in my own way to impress also on the different characters that I go to interpret as an actress!”

Her artistic wanderlust has been a defining force in her life. “As a good Sagittarius, I am always traveling and with my suitcase ready. Since I was about twenty years old, I go especially to America to lock myself in theaters and in international acting masterclasses to feel at one with other artists from different countries, learn from them, compare myself with other methods, and also bring my enthusiasm and my Italian personality. I believe that you have to open your mind also to feel like a more complete human being.”

This openness to learning and adaptation has shaped Salvucci’s career. She immersed herself in acting workshops with legends like Lino Damiani, Anna Strasberg, and Ivana Chubbuck, and further honed her craft in Los Angeles under renowned coach Bernard Hiller and at the Actors Studio with Oscar-winner Martin Landau.

Lessons from legends — and the power of rejection

Salvucci’s journey has not been without obstacles. She credits both her mentors and her detractors for fueling her growth.

“I thank one by one every single person I have met, especially those who closed the door in my face, who did not believe in me or who said no to me: those are the best teachings to not let you relax, to lower your guard, but they are the engine to make you get up with determination and bring out your talent!”

She is quick to express gratitude for her family’s support: “I have wonderful parents who are always my best teachers to teach me the harmony of life.” Professionally, she has learned from some of the greatest names in cinema: “From Martin Landau, who I had the privilege of following in his lessons at the Actors Studio, to Bernard Hiller my acting coach, to Paolo Sorrentino who directed me in ‘The Family Friend,’ to Peter Chelsom (‘Serendipity,’ ‘Shall We Dance’) with whom I worked in the film ‘A Sudden Case of Christmas,’ to the masters of Italian cinema like Pupi Avati.”

Her resilience in the face of rejection has become a driving force, pushing her to continually evolve and excel.

From Italy to the world: Building an international career

Salvucci’s versatility and commitment have led to a filmography that reads like a tour of world cinema. After establishing herself on Italian television in dramas such as “The Marshal Rocca” and “Carabinieri,” her breakout came with the role of a complex noblewoman in Aurelio Grimaldi’s “L’educazione sentimentale di Eugénie.” This performance caught the eye of Paolo Sorrentino and led to further high-profile roles.

Her credits include collaborations with directors like Lamberto Bava (“The Torturer”), Giacomo K. Cimini (“Red Riding Hood”), Alessandro Perrella (“The Night of the Sinner” with Robert Englund), and Marco

Carlucci (“Il punto rosso”). She has also worked in American productions filmed in Italy, such as “The Voice & the Diva” (Michael Oblowitz), “The American Connection” (Jeff Espanol), and “The Mission Possible” with John Savage (Brett Roberts).

Salvucci’s artistic curiosity has taken her to India for commercials and film projects, and she has starred in stage comedies, musicals, and the hit Italian TV show “I Delitti del Barlume 9.” Her recent credits include “Lamborghini – The Legend” with Oscar-winner Bobby Moresco and a cameo in “Kid Santa” alongside Alec Baldwin.

Art meets advocacy: Using fame for good

For Salvucci, acting is more than a profession—it’s a platform for change. She is deeply involved in women’s empowerment and anti-violence initiatives, seeing her advocacy as inseparable from her creative work.

“I think that every artist has almost a moral duty to commit to humanitarian causes and against violence against women—to use their visibility and influence in favor of important social issues, giving a voice to those who often don’t have one and helping to raise public awareness,” she explains.

She draws inspiration from actresses like Angelina Jolie, who have become ambassadors for international organizations. “This is also a bit of my life goal — to unite the light side of the entertainment world with a more solid and structured substratum such as commitment and support for important issues.”

Salvucci’s advocacy is hands-on: she leads panels at major film festivals, works with the No Violence Project, and participates in global awareness events. “The commitment for me as an actress and as a woman in these causes comes from the desire to make a concrete difference in the name of popularity to promote justice, solidarity, and social change.”

The roles she loves — and the ones she still dreams of

Salvucci’s range as an actress is remarkable, from noblewomen to action heroines. Yet she remains hungry for new challenges.

“I love to continually change and explore different lives—that’s why I like acting. It’s like living more lives at the same time and going back to being a child with amazement in your eyes and that constant sense of wonder! There are many roles that I would like to play, certainly strong women with a certain personality and charisma, real women who have suffered but who fight with the strength of their smile and who have the ability to inspire and enchant.”

Recent triumphs and future aspirations

Recently, Salvucci filmed with Danny DeVito and his daughter Lucy, describing the experience as “magical.” “I have a beautiful memory of the set with Danny DeVito and his daughter Lucy DeVito—loving and simple people who love Italy and this job without ever complaining even in the most difficult scenes with the horses, in the rain, in the middle of the ravines.”

Her appearance on “The Bold & the Beautiful” was another milestone: “The honor of having been on an iconic set that I dreamed of since I was a child will remain in my heart for a long time, next to actors with enormous sensitivity and generosity immediately ready to welcome new ones without stardom or competition. Now I understand why the series has maintained this great success with the public intact for almost forty years of programming!”

Looking ahead, Salvucci is on the set of a new Italian film and preparing to shoot a television series that will take her away from Rome for several months. Yet she remains eager to expand her horizons even further: “I hope with all my heart to be able to shoot a project in the Middle East and be influenced by that sense of happiness, belonging, elegance that you have always communicated to me!”

A beacon for the next generation

Antonella Salvucci’s journey is one of relentless curiosity, artistic integrity, and social commitment. As her career continues to flourish, she remains a beacon of inspiration—an artist who uses her craft not just to entertain, but to empower and uplift.

... weaving dreams between continents and cameras

editor’s choice



The UK’s giant music event in numbers

Inside Glastonbury: What makes the festival legendary?

LONDON, June 26, (AP): This week, thousands of music lovers from across the UK and beyond will flock to a farm in the southwest of England for the legendary Glastonbury Festival of Contemporary Performing Arts. But just how many? Find out in this guide to Glastonbury - and all of its quirks - by the numbers.

The festival’s current license allows up to 210,000 people on-site, including fans, staff and performers - but, this year, a few thousand fewer tickets have been sold, to avoid overcrowding.

The closest village of Pilton has a population of around 1,000 people. During the festival, though, the area becomes the seventh-largest city in the UK (more than double that of nearby Bath, which has a population of around 94,000).

The headliners on the iconic Pyramid Stage traditionally attract the biggest crowds, and Elton John’s 2023 farewell gig attracted more than 120,000 fans as he closed the festival. Paul McCartney pulled in more than 100,000 festivalgoers for his headlining Saturday night set in 2022.

As well as standard portable toilets, the more than 4,000 toilets include the infamous “long drops” - lockable, open-air toilets set up on high with a huge concrete gutter around 10 feet (3 meters) below (looking down not recommended) and “compost loos,” with a bin of sawdust located outside to scoop and scatter over your business. There are also both men’s and women’s urinals for a speedy pee!

By contrast, there are scarce few public showers. Organizers instead recommend a “good ol’ fashioned stripwash and making do.”

This year’s headliners are English indie rockers The 1975 on Friday, Canadian-American singer-songwriter Neil Young on Saturday and American pop star Olivia Rodrigo closing on Sunday. But if that’s not your thing, there are 3,969 other acts to choose from.

Tickets for this year went on sale in November 2024, more than 6 months before a single performer was announced, yet the general admission tickets sold out in 35 minutes. The resale round in April saw remaining tickets sell out in just 20 minutes.



Pyramid Stage at the Glastonbury Festival on Worthy Farm, in Somerset, England, Wednesday, June 25. (AP)

This does not mean this week is the 55th edition though, as traditionally the festival takes a fallow year roughly every five years to allow the farmland to recover. The last official fallow year was 2018, but the festival’s 50th anniversary in 2020 and the following year’s edition were canceled because of the coronavirus pandemic.

If you’re considering making Glasto plans for next year, don’t bother: 2026 is a fallow year.

This is equivalent to 500 soccer pitches or approximately 733 standard American football fields. That makes it the world’s largest greenfield music and arts event.

The rest of the year, that is - the humans and the cows don’t cohabitate during the festival. Worthy Farm, where the festival is held, is a working farm with 500 milking cows and 500 young stock. During the festival, organizer Michael Eavis sends the dairy cows for a short stay at the Glastonbury “Moo-tel,” a large shed based away from the action, while the rest go off to graze further afield.

The more than 400 stalls go well beyond the traditional festival burger, offering just about every type of global cuisine you can imagine. Plus the Brits love a “meal deal” (a combo of a main meal and a drink or side dish) and Glastonbury is no exception with 6-pound (roughly \$8) meal deals offered across the site to keep things affordable.

Twenty-one of these were for drug-related offenses, but the festival retains a low crime rate overall.

A “Super Fortress Fence” was installed in 2002. Before this, there were tens of thousands of gate-crashers every year. Some jumped the fence, while others tunneled under. “Great Escape” style. Eavis installed the impenetrable fence after he was fined in 2000 for breaching licensing conditions.

Ticket holders can get access starting 8 a.m. Wednesday to pitch their tents and bag the best spots. While there is entertainment and music over the first few days, the main stages start up on Friday morning and run through Sunday night. All festivalgoers must leave by 5 p.m. Monday, when the site officially closes.

Coldplay has headlined the Pyramid Stage a record five times. They first topped the bill in 2002, followed by 2005, 2011, 2016 and, most recently, 2024. Arctic Monkeys, Muse and Radiohead are among an elite group of artists who have headlined three times.

Television



This image released by Apple TV+ shows Taron Egerton, left, and Jurnee Smollett in a scene from ‘Smoke.’ (AP)

New Apple TV+ crime drama based on true story

Arson ignites Lehane’s firebug series ‘Smoke’

NEW YORK, June 26, (AP): Author and screenwriter Dennis Lehane has a healthy respect for the power of fire. He learned that the hard way - surviving a house fire in Boston in his 30s.

Lehane was living on the top floor of an apartment building when a propane tank on the roof exploded and started a blaze. The landlord was replacing the building’s smoke detectors at the time so none were working. Lehane is lucky to be alive and he credits, in part, the flames.

“If you’re trapped in fire - if you wake up and the building you’re in is on fire - it’s up to the fire at that point. It’s really up to whims of the fire, whatever’s going to happen to you. And I find that lack of control fascinating.”

Lehane, whose literary canon includes the novels-turned-movie hits “Gone, Baby, Gone” and “Mystic River,” has turned to fire for his latest project - Apple TV+’s new nine-episode crime drama “Smoke.” It debuts Friday.

It’s based on the true story of a former arson investigator who was convicted in 1998 of serial arson, captured in part after he wrote a novel about a firefighter who was a serial arsonist. The case - chronicled in the 2021 podcast Firebug - sparked something in Lehane.

“I just thought, that’s just the height of craziness. Like, you’re not only in denial about who you are, you’re so far in denial you’re going to write a book about what a great guy you are and then use the fires that you set as the models for the fires in your book?” he says. “I can get in the zip code of that mindset; I cannot land on the street, though.”

The show marks a reunion between Lehane, Greg Kinnear and

Taron Egerton, who previously worked together on the 2022 Apple TV+ series “Black Bird.” It also stars Jurnee Smollett, Anna Chlumsky and John Leguizamo, and boasts an original, eerie song by Radiohead’s Thom Yorke called “Dialing In.”

Egerton plays Dave Gudsen, an arson investigator in Umlerland, a fictional town in the Pacific Northwest, who is chasing two separate firebugs. He’s teamed up with a smart but troubled detective played by Smollett, who begin a game of cat and mouse.

If the setup sounds like it leads to a typical TV procedural, viewers who stick around get rewarded by a show that gets weirder and more complex, infused by Lehane’s attraction to moral ambiguity.

Contradictions

“We walk with contradictions and I think that’s the dramatic irony that Dennis is exploring,” says Smollett. “These people are saying they’re fighting to do the right thing and yet they’re morally questionable. I think that’s very relevant today.”

Egerton’s Dave, it’s soon clear, is not who he appears to be and has an almost superhuman ability to compartmentalize aspects of his personal and private lives. He is both bombastic and insecure, goofy and frightening.

“Taron has endless reservoirs of talent to draw on. He’s an extremely inspired actor,” says Lehane. “He comes at it from the same place I come at it, which is Taron won’t take a role unless some part of it scares him. I won’t tell a story unless some of it scares me.”

Egerton said he relished a chance to show a different side of himself, rebelling a little at his safe, good-guy public persona after the

success of his heroic turn in 2024’s “Carry-On.”

“You know what? I’m not that affable. I am sometimes, but I’m not some of the time,” he says, laughing. “I think the thing I love about Dave is there is a tension between what the perception of him is and who he really is. And how can you ever really know who a person is?”

Adding to the series’ allure is some of Lehane’s street poetry, like the line: “Whatever you do, whatever you know, however much lifetime wisdom you’ve accrued, fire puts a lie to it all.”

Smollett was onboard after an initial conversation with Lehane in which he said: “So many of us say we want to be happy and yet we are drawn to the very thing that will destroy us.” That was Smollett’s entry point to her gloriously messy character.

Smollett’s detective, a former Marine, refuses to be vulnerable, is excellent at her job, traumatized by a past experience with arson and not afraid to mess with anyone. Early on, she is shown using a sledgehammer to her own home.

“She plays with fire,” says Smollett. “She’s living on the edge and has this mask and this guard up and walks around as if she’s invincible because she’s really just afraid.”

Lehane says with “Smoke” he’s drawn to people who invest in a narrative of who they choose to be rather than be true to who they really are.

“You don’t know who they are because they don’t know who they are,” he says. “They’re running from themselves, they’re running from their true selves. And I felt like that’s the interesting story here I’m trying to tell.”

Variety

VENICE, Italy: Amazon founder Jeff Bezos and Lauren Sanchez arrived in Venice, Italy, on Wednesday ahead of their star-studded weekend wedding, which has galvanized an assortment of protesters.

Bezos waded from a water taxi as he and Sanchez arrived at the dock of the Aman Hotel on the Grand Canal with two security boats in tow.

Oprah Winfrey arrived in Venice on Thursday, leading a star-studded guest list of celebrities descending on the lagoon city for the weekend wedding of Amazon founder Jeff Bezos and Lauren Sánchez.

Winfrey’s private jet landed at Venice’s Marco Polo airport. Tom Brady arrived shortly afterwards.

The details of the nuptials have been a tightly kept secret, though the locations now appear to have firmed up as has the guest list.

Ivanka Trump, her husband Jared Kushner and their three children arrived Wednesday.

Other celebrities on the guest list, according to two people close to the wedding who spoke on condition of anonymity, because they weren’t authorized to speak publicly, include: Kim Kardashian, Mick Jagger, Katy Perry, Leonardo DiCaprio, Orlando Bloom.

Italian media reported the arrivals or presence of: Microsoft founder Bill Gates and Diane von Furstenberg and her husband Barry Diller.

Their wedding has drawn protests by groups who view it as a sign of the growing disparity between the haves and have-nots, while residents complain it exemplifies the way their needs are disregarded in the era of mass tourism to the historic lagoon city. (AP)



Bezos

ROME: In celebration of the 55th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic ties between China and Italy, a launch event for the documentary “Xi Jinping’s Cultural Story,” produced by China Media Group, was held in Rome on Wednesday.

Starting from June 25, the program will be broadcast across more than 30 mainstream Italian media outlets, including Alma TV, Donna TV, Travel TV, Lazio TV, Lombardia City TV, Roma Corona TV, Milan Pavia TV, and the website of Milano Finanza, among others.

“Xi Jinping’s Cultural Story” features vivid stories that reflect Chinese President Xi Jinping’s deep concern for the inheritance and development of culture. It showcases his profound reflections on the idea that “our country will thrive only if our culture thrives, and our nation will be strong only if our culture is strong,” as well as his deep affection for cultural heritage and his dedication to preserving historical continuity. The program explains to international audiences the essence of Xi Jinping Thought on Culture and the solid cultural foundation underpinning his philosophy of governance. (Xinhua)

Wild tunes bring joy to homeless pets

Volunteers play music to soothe shelter animals

DENVER, June 26, (AP): It’s often said music is the universal language of humanity. Now a 12-year-old Houston boy is putting that to the test for an unlikely audience - man’s best friend.

Yuvi Agarwal started playing keyboard when he was 4 and several years ago noticed his playing soothed his family’s restless golden doodle, Bozo. He grew curious if it also could help stressed homeless animals.

With help from his parents, who both have backgrounds in marketing, he founded the nonprofit Wild Tunes in 2023 to recruit musicians to play in animal shelters. So far he has enlisted about 100 volunteer musicians and singers of all ages and abilities to perform at nine shelters in Houston, New Jersey and Denver.

“You don’t have to understand the lyrics to enjoy the music. Just enjoy the melody, the harmony and the rhythms. So it transcends linguistic barriers, and even it can just transcend species,” Agarwal said recently after playing hits like The Beatles’ “Hey Jude” and Ed Sheeran’s “Perfect” on his portable keyboard at the Denver Animal Shelter.

Agarwal, who was playing for an elderly miniature poodle named Pituca - Spanish slang sometimes used to describe a snob - said many of his four-legged listeners, which include cats, become excited when he enters their kennel. But after a few minutes of playing, they calm down. Some even go to sleep.

He remembers a rescue dog named Penelope that refused to come out of her enclosure in Houston to be fed.

Nibbling

“Within a short period of me playing, she went from not even coming out of her kennel to licking me all over my face and nibbling my ears,” Agarwal said.

A few stalls down from where he was jamming on his keyboard at the Denver shelter, volunteer Sarah McDonner played Mozart and Bach on her flute for Max, a 1-year-old stray boxer that tilted his head when she hit the high notes.

“The animals having that human interaction in a positive way, I think, gives them something to look forward to, something that is different throughout their day,” said McDonner, a professional musician

who met Agarwal in Houston.

She helped bring the program to Colorado after moving to Denver a few months ago. “I think it’s very important to give them something different from what they’re used to in their little tiny cages ... and makes them more adoptable in the long run,” McDonner said.

While the effect of music on humans has been studied extensively, its role in animal behavior remains murky.

Several studies suggest that classical music generally has a calming influence on dogs in stressful environments like kennels, shelters and veterinary clinics. But some researchers warn there is not enough data to support the claim.

“We always want these really simplistic answers. So we want to say that music calms animals, for example, and I think that it’s much more nuanced than that,” said Lori Kogan, a self-described “dog-person” who chairs the human-animal interaction section of the American Psychological Association. “There’s a lot more research that needs to happen before I think that we can unequivocally say that music is a great thing for animals.”



Sarah McDonner, a volunteer for Wild Tunes, which aims to soothe stressed shelter animals with live music, plays the flute at the Denver Animal Shelter, on Friday, May 30, 2025. (AP)

‘A rare heart side effect seen in young men’

FDA requires updated heart risk warning with COVID shots

WASHINGTON, June 26, (AP): The Food and Drug Administration said Wednesday it has expanded existing warnings on the two leading COVID-19 vaccines about a rare heart side effect mainly seen in young men.

Myocarditis, a type of heart inflammation that is usually mild, emerged as a complication after the first shots became widely available in 2021. Prescribing information from both Pfizer and Moderna already advises doctors about the issue.

In April, the FDA sent letters to both drugmakers asking them to update and expand the warnings to add more detail about the problem and to cover a larger group of patients. While the FDA can mandate label changes, the process is often more of a negotiation with companies.

Specifically, the new warning lists the risk of myocarditis as 8 cases per 1 million people who got the 2023-2024 COVID shots between the ages of 6 months and 64 years old. The label also notes that the problem has been most common among males ages 12 to 24. The previous label said the problem mostly occurs in 12- to 17-year-olds.



Dr. Sarah Meyer presents on COVID vaccine safety during a meeting of the Advisory Committee in Immunization Practices at the CDC, Wednesday, June 25, in Atlanta. (AP)

The FDA’s labeling change appears to conflict with some prior findings of scientists elsewhere in the US government.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention previously concluded there was no increased risk of myocarditis detected in government vaccine injury databases for COVID-19 shots dating back to 2022. Officials also noted that cases tend to resolve quickly and are less severe than those associated with COVID-19 infection itself, which can also cause myocarditis.

The FDA announcement came as new vaccine advisers appointed by Health Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. met to debate the continuing use of COVID-19 vaccines for key groups, including pregnant women. It’s the first meeting of the CDC advisory panel since Kennedy abruptly dismissed all 17 members of the group, naming a new panel that includes several members with a history of anti-vaccine statements.

The FDA’s label update is the latest step by officials working under Kennedy to restrict or undercut use of vaccines. FDA Commissioner Marty Makary and a top deputy recently restricted annual COVID-19 shots to seniors and other Americans at higher risk from the virus. They’ve also suggested seasonal tweaks to match the latest circulating virus strains are new products that require

extra testing. Outside experts said the new warning is the wrong approach.

“They are right to suggest that we need to consider myocarditis risks associated with the vaccine, but what they propose is exactly the wrong solution,” said Dr. Robert Morris, a public health specialist at the University of Washington. “We should be investigating who is prone to myocarditis to see if we can predict and mitigate that risk.”

Makary and several other FDA officials gained prominence during the pandemic by suggesting the federal government exaggerated the benefits of COVID-19 boosters and downplayed serious side effects, including myocarditis.

Before joining the government, Makary and two of his current FDA deputies wrote a 2022 paper that said mandating booster shots in young people would cause more vaccine-related injuries than prevented hospitalizations from COVID-19 infections. The conclusion contradicted that of many leading vaccine and public health experts at the time, including at the CDC.

‘Re-earn public trust’

US pulls funding from Gavi, says it ‘ignored the science’

LONDON, June 26, (AP): US Health Secretary **Robert F. Kennedy Jr.** said the country is pulling its support from the vaccines alliance Gavi, saying the organization has “ignored the science” and “lost the public trust.”

A video of Kennedy’s speech was shown to participants at a Gavi meeting in Brussels on Wednesday, where the vaccines group was hoping to raise at least \$9 billion for the next five years.



Kennedy

Gavi is a public-private partnership including WHO, UNICEF, the Gates Foundation and the World Bank. It has paid for more than 1 billion children to be vaccinated through routine immunization programs, saving an estimated 18 million lives. The US has long been one of its biggest supporters; before Trump’s re-election, the country had pledged \$1 billion through 2030.

Kennedy called on Gavi “to re-earn the public trust and to justify the \$8 billion America has provided in funding since 2001,” saying officials must “consider the best science available, even when that science contradicts established paradigms.” Kennedy said until that happens, the US won’t contribute further to Gavi.

Kennedy, a longtime vaccine skeptic, said he and President Trump were concerned about how Gavi and

the World Health Organization partnered together during the COVID-19 pandemic to work with social media companies “to silence dissenting views, to stifle free speech and legitimate questions” during a time when many people had questions about vaccine safety.

Kennedy said Gavi continues to make “questionable recommendations,” like advising pregnant women to get immunized against COVID-19 and funding the roll-out of a vaccine against diphtheria, tetanus and pertussis in poorer countries.

WHO and other health authorities have recommended pregnant women get vaccinated against COVID-19, saying they are at higher risk of severe disease.

Kennedy said he has seen research that concluded that young girls vaccinated against diphtheria, tetanus and pertussis were more likely to die from all other causes than children who weren’t immunized.

Gavi said in a statement Thursday that its “utmost concern is the health and safety of children.” The organization said any decision it makes on vaccines to buy is done in accordance with recommendations issued by WHO’s expert vaccine group.

“This ensures Gavi investments are grounded in the best available science and public health priorities,” it said. Gavi said scientists had reviewed all available data, including any studies that raised concerns, and that the diphtheria, tetanus and pertussis vaccine has “played a key role in helping halve childhood mortality.”

Israel’s blockade fueling infant health crisis

Doctors, moms say these babies in Gaza may die without formula

KHAN YOUNIS, Gaza Strip, June 26, (AP): Seham Fawzy Khodeir watches as her son lies inside a dilapidated incubator and listens to his faint cry, mixed with the muted sound of the equipment.

The mother of six is increasingly concerned about the survival of Hisham al-Lahham, who was just days old, breathing with the help of equipment and being fed through a tube in his tiny nose.

Most alarming is that the medical-grade formula he needs to survive is running out. “There is no milk,” the 24-year-old mother told The Associated Press. He needs it to “to get better, to live and to see life.”

Hisham is among 580 premature babies at risk of death from starvation across the war-battered Gaza Strip, according to the Gaza Health Ministry. Khodeir and others blame Israel’s blockade for the plight of their children. Doctors say that although some formula has been delivered, the situation is dire. Their desperation comes as the war in Gaza has been overshadowed by the Israel-Iran war.

Voice

“These babies have no time ... and no voice,” said Dr. Ahmed al-Farah, head of the pediatrics and obstetrics department at Nasser Hospital, the main medical facility still partially functional in southern Gaza.

Khodeir’s son is one of 10 babies in incubators at Nasser’s neonatal intensive care unit. Last week, al-Farah rang the alarm, saying the hospital’s stock of medical-grade formula was “completely depleted.”

He said the tiny babies who relied on it would face “an avoidable disaster” in two to three days.

His pleas were answered, in part, by the delivery of 20 boxes of formula sent over the weekend by a US aid group, Rahma Worldwide. The new delivery is enough to cover the needs for the 10 infants for up to two weeks, al-Farah said.

Al-Farah, however, expressed concern about future deliveries, saying that it wasn’t guaranteed that more formula would be allowed into Gaza.

“This is not enough at all,” he said. “It solved the problem temporarily, but what we need is a permanent solution: Lift the siege.”

Meanwhile, fortified formula required for newborns is already out of stock at Al-Rantisi Hospital in Gaza City, its director, Dr. Jamil Suliman, said.

“Many mothers are unable to breast-feed due to severe malnutrition,” he said, warning of a looming crisis.

Infants are among the hardest hit



A nurse feeds a prematurely born baby lying in an incubator at the neonatal intensive care unit of Nasser Hospital in Khan Younis, southern Gaza Strip, Thursday, June 19. (AP)

by Israel’s blockade, which started on March 2 with the complete ban of any food, water, shelter or medication.

Under mounting international pressure and repeated warnings of famine from the United Nations, Israel began allowing what Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu called “minimal” aid, starting May 19.

Since then, more than 1,000 tons of baby food, including formula, have entered Gaza, according to COGAT, the Israeli defense agency in charge of aid coordination in the Palestinian territory.

Medicine

“Food for babies is certainly entering (the Gaza Strip), as the organizations are requesting it we are approving it, and there is no withholding of food for babies,” a COGAT spokesperson said.

But Gaza’s health officials say that for these babies, that aid hasn’t included enough critical medicine, formula, medical equipment, and spare parts to keep the existing equipment operational.

The Palestinian Center for Human Rights said in a report Monday that fortified infant formula was nearly depleted from local markets, with several types already completely out of stock.

“Any limited quantities available in some pharmacies are being sold at skyrocketing prices, far beyond the purchasing power of most families,” it said.

COGAT said the baby food is being distributed mostly through international organizations - not via the Gaza Humanitarian Foundation, an

Israeli-backed private contractor that has drawn criticism from other groups. Palestinian witnesses and health officials say Israeli forces have opened fire on crowds heading to GHF sites. The Israeli military says it has fired warning shots.

Israel has said the blockade aims to pressure Hamas into releasing the 50 hostages it still holds from its Oct. 7, 2023, attack on southern Israel that sparked the war. Fewer than half are still believed to be alive.

Israel has accused Hamas of siphoning aid, without providing evidence. The United Nations says there’s been no significant diversion of aid.

Militants killed around 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and took 251 hostage on Oct. 7. Most of the hostages have been released by ceasefire agreements.

The war has unleashed unrelenting destruction, with more than 56,000 Palestinians killed and more than 131,000 wounded in Israel’s offensive, according to Gaza health officials. The officials don’t distinguish between combatants and civilians but say more than half the casualties are women and children.

The war and the blockade have sparked a humanitarian crisis, creating shortages of the most basic necessities and pushing Gaza’s health care system to the brink of collapse.

Seventeen of the enclave’s 36 hospitals remain partially functioning, providing health care to more than 2 million people amid bombings, rising malnutrition rates and dwindling medical supplies.

CT scans

AI helps spot cancer early

HANGZHOU, June 26, (Xinhua): Chinese researchers have developed an AI model that can spot early signs of stomach cancer in routine CT scans, helping doctors identify cases earlier.

The DAMO GRAPE model, co-developed by the Zhejiang Cancer Hospital and Alibaba’s DAMO Academy in east China’s Zhejiang Province, was tested on more than 70,000 patients, yielding promising results.

The study was published in the journal Nature Medicine on Tuesday.

“This is an interesting finding as such a tool may be able to identify more patients with earlier stage gastric cancer in the future,” commented a reviewer of the journal.

Stomach cancer results in 260,000 deaths every year in China. While early detection can increase five-year survival rates from under 30 percent to over 90 percent, many patients avoid invasive endoscopy, and the quality of screening varies among hospitals, said Cheng Xiangdong, Party chief of the hospital.

Examination

Zhang Ling, the corresponding author and a senior algorithm expert at DAMO Academy, said that non-contrast CT is a common non-invasive examination used for checkups and outpatient care, as it is both cost-effective and efficient. However, it is traditionally considered unsuitable for scanning hollow organs like the stomach.

The team challenged this conventional belief by building the world’s largest multicenter dataset of gastric non-contrast CT images, overcoming difficulties such as the stomach’s variable shape, internal content interference and early-stage cancer cells limited to the mucosal layer.

“The model achieved 85.1 percent sensitivity and 96.8 percent specificity, outperforming radiologists by 21.8 percent and 14 percent, respectively,” said Zhang. “This marks the first time non-contrast CT can detect early gastric cancer.”

At two regional hospitals, the model detected cancer in 17.7 percent and 24.5 percent of scanned patients at high risk, including many without symptoms.

The DAMO GRAPE model could fill the gap in opportunistic detection of early gastric cancer during imaging examinations, said Hu Can, the leading author and a gastric surgeon at Zhejiang Cancer Hospital.

During the study, the team reviewed earlier CT scans from 11 patients diagnosed with stomach cancer and found that the AI model detected abnormalities in scans taken two to 10 months before their diagnosis.

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Liberty holds off Valkyries

Wilson becomes fastest in WNBA history to 5,000 points in Aces win

LAS VEGAS, June 26, (AP): A’ja Wilson scored 22 points and became the fastest player in WNBA history to 5,000 points as the Las Vegas Aces beat the Connecticut Sun 85-59 .

Wilson made a driving left-hand layup with about four minutes left in the first quarter to top the 5,000-point plateau in just 238 games. She has 5,015 career points. Breanna Stewart needed 242 games to score 5,000.

Connecticut (2-13) has lost seven in a row overall and six straight to the Aces, who beat the Sun 87-62 on May 20.

Jackie Young scored 20 points for the Aces (7-7) and Chelsea Gray added 15 points, seven rebounds, six assists and three blocks. Jewell Loyd scored 13 points. Young, Gray and Loyd each hit three of Las Vegas’ 11 3-pointers.

Liberty 81, Valkyries 78

In San Francisco, Sabrina Ionescu converted seven free throws in the final two minutes and made a key steal with 26 seconds left, Breanna Stewart had 23 points and 10 rebounds, and New York held off Golden State.

Ionescu struggled to find her shooting rhythm returning from a neck injury and wound up 1 of 11 for 11 points in her Bay Area homecoming not far from where she grew up in the East Bay suburb of Walnut Creek. She regularly attended Warriors games.

Ionescu was 0 for 5 at halftime missing all four of her 3s. She finally connected on her first field goal, a 3-pointer, with 9 minutes left

Kate Martin hit a tying 3-pointer with 4:12 remaining and put the Valkyries ahead on a 3 at the 1:59 mark before Ionescu’s free throws. Martin’s 3 with 12 seconds to go made it a one-point game but Martin and Kayla Thornton missed two late 3s.

Stewart scored 21 of her points by halftime and Kennedy Burke added 20 points off the bench.



Las Vegas Aces center A’ja Wilson (22) celebrates after scoring a basket against Connecticut Sun center Tina Charles, left, to achieve her 5,000th career point in the WNBA during the first half of a WNBA basketball game in Las Vegas. (AP)

Women’s Euros set to break records



England’s Leah Williamson, center left and Millie Bright lift the trophy after winning the Women’s Euro 2022 soccer final match between England and Germany at Wembley. (AP)

Bigger, better, more popular

BERN, June 26, (AP): Around 1,000 fans were on hand when England played one of the very first matches of the inaugural Women’s European Championship in 1984.

How things have changed.

More than half a million tickets have already been sold for the 31 matches of this year’s edition of the tournament, which kicks off next week in Switzerland.

Organizers expect to break the attendance record of 575,000 set at the previous women’s euros in England in 2022 when 87,000 people packed into Wembley Stadium for the final.

The popularity of women’s soccer in Europe - and around the world - has accelerated in leaps and bounds in recent years. Players are becoming stronger, faster and more technically skilled, making the game more entertaining to watch.

While it hasn’t yet closed the gap with men’s soccer in revenue, the women’s game is seeing rapid growth in investment at both the international and club level. Players who started their careers over a decade ago say the pace of change has been stunning.

“If you look at a match from five years ago, it has nothing to do with the ones being played now,” said Barcelona’s two-time Ballon d’Or winner Alexia Putellas, who made her senior debut in 2010.

The 31-year-old Spain midfielder told The Associated Press that her generation and earlier generations never thought they would be able to make a living from playing soccer when they grew up.

“For sure it’s about making our sport a little more visible, so that girls can dream of being soccer players,” she said. “I think that in recent years there has been a very good evolution. In the end, we just needed people to invest in us, to help us improve, and I think that change is happening.”

Governing bodies have set up initiatives to drive the game forward, such as European soccer body UEFA’s “Unstoppable” strategy - aimed at making football the most-played team sport for



Spain’s Vicky Lopez center challenges for the ball with Portugal’s Andreia Norton and Andreia Jacinto during the Women’s Nations soccer match in Spain. (AP)

women and girls in every European country by 2030, while increasing the number of professional leagues across the continent.

A major shift has happened at the club level, as Europe’s powerhouse clubs such as Barcelona, Real Madrid and Chelsea started taking women’s soccer seriously.

More women’s leagues across Europe have turned professional over the past decade, inspiring a new generation of female soccer players.

“In the last decade real progress happened, especially on the club side. You see real professionalization,” Norway FA president Lise Klaveness told AP. “It is very important to have a full pyramid that girls can see that they can have this as a job.”

She said the real DNA in soccer is the connection with local clubs.

“We haven’t really had that with women. Now you see it more and more,” she said.

She added that many top leaders on the men’s side show real ambitions to raise their women’s teams.

“If you meet the Arsenal president or (Joan) Laporta at Barcelona he feels very close to his women’s team. When the women’s team plays, he is there,” Klaveness said.

As the club game has gotten bigger - England’s top women’s league is

expanding - so have the international competitions.

At Euro 1984, there were just four teams in the inaugural tournament: England, Italy, Sweden and Denmark.

It wasn’t until 1997 that it was expanded to eight teams, becoming 12 in 2009 and increased to the current format of 16 from the 2017 edition.

At Euro 2009 there was an average attendance of just over 5,000 at the matches in England. In the same country in 2022, the average was 18,544.

And just as attendance levels have soared, so have television viewing figures. Euro 2022 had a global cumulative live viewership of 365 million across TV, out-of-home viewing and streaming. That was more than double the number of live viewers compared to the 2017 edition (178 million) and 214% more live viewers than in 2013 (116 million).

The rise in attendances is also evident in club soccer as women start playing in stadiums with bigger capacities and clubs start to invest more in their women’s teams. A couple of Barcelona’s Women’s Champions League matches in 2022 drew more than 90,000 fans.

A major change that’s happened in recent years is investors are now looking at women’s soccer as something you can make money off, said Seat-

tle Reign coach Laura Harvey, who coached Arsenal and Birmingham City in her native England before moving to the U.S.

“For those of us who’ve been in this a long time - I was Birmingham City’s head coach in 2006 - and to think where the game’s evolved in 19 years or whatever it’s been, it’s just wild,” she told AP. “I’m glad that I can be part of it.”

The continued growth in popularity of women’s soccer has the knock-on effect of more sponsorship, more prize money and more to invest in grassroots soccer and clubs.

In 2017, UEFA made what was perceived as a bold move: unbundling sponsorship rights for its women’s competitions and selling the commercial rights separately from the men’s.

That was done with the express purpose of “accelerating the growth of women’s football competitions” and was considered a success.

So much so that FIFA has followed suit, as have governing bodies of other sports.

UEFA now counts 11 dedicated women’s soccer partners among its wider portfolio, including Visa, Amazon and Adidas.

There are more than 20 sponsors for Euro 2025 and that revenue is projected to increase by 145% compared to 2022, according to UEFA.

“The impact of Women’s Euro 2025 extends far beyond the competition itself,” UEFA President Aleksander Ceferin said in a report last month. “With record prize money and unprecedented interest from sponsors, the tournament will bring more investment into the women’s game than ever before.”

The prize pot at Euro 2025 has been set at 41 million euros (\$47 million), more than double the 16 million euros (\$18.3 million) received by national associations in 2022.

Moreover, players will receive a guaranteed share from their national associations for the first time.

The men’s Euro 2024 had a total prize fund of 331 million euros (\$347 million), with each of the 24 teams receiving a minimum of 9.25 million euros and champion Spain earning 28.25 million euros.

Spurs take Harper as No. 2

Flagg new Maine man for Mavericks as the No. 1 pick

NEW YORK, June 26, (AP): Cooper Flagg is the new Maine man in Dallas.

The Mavericks took the Duke forward with the No. 1 pick in the NBA draft Wednesday night, hoping they have found their next franchise superstar less than five months after trading one away.

Mavericks fans were furious when Dallas traded Luka Doncic to the Los Angeles Lakers on Feb. 1, some immediately threatening to end their support of the team.

But the ones who stuck around may quickly love Flagg, the college player of the year who averaged 19.2 points and 7.5 rebounds while leading Duke to the Final Four. The Mavericks quickly announced that Flagg would wear No. 32 in Dallas, where fellow Duke products Kyrie Irving and Dereck Lively II are on the roster.

“I’m really excited. I think I keep saying I’m excited to be a sponge, to get down there and just learn, be surrounded by Hall of Fame-caliber guys and just to be able to learn from them,” Flagg said. “It’s going to be an incredible experience.”

His selection - considered likely ever since Flagg showed off his considerable game last summer after being invited to the U.S. Olympic team’s training camp - was a daylong celebration in his home state for the 18-year-old forward from Newport, Maine.

“It means a lot to me to have the support of the whole state. I know how many people showed up today and supported me at some of the draft parties back home,” Flagg said. “It feels amazing knowing I can inspire younger kids. I was in their shoes really not that long ago, so just to know I can give those kids those feelings and have the whole state behind me, it means a lot.”

He joined Elton Brand, Irving, Zion Williamson and Paolo Banchero as Duke players drafted No. 1 since 1999, and he returned the draft to its longtime start with a one-and-done college player.

That’s the way the draft began every year from 2010 until Banchero’s selection in 2022, but the last two No. 1 picks, Victor Wembanyama and Zacherie Risacher, are both from France.

Rutgers freshman Dylan Harper was taken by the Spurs with the No. 2 pick and will try to follow Wembanyama and Stephon Castle and give San Antonio a third straight NBA Rookie of the Year.

“It’s definitely a goal of mine to make it three in a row,” said Harper, the son of former NBA guard Ron Harper. “I think the coaching staff and the players are going to make it easy for me to go out there and showcase my talent, so definitely.”

The 76ers then took Baylor’s VJ Edgecombe, getting the first sustained burst of loud cheers of the draft from what seemed to be a number of Philadelphia fans who made the trip to Barclays Center in Brooklyn. The first two picks had long been expected, but the No. 3 spot was the first one where there was intrigue.

Kon Knueppel made it two Duke players in the first four picks when the Charlotte Hornets took him at No. 4. When big man



Cooper Flagg, right, poses for a photo with NBA commissioner Adam Silver after being selected first overall by the Dallas Mavericks in the first round of the NBA basketball draft in New York. (AP)

Khaman Maluach went at No. 10 - a pick made by the Houston Rockets but headed to Phoenix as part of the trade for Kevin Durant that can’t become official until next month - it gave the Blue Devils three top-10 picks and 50 in the first round since 1989, moving past Kentucky (48) for most by any school.

“It was so emotional getting to see my teammates, my fellow freshmen getting drafted,” Maluach said. “I was so happy for them because they deserve everything they have. They worked hard for it, for that moment, too.”

Ace Bailey, Harper’s teammate with the Scarlet Knights who could have been in the mix to go third but declined to work out for the 76ers, ended up going at No. 5 to Utah to end a draft process in which he was criticized for how his camp handled it.

“I’m glad it’s over,” Bailey said. “I’m ready to play some basketball now.” Then it was Tre Johnson of Texas to the Washington Wizards at No. 6 and Oklahoma’s Jeremiah Fears to New Orleans at No. 7, before the host Nets took BYU’s Egor Demin at No. 8, Brooklyn’s first of potentially five selections in the first round. Toronto took South Carolina’s Collin Murray-Boyles at No. 9.

The Nets would later add French guard Nolan Traore at No. 19, North Carolina’s Drake Powell at No. 22 (once a three-way trade with Boston and Atlanta is complete), Ben Saraf of Israel at No. 26 and Michigan center Danny Wolf at No. 27.

The NBA champion Oklahoma City Thunder took Georgetown center Thomas Sorber at No. 15, their first of two picks in the first round. The Thunder also had the No. 24 pick but traded the rights to Nique Clifford to Sacramento for a future first-round pick.

The first night of the two-night draft, a format the NBA went to last season, had some mid-round trades involving some of college basketball’s top players. New Orleans acquired the rights to Maryland forward Derik Queen, the No. 13 pick, from Atlanta for the rights to the No. 23 pick, Asa Newell of Georgia, and a future first-round pick.

Walter Clayton Jr., the Most Outstanding Player of the Final Four after leading Florida to the national championship, was drafted by Washington at No. 18 but his rights were dealt to Utah for the rights to Illinois’ Will Riley, who went 21st.

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US edges China 3-2 in VNL opener despite brave fightback

CHICAGO, June 26, (Xinhua): The world’s 22nd-ranked Chinese men’s volleyball team lost 3-2 to sixth-ranked United States in their opening match of the 2025 Volleyball Men’s Nations League (VNL) Chicago leg.

The two teams battled through five intense sets, with China ultimately falling 25-22, 21-25, 19-25, 25-16, 15-11.

The U.S. maintained a lead throughout the first set. Although China remained close on the scoreboard, it ultimately fell short of the hosts’ performance.

After dropping the opening set, China’s Belgian head coach Vital Heynen made swift adjustments, inserting team captain Jiang Chuan as the opposite hitter.

With improved serve aggression and tighter

blocking coordination, China disrupted the U.S. rhythm and claimed the second and third sets.

In the fourth set, the U.S. team responded with heightened offense and defense, registering four aces and repeatedly breaking China’s first pass.

In the deciding fifth set, the Americans showed greater composure under pressure, jumping to a 5-1 lead. China closed the gap to 9-11, but the U.S. sealed the win through a counterattack spike by Kyle Ensing and a defensive dig from Erik Shoji.

Facing the home crowd and a more experienced U.S. squad, the Chinese team showed admirable resilience and fighting spirit.

Heynen said he was satisfied with his players’ performance.

“They played a very, very good match. I think

we were better than Team USA, but we didn’t win, because there are three moments of the match: the start of the first set, the start of the fourth, and the start of the tie break.

In the three sets, we start too late. We are always four points behind.

That’s a pity that we have the chance to win but don’t do it.” “So I can only say I’m happy with how they played, because we have a lot of injuries - we’re not at full strength.

It’s very hard to make a lot of excuses, but if you have the chance to win, you have to win, and that is so disappointing,” Heynen said.

“I think we played very close as a team,” he continued. “But we don’t use our chances.

And if you don’t use your chances in sport, you lose.”

Earthquakes use 4 second-half goals to beat 9-man FC Dallas

Iloski’s record-breaking performance lifts San Diego to West summit

VANCOUVER, British Columbia, June 26, (AP): Milan Iloski scored a club-record four goals, Anders Dreyer had three assists and San Diego FC beat Vancouver 5-2 to move past the Whitecaps into first in the Western Conference.

Iloski is the third player this season (Vancouver’s Brian White and Nashville’s Sam Surridge) and the 20th in MLS history to score at least four goals in a game.

San Diego (11-5-3) has won seven of nine with just one loss in that span and has 36 points, four behind Philadelphia - the points leaders in all of MLS - and one ahead of Vancouver.

Vancouver (10-3-5) has lost back-to-back games following an 11-game unbeaten streak.

Tomás Angel scored for San Diego in the 90th minute.

Iloski’s shot from the edge of the box was parried by goalkeeper Yohei Takaoka but Iloski calmly tapped in the one-touch putback from the left side of the area that slipped inside the near post in the 35th minute and then scored on the counter-attack in the 37th to make it 2-0.

Edier Ocampo scored his first career goal in MLS in the 43rd, a first-touch shot off a misplayed ball by San Diego defender Oscar Verhoeven.

Beau Leroux scored in the 76th minute to put San Jose ahead and the Earthquakes used four second-half goals to beat nine-man FC Dallas 4-2.

San Jose (7-7-5), which improved to 4-4-2 on the road this season, has suffered just one loss in its last nine games.

Dallas (5-7-6) has gone 1-5-2 at home this season.

San Jose tied it 1-all in the 50th minute on Cristian Arango’s 10th goal of the season when he headed in Cristian Espinoza’s corner kick.

Idan Toklomati scored in the 34th minute and Kristijan Kahlina had two saves to help Charlotte FC beat Sporting Kansas City 1-0 .

Toklomati flicked a back-heel shot, off a low cross played in from the left side by Souleyman Doumbia, into the net to give Charlotte a 1-0 lead.

Kahlina has four shutouts this season for Charlotte (9-9-1).



San Diego FC’s Emmanuel Boateng, right, and Vancouver Whitecaps’ Jeevan Badwal vie for the ball during the second half of an MLS soccer match, in Vancouver. (AP)

John Pulskamp had four saves for Kanas City.

Bruno Damiani converted from the penalty spot in the 10th minute and 19-year-old goalkeeper Andrew Rick had his fourth shutout of the season to help the Philadelphia Union beat the Chicago Fire 1-0.

Philadelphia (12-3-4), the points leader in all of MLS with 40, is unbeaten - with

eight wins - in 11 straight.

Jakob Glesnes blocked a shot by Chicago’s Brian Gutiérrez in the third minute of stoppage time to preserve the Union’s win.

Ramiro Enrique and Marco Pasić each scored two goals on Wednesday night to help Orlando City beat St. Louis City SC 4-2 .

Enrique put away a low cross played by Martín Ojeda with a sliding first-touch finish from point-blank range to open the scoring in the seventh minute and Pasić, on the counter-attack, rolled a shot from well outside the area that slipped inside the right post in the ninth.

Theo Corbeau’s second-half goal lifted Toronto into a 1-1 draw with the New York Red Bulls.

Toronto (3-10-5), which was playing for the first time since May 31, had lost four in a row at home.

New York (8-7-4) is 1-6-3 on the road this season.

Evander scored twice to reach nine goals on the season and Luca Orellano also scored to help Cincinnati beat Montreal 3-1.

Cincinnati (11-5-3) had just one victory in its previous five games.

Montreal (2-12-5) fell to 0-5-3 at Saputo Stadium this season.

Sam Surridge scored two goals, the 26-year-old’s third multi-goal game in the last five, to help Nashville SC beat the New England Revolution 3-2 to extend its unbeaten streak to a franchise-record tying 10 games.

Surridge scored in stoppage time to make it 1-1 at halftime and converted from the penalty spot to give Nashville (10-4-5) a 3-2 lead in the 58th minute. Surridge joined Hany Mukhtar (2022) as the only players in franchise history to score a goal in five consecutive games and has eight in that span. Surridge leads MLS with a career-high 14 goals this season.

Jacen Russell-Rowe scored two goals, the 22-year-old’s first multi-goal game in MLS. Andrés Herrera scored his first goal of the season in the 23rd minute, and the Columbus Crew beat Atlanta United 3-1 .

Sri Lanka strengthens grip on 2nd test with Nissanka’s stellar knock



Sri Lanka’s Pathum Nissanka plays a shot as Bangladesh’s Litton Das watches during the second day of the second cricket test match between Sri Lanka and Bangladesh in Colombo, Sri Lanka. (AP)

Bangladesh bowled out for 247

COLOMBO, Sri Lanka, June 26, (AP): Pathum Nissanka’s second successive test century led Sri Lanka to a formidable 290-2 after Bangladesh was bowled out for 247 on day two of the second test on Thursday.

The opening batter’s chanceless unbeaten 146 off 238 balls with 18 fours followed his career-best 187 in the drawn first test at Galle last week.

Nissanka and Dinesh Chandimal ground down the Bangladesh bowlers with their 194-run second-wicket stand.

Chandimal was seven runs from a century, 93 off 153 balls, when he tried to reverse sweep Nayeem Hasan and gloved an easy catch to wicketkeeper Litton Das in fading light. Chandimal was dismissed in the 90s for the first time.

Bangladesh wasted a review when it went for an lbw referral against nightwatchman Prabath Jayasuriya, who will resume on 5.

Nissanka and Lahiru Udara gave Sri Lanka



Sri Lanka’s Dinesh Chadimal takes a catch to dismiss Bangladesh’s Taijul Islam during the second day of the second cricket test match between Sri Lanka and Bangladesh in Colombo, Sri Lanka. (AP)

a brisk start of 88 before Taijul Islam broke through soon after lunch. Udara made a brisk

40 off 65 balls but stayed in his crease against left-armers’ straight delivery and Bangladesh successfully reviewed.

Fast bowler Nahid Rana was wayward in his short spells despite bowling consistently at 144 kph, and the tall pacer’s ploy of challenging Nissanka and Chandimal with bouncers also proved ineffective. Chandimal successfully overturned a lbw decision on 30.

Nissanka raised his fourth test century off 167 balls with a backfoot-driven boundary against Rana shortly after tea. It is his 11th 50-plus score in his 18th test. Chandimal also opened up late in the last session with reverse sweeps. Both batters used their feet well against the spinners and punished the loose balls from the fast bowlers.

Earlier, Bangladesh resumed the day at 220-8 and lost the last two wickets after adding 27 more runs.

Left-arm spinner Sonal Dinusha, on debut, had the best bowling figures for Sri Lanka of 3-22, and fast bowler Asitha Fernando returned 3-51.

Al-Najjar claims top-ten finish in Madrid inline skating marathon

MADRID, June 26: Kuwaiti athlete Abdulrazzaq Yousef Al-Najjar claimed a top-ten finish, placing 10th overall in the inline skating marathon recently held in Madrid, Spain. The event marked the first edition of the marathon in the Spanish capital, attracting nearly 1,000 competitors from around the world.

Al-Najjar stood out as the only Arab participant in the highly competitive international field, which featured some of the world’s best inline skaters. Despite the challenges, Al-Najjar delivered a strong performance and earned praise from organizers for his effort and presence.

“I’m proud to have represented Kuwait and the Arab world in such a prestigious event,” Al-Najjar said. “The level of competition was very high, and while my timing needs improvement to match the leaders, I’ve gained valuable experience.”

Al-Najjar also mentioned that he had arrived in Madrid just a few days before the race, which impacted his preparation time. Nevertheless, he remains optimistic about future competitions.

The marathon’s organizing committee expressed appreciation for Al-Najjar’s participation and welcomed his feedback



Abdulrazzaq Yousef Al-Najjar

for improving future editions. Given his experience in international races, Al-Najjar was invited to share observations on logistics and athlete needs to help elevate the event’s standards.

Looking ahead, Al-Najjar is determined to build on this performance and improve his ranking in upcoming international events, especially with more focused preparation.

Best of the Rest

Jofra Archer joins England squad: Fast bowler Jofra Archer could play his first test in four years after he was added to England’s squad on Thursday.

Archer joined up for the second test against India next week at Edgbaston. England leads the five-test series 1-0.

The 30-year-old played the last of his 13 tests in February 2021 in India.

Following his right thumb injury during the Indian Premier League, Archer played his first red-ball game in more than four years this week for Sussex in the English County Championship. He took 1-32 in 18 overs in his only bowling innings. He also batted once for 31 runs. (AP)

Izeta signs one-year extension: La Liga side Athletic Bilbao announced on Thursday that striker Urko Izeta has signed a one-year contract extension until June 2027.

The new deal is a reward for Izeta’s exceptional season on loan at second-tier Mirandes, scoring 15 goals as the division’s smallest club finished fourth, just missing out on promotion after losing the play-off final to Oviedo.

The 25-year-old had previously impressed in Athletic’s B-team, netting 25 goals in 52 appearances, while he also hit the net 17 times in 32 appearances for local side Las Arenas.

The new deal means Izeta will start pre-season with Athletic’s first team as the Basque side returns to the Champions League following a fourth-place finish in La Liga last season.

Athletic’s close season has so far been dominated by FC Barcelona’s attempts to sign the club’s Spain international winger Nico Williams for the second consecutive summer.

The Basque club has expressed annoyance at how Barcelona has openly pursued Williams, with Barcelona sporting director Deco saying the winger had asked for a move in an interview with Catalonia’s La Vanguardia newspaper.

As a consequence, Athletic has asked both La Liga and the Spanish Football Federation to look at Barcelona’s accounts to ensure the club is in a position to pay Williams’ buyout clause. (Xinhua)

Gut-Behrami retiring after upcoming Olympic season

Buonfiglio elected CONI boss ahead of Milan-Cortina Games

ROME, June 26, (AP): Luciano Buonfiglio, a canoe athlete at the 1976 Montreal Games, was elected president of the Italian Olympic committee (CONI) on Thursday to keep the body moving in the same direction ahead of next winter’s Milan-Cortina Games.

The 74-year-old Buonfiglio, who has been president of the Italian Canoe and Kayak Federation since 2005, was the candidate supported by outgoing CONI president Giovanni Malagò.

Malagò, who is leaving the presidency after 12 years and three terms, remains president of the Milan-Cortina organizing committee.

Buonfiglio was elected in the first round after receiving 47 of the 81 votes.

Luca Pancalli, who led Italy’s Paralympic Committee for a quarter century, received the remaining 34 votes.

Franco Carraro, the 85-year-old former International Olympic Committee member who ran as a peace-maker, didn’t get any votes.

During his pre-vote speech, Carraro said he was “very concerned” that Buonfiglio and Pancalli led groups



Luciano Buonfiglio listens during the CONI National Elective Council at the multipurpose sports hall of the ‘Giulio Onesti’ Olympic Training Centre in Rome. (AP)

of voters who were strongly opposed to each other but told his supporters that they were free to vote for either of those two candidates.

Buonfiglio was also a CONI vice president from 2013-18.

Two-time overall World Cup champion Lara Gut-Behrami intends on retiring after the upcoming Olympic season.

The Swiss skier revealed her plans at a sponsor’s event in Zurich.

The 34-year-old Gut-Behrami

said she wants to move to London next year to join her husband, former Switzerland international Valon Behrami, who she said was taking over as sporting director at English soccer club Watford.

“I certainly won’t be a cleaning lady,” Gut-Behrami said this week, while hinting she would like to become a mother.

Gut-Behrami won her overall titles in 2015-16 and 2023-24 and has 48 World Cup victories - good for fifth on the all-time women’s list. She also won gold in super-G and bronze in giant slalom at the 2022 Beijing Olympics, plus a bronze in downhill at the 2014 Sochi Games.

One of Gut-Behrami’s best performances came at the 2021 world championships in Cortina d’Ampezzo, where she swept gold in super-G and giant slalom and took bronze in downhill.

Cortina will host women’s skiing in the Winter Games in February, which would be Gut-Behrami’s fourth Olympics. She missed the 2010 Vancouver Games due to injury.

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NEWS



Sri Lanka's Lahiru Udara plays a shot during the second day of the second cricket test match between Sri Lanka and Bangladesh in Colombo, Sri Lanka. Pathum Nissanka's second successive test century led Sri Lanka to a formidable 290-2 after Bangladesh was bowled out for 247 on day two of the second test. (AP) – See Page 15

Sports

Al-Qadsiya hopes to end drought

Kuwait Club aims for 12th straight title in 57th Handball Association Cup final

KUWAIT CITY, June 26: The curtain falls on the 2024-2025 handball season tomorrow with the final match of the 57th Kuwait Handball Association Cup, taking place at Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Sports Complex. The highly anticipated showdown will see defending champion Kuwait Club faces Al-Qadsiya in a battle for glory at 6:30 pm. The third-place match between Al-Salmiya and Kazma will precede the final at 5:00 pm.

The Whites, enter the final with an unmatched record—11 consecutive Federation Cup titles and a tournament-leading 14 titles overall. They aim to extend their dominance and clinch a historic 12th straight championship, completing a domestic treble after securing both the Super Cup and the Premier League titles this season.

On the other hand, Al-Qadsiya, seeks to reclaim past glory. It last lifted the Association Cup in the



A file photo of players fighting for the ball.

2012-2013 season, when it defeated Al-Qurain in the final, and currently hold seven titles.

Al-Qadsiya's journey to the final has been one of resilience. After a difficult start in the merger league and subsequent relegation to the First Division,

the club turned things around under Tunisian coach Amin Al-Qafsi, finishing top of the division. In the Federation Cup, they defeated Al-Fahaheel 33-24 in the preliminary round, and then edged Burgan 30-28 in the quarterfinals. Their semifinal victory came in dramatic fashion, beating Kazma 34-33.

Kuwait Club, under the guidance of Algerian coach Saeed Hijazi, began their campaign directly in the quarterfinals as defending champions. They dispatched Al-Qurain 38-30, followed by a convincing 38-24 win over Al-Salmiya in the semifinals to reach yet another final.

Kuwait Club Handball Director Sameh Al-Hajri confirmed the team is fully prepared for the final.

"The technical, administrative, and medical staff, along with the players, is all ready. We hope to win the title for the 12th straight season and continue to prove Kuwait Club's strength in handball,"

he said.

The squad is at full strength, except for Saif Al-Adwani, who is sidelined for a month with a partial ligament tear.

Al-Hajri also commended the unwavering support from the club's Board of Directors, led by President Khaled Al-Ghanim, and praised the efforts of the technical staff despite a demanding season schedule.

Since its inception, the Cup has been held 56 times, with two exceptions during the 1980-1981 and 1990-1991 seasons. Kuwait Club tops the all-time winners list with 14 titles, followed by Al-Arabi (10), Kazma and Al-Salmiya (8 each), Al-Qadsiya (7), Khaitan (4), Fahaheel (3), and Sulaibikhat (2).

As the final approaches, all eyes will be on whether Kuwait can extend their historic run, or if Al-Qadsiya can stage a long-awaited comeback to the top of Kuwaiti handball.

Kuwait U-23 team postpones Egypt training camp to July 6



Players intensify their local training.

KUWAIT CITY, June 26: The Football Association's technical committee has announced a one-week postponement of the Olympic football team's training camp, now set to begin on July 6 in Cairo, Egypt.

The Blues continue their preparations at the Jaber Al-Ahmad International Stadium's auxiliary stadium as they gear up for the AFC U-23 Championship qualifiers scheduled to take place in Saudi Arabia in January 2026.

Competing in Group B, Kuwait will face tough opponents including Japan, Afghanistan, and Myanmar. Myanmar will host the group tournament from September 1 to 9, 2025.

The qualification format will see the top team from each of the ten groups and the five best second-placed teams advance to the finals, joining hosts Saudi Arabia. The finals will feature 16 teams divided into four groups.

Following its overseas camp, the team is expected to start a second intensive training program to further enhance its readiness ahead of the qualifiers. A roster reduction is also planned as part of the final preparations.

To acclimate to local conditions, the team's delegation will depart for Myanmar one week before the tournament to adapt to the different climate and temperature, ensuring peak performance during the qualifiers.

River out as Inter, Dortmund, Flu advance

Monterrey thrashes Urawa to qualify

NEW YORK, June 26, (Xinhua): Inter Milan clinched top spot in Group E at the FIFA Club World Cup with a win that knocked River Plate out of the tournament while Borussia sealed first place in Group F after beating eliminated Ulsan.

Elsewhere, Monterrey reached the last 16 by thrashing Urawa Red Diamonds, which was out of contention, and Fluminense advanced following a goalless draw that ended Mamelodi Sundowns' campaign.

In Cincinnati, Daniel Svensson's first-half goal gave German club Borussia Dortmund a 1-0 win over South Korea's Ulsan. Sweden international Svensson broke the deadlock in the 36th minute as he took a touch to control Jobe Bellingham's pass before firing low past Jo Hyeon-woo.

Both teams appeared to lower their intensity in the second half as temperatures reached 34 degrees Celsius (93 degrees Fahrenheit) at TQL Stadium.

"The only thing we could have done a little better was maybe score a few more goals because we created a lot of chances today," Svensson said.

"Football is emotional. It was very nice to score the goal that turned out to be an important one. It's a nice feeling," he added.

Ulsan goalkeeper Jo said his team had suffered in the conditions and expressed his disappointment for the club's supporters.

"I'm sorry that we weren't able to meet our fans' expectations," he

said. "The weather was really harsh. It wasn't really appropriate for playing football but it is what it is." While Ulsan departs, Dortmund will vie for a quarterfinal berth against Monterrey in Atlanta on Tuesday.

In Miami, Brazil's Fluminense progressed after a goalless draw with South Africa's Mamelodi Sundowns in Group F.

The Pretoria-based club dominated possession in the first half but Fluminense looked sharper in the second despite failing to register a shot on target.

Veteran Argentine striker German Cano went closest to scoring when his right-footed effort after Jhon Arias' pass hit the post.

Fluminense, who finished second in the group, will face Inter Milan in the round of 16 while Mamelodi exits the competition.

"It was a very hard match. They had most of the possession but we were able to repel them. Now we're through to the next round and that was our goal," Fluminense defender Ignacio Oliveira told reporters.

Mamelodi manager Miguel Cardoso said he was proud of his team's achievements throughout the group stage.

"It has been a long journey for all of us, for the club itself and for the people that support it," Cardoso said. "Today is not a happy result, but it is a very important day for us." In Seattle, Francesco Pio Esposito and Alessandro Bastoni netted second-half goals as Inter Milan topped Group E with a 2-0 win over nine-man River Plate.

Lucas Martinez Quarta was shown a straight red card in the 66th minute for scything down Henrikh Mkhitaryan when the Armenian midfielder was through on goal.



Borussia Dortmund's Julien Duranville goes after the ball between Ulsan HD's Lee Jin-hyun and Ulsan HD's Lee Hui-gyun during the Club World Cup Group F soccer match between Borussia Dortmund and Ulsan in Cincinnati. (AP)

Inter immediately took advantage as Esposito finished calmly from 12 yards after Petar Sucic's clever lay-off.

Alessandro Bastoni added to River Plate's misery by charging past two defenders and thumping a low 18-yard shot beyond goalkeeper Franco Armani.

The Argentine outfit finished with

nine men after Gonzalo Montiel received a second yellow card in the 95th minute for his part in a scuffle between players from both sides.

The result left River Plate third in the group as it bid farewell to the competition.

In Wednesday's other match, Monterrey scored three first-half goals en route to a 4-0 rout of Japan's

Urawa Red Diamonds.

Nelson Deossa put the Mexican side ahead on the hour with a stunning 35-yard drive and German Berterame made it 2-0 by slotting into the far corner after Alfonso Alvarado's assist.

Mexico international winger Jesus Corona extended the lead with another long-range effort following

a swift counterattack.

Monterrey was in a relentless mood and Berterame completed the rout in the 97th minute as he pounced on a loose ball and slid home from inside the six-yard box.

The victory meant the Liga MX side finished second in Group E while Urawa was last, having failed to pick up a point.

Best of the Rest

Lewis-Skelly signs long-term contract: Arsenal defender Myles Lewis-Skelly has signed a new long-term contract after making his first team debut last season.

The 18-year-old academy graduate established himself as one of the brightest prospects in the Premier League last term and became an England international. Arsenal did not give the length of the deal.

"I want a legacy. I want to win everything there is to win in the game," Lewis-Skelly said on Thursday. "I want to win trophies on the biggest stages whilst being a person that's always learning and stays grounded, which is so important."

Lewis-Skelly joined Arsenal as an eight-year-old and made his senior debut against Manchester City in September. He had 39 first-team appearances last season. (AP)



Kerkez joins Liverpool: Liverpool signed Hungary left back Milos Kerkez to a long-term contract after paying a reported transfer fee of 40 million pounds (\$54 million) to Bournemouth.

The Premier League champion's most expensive addition, Germany midfielder Florian Wirtz, was announced last Friday, and that followed the signing of Netherlands right back Jeremie Frimpong, with both coming from Bayer Leverkusen.

"I'm really happy," Kerkez said. "It's a real honour for me, a privilege to come to play for one of the biggest clubs in the world, (the) biggest club in England. I'm just really, really happy and excited."

Kerkez's arrival raises questions about 31-year-old Andy Robertson's future at Anfield. The Scotland left back has been linked to a move to Atletico Madrid.

The 21-year-old Kerkez made 38 Premier League appearances for Bournemouth last season when the Cherries finished ninth with a club-record 56 points in the English top flight. He scored twice and had six assists. He also has 23 appearances for Hungary. (AP)

RIYADH, June 26, (AP): Cristiano Ronaldo signed a two-year contract extension with Saudi Arabian club Al-Nassr on Thursday.

The Portugal great's deal lets him continue playing until at least the age of 42 and will give him the chance to add to his record-breaking career.

"A new chapter begins. Same passion, same dream. Let's make history together," Ronaldo said in a social media post.

The five-time Ballon d'Or winner moved to Saudi Arabia at the end of 2022 in one of the most shocking transfers in soccer history after leaving Manchester United. The spectacular deal was reportedly worth up to \$200 million a year and led to a slew of top players leaving Europe for the oil-rich kingdom, including Neymar and Karim Benzema.

Ronaldo sparked uncertainty about his future at the end of the Saudi season last month when announcing the "chapter is over." But the announcement on Thursday put an end to speculation about his next move.

"Al-Nassr forever," he said in a vid-



In this file photo, Cristiano Ronaldo gestures to the crowd after a Nations League soccer match. (AP)

eo accompanying the announcement.

The deal is evidence the 40-year-old former Real Madrid forward wants to achieve more in what has been one of the finest soccer careers of all time.

The five-time Champions League winner has just added another trophy

to his collection after helping Portugal lift the UEFA Nations League - and it is likely he will still be representing his country at next year's World Cup.

In all, Ronaldo has won 28 major trophies with club and country. He is the all-time leading scorer in the

Champions League with 141 goals.

But trophies have been harder to come by in Saudi Arabia where he has had only limited success.

His one trophy so far was the Arab Club Champions Cup in 2023 and Al-Nassr is still to win the Saudi Pro League in three attempts with Ronaldo in the team.

Still, his latest deal was hailed by the club, which posted a video of him walking on a beach with the caption "The Story continues..." along with emojis of a goat and a gold heart.

Ronaldo is considered by many to be soccer's greatest of all time, a term often abbreviated as GOAT.

He and Lionel Messi have had a years-long rivalry as the two finest players of their generation, with the duel reaching its peak when they played for Madrid and Barcelona respectively.

The intensity of the rivalry has diminished in recent years as both players have entered the latter stages of their careers and are playing in less heralded leagues, with Messi joining MLS team Inter Miami in 2023.