



Amiri Diwan mourns loss of Sheikh Fahad Sabah Al-Nasser

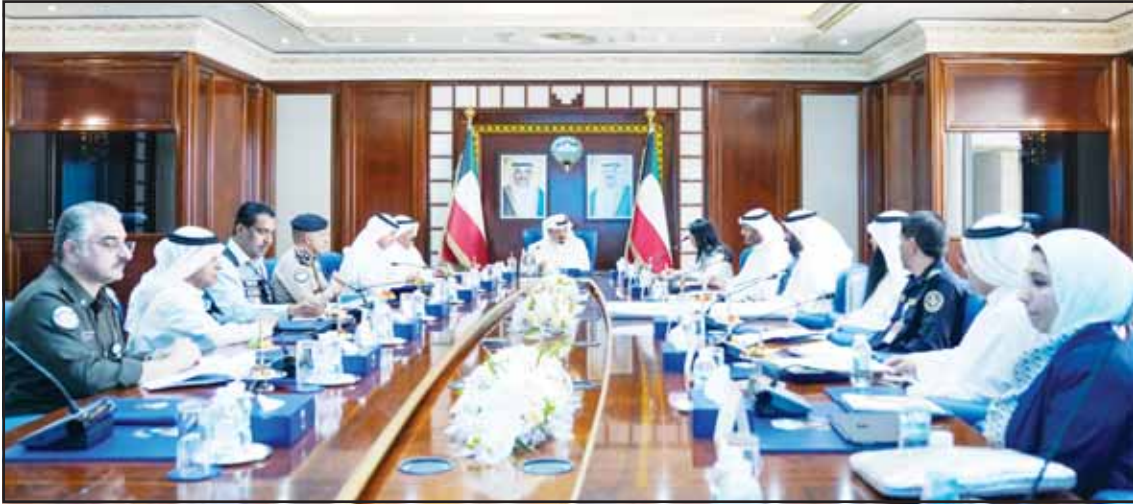
KUWAIT CITY, June 29, (KUNA): The Amiri Diwan on Sunday mourned the passing of Sheikh Fahad Sabah Al-Nasser Al-Mubarak

Al-Sabah at the age of 75. The funeral service is scheduled to take place on Monday at 9 am (local time).

Amir, Crown Prince receive PM, officials

KUWAIT CITY, June 29, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah at Seif Palace on Sunday morning, received His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah.

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HH the Prime Minister chairs meeting on infrastructure and transport projects at Bayan Palace.

PM chairs meeting on infrastructure, road safety

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah chaired on Sunday a meeting of the coordinating committee tasked with following up the country's infrastructure and transportation system projects.

The meeting discussed effective oversight tools aimed at enhancing road safety, reducing burdens and costs on infrastructure, alleviating

pressure on the road network, ensuring optimal use, reducing material and human losses, and curbing customs evasion at land, sea, and air ports.

His Highness the Prime Minister stated that this approach falls within the framework of the state's relentless efforts to protect national infrastructure and ensure the sustainable and efficient operation of its facilities, achieving a balance between facili-

tating transportation and trade.

The meeting was held in Bayan Palace, during which the committee reviewed several housing developments and their progress.

Head of the Prime Minister's Diwan Abdulaziz Al-Dekheel and Minister of Public Works Dr. Noura Al-Mashaan, in addition to a number of senior officials attended the meeting. (KUNA)



Opinion

Ahmed Al-Jarallah

Editor-in-Chief, the Arab Times

The 'Souq Al-Manakh' case: A tight noose around the necks

THE 'Souq Al-Manakh' case is like a tight noose around the necks of those with 'hard-to-finance debts' that has been ongoing for more than 42 years. It seems to have no end, as our colleague Ahmed Al-Sarraf stated in his article published Sunday in Al-Qabas newspaper. He pointed out that there is ongoing injustice not only against debtors; but also against their heirs, children and grandchildren due to the progressive annual interest of 15 percent. From the beginning, the handling of this case has been ill-advised.

Law No. 41/1993, which was imposed by the National Assembly at the time, has a lot of harsh stipulations and made the penalty eternal. Even after the death of the debtor, the heirs are held accountable for the accumulated debt. The government at the time was the subordinate of the National Assembly, so it approved and implemented this law.

The law stipulates numerous measures restricting the debtors' freedom of movement; including travel ban, confiscation of assets and putting them under the control of a government employee who managed the assets without commercial experience.

Kuwait is not alone in facing this problem. During the tenure of British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, Britain experienced what is known then as the 'securities crisis'. Thatcher quickly resolved the problem without any additional cost to debtors. She transformed the crisis into an opportunity to revitalize the economy of the United Kingdom.

Bahrain experienced the 'post-dated checks' crisis, which threatened economic activity. The late Prime Minister Sheikh Khalifa bin Salman, may Allah have mercy on him, restored the debts to their original value and eliminated the interest rate. In Kuwait, a debtor needed to sign 10 or 20 checks to purchase a single item in installments. Bear in mind that the cash balance in 1982 amounted to about KD4 billion, while debts in the 'Manakh

Market' amounted to approximately KD27 billion.

The increased risks prompted attempts to prevent the market collapse at the time through efforts exerted by the government and Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI). However, parliamentary interventions prevented justice from being served. This is why people flocked to the Public Prosecution in a remarkable action aimed at preserving their rights.

This problem continues today, more than 43 years after the Souk Al-Manakh crisis; and 32 years after the issuance of Law No. 41/1993 and other stringent and harsh laws. While the principal debt at that time was KD100,000; it reached about KD4.8 billion today and continues to grow annually.

On the other hand, if the management of tangible assets, stocks, companies and funds was left to the debtors; the value of these assets would have increased and the debtors would have been able to pay their debts. Economic activity would have witnessed significant growth, instead of being frozen and adding pressure to the financial and economic cycle.

In the government's annual budgets, there is a clause on 'bad debts'. Unfortunately, this clause was included in the budget, specifically for Souk Al-Manakh and other debts, without taking into account the reality. This has resulted in 'bad debts' estimated at KD7 billion, subject to increase.

Most of the debtors in the Souq Al-Manakh case include their heirs, children and grandchildren. This has never happened in any country except Kuwait; because some of the then MPs sought to

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Kuwait powers ahead with 5G Advanced, paving way for 6G

KUWAIT CITY, June 29, (KUNA): The Communication and Information Technology Regulatory Authority (CITRA) announced, Sunday, the launch of 5G Advanced technology in Kuwait, marking a key step toward upgrading the country's digital infrastructure and preparing for future 6G deployment.

In a statement to KUNA, Acting Chairman of CITRA Sheikh Athbi Jaber Al-Sabah said the new technology delivers speeds of up to 3 Gbps and low latency, representing



Sheikh Athbi

a major advancement in the telecom sector. He noted that CITRA is working with telecom providers to create a supportive regulatory environment, enabling both public and private sectors to benefit from investment opportunities in digital infrastructure. Kuwait is among the first countries globally to adopt 5G Advanced, underscoring its leadership in embracing cutting-edge technologies and advancing its position as a regional digital hub.

Newswatch

MADRID: Kuwait will be taking part in the fourth International Conference on Financing for Development, kicking off tomorrow, Monday, in **Seville Spain**.

Heading the Kuwaiti delegation is **Sheikh Saud Salem Al-Sabah**, Chief of Kuwait Investment Authority, accompanied by Kuwaiti Ambassador to Spain, **Ziad Al-Anbai** as well as representatives from Kuwait Fund for Development.

The Spanish Foreign Ministry mentioned in a statement that more than 200 official delegations, 60 heads of state and around 150 ministers will be participating in the conference.

The conference is an opportunity to rewrite the global strategy and boost resources to expedite achievement of sustainable development goals, as well as a chance to renew commitment to multilateral and international cooperation.

Inaugurating the conference will be

King of Spain, **Felipe VI**, along with United Nations Chief **Antonio Guterres** and Spanish Prime Minister **Pedro Sanchez**. (KUNA)

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GAZA: At least 88 Palestinians were martyred and 365 others were injured due to Israeli occupation strikes in the **Gaza Strip** over the past 24 hours, said health authorities on Sunday.

They added that the number of martyrs who arrived at American distribution centers, supported by the occupation army, is 18 martyrs and more than 41 injured, raising the total number of victims to 583 martyrs and more than 4,186 injured.

The total number of martyrs since the beginning of the Israeli occupation aggression on October 7, 2023, has risen 56,500 martyrs and 133,419 injured, with the aggression still ongoing. (KUNA)

Day by Day

The NEOM project in Saudi Arabia, overlooking the Red Sea, has beaches with modern and comfortable floating chalets. What is stopping Failaka and the other islands from having similar projects, allocated to companies under usufruct rights, but for extended periods of no less than forty years?

... Yet tomorrow is another day.

Zahed Matar

Kuwait banks pledge full compliance with seizure rules

KUWAIT CITY, June 29: Kuwait Banking Association (KBA) has stated that, in compliance with Law No. 59/2025 for amending certain provisions of the Civil and Commercial Procedures Law, all Kuwaiti banks are committed to strictly abiding by the law's provisions, particularly regarding the seizure of debtors' balances, to ensure full compliance, and to protect the rights of all parties involved.

In a press release, KBA explained that banks receive executive seizure reports on debtors' funds electronically from the Judicial Execution Directorate via its official email. Upon receiving a seizure report, banks freeze the relevant accounts until they receive a lifting report from the Judicial Execution Directorate, based on the specified percentages and instructions.

Kuwaiti banks are taking all necessary measures to ensure the proper implementation of the law.

Furthermore, KBA affirmed that member banks are fully prepared to receive complaints and suggestions through their official channels and to address them diligently.

Other Voices

The UK's first female ambassador to Kuwait leaves a lasting legacy

By Nasser Al-Hajeri

As the first female British Ambassador to Kuwait, Her Excellency Belinda Lewis has not only made history, but also forged one of the most dynamic chapters in the UK-Kuwait relationship.

As her tenure comes to an end, she departs with admiration, gratitude, and a remarkable record of diplomacy, progress, and partnership.

Ambassador Lewis has worked tirelessly to deepen ties between the two countries, launching the UK-Kuwait Strategic Dialogue, a high-level framework that has enhanced political, economic, and security co-operation. She played an instrumental role in welcoming His Highness Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to the UK on three significant visits, including a formal meeting with His Majesty King Charles III at Buckingham Palace and again in Scotland earlier this year to mark the conclusion of the 125th anniversary of UK-Kuwait diplomatic relations.

Her Excellency hosted His Royal Highness The Duke of Edinburgh during a special visit to Kuwait in December, and welcomed four UK Cabinet Ministers and numerous senior officials, ensuring continued momentum in bilateral engagement. She actively contributed to four Joint Steering Groups focusing on mutual interests and strategic priorities.

During her time in Kuwait, several landmark agreements were reached, from government-to-government defence procurement mechanisms, to multiple MoUs, to the historic 2023 Sovereign Investment Partnership, deepening investment cooperation between the two nations.

Trade flourished under her stewardship, with bilateral commerce reaching an impressive £6.1 billion per year.



Her Excellency Belinda Lewis, British Ambassador to Kuwait

Ambassador Lewis also championed educational and cultural exchange. With over 10,000 Kuwaiti students now pursuing degrees in British universities, the people-to-people links between the UK and Kuwait are stronger than ever. In the field of defence and security, joint exercises including a breathtaking performance by the Red Arrows reflected growing military cooperation.

She also oversaw the UK and Kuwait's first international humanitarian partnerships, reflecting shared values and a global outlook.

Belinda Lewis leaves behind more than achievements. She leaves behind trust, friendship, and inspiration. As the first woman to serve as Britain's Ambassador to Kuwait, she has paved the way for future generations while building a modern, resilient, and enduring partnership between our two nations.

Thank you, Your Excellency, and farewell.



8 Zain invests in its own to shape a digitally creative future

8 Chevron's Javier La Rosa to lead portfolio across key global exploration and production assets



16 Kuwait Club continues Handball Cup dominance

Prayer Timings			
Fajr	03:16	Asr	15:25
Sunrise ..	04:51	Maghrib ..	18:51
Zohr	11:51	Isha	20:24

Local



PM Diwan photo
His Highness the Prime Minister, Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah chairs the meeting.

PM, officials discuss draft municipal law

KUWAIT CITY, June 29, (KUNA): His Highness the Prime Minister, Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, chaired a meeting to discuss the general framework of the draft municipal law, which will keep pace with urban infrastructure development and accelerate the country's growth.

The meeting was attended by Minister of State for Municipal Affairs and Minister of State for Housing Affairs Abdullatif Al-Mishari, the Head of the Prime Minister's Diwan, Abdulaziz Al-Dakheel, the Head of the Fatwa and Legislation Department, Counsellor Salah Al-Majed, and a number of senior officials from the Kuwait Municipality.

Kuwait eyes UAE skills for local railway sector

Cooperation needed: Dr Al-Mashaan

By Mohammad Ghanem
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 29: Minister of Public Works Dr. Noura Al-Mashaan affirmed that Kuwait is keen on benefiting from pioneering experiences in the railway sector.



Dr. Al-Mashaan

Al-Mashaan praised the achievements of the United Arab Emirates (UAE), particularly the Hafeet Railway Company project -- a joint venture between the UAE and Oman. She considers this a successful model for Gulf integration in infrastructure projects.

She made the statement when she received a delegation from the Etihad Rail Company in the UAE, headed by CEO Shadi Malak, during an official visit to Kuwait at the invitation of the Public Works Ministry.

She pointed out that this cooperation embodies Kuwait's commitment to support Gulf integration projects, in addition to strengthening economic and geographical ties between the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries. She emphasized the importance of continuous coordination between technical teams to ensure the implementation of quality projects that meet the development needs of the region.

Meanwhile, Undersecretary of the ministry Eid Al-Rashidi stressed that the ministry puts importance on benefiting from successful Gulf experiences in the railway sector. He pointed out that cooperation in the early stages of project implementation contributes to building a sustainable railway network that enhances regional connectivity and supports common development goals.

Moreover, the ministry explained that the meeting tackled the activation of the UAE Memorandum of Understanding and future plans for railway projects in Kuwait. It added that Al-Mashaan introduced the ministry's vision for building a sustainable national railway network, based on the best regional practices and taking into account environmental and economic factors in line with the sustainable development goals of the country.

'Kuwait working for carbon neutrality target'

BEIJING, June 29, (KUNA): Representative of Kuwait Embassy in Beijing Abdulaziz Al-Dekheil briefed the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) ministerial meeting on the efforts of his country to achieve the carbon neutrality target by 2060 in the framework of the strategy for diversifying the sources of national income.

The State of Kuwait supports the SCO initiatives for achieving sustainable development under China - the current president of the organization for 2024-2050, a statement from the embassy received by KUNA on Saturday, quoted Al-Dekheil as saying in a speech to the meeting of the SCO ministers of energy.

Stating Kuwait's support for the objectives outlined by the SCO in its "year of sustainable development" initiative, Al-Dekheil said the initiative reflects a collective commitment

to the issues of climate, energy security and green economy.

As an active dialogue partner of the SCO, the State of Kuwait continues contributing to the regional and international efforts to make better use of energy resources and protect the environment, he pointed out.

He commended the Kuwait-China energy partnership which gained momentum after the signing last July of a memorandum of understanding between Kuwait's Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy and China China's National Energy Administration.

The ministerial meeting, themed "innovation and integration - dynamic future," was held in Ningbo city, Zhejiang Province, east China, on June 26-27 with energy decision-makers and experts from the Organization's member states and partners taking part.

Expected weather for next 24 hrs:
By Day: Very hot with light to light freshening at times southwesterly wind changing to northwesterly wind, with speeds of 12-45 km/h.
By Night: Hot to rather hot with light to moderate freshen-

Weather
ing later on southwesterly wind changing to northwesterly wind, with speeds ranging from 10-40 km/h with a chance for airborne dust.
Station Max Exp Min Rec
Kuwait Airport 49 28

Abdaly	49	30
Jahra	50	32
Ahmadi	44	32
Nuwaisib	47	29
Wafra	48	28
Salmi	49	35
Managish	49	35



KUNA photo
KUNA Acting Director General Mohammad Al-Mannai receives the UNICEF official and delegation.

KUNA, UNICEF to boost media cooperation

KUWAIT CITY, June 29, (KUNA): KUNA Acting Director General Mohammad Al-Mannai received on Sunday UNICEF Gulf Area Communication Manager Sara Al-Zawqari. During the meeting, they discussed media cooperation and ways to enhance the role of KUNA in spreading humanitarian and awareness, as well as the role of UNICEF and their regional and international programs.

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs welcomed on Saturday the agreement on cessation of hostilities signed by the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda in Washington yesterday. On behalf of the State of Kuwait, the Ministry appreciated in a statement the efforts made by sisterly Qatar and the United States and Qatar to facilitate the peace talks and end the decades-long insurgency in the DRC.

Amir congratulates Seychelles Pres. on his nation's Independence Day

KUWAIT CITY, June 29, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent Sunday a cable of congratulations to President of Seychelles, Wavel Ramkalawan, on occasion of his country's Independence Day.

His Highness the Amir wished the President good health and the people of Seychelles all progress and prosperity.

Al-Hamad Al-Sabah sent Sunday a cable of congratulations to President of Seychelles, Wavel Ramkalawan, on occasion of his country's Independence Day, and wished him good health.

Prime Minister

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah sent Sunday a cable of congratulations to President of Seychelles, Wavel Ramkalawan, on occasion of his country's Independence Day.

Crown Prince

His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled

KCCI participates in high turnout 2nd 'Arab-Hellenic' Maritime Conference

KUWAIT CITY, June 29: The Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI) participated in the Second Arab-Hellenic Maritime Conference, organized by the Arab-Hellenic Chamber of Commerce and Development in Athens, Greece, on June 25-26, 2025.

According to a press release issued by KCCI, the conference witnessed notable attendance and participation from business owners representing 14 Arab countries, along with more than 100 Greek officials and business leaders.

KCCI was represented by Assistant Director General Imad Abdullah Al-Zaid and Director of External Relations Salah Khalil Ayada.

The Kuwait Ports Authority (KPA) was represented by Marine Vessel Maintenance Supervisor, Engineer Hamad Tariq Al-Rakhis.

The conference was held within the framework of the long-standing historical relations between Greece and the Arab region, which span centuries.

Discussions during the conference focused on important topics such as port services and infrastructure, shipbuilding and manufacturing yards, supply chains, and recent developments in navigation technology and related sectors.

The conference sessions were organized around several thematic axes, highlighting the strategic and geographical relationships between Greece and various Arab regions.

The first axis focused on Greece's relations with Egypt, Libya, and Morocco, as well as opportunities for cooperation and investment in maritime industries, services, and port infrastructure.

The second axis covered Greece's ties with Lebanon and Syria, and the recent regional developments and their potential to enhance collaboration, particularly in the transfer of maritime port industry technologies.

The third axis reviewed the joint relations between Greece, the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries, and Yemen. Discussions centered on the GCC's economic visions and efforts to diversify income sources.

Emphasis was placed on the Gulf region's vast potential, the importance of strengthening bilateral ties, and the prospects for cooperation in maritime navigation, marine industries, and port development projects.

During his participation in the third axis, the Kuwait Ports Authority (KPA) representative Engineer Hamad Tariq Al-Rakhis emphasized that the strong bilateral relations between Kuwait and Greece pave the way for enhanced maritime and logistical cooperation, benefitting from Greece's extensive experience in the sector.

He also highlighted the historical ties between the two



Kuwaiti delegation at the conference.

countries, particularly the influence of Greek civilization on Failaka Island, which stands as a prominent symbol of cultural exchange.

Eng. Al-Rakhis explained that KPA, through its future vision, aims to develop Kuwait's ports into important hubs connecting the country to the global maritime network. Maritime shipping accounts for over 80 percent of Kuwait's import trade and plays a vital role in the national supply chain.

KPA plans, in the near future, to rehabilitate the docks at Shuwaikh Port to accommodate larger vessels. Efforts are also underway to modernize port infrastructure, automate services and cargo handling procedures, and increase overall port capacity.

Other Voices

Who benefits from this persistent persecution?

By Ahmad alsarraf

YOUR Highness the Prime Minister, Your Excellency the First Deputy Prime Minister, I address you with sincere wishes for success in your duties. I hope you will give the topics raised in this week's articles the serious attention they deserve for the sake of the public interest, humanity, and common sense.

Never before have such rulings been issued as those handed down to the hundreds of citizens who fell victim to the "Souk Al-Manakh" scheme, each of whom, at one point, had debts exceeding their assets.

The legislature not only declared them bankrupt but also placed their assets under guardianship, causing harm to their business partners. Moreover, it imposed an unprecedented accumulated interest rate of 15 percent annually unlawfully, inhumanely, and illogically.

Thus, they became victims of the law forever. The interest alone consumed any increase in the value of their assets, trapping them in bankruptcy as if they were criminals undeserving of mercy. Their punishment has lasted for more than thirty years, even beyond the deaths of many of them.

The state, through the Debt Management Authority's employees, continues to control their assets, preventing their heirs and solvent partners from managing these funds.

If any authority were to review the original debts of each bankrupt individual, it would reveal the full extent of the harm caused by the high rate of vindictive interest.

Were it not for the accumulation of this interest, most would have been able to recover from bankruptcy, es-



alsarraf

pecially given the increase in their assets over the past three decades.

Yet, the Debt Management Authority maintains control over their bank accounts to this day.

* * *

There is no clearer example of the damage suffered by those declared bankrupt, and the ongoing harm to their remaining partners, than the story of a large, well-known joint-stock industrial company founded forty years ago. Due to the Souk Al-Manakh case, two of its shareholders, who together owned 60 percent of the shares, were declared bankrupt.

More than thirty years ago, the Debt Management Authority replaced them on the board of directors. Since then, the company has been managed by a government employee who imposed his decisions on the remaining shareholders, who had no connection to the Souk Al-Manakh case or the bankruptcies.

This director refused to act on behalf of the bankrupt shareholders, many of whom have since passed away. He also prevented the remaining partners from selling their shares, refused to sell any company assets, and blocked any efforts to develop or expand the business.

What happened to this company reflects the situation of many other once-successful companies still controlled in similar ways by government representatives.

* * *

Your Excellency the Prime Minister and Your Excellency the First Deputy Prime Minister, I believe you are the most qualified and capable to bring an end to this grave injustice by resolving this long-standing case. Letting these wounds remain open and bleeding for over thirty years is an unprecedented punishment that should be unacceptable to you. If these individuals were hardened criminals or murderers, most of them would be free by now.

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email: a.alsarraf@alqabas.com.kw

Court Cases

37 kg gold bars, cash from proceeds seized

Life in jail for growing drugs at home

By Jaber Al-Hamoud

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 29: The Criminal Court sentenced a citizen to life imprisonment for growing marijuana in his apartment in Salwa and drug trafficking. The citizen was caught red-handed in possession of large quantities of narcotics, gold bars and cash believed to be proceeds from trafficking in narcotics.

The sentence was issued following extensive investigations conducted by the Drug Control General Department (DCGD) at the Interior Ministry, which monitored the activities of the citizen as per the directive of Assistant Undersecretary for Criminal Security Affairs Major General Hamed Al-Dawas and under the supervision

of Director of the department Brigadier General Mohammad Qabazard, and his assistant, Brigadier General Hamad Al-Sabah.

According to a security source, the anti-narcotics officers, after careful monitoring, were able to connect the threads of the case after noticing a significant spread of marijuana in certain areas; particularly in the Capital and Hawally Governorates, and the chalet area.

He added that investigations led to the identification of the accused, a Kuwaiti, who was using his apartment for preparing, packaging and storing drugs -- 45 marijuana plants, four kilograms of the substance ready for distribution, 37 kilograms of gold bars and precious metals.

The Public Prosecution charged the

accused with drug trafficking, possession of narcotic substances for the purpose of distribution, cultivation of prohibited substances within the residence, and collecting money through an illegal activity.

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Court rules in wife's favor: The Administrative Court ruled that a female citizen is entitled to take steps to obtain a title deed in equal shares with her husband (the defendant) for the house that the Public Authority for Housing Welfare (PAHW) allocated to them in accordance with legal procedures.

Attorney Hawra Al-Habib filed the lawsuit on behalf of the wife. The couple submitted a request to the second defendant -- PAHW director general in his capacity -- to obtain a housing plot, and the plot was granted to them.



KUNA photo
Ambassador Nasser Al-Qahtani heads the Kuwait delegation at FAO conference in Rome.

Kuwaiti delegation partakes high-level FAO talks in Rome

PARIS, June 29, (KUNA): Kuwait participated in the opening session of the 44th United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) Conference held in Italy, the Kuwaiti Embassy in Rome said in a statement to KUNA.

The conference will run until July 4, with the participation of representatives from 194 member states.

The Kuwaiti delegation is headed

by Ambassador Nasser Al-Qahtani and includes Kuwait's Permanent Representative to the FAO, Yousef Juhail.

The embassy emphasized in the statement that Kuwait remains committed to the role of the FAO in achieving food security, which it considers a priority within the goals of the international 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

MoHE unveils ‘Guide Me’ support booth for scholarship registration

Grade 12 certificates ready for distribution

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

KUWAIT CITY, June 29: As part of the ‘Wajihni’ (Guide Me) campaign, the Ministry of Higher Education invited students applying for external scholarships to visit the campaign booth in Al-Sanabel Tower to receive the necessary technical support and help them resolve any problems they encounter while using the electronic registration system.

The ministry announced that the campaign will welcome visitors from 9:00 am until 2:00 pm on Sunday until Thursday.

Campaign organizers said the ‘Wajihni’ booth is dedicated to providing direct technical support to all students who encounter difficulties or have inquiries related to the scholarship registration process in terms of uploading documents, arranging preferences or verifying that conditions are met.

The ministry stressed the importance of visiting the booth on time, especially since the scholarship registration period closes on Thursday.

It urged students to take advantage of this free service, which aims to ensure broader and more accurate participation in this year’s scholarship plan.

Additionally, the directors general of the six educational districts -- including private, religious education and special education sectors -- started approving and signing the certificates of around 33,800 Grade 12 students who passed the first round of exams for the 2024/2025 academic year on Thursday and Friday, following the announcement of the exam results.

Schools will begin distributing graduation certificates to successful students on Sunday and Monday. Students who want to obtain an original copy must provide an official stamp worth KD1 for each copy.

Meanwhile, the directors general of the educational districts confirmed to the newspaper that all procedures for signing and stamping the original and copies of the certificates have been completed and will be delivered to the secondary school principals for distribution to the students. They indicated that schools will receive students only on Sunday and Monday to complete the distribution of certificates before the summer vacation, especially in light of the efforts of



Photos during the ‘Guide Me’ campaign in Al-Sanabel Tower.

many graduates to complete their paperwork and apply for internal and external scholarships.

The directors general congratulated the graduating students, wishing them a bright academic future. They also emphasized that this achievement is the re-

sult of the joint efforts of students and teachers who exerted tremendous efforts throughout the year, continuing their journey of serving and molding a new generation that contributes to the advancement and service of the nation.

Gov’t says ‘no grounds’ to reclaim bonuses absent fraud or collusion

KUWAIT CITY, June 29: The Legal Advice and Legislation Department ruled that bonuses paid to employees should not be recovered if there is no evidence of fraud, collusion or any unlawful action on their part, reports Al-Anba daily.

The Secretariat General of the Cabinet issued a circular to all entities, communicating the opinion of the department on the recovery of bonuses that were granted in

violation of Civil Service Council decisions.

This circular was issued after the Cabinet reviewed the recommendations of the Legal Affairs Committee on the matter, as well as the letter of the Legal Advice and Legislation Department on the same subject, which concluded that recovering such bonuses is inadmissible in the absence of any fraudulent or illegal conduct by the employees.

JULY

Room Promotion

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

Promo period from 1st July to 31st July 2025 Terms & conditions apply*

KUFPEC profit hits KD 226m in '24, CEO notes KD 54m rise from 2023

By Najeh Bilal
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 29: According to informed sources, the Kuwait Foreign Petroleum Exploration Company (KUFPEC) recorded net profits of KD 226.231 million for the fiscal year ending December 31, 2024,

marking an increase of more than KD 54 million compared to 2023, when net profits stood at KD 172.8 million.

The sources said KUFPEC's highest profit growth was in 2022, when profits reached approximately KD 308 million, equivalent to \$1 billion.

Push for integrated aid delivery

KRCS, IICO strengthen relations to bolster humanitarian efforts

KUWAIT CITY, June 29, (KUNA): Chairman of the Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS), Ambassador Khaled Al-Mughamis, stressed the importance of integrating roles among charitable organizations to expand the scope of aid and ensure its delivery to those in need with the highest levels of efficiency and transparency.

Al-Mughamis told KUNA on Sunday, after meeting with Director General of the International Islamic Charitable Organization (IICO), Bader Al-Sumait, that Kuwait is proud of its humanitarian institutions, which have become a model to be emulated in organized charitable work at all levels.

He added that the IICO is a key partner in Kuwaiti humanitarian work, and that the society seeks, through this cooperation, to develop joint action mechanisms and implement qualitative and sustainable projects that meet the needs of vulnerable communities.

He stressed the importance of institutional coordination that doubles the humanitarian impact, especially in light of the growing humanitarian challenges around the world, noting that the country's political leadership is keen to organize and continue charitable work.

For his part, Al-Sumait expressed his pride in the meeting, praising the role of the KRCS both locally and internation-



KUNA photo
Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Kuwait Red Crescent Society, Ambassador Khaled Al-Mughamis, and Director General of the International Islamic Charitable Organization, Bader Al-Sumait.

ally.

He said that the delegation of the authority was briefed on the field efforts of the Kuwait Red Crescent in the areas of relief, healthcare, education support, and empowerment of the most vulnerable groups.

He explained that aspects of cooperation and exchange of expertise between the two parties were discussed, as well as efforts to raise the level of performance in a way that serves just causes and meets the aspirations of donors and beneficiaries alike.

Over 5,500 students receive inclusive care

Kuwait University Pres highlights student support in aptitude tests

KUWAIT CITY, June 29: Kuwait University President Dr. Dina Al-Mailem affirmed that the university is keen to provide an integrated educational environment, emphasizing that students are at the heart of the educational process, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

She highlighted the university's commitment to supporting students at every stage of their academic journey.

This statement was made during Dr. Al-Mailem's field visit on Sunday to monitor the progress of the academic aptitude tests at several colleges in Sabah Al-Salem University City.



Dr. Al-Mailem

Dr. Al-Mailem expressed her satisfaction with the progress and organization of the tests, affirming the university's commitment to providing comprehensive services during the testing period, including security and safety, healthcare, and food services in cafeterias.

Meanwhile, Assistant Vice President for Evaluation and Measurement, Dr. Sulaiman Al-Rafi'i, stated that the number of test applicants reached 5,524 students, including 30 students with special needs.

He explained that equipped halls were allocated for these students, with specialized supervisors assigned to handle each case individually. Assistive devices, such as computers and special writing instruments, were provided to ensure the tests were conducted in a comfortable and safe environment.

Kuwait aligns university admission timetables

33,000 graduates to benefit from coordinated application periods

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

KUWAIT CITY, June 29: While the Ministry of Higher Education has set application period for universities and the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training (PAAET) for the 2025/2026 academic year – from July 7 to Aug 20, multiple options have been made available in five educational institutions to provide educational

opportunities that meet the aspirations of more than 33,000 high school graduates.

The ministry explained that coordinating timetables between various educational institutions aims to prevent the duplication of admissions and ensure optimal use of available seats. It indicated that the number of accepted applicants will be determined based on the capacity of each educational institution and in accordance with the approved academic standards.

It pointed out that the coordination and allocation of application periods between the Ministry of Higher Education, Secretariat General of the Private Universities

Council, Kuwait University, Abdullah Al-Salem University, and PAAET aim to maximize opportunities and make sure that registration conflicts do not arise between institutions.

The ministry also worked hard to provide sufficient seats in various academic institutions in and outside the country in order to meet the needs of the largest possible number of students. It disclosed that each educational institution will accept students based on its capacity and in accordance with its approved academic conditions and standards.

It urged the high school graduates to carefully review the dates and conditions for each educational institution

or scholarship, and to adhere to the application period specified for each institution to ensure that opportunities are not lost due to registration with only one institution or a conflict in deadlines.

Following are the application periods for higher education institutions and scholarships for academic year 2025/2026:

- From June 11 to July 3 for external scholarships
- From July 7-17 for Abdullah Al-Salem University
- From July 19-29 for Kuwait University
- From Aug 4-14 for private university scholarships (Private Universities Council)
- From Aug 7-20 for PAAET

Municipal Council greenlights donations

Capital Governorate OKs urban projects & delays walkway plan

By Inass Awadh
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 29: The Capital Governorate Committee at the Municipal Council, chaired by Dr. Hassan Kamal, on Sunday approved two out of three items on its agenda -- request to accept donations for the beautification and development of Darwaza Abdul Razzaq and request of the Environment Public Authority (EPA) to add a coffee shop to the Environmental Pollutants Building located in Salmiya (Block One).

The committee retained on its agenda the request of the Ministry of Social Affairs to allocate a ground-level connecting walkway between the central market building of Qadisiya Cooperative Society, the vegetable branch building, and administration of the cooperative. It decided to invite representatives of the ministry, the cooperative and the

General Traffic Department to discuss the request.

On the other hand, the Public Services Department in Kuwait Municipality released statistics for the month of May; indicating that the emergency hotline number '139', under the Transportation Control Unit at the department, and the WhatsApp service received 850 complaints from all governorates regarding garbage, used furniture, bachelor housing, rubble, fallen trees, poles, accumulation of sand dunes, rainwater, animals, street vendors, practicing itinerant trades and abandoned vehicles. Citizens were also provided with the telephone numbers of various municipal centers.

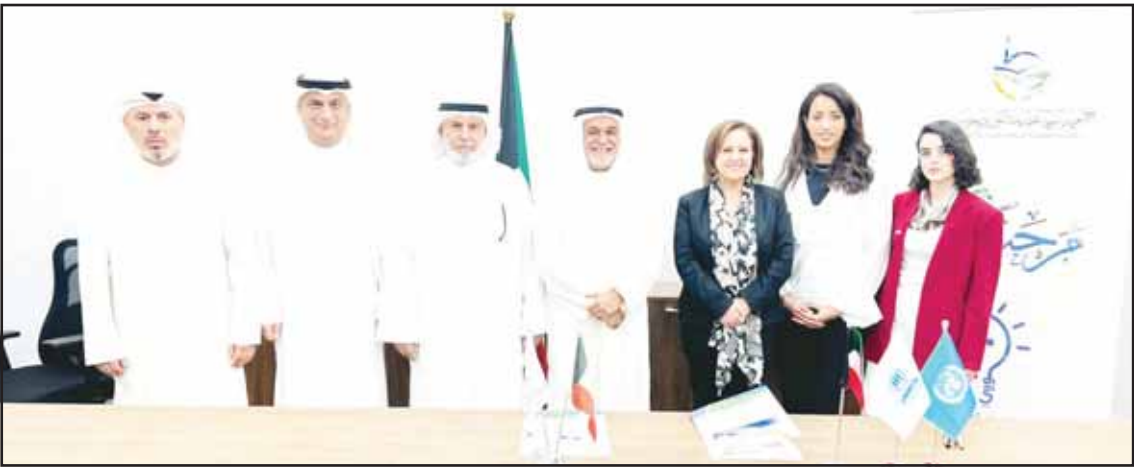
The Municipality affirmed that

the concerned employees follow up complaints received through the WhatsApp service and '139' hotline after being referred to the relevant authorities. They also verify the measures taken to communicate with the complainants.

Following is the breakdown of complaints received per governorate:

- 171 in Ahmadi Governorate
- 168 in Jahra Governorate
- 147 in Mubarak Al-Kabeer Governorate
- 139 in Farwaniya Governorate
- 116 in Hawally Governorate
- 109 in the Capital Governorate

The Municipality added that employees at the Emergency and Public Services departments work 24 hours a day to deal with the complaints, confirming the mobilization of mechanisms and equipment in the event of emergency situations that require an immediate solution.



The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the Sheikh Abdullah Al-Nouri Charitable Association sign a grant agreement to support 346 Syrian refugee families in Jordan.

New pact delivers aid to 346 families

UNHCR and Kuwaiti charity agree grant for Syrian refugees in Jordan

KUWAIT CITY, June 29, (KUNA): The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and Kuwait-based Sheikh Abdullah Al-Nouri charity signed on Sunday a grant agreement in aid of Syrian refugees in Jordan.

The agreement entails the delivery of pecuniary aid to some 346 Syrian

refugee families residing in the Hashemite Kingdom, the UN refugee agency's representative in Kuwait Nesreen Rubaiaan said in a statement.

The signing of the agreement is a testament to the solid rapport between the UN refugee agency and the Kuwaiti charity, which aims to provide

continued aid to Syrian refugees, the official underlined.

On the agreement, the Kuwaiti charity's chairman Jamal Al-Nouri said it was the latest joint initiative involving the two sides, with Syrian refugees being the ultimate beneficiaries of all-inclusive humanitarian aid, he highlighted.

MoUs signed

University calendars approved

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

KUWAIT CITY, June 29: Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research Dr. Nader Al-Jalal chaired the meeting of the Public Universities Council on Sunday, with the council members in attendance. During the meeting, Al-Jalal approved the academic calendar for all colleges -- including the colleges of Law and Medical Sciences at Kuwait University -- for academic years 2025/2026, 2026/2027 and 2027/2028.

Acting Secretary General of the council Dr. Jassim Al-Ali stated that the council approved the minutes of its meeting held on March 27, 2025 and reviewed a report on the implementation of its previous decisions. Al-Ali added that the council discussed several items on its agenda as follows: a memorandum regarding the appointment of Kuwait University Council members from outside the university, a memorandum of understanding between Kuwait University and Qassim University in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and a memorandum of understanding with the University of Malta in the Republic of Malta with the aim of strengthening academic and research cooperation between educational institutions in sisterly and friendly countries.

Continued from Page 1

The 'Souq

impose the will of certain influential figures on businessmen who outperformed them in terms of profits.

Yes, the government as a whole currently has the power to lift the injustice inherited from decades ago. The government can repeal Law No. 41/93 and address the problems that resulted from this legislation. The government can serve justice to the new debtors (the heirs), so that the crisis does not recur. Most of the debtors have already passed away and the government will not bear the burden.

The Council of Ministers has a historic opportunity to lift this injustice. Ahmed Al-Sarraf was absolutely right when he described the penalties as "unprecedented punishment".

Can His Highness the Prime Minister, His Excellency the First Deputy Prime Minister, and the entire government do it and rescue the people from a grievance that has lasted for half a century?

If the then parliamentary interventions were used to entrench tyranny, the Council of Ministers today has the power to establish justice for the sake of the people.

21,900 expats

of the employees without the knowledge of the employers, and to ensure the systematic documentation of travel cases.

According to PAM, the new procedure requires every expatriate worker under Article 18 (private sector) to obtain a prior electronic travel permit approved by the employer through the 'Sahel Individuals' application, provided the request is approved by the authorized representative of the company or the sponsor through the 'Easy Companies' portal.

Amir, Crown

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

His Highness welcomed Kuwait National Guard Chief Sheikh Mubarak Humoud Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

His Highness the Amir then met First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah.

His Highness the Amir received Defense Minister Sheikh Abdullah Ali Abdullah Al-Salem Al-Sabah.

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

His Highness the Crown Prince welcomed Kuwait National Guard Chief Sheikh Mubarak Humoud Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

His Highness the Crown Prince then met First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah.

His Highness the Crown Prince received Defense Minister Sheikh Abdullah Ali Abdullah Al-Salem Al-Sabah.

Ministry bans unapproved fundraising and influencers

MoSA sets tight new rules for charitable donations

By Fares Ghaleb
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 29: The Ministry of Social Affairs has issued new regulations governing charitable activities in the country, along with the resumption of the authorization for charities to collect donations provided they comply with tits rules and directives.

The ministry prohibits charities from contracting with advertising and publicity agencies, marketing companies, or individual marketers to manage donation websites without prior approval. Similarly, charities are not permitted to engage celebrities, social media influencers, or advocates for fundraising purposes without first obtaining the ministry's consent.

Charities must submit a draft copy of any intended contract to the ministry. This draft must clearly detail the contract duration, nature of the services provided, the associated project, and value of the contract in accordance with Circular No. 274.

Donations should be collected solely for charitable projects licensed by the ministry and aligned with its objectives as defined in the bylaws. Charities are strictly prohibited from creating donation collection links on behalf of intermediaries such as marketing and publicity companies, advertising agencies, volunteer teams, and similar entities. Publication of donation collection links is limited to the official website.

If a charity wishes to create a donation collection link for a special case, it must first obtain approval from the ministry. Charities must disclose the administrative percentage deducted from all advertisements related to licensed projects -- whether domestic or international.

All donation proceeds must be recorded daily in the automated system for managing charitable associations (by the next business day). This record must include total value of donations collected, sources of donations, administrative percentage deducted and net value of the donations.

Charities are required to enter daily proceeds from donation devices located at their headquarters. Existing regulations regarding the disbursement and deposit of collected funds into bank accounts remain in force.

Regarding bank deductions, charities must provide the ministry with a monthly report detailing the amounts collected under each licensed project included in the deduction offer. This report must be submitted within seven working days of the following month and

must explain both the deduction amounts and the projects to which they relate.

For checks received from donors, charities must notify the ministry daily, providing the following details:

- check amount, donor's name and project to which the donation applies

For bank transfers, charities must notify the ministry daily, specifying the transfer amount, donor's name and designated project

Regarding international campaigns, the ministry clarified that any request must specify the campaign duration, administrative percentage deducted from donations and foreign entities contracted to carry out the campaign.

The ministry will coordinate with its Foreign Affairs counterpart to review the request and secure approvals from the official authorities in the destination countries.

If charities already hold licenses to implement charitable projects in those countries, they must deliver aid through their licensed projects without launching an independent campaign.

When organizing marketing campaigns in or outside Kuwait, all previously mentioned conditions must be strictly observed. Charitable organizations will also receive specific guidelines governing external financial transfers for executing licensed charitable projects abroad.

The ministry stressed that assistance to various types of cases must be provided exclusively through the Central Assistance Program. It also underscored the importance of expediting assistance procedures and withdrawals through this program.

Charities are required to engage auditors approved by the Capital Markets Authority, maintain an internal auditor responsible for reviewing all financial transactions, appoint a compliance officer who must submit annual compliance reports to the ministry and disclose financial statements in accordance with Circular No. 194.

The ministry confirmed that within a month, charitable associations will be classified as compliant, partially compliant or non-compliant. It is prohibited to collect donations for entities classified as non-compliant.

In the event of a violation, the ministry will take legal action against the violating association, either by suspending the collection of donations or suspending the project in accordance with Ministerial Resolution No. 1/128 of 2016, or dissolving the association in accordance with Law No. 24/ 1962.

The ministry issued general guidelines for evaluation and adherence to governance as follows:

Measuring financial performance indicators

- Prepare periodic audited financial reports that include detailed revenues and expenditures;
- Diversify funding sources;
- Maintain an appropriate percentage of administrative expenses (not exceeding 12.5 percent of total donations);
- Number of reports presented to official bodies or donors.

Measuring administrative and functional performance:

- A complete organizational structure and diverse tasks, specializations and functions;
- A general manager to oversee the association's financial and administrative activities;
- A bylaw defining financial and administrative responsibilities and authorities in place;
- Document and update administrative and financial policies and procedures;
- Ensure the qualifications of administrative personnel and provide them with the necessary training on an ongoing basis;
- Activate internal control systems to ensure integrity and transparency in all operations;
- An internal financial auditor;
- A department to measure regulatory compliance and business governance;
- Prompt response to regulatory inquiries;
- Number of effective administrative meetings.

Measuring activity supervision and follow-up indicators:

- Highlight contracts that clarify the nature of services;
- Percentage of project completion and the extent of adherence to project timelines;
- A risk assessment system;
- Compliance with governance systems and internal regulations;
- Work to localize charitable work within Kuwait.

Measuring external project follow-up indicators:

- Percentage of project completion compared to the timeline;
- Submit progress reports on time;
- Number of field supervisory visits to all implemented projects;
- Response rate to supervision recommendations and periodic project follow-up;
- Level of project documentation (photos, videos, reports);
- Percentage of external parties implementing the project that adhere to contracts, agreements and the specified timetable;
- Quality of communication with the external implementing party (responses, meetings, updates).

Call for study leave

Ministry opens fields for staff scholarships

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

KUWAIT CITY, June 29: The Ministry of Islamic Affairs opened the registration for employees, who want to apply for scholarships and study leave for academic year 2025/2026, on Sunday and it will continue until July 17.

The newspaper obtained a copy of the memorandum, stating that the specialization must be compatible with the activities of the ministry and approved by the Civil Service Commission (CSC).

The ministry stated that if the applicant meets all requirements, priority for seats will be based on seniority in appointment.

It urged applicants to adhere to 15 specializations in diploma and bachelor's programs; indicating that diploma specializations include Electrical Engineering, Computer Engineering, Artificial Intelligence, and Accounting.

It added that bachelor's specializations include Civil Engineering, Computer Engineering, Artificial Intelligence, Accounting, Business Administration, English Literature, Information Systems Management, Psychology, Sociology, Social Work and Arabic Literature.

It called on those wishing to study for a bachelor's or diploma in Nursing to transfer to an organization that includes nurses in its workforce. The employee must be a candidate for a qualification higher than the one for which he was appointed.

Persons with disabilities are exempted from all scholarship requirements, provided they obtain a valid disability certificate issued by the Public Authority for Disability Affairs (PADA) for all types of disabilities and at all educational levels.

The general conditions state that the employee's age at the time of granting the scholarship or study leave must not exceed 50 years for all educational levels, and that the last job performance rating must be 'excellent'.

Required for Academic Year 2025-26 at Private American School

Kindergarten <ul style="list-style-type: none">Female Physical Education Teacher/LifeguardEnglish Teacher (Native English speakers only)
Elementary <ul style="list-style-type: none">English Teacher (Native English speakers only)Science TeacherMusic Teacher
Middle and High School <ul style="list-style-type: none">Math TeacherAP English Teacher (Native English speakers only)English Teacher (Native English speakers only)Science TeacherCulinary Arts TeacherSocial Studies/Humanities TeacherCounselor (Social-Emotional and Academic Focus)College Counselor
Leadership Positions <ul style="list-style-type: none">HS School PrincipalMSHS Curriculum CoordinatorElementary Curriculum CoordinatorElementary CounselorMSHS Dean of Students

Interested applicants may apply through our website at the following link:
<https://www.abs.edu.kw/careers/abs>

Musk renews criticism of big bill

US Senate Republicans advance Trump’s tax, spending cuts bill after late-night vote

WASHINGTON, June 29, (AP): US Senate Republicans voting in a dramatic late Saturday session narrowly cleared a key procedural step as they race to advance President Donald Trump’s package of tax breaks, spending cuts and bolstered deportation funds by his July Fourth deadline.

The tally, 51-49, came after a tumultuous night with Vice President JD Vance at the Capitol to break a potential tie. Tense scenes played out in the chamber as voting came to a standstill, dragging for more than three hours as holdout senators huddled for negotiations, and took private meetings off the floor. In the end, two Republicans opposed the motion to proceed, joining all Democrats.

There’s still a long weekend of work to come.

Republicans are using their majorities in Congress to push aside Democratic opposition, but they have run into a series of political and policy setbacks. Not all GOP lawmakers are on board with proposals to reduce spending on Medicaid, food stamps and other programs as a way to help cover the cost of extending some \$3.8 trillion in Trump tax breaks.

“It’s time to get this legislation across the finish line,” said Senate Majority Leader John Thune, R-S.D. Ahead of roll call, the White House released a statement of administrative policy saying it “strongly supports passage” of the bill. Trump himself was at his golf course in Virginia on Saturday with GOP senators posting about the visit on social media.

But by nightfall, Trump was lashing out against holdouts, threatening to campaign against one Republican, Sen Thom Tillis of North Carolina, who had announced he could not support the bill because of grave Medicaid cuts that he worried would leave many without health care in his state. Tillis and Sen. Rand Paul of Kentucky voted against. The president was working the phones from the Oval Office late Saturday night, according to a person familiar with the discussions who was not authorized to speak publicly and spoke on condition of anonymity.

Pressure was mounting from all sides - billionaire Elon Musk criticized the package as “utterly insane and destructive.”

Musk on Saturday doubled down on his distaste for Trump’s sprawling tax and spending cuts bill, arguing the legislation that Republican senators are scrambling



US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent speaks to reporters as he leaves a closed-door meeting with Republicans working on President Donald Trump’s sweeping domestic policy bill, at the Capitol in Washington on June 27. (AP)

to pass would kill jobs and bog down burgeoning industries.

“The latest Senate draft bill will destroy millions of jobs in America and cause immense strategic harm to our country,” Musk wrote on X on Saturday ahead of a procedural Senate vote to open debate on the nearly 1,000-page bill. “It gives handouts to industries of the past while severely damaging industries of the future.”

The Tesla and SpaceX CEO, whose birthday is also Saturday, later posted that the bill would be “political suicide for the Republican Party.”

The 940-page “One Big Beautiful Bill Act was released shortly before midnight Friday, and senators are expected to grind through all-night debate and amendments in the days ahead. If the Senate is able to pass it, the bill would go back to the House for a final round of votes before it could reach the White House.

With the narrow Republican majorities in the House and Senate, leaders need almost every lawmaker on board. A new analysis from the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office said the Senate bill would increase by 11.8 million the number of people without health insurance in 2034.

Senate Democratic leader Chuck Schumer of New York said Republicans unveiled the bill “in the dead of night” and are rushing to finish the bill before the public fully knows what’s in it. He immediately forced a full reading of the text late Saturday in the Senate, which would take hours.

The weekend session could be a make-or-break moment for Trump’s party, which has invested much of its political capital on his signature domestic policy plan. Trump is pushing Congress to wrap it up and has admonished the “grandstanders” among GOP holdouts to fall in line.

The legislation is an ambitious but complicated series of GOP priorities. At its core, it would make permanent many of the tax breaks from Trump’s first term that would otherwise expire by year’s end if Congress fails to act, resulting in a potential tax increase on Americans. The bill would add new breaks, including no taxes on tips, and commit \$350 billion to national security, including for Trump’s mass deportation agenda.

But the cutbacks to Medicaid, food stamps and green energy investments, which a top Democrat, Sen. Ron Wyden of Oregon said would be a “death sentence” for America’s wind and solar industries, are also causing dissent within GOP ranks.

The Republicans are relying on the reductions to offset the lost tax revenues but some lawmakers say the cuts go too far, particularly for people receiving health care through Medicaid. Meanwhile, conservatives, worried about the nation’s debt, are pushing for steeper cuts.

America

Biden, Harris attend Hortman’s funeral: Democratic former Minnesota House Speaker **Melissa Hortman** was honored for her legislative accomplishments and her humanity during a funeral Saturday where former President Joe Biden and former Vice President Kamala Harris joined over 1,000 mourners.

Hortman was fatally shot two weeks earlier by a man posing as a police officer in an attack that Minnesota’s chief federal prosecutor has called an as-sassination. It and another shooting also left her husband, Mark, dead and a state senator and his wife seriously wounded.

“Melissa Hortman will be remembered as the most consequential speaker in Minnesota history. I get to remember her as a close friend, a mentor, and the most talented legislator I have ever known,” Gov. Tim Walz said in his eulogy. “For seven years, I have had the privilege of signing her agenda into law. I know millions of Minnesotans get to live their lives better because she and Mark chose public service and politics.” Neither Biden nor Harris spoke, but they sat in the front row with the governor, who was Harris’ running mate in 2024. Biden and Harris held hands during the prayer, a common practice, before embracing during the passing of the peace. Biden and then Harris then reached over to shake Walz’s hand.

Biden was also one of more than 7,500 people who paid their respects Friday as Hortman, her husband, Mark, and their golden retriever, Gilbert, lay in state in the Minnesota Capitol rotunda in St. Paul. Gilbert was seriously wounded in the attack and had to be euthanized. Biden also visited the wounded senator in a hospital. Dozens of current and former state legislators from both parties and other elected officials who worked with Hortman also attended.



Hortman

Hortman, who was first elected in 2004, helped pass an expansive agenda of liberal initiatives like free lunches for public school students during the momentous 2023 session as the chamber’s speaker, along with expanded protections for abortion. With the House split 67-67 between Democrats and Republicans this year, she yielded the gavel to a Republican under a power-sharing deal, took the title speaker emerita, and helped break a budget impasse that threatened to shut down state government. (AP)

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5 dead, multiple injured in Texas crash: Five people were killed and several others injured Saturday in a crash involving seven vehicles near Terrell in northern Texas, authorities said.

According to the Texas Department of Public Safety, the accident began when a truck-tractor driver fell asleep at the wheel and crashed into a Ford F-150 carrying five people. The truck-tractor then collided with two other 18-wheelers, causing one to jackknife and collide with three more cars.

The Terrell Volunteer Fire Department said at least one of the injured was in critical condition.

The crash led to the shutdown of Interstate 20 and triggered an emergency response from multiple agencies. (Xinhua)

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‘Young shark bit woman at NY beach’: A 20-year-old woman was likely bitten by a juvenile shark while waist-deep in the surf at a suburban New York beach, according to state officials.

The unidentified woman suffered minor cuts to her left leg and foot after being bitten Wednesday at Jones Beach State Park on Long Island. She was treated for injuries that were not life-threatening, according to a release from state parks officials.

The woman did not see what bit her, and a subsequent drone search for dangerous marine life was not successful. But experts analyzing photos of the injuries and other factors believe the bites “most likely” came from a juvenile sand tiger shark, state officials said. (AP)

US Chief Justice Roberts warns against heated political words about judges

WASHINGTON, June 29, (AP): US Chief Justice John Roberts, speaking at a moment when threats against judges are on the rise, warned on Saturday that elected officials’ heated words about judges can lead to threats or acts of violence by others.

Without identifying anyone by name, Roberts clearly referenced Republican President Donald Trump and Senate Democratic leader Chuck Schumer of New York when he said he has felt compelled to issue public rebukes of figures in both parties in recent years.

“It becomes wrapped up in the political dispute that a judge who’s doing his or her job is part of the problem,” Roberts said at a gathering of lawyers and judges in Charlotte, North Carolina. “And the danger, of course, is somebody might pick up on that. And we have had, of course, serious threats of violence and murder of judges just simply for doing their work. So I think the political people on both sides of the aisle need to keep that in mind.”

Roberts appeared at the 4th US Circuit Court of Appeals judicial conference on the day after the Supreme Court issued the final decisions of its term, including a major victory for



Chief Justice of the US Supreme Court John Roberts speaks during a lecture to the Georgetown Law School graduating class of 2025, in Washington, May 12. (AP)

Trump that limits judges’ ability to use court orders with nationwide reach to block his agenda. C-Span carried Roberts’ conversation with Judge Albert Diaz, the 4th Circuit’s chief judge.

Roberts first took issue with Trump’s comments in 2018, when Roberts responded to Trump’s description of a judge who rejected his migrant asylum policy as an “Obama judge.” In March, Roberts rejected calls for impeaching judges, shortly after Trump demanded the removal of one who ruled against his deportation plans.



People attend a major anti-government rally in Belgrade, Serbia on June 28. (AP)

Dozens of anti-govt protesters detained during clashes with riot police in Serbia

BELGRADE, Serbia, June 29, (AP): Dozens of anti-government protesters were detained during clashes with riot police in Serbia’s capital on Saturday during a massive rally against populist President Aleksandar Vucic demanding an early parliamentary election.

The protest by tens of thousands of demonstrators was held after nearly eight months of persistent dissent led by Serbia’s university students that have rattled Vucic’s firm grip on power in the Balkan country.

The huge crowd chanted: “We want elections!” as they filled the capital’s central Slavija Square and several blocks around it, with many unable to reach the venue.

Police handcuffed detained protesters, and an officer was seen injured on the ground during street battles in central Belgrade that lasted several hours. Six police officers and an unknown number of citizens were injured, police said.

“Serbia always wins in the end,” President Vucic said in an Instagram post.

Vucic, a former extreme nationalist, has become increasingly authoritarian since coming to power more than a decade ago. Though he formally says he wants Serbia to join the European Union, critics say Vucic has stifled democratic freedoms as he strengthened ties with Russia and China.

As the protest formally ended, the demonstrators threw

eggs, plastic bottles and other objects at riot police who were preventing the crowd from approaching a downtown park. At the park, hundreds of Vucic’s loyalists have been camping in the park to form a human shield in front of his headquarters in the capital. Serbia’s Interior Minister Ivica Dacic said participants in the protest attacked the police. He said police used their powers to restore public order and “arrest all those who attacked the police.”

Police later said dozens of “hooligans” were detained but did not provide the exact number.

Some demonstrators wore scarfs and masks over their faces as they clashed with law enforcement, using garbage cans as protection against baton wielding police. Police used pepper spray before pushing protesters with their shields.

Tensions were high before and during the gathering as riot police deployed around government buildings.

“Elections are a clear way out of the social crisis caused by the deeds of the government, which is undoubtedly against the interests of their own people,” said a student who didn’t give her name while addressing the crowd from a stage. “Today, on June 28, 2025, we declare the current authorities illegitimate.”

At the end of the official part of the rally, students told the crowd to “take freedom into your own hands.”

World leaders adapt to US President Trump’s erratic diplomacy with flattery and patience

LONDON, June 29, (AP): If world leaders were teaching a course on how to deal with US President Donald Trump early in his second term, their lesson plan might go like this: Pile on the flattery. Don’t chase the policy rabbits he sends running across the world stage. Wait out the threats to see what, specifically, he wants, and when possible, find a way to deliver it.

With every Oval Office meeting and summit, the leaders of other countries are settling on tactics and strategy in their pursuit of a working relationship with the emboldened American leader who presides over the world’s largest economy and commands its most powerful military. The results were there to see at NATO, where leaders heaped praise on Trump, shortened meetings and removed contentious subjects from the agenda.

Given that Trump dominates geopolitics, foreign leaders are learning from each other’s experiences dating to Trump’s first term, when he reportedly threatened to withdraw the U.S. from the alliance. Among the learnable Trumpisms: He disdains traditional diplomacy. With him, it’s “America first,” it’s superlative - and “it’s not even close.” He goes with his gut, and the world goes along for the ride.

They’re finding, for example, that the sheer pace of Trump’s orders, threats and social posts can send him



US President Donald Trump, (center), speaks with NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte, (left), during a group photo of NATO heads of state and government at the NATO summit in The Hague, Netherlands on June 25. (AP)

ping from the priority of one moment to another. He describes himself as “flexible” in negotiations, such as those in which he threatened big tariffs on Canada, Mexico and China only to back down during talks. And while Trump claimed credit for the ceasefire in the Iran-Israel war, he also has yet to negotiate ending the conflicts in Ukraine and Gaza as promised.

Trump’s threat this week to levy retaliatory tariffs on Spain, for example, “is a mystery to everyone,” Belgian Prime Minister Bart De Wever told reporters Thursday during a summit in Brussels. If the tariffs never happen, he said, “It won’t be the first time that things don’t turn out as bad as they seem at first glance. Or that he changes his mind. I’m not the kind of leader who jumps every time Mr. Trump says something.”

Two summits this month, an ocean apart - the Group of Seven in Canada and NATO in The Netherlands - illustrate contrasting approaches to the American president on the brink of his 6th month back in office.

Russia launches biggest aerial attack since start of war, says Ukraine official

KYIV, Ukraine, June 29, (AP): Russia launched its biggest aerial attack against Ukraine overnight, a Ukrainian official said Sunday, part of an escalating bombing campaign that has further dashed hopes for a breakthrough in efforts to end the 3-year-old war.

Russia fired a total of 537 aerial weapons at Ukraine, including 477 drones and decoys and 60 missiles, Ukraine’s air force said. Of these, 249 were shot down and 226 were lost, likely having been electronically jammed.

The onslaught was “the most massive airstrike” on the country since the beginning of Russia’s full-scale invasion in February 2022, taking into account both drones and various types of missiles, Yuriy Ihnat, head of communications for Ukraine’s air force, told The Associated Press. The attack targeted several regions, including western Ukraine, far from the front line.

Poland and allied countries scrambled aircraft to ensure the safety of Polish airspace, the country’s air force said.

One person died in a drone strike in



A view of the damaged flat of an apartment building where the Ukrainian drone fell in Krasnogorsk, just outside Moscow, Russia, on June 24. (AP)

the Kherson region. Gov. Oleksandr Prokudin said, while another was killed when a drone hit a car in the Kharkiv region, according to its Gov. Oleh Syniehubov. Six people were wounded in Cherkasy, including a child, according to regional Gov. Ihor Taburets.

In the far-western Lviv region, a large fire broke out at an industrial facility in the city of Drohobych following a drone attack that also cut electricity to parts of the city.

Europe

Germany suspends family reunification: German lawmakers voted Friday to suspend family reunions for many migrants, part of a drive by the new conservative-led government for a tougher approach to migration.

Parliament’s lower house voted 444-135 to suspend the possibility of family reunions for two years for migrants who have “subsidiary protection,” a status that falls short of asylum.

At the end of March, more than 388,000 people living in Germany had the status, which was granted to many people fleeing Syria’s civil war.

New Chancellor **Friedrich Merz** made tougher migration policy a central plank of his campaign for Germany’s election in February. Just after he took office in early May, the government stationed more police at the border and said some asylum-seekers trying to enter Europe’s biggest economy would be turned away.

Asylum applications declined from 329,120 in 2023 to 229,751 last year and have continued to fall this year. (AP)

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2 dead, 1 injured in Poland shooting: Two people were killed and another injured in a shooting that took place Friday morning in southern Poland, the Polish Press Agency reported.

The incident took place around 10 a.m. local time (0800 GMT) in the village of Stara Wola, situated within Limanowa Municipality in the Lesser Poland Voivodeship.

A 57-year-old suspect opened fire inside a house, shooting three people before fleeing into a nearby forest, according to local media. Authorities have released the name and image of the alleged gunman, and a large-scale manhunt is currently in progress. (Xinhua)



Merz

Asia

S.Korean president names ministers, secretaries: South Korean President Lee Jae-myung, who took office on June 4, named six ministers and two senior secretaries, the presidential office said Sunday.

Koo Yun-cheol, former vice finance minister, was selected to lead the Ministry of Economy and Finance and double as deputy prime minister for economic affairs.

Lee Jin-sook, former president of Chungnam National University, was picked as education minister who doubles as deputy prime minister for social affairs.

Jeong Seong-ho, five-term lawmaker of the ruling liberal Democratic Party, was nominated as justice minister, while the Democratic Party's five-term lawmaker, Yoon Ho-jung, was named as interior minister.

Kim Jung-kwan, president of the country's major plant builder Doosan Enerbility, was nominated as industry minister, while former Korea Disease Control and Prevention Agency Commissioner Jeong Eun-kyeong was picked as minister of health and welfare.

President Lee also appointed senior presidential secretaries for civil affairs and for non-governmental organizations as well as deputy chiefs of the National Intelligence Service. (Xinhua)

Boat capsizes off Malaysia east coast, 3 dead: Three deaths were reported following the capsizing of a boat off Malaysia's east coast, authorities said on Sunday.

The victims were identified as a 40-year-old man, his 3-year-old daughter, and a 10-year-old relative, Besut district police chief superintendent Azamuddin Ahmad Abu told a press briefing.

He said the incident occurred late Saturday night when the boat capsized during a storm with heavy rain and rough seas near Perhentian Island, a popular tourist spot in Malaysia's Terengganu state. (Xinhua)

4 dead, 3 hurt in Vietnam recycling facility fire: Four people were killed and three others injured in a fire that broke out at a waste recycling facility



South Korean President Lee Jae-myung delivers his first budget speech at the National Assembly in Seoul on June 26. (AP)

in northern Vietnam's Hung Yen province on Saturday afternoon, local media Tuoi Tre (Youth) reported.

The blaze erupted at around 2:00 p.m. at the facility located in Van Lam district.

According to witnesses, the fire was believed to have started in the recycling area before engulfing other sections of the facility.

The cause of the fire is under investigation. (Xinhua)

Man in hospital after Sydney shooting: A man has been hospitalized following a late-night shooting in western Sydney.

Police said that the man, believed to be aged in his 20s, was shot while sitting

in a parked vehicle in Penrith, 50 km west of central Sydney, on Friday night.

Emergency services were called to the scene and the man was treated by ambulance paramedics for a gunshot wound before being taken to hospital with injuries not considered life threatening. (Xinhua)

Cambodia's CCP marks anniversary: The ruling Cambodian People's Party (CPP) on Saturday celebrated the 74th anniversary of its birth.

At the event, a troupe of artists performed a celebratory dance, and doves were released into the sky as a symbol of peace and freedom.

The CPP has ruled the Southeast Asian country since 1979. (Xinhua)

Laos braces for rising flood risk: As rainfall continues across Laos, rising river levels have caused flooding in several villages, leading to growing public concern as communities brace for an escalating threat of widespread flooding.

Continuous heavy rainfall in Laos has triggered rising river levels and widespread flooding across several villages. On Friday, several villages in Meun district in Vientiane province experienced heavy rainfall for several hours.

Many people shared videos and images on social media showing water-logged streets in Vientiane.

Chaipaserd, a resident of Vientiane, observed that every rainy season brings floods to many villages across the country, causing severe damage to homes, schools, and roads, and significantly disrupting people's daily lives. He expressed deep concern over the recent flooding in Vientiane province.

"With the rain continuing, it's a stressful time for everyone living in vulnerable areas, especially low-lying communities," Chaipaserd told Xinhua on Saturday. "Floods can strike suddenly, and the damage can be devastating."

"I encourage everyone to stay vigilant and take every possible precaution, protect your children, secure your belongings, and be ready to evacuate if needed. Even a brief flood can cause lasting damage and put lives at risk," he added.

On Saturday, a flash flood hit the Boten border crossing in Luang Namtha province, northern Laos, after persistent heavy rainfall. The flood led to major traffic disruptions, with water levels rising to nearly 1 meter in certain areas, and strong currents creating a considerable risk of accidents. (Xinhua)

Yellow alert issued for rainstorms

China's Xi meets Ecuadorian president

BEIJING, June 29, (Xinhua): Chinese President Xi Jinping met with Ecuadorian President Daniel Noboa in Beijing on Friday.

Xi said this year marks the 45th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic ties and bilateral relations have maintained a good momentum.

"Ecuador has joined the big family of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), and China and Ecuador have signed a free trade agreement, carrying out fruitful cooperation in areas such as energy, mining, power and infrastructure construction," Xi said.

China has always viewed and developed relations with Ecuador from a strategic and long-term perspective, and is willing to work with Ecuador to advance the comprehensive strategic partnership, Xi added.

He stressed that the two countries should be good friends that respect and trust each other and good partners that seek common development, calling on both sides to continue supporting each other's core interests and major concerns and increase exchanges on state governance.

Xi encouraged both sides to carry out key cooperation projects effectively, boost bilateral trade, enhance exchanges in education, culture, media and youth, and implement the outcomes of the fourth ministerial meeting of the China-CELAC (the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States) Forum.

Noboa, who came to China for the 2025 Summer Davos forum in north China's Tianjin Municipality, said he

admires China's development that impresses the world and that his country will always remember China's great support and assistance for its social and economic development.

Ecuador looks forward to deepening relations with China and increasing cooperation in trade, science and technology, culture, education and youth, Noboa added.

After their meeting, the two leaders witnessed the signing of a cooperation plan for promoting the BRI.

China's top legislator Zhao Leji met with Noboa in Beijing on Friday.

Also:

BEIJING: China's national observatory issued a yellow alert on Sunday, warning of downpours in some regions of the country.

From 8:00 am Sunday to 8:00 am Monday, heavy rains and rainstorms are forecast to hit parts of the provincial-level regions of **Sichuan, Gansu, Shaanxi, Chongqing, Hubei, Zhejiang, Fujian, Anhui, Jiangsu, Shandong, Hebei and Liaoning**, the National Meteorological Center said.

Parts of the Sichuan Basin are expected to experience torrential rains, with precipitation up to 300 mm, the center added.

The center has advised local authorities to take precautions for heavy rainstorms, and suggested that necessary drainage measures should be taken in urban areas and across farmlands.



Chinese Premier Li Qiang meets with Ecuadorian President Daniel Noboa, who is in China to attend the 2025 Summer Davos forum, at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing, capital of China on June 24. (Xinhua)

3 killed and dozen others hospitalized after crowd surge at eastern India fest

NEW DELHI, June 29, (AP): Three people were killed and more than a dozen hospitalized Sunday following a sudden crowd surge and stampede at a popular festival in eastern India, local authorities said.

"There was a sudden crowd surge of devotees during which a few people either fainted, felt suffocated or complained of breathlessness," said Siddharth Shankar Swain, the top government official in Puri.

Swain told The Associated Press that 15 people were rushed to a local government hospital, where three people were pronounced dead. Autopsies are planned to determine the exact causes of death. The other 12 people have been discharged.

Tens of thousands of devotees gathered in the coastal town early Sunday at Shree Gundicha Temple, near the famous Jagannatha Temple, Swain said. The coastal temple town of Puri comes alive each year with the grand "Rath Yatra," or chariot festival, in one of the world's oldest and largest processions. Naveen Patnaik, a former top elected official of Odisha state where Puri is located, said in a social media post that "no government machinery (was) present to manage the surging crowds, highlighting a shocking lapse in duty."

Also:

NEW DELHI: At least four workers



Police personnel and relatives of victims who lost their lives in a crowd surge at a procession wait outside a postmortem center at a government hospital in Puri, India on June 29. (AP)

were killed and four others injured Sunday after soil caved in during pipeline excavation work in **India's** western state of **Rajasthan**, officials said.

The incident took place at **Jangika Nagla** village in **Bharatpur** district, about 190 km east of **Jaipur**, the capital city of Rajasthan.

"Today, a mud wall of a 10-foot-deep trench collapsed at a site where work is going on under the Chambal drinking water scheme. A total of six people were rescued. Four people have been admitted to the hospital, while two people were declared brought dead. Two more casualties have been reported, thus taking the toll to four," a senior local government official in Bharatpur, Qamar Chaudhary said.

Qamar said the rescue operation is underway as personnel from the State Disaster Response Force, National Disaster Response Force, police and civil defence have been pressed into service. Officials said rescue teams used earthmoving machines to remove soil and retrieve the trapped laborers.

Sudan civil war overwhelms border town in neighbor Chad as refugees find little help

ADRE, Chad, June 29, (AP): Fatima Omas Abdullah wakes up every morning with aches and pains from sleeping on bare ground for almost two years. She did not expect Sudan's civil war to displace her for so long into neighboring Chad.

"There is nothing here," she said, crying and shaking the straw door of her makeshift home. Since April 2023, she has been in the Adre transit camp a few hundred meters from the Sudanese border, along with almost a quarter-million others fleeing the fighting.

Now the US-backed aid system that kept hundreds of thousands like Abdullah alive on the edge of one of the world's most devastating wars is fraying. Under the Trump administration, key foreign aid has been slashed and funding withdrawn from United Nations programs that feed, treat and shelter refugees.

In 2024, the US contributed \$39.3 million to the emergency response in Chad. So far this year, it has contributed about \$6.8 million, the U.N. says. Overall, only 13% of the requested money to support refugees in Chad this year has come in from all donors, according to UN data.

In Adre, humanitarian services were already limited as refugees are meant to move to more established camps deeper inside Chad.

Many Sudanese, however, choose to stay. Some are heartened by the

Refugees arrive at the Tine transit camp in Chad's Wadi Fara province on May 3. (AP)

military's recent successes against rival paramilitary forces in the capital, Khartoum. They have swelled the population of this remote, arid community that was never meant to hold so many. Prices have shot up. Competition over water is growing.

Adre isn't alone. As the fighting inside Sudan's remote Darfur region shifts, the stream of refugees has created a new, more isolated transit camp called Tine. Since late April, 46,000 people have arrived.

With the aid cuts, there is even less

to offer them there.

Adre has become a fragile frontline for an estimated 235,000 Sudanese. They are among the 1.2 million who have fled into eastern Chad.

Before the civil war, Adre was a town of about 40,000. As Sudanese began to arrive, sympathetic residents with longtime cross-border ties offered them land.

Now there is a sea of markets and shelters, along with signs of Sudanese intending to stay. Some refugees are constructing multi-story buildings.



Refugees arrive at the Tine transit camp in Chad's Wadi Fara province on May 3. (AP)

Prez defies calls for retirement

Uganda's Museveni seeks seventh term

KAMPALA, Uganda, June 29, (AP): Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni on Saturday sought nomination for a seventh term, a move that would bring him closer to five decades in power in the East African country.

Museveni, 80, has defied calls for his retirement, as critics warn that he has veered into authoritarianism with virtually no opposition, including within his governing National Resistance Movement party.

He was welcomed by a large crowd of supporters as he went to collect nomination papers from the party's offices in Kampala, the capital.

He said in a speech to his followers that, if reelected, one of his goals is to fight official corruption.

"In this time I want us really to wipe out corruption," he said.

Museveni first took power as head of a rebel force in 1986. He has since been elected six times, though recent elections have been marred by violence and allegations of vote rigging. His main opponent in the last election was the popular entertainer known as Bobi Wine, who has also declared his candidacy in the polls set for January.

Wine, whose real name is Kyagulanyi Ssentamu, has seen many associates jailed or go into hiding as security forces cracked down on opposition supporters.

Museveni has dismissed Wine as "an agent of foreign interests" who can't be trusted with power. Wine has been arrested many times on various charges, but has never been convicted. He insists he's running a nonviolent campaign.

Decades ago, Museveni himself had criticized African leaders who overstayed their welcome in office. In Uganda, lawmakers did the same thing for him when they jettisoned the last constitutional obstacle - age limits - for

a possible life presidency. His son, army chief Muhoozi Kainerugaba, has asserted his wish to succeed his father, raising fears of hereditary rule.

A long-time opposition leader, Kizza Besigye, has been jailed since November over alleged treason charges his lawyers say are politically motivated. Besigye, a physician who retired from Uganda's military at the rank of colonel, is a former president of the Forum for Democratic Change party, for many years Uganda's most prominent opposition group.



Uganda's President Yoweri Museveni attends the state funeral of Kenya's former president Daniel Arap Moi in Nairobi, Kenya on Feb. 11, 2020. (AP)

Subcontinent

Sri Lanka to renovate stations: The Sri Lankan government has launched the "Dream Destination" project to renovate 100 railway stations around the country, the President's Media Division (PMD) said in a statement on Saturday.

The project was launched during a ceremony on Friday evening, which was attended by President **Anura Kumara Dissanayake**, the PMD said, adding that the Road Safety Action Plan 2025-2026 was formally presented to Dissanayake by transport minister Bimal Ratnayake during the event. This project aims to create a clean and attractive railway station network that ensures the safety and comfort of all passengers, including those with special needs, the PMD said. (Xinhua)

Pakistan bomb blast kills 2: At least two people were killed and five others injured when a blast occurred at a scrap warehouse in Pakistan's northwest Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, official sources said.

The explosion took place on Saturday evening in the Lower Dir district of the province due to old explosive ordnance in the scrap shop, the sources told Xinhua. (Xinhua)

Afghanistan traffic accident injures 11: Eleven commuters sustained injuries in a road accident in Afghanistan's eastern Laghman province, the provincial police office said on Saturday.

The accident took place Saturday morning on a highway linking the capital Kabul to eastern Nangarhar province when a truck collided with two passenger vehicles, leaving 11 injured, including a woman, said the office. (Xinhua)



Dissanayake



Guyanese President Mohamed Irfaan Ali and US Secretary of State Marco Rubio hold a news conference in Georgetown, Guyana on March 27. (AP)

Guyana to crack down on gold smuggled in from Venezuela

GEORGETOWN, Guyana, June 29, (AP): Guyana has pledged to crack down on gold smuggled across the border from neighboring Venezuela at the urging of the US government.

President Irfaan Ali said late Friday that the government of the South American country is dedicating "enormous resources" to thwart the smuggling, which has long been a problem. He said authorities have increased border patrols and improved monitoring in mining regions.

Local officials have said they suspect that Venezuelan-sanctioned gold is being mixed with gold mined in Guyana and then passed off as local production and sold to markets in the US, Canada, the Middle East and elsewhere.

In 2021, the Royal Canadian Mint suspended gold purchases from a major export company in Guyana because officials suspected some shipments had been mixed with Venezuelan gold, an allegation the company denied.

Saudi’s unemployment rate sees record 6.3% decline

RIYADH, June 29, (KUNA): Saudi Arabia’s unemployment rate among Saudis saw a record 6.3 percent decline in the first quarter of 2025, while women’s participation in the workforce surged to 36.3 pct, said Saudi General Authority for Statistics on Sunday.

In a statement, the authority noted that the overall unemployment rate reached 2.8 pct, while the overall labour force participation rate reached 68.2 pct, and the Saudi labour force participation rate rose to 51.3 pct compared to the fourth quarter of 2024.

Business



Javier La Rosa

Chevron’s Javier La Rosa to lead portfolio across key global exploration and production assets

LONDON, June 29: Javier La Rosa has been appointed to lead a broad Chevron portfolio which includes a number of the company’s key global assets. La Rosa’s new role as president of Base Assets and Emerging Countries (BAEC), is effective July 1, 2025 and he will be based at Chevron’s Houston headquarters.

La Rosa will be responsible for the strategic leadership and overall performance of the BAEC organization, which includes

heavy oil assets in the Partitioned Zone (located between Kuwait and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia), San Joaquin Valley (California), and Venezuela; domestic gas assets in Bangladesh and Thailand; non-operated joint ventures in the UK, Canada and China; countries with emerging assets such as Egypt and Cyprus, and legacy assets such as Indonesia.

La Rosa’s appointment follows an announcement by Chevron Corporation (NYSE: CVX) in February 2025, of the

company’s efforts to simplify its organizational structure, execute faster and more effectively, and be positioned for stronger long-term competitiveness.

“I am honored to be appointed to this new role. I believe the key to advancing and maintaining partnerships is trust. Partnerships between people, companies and countries are fundamental to providing reliable, affordable and ever cleaner energy,” said La Rosa.

In his previous role, Javier La Rosa was

based in Buenos Aires, Argentina as managing director of Chevron Latin America. He has also led Chevron’s businesses in Venezuela, Brazil and Colombia, and Geothermal operations in Indonesia and the Philippines.

“I leave Argentina filled with optimism for the country and the region. I am confident that we will continue to advance the tremendous opportunities we see in Argentina’s Vaca Muerta shale play and in the region,” he said.

Boursa Kuwait ends higher as Premier Index jumps 2.12 pct

General benchmark rises 145 points; trading value exceeds KD 162 mln

KUWAIT CITY, June 29, (KUNA): Boursa Kuwait concluded Sunday’s trading session with notable gains across major indices, despite a slight decline in the main market index. The general index surged by 145.11 points, or 1.75 percent, to settle at 8,438.48 points. Trading activity remained brisk, with 759.1 million

shares exchanged through 35,844 cash transactions, amounting to 162.6 million Kuwaiti dinars (approximately \$531.6 million USD).

In contrast, the main market index edged down by 5.98 points, or 0.08 percent, closing at 7,245.13 points. A total of 469.1 million shares were traded via 22,647 cash transactions, valued at 60 million dinars

(about \$196.1 million USD).

The Premier Market Index outperformed, climbing 190 points, or 2.12 percent, to 9,153.22 points. This rally was supported by the trade of 290 million shares through 13,197 transactions, worth 102.5 million dinars (roughly \$335.1 million USD).

Meanwhile, the Major 50 index advanced by 103.39 points, or 1.45 percent, reaching 7,256.36 points. Traders exchanged 318 million shares via 13,353 cash transactions, totaling 40.2 million dinars (about \$131.4 million USD).



Warren Buffett, chairman and CEO of Berkshire Hathaway, smiles as he plays bridge following the annual Berkshire Hathaway shareholders meeting in Omaha, Neb., May 5, 2019. (AP)

Warren Buffett gives \$6 bln in donations to five Foundations

NEW YORK, June 29, (AP): Famed investor Warren Buffett is donating \$6 billion worth of his company’s stock to five foundations, bringing the total he has given to them since 2006 to roughly \$60 billion, based on their value when received.

Buffett said late Friday that the shares of Berkshire Hathaway will be delivered on Monday. Berkshire Hathaway owns Geico, Dairy Queen and a range of other businesses, and Buffett is donating nearly 12.4 million of the Class B shares of its stock. Those shares have a lower and easier-to-digest price tag than the company’s original Class A shares, and each of the B shares was worth \$485.68 at their most recent close on Friday.

The largest tranche is going to the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation Trust, which will receive 9.4 million shares. The Susan Thompson Buf-

fett Foundation will receive 943,384 shares, and the Sherwood Foundation, Howard G. Buffett Foundation and NoVo Foundation will each receive 660,366 shares.

Buffett made waves a year ago when he said he plans to cut off donations to the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation after his death and let his three children decide how to distribute the rest of his fortune.

Berkshire Hathaway’s Class B stock has climbed 19.1% over the last 12 months, topping the broad U.S. stock market’s return of 14.1%, including dividends. Buffett is famous on Wall Street for buying companies at good prices and being more conservative when prices look too high. The bargain-hunting approach has helped him amass a fortune worth about \$145 billion, with basically all of it in Berkshire Hathaway’s stock.

Average long-term US mortgage rate drops to 6.77%

WASHINGTON, June 29, (AP): The average rate on a 30-year U.S. mortgage fell to its lowest level since early May, an encouraging trend for prospective homebuyers at a time when the U.S. housing market remains largely held back by elevated borrowing costs and rising prices.

The long-term rate fell to 6.77% from 6.81% last week, mortgage buyer Freddie Mac said Thursday. A year ago, the rate averaged 6.86%.

Borrowing costs on 15-year fixed-rate mortgages, popular with homeowners refinancing their home loans, also fell. The average rate dropped to 5.89% from 5.96% last week. A year ago, it was 6.16%, Freddie Mac said.

High mortgage rates can add hundreds of dollars a month in costs for borrowers and reduce their purchasing power. That’s helped keep the U.S. housing market in a sales slump that dates back to 2022, when mortgage rates began to climb from the rock-bottom lows they reached during the pandemic.

Last year, sales of previously occupied U.S. homes sank to their lowest level in nearly 30 years. They’ve remained sluggish so far this year, as many prospective homebuyers have been discouraged by elevated mortgage rates and home prices that have kept climbing, albeit at a slower pace.

Elevated borrowing costs are also putting pressure on the new-home

market. Sales of new U.S. homes fell nearly 14% in May from the previous month, the government reported Wednesday.

“Stuck in a bit of a rut, the housing market continues to suffer from high home prices and elevated mortgage rates,” said Hannah Jones, senior economic research analyst at Realtor.com. “However, climbing for-sale inventory in much of the country could help soften upward price pressure and usher in a more friendly housing market for buyers.”

New data suggests sales could pick up in the coming months. A seasonally adjusted index of pending U.S. home sales rose 1.8% in May from the previous month and increased 1.1% from

May last year, the National Association of Realtors said Thursday.

There’s usually a month or two lag between a contract signing and when the sale is finalized, which makes pending home sales a bellwether for future completed home sales.

Mortgage rates are influenced by several factors, from the Federal Reserve’s interest rate policy decisions to bond market investors’ expectations for the economy and inflation.

The key barometer is the 10-year Treasury yield, which lenders use as a guide to pricing home loans. The yield was at 4.28% in midday trading Thursday, down from 4.58% just a few weeks ago.



Group photo of participants – Children aged 7–10 years.



Group photo of participants – Youth aged 11–14 years.

Company holds Innovation Nation Summer Camp for employees’ children

Zain invests in its own to shape a digitally creative future

KUWAIT CITY, June 29: Zain successfully held the second edition of its Innovation Nation (IN) Digital Summer Camp for employees’ children, in collaboration with Sabah Al-Ahmad Center for Giftedness and Creativity (SACGC) — one of the centers of the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences (KFAS). The program aimed to help shape a creative digital generation capable of leading tomorrow’s economy with confidence.

The camp was held at the Zain Innovation Campus (ZINC) at the company’s main headquarters in Shuwaikh. This specialized program in digital skill-building reflects Zain’s commitment to investing in the next generation of digital leaders, starting from within its own corporate



The IN Camp developed children’s skills in digital innovation, creativity, and robotics.

rate family. It focused on developing children’s skills in innovation, creativity, robotics, logical thinking, and problem-solving.



Interactive activities and hands-on workshops that combined learning and fun.

This year’s program saw wide engagement from the targeted age groups (children aged 7–10 and youth aged 11–14). It featured a

range of interactive activities and hands-on workshops that blended education with entertainment, providing a stimulating environment to explore young talents in technology, engineering, and science (STEM).

The program reflects Zain’s vision to foster innovation and creativity, elevate digital competence across various segments of society, and support entrepreneurial thinking among the next generation, all in alignment with the demands of the digital economy and the goals of building an Innovation Nation.

This initiative adds to the series of impactful programs Zain leads as part of its Innovation Nation initiative to empower future generations and prepare youth to lead Kuwait’s digital transformation journey.

Clock ticking on EU-US trade talks as key divides remain

BRUSSELS, June 29, (Xinhua): U.S.-EU trade talks have gone through multiple rounds, but with the July 9 tariff deadline approaching, European leaders remained divided at Thursday’s European Council summit over whether to push for a quick deal or hold out for a more favorable one.

European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said Thursday that the EU had received the “latest U.S. document” for continued negotiations, though she did not disclose details of the U.S. proposals.

EU leaders now face a strategic dilemma over whether to accelerate talks to secure a deal before the deadline, or risk a prolonged trade dispute in hopes of achieving more

favorable terms.

German Chancellor Friedrich Merz, whose country is among the EU’s top exporters, is leading calls for a rapid resolution.

“We have less than two weeks until July 9 -- you can’t negotiate a sophisticated trade agreement in that time,” he said, warning that key industries, including chemicals, steel and automotive, are already under intense pressure.

But others urged caution, warning that a rushed deal could tilt the balance in favor of the United States.

“We are assessing it,” von der Leyen said. “Our message today is clear. We are ready for a deal. At the same time, we are preparing for the possibility that no satisfactory agree-

ment is reached.” She added that “all options remain on the table,” and the EU would defend its interests if needed.

French President Emmanuel Macron echoed this stance, saying France supports a fast and pragmatic deal but “will not accept unfair terms.” U.S. Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent has indicated that Washington may consider extending the deadline for countries negotiating in “good faith.” To ease tensions, the EU has proposed eliminating tariffs on industrial goods on both sides -- a move that has met with a lukewarm response from Washington.

The EU also hopes to narrow the trade imbalance by increasing imports of U.S. liquefied natural gas, arms and agricultural products, and by considering reducing auto tariffs.

However, U.S. negotiators continue to press for sweeping EU concessions on value-added tax rules, digital regulation, food safety and environmental standards.

While EU officials say they are open to dialogue, they insist that core regulatory principles are non-negotiable.

“Where it is the sovereign decision-making process in the European Union and its member states that is affected, this is too far,” von der Leyen said recently.

Citing diplomatic sources, AFP reported that EU leaders may be exploring a so-called “Swiss cheese” deal -- allowing for broad U.S. tariffs but securing exemptions for sensitive sectors such as steel, automotive, pharmaceuticals and aerospace.

From the trading hall to the pinnacle of digital innovation

Boursa Kuwait and Markaz empower Kuwaiti youth with UNICODE

KUWAIT CITY, June 29: Boursa Kuwait and the Kuwait Financial Centre “Markaz” continued their strategic partnership with CODED Academy, sponsoring the fifth edition of the Academy’s UNICODE Program, which targets over 300 university students and recent graduates across three cohorts from August to October 2025.

The program, hosted by Boursa Kuwait at its premises, aims to equip participants with essential coding and programming skills, thereby enhancing their readiness to compete in the rapidly evolving digital job market. It features specialized training tracks in cybersecurity as well as mobile application and web development, offering participants a wide range of potential career pathways. Since its inception in 2021, the program has benefited over 750 students from diverse academic disciplines.

The UNICODE Program’s fifth edition will commence on August 9 and is comprised of three intensive two-week training cohorts, culminating in a graduation ceremony to be held in November. Participants will undergo hands-on training in a range of essential technical skills, including website development using HTML, CSS, and JavaScript, mobile application development using the Flutter platform as well as foundational cybersecurity and digital safety practices.

“Boursa Kuwait firmly believes that investing in human capital is the cornerstone of any meaningful development and that Kuwaiti youth are the driving force behind a sustainable future,” said Mr. Naser Al-Sanousi, Boursa Kuwait’s Senior Director of Marketing and Communication.

“Our strategic partnership with CODED Academy, along with our sponsorship and hosting of the UNICODE Program, reflects this belief, reaffirming our commitment to initiatives that bridge the gap between academic knowledge and the evolving needs of the Kuwaiti labor market. These efforts are also an embodiment of Boursa Kuwait’s strategic commitment to building a



Naser AlSanousi



Maryam Al-Rifae



Hashim Behbehani

knowledge-based society capable of driving digital transformation and enhancing national competitiveness,” he added.

Boursa Kuwait will host the program’s workshops and interactive training sessions at its headquarters, which has been equipped with state-of-the-art facilities designed to offer students a stimulating learning environment that mirrors real-world professional settings and inspires them to explore promising career opportunities in the financial sector. “Boursa Kuwait is proud to host UNICODE at its premises, reinforcing the connection between program participants and capital markets,” Al-Sanousi said.

This year’s edition of the program introduces enhanced content through the integration of financial technology (FinTech) and artificial intelligence concepts across all training tracks, an approach that reflects Boursa Kuwait’s strategic focus on innovation as a key driver of sustainable development. The program also aims to empower participants to devise practical solutions to the contemporary challenges of the financial sector, expanding their professional horizons and supporting their long-term career growth.

“The fifth edition of this pro-

gram serves as an effective bridge between academic aspirations and practical application in the workplace, representing a true launchpad for innovation. By supporting this initiative, we aim to help prepare a generation equipped with the skills and capabilities to drive Kuwait’s economic growth and support its efforts for diversification. I would like to extend my sincere appreciation to CODED Academy for its instrumental role in nurturing young talent and enhancing their skills, and I wish all participants continued success in their pursuit of excellence and innovation,” added Al-Sanousi.

The strategic partnership between Boursa Kuwait and “Markaz” with CODED Academy and sponsorship of its UniCODE program forms part of both companies’ efforts to develop and educate Kuwaiti society and create a lasting meaningful impact on the communities where they operate. Part of their Corporate Sustainability (CS) strategies, the initiative is also in line with Goal 4 – Quality Education – and Goal 17 – Partnership for the Goals – of the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Senior Vice President of Wealth Management and Business Development Ms. Maryam Al-Rifae also spoke about the partnership

with CODED Academy, stating, “Markaz takes great pride in being one of the earliest supporters of CODED Academy since its inception. This marks our fourth sponsorship of the academy’s initiatives since 2019, a commitment that underscores our dedication to fostering innovation and entrepreneurship in Kuwait. It also reflects our broader vision of empowering youth to pursue promising fields such as programming and coding, while reinforcing our belief in human capital development as a cornerstone of our corporate social responsibility strategy.”

She added, “Technology has become an essential part of everyday life, and we have a responsibility as institutions to nurture this shift by cultivating an environment conducive to the growth of start-ups and the development of competitive, homegrown tech solutions. A recent McKinsey report found that supporting educational tech initiatives like the UNICODE program can boost youth employment opportunities by up to 50%, which is a compelling validation of the program’s impact and importance.”

“We are proud to collaborate with Boursa Kuwait on this initiative that reflects our shared commitment to

empowering Kuwaiti youth, equipping them for digital transformation and helping them adapt to the fast-evolving demands of today’s job market. At Markaz, we firmly believe that institutional partnerships are essential to driving inclusive development, led by a generation armed with knowledge, skills and a spirit of innovation,” Al-Rifae said.

The Kuwait Financial Centre “Markaz” was established in 1974 and is one of the first financial institutions in Kuwait to offer asset management and investment banking services in the Middle East and North Africa. Listed on Boursa Kuwait since 1997, it currently manages assets worth KD 1.44 billion (equivalent to USD 4.67 billion) as of March 31, 2025.

CODED Academy Co-Founder and Chief Operating Officer Mr. Hashim Behbehani expressed his heartfelt gratitude to Boursa Kuwait and the Kuwait Financial Centre “Markaz” for their continued support of the Academy and generous sponsorship of the Unicode Program, emphasizing that this strategic collaboration reflects a shared commitment to empowering Kuwaiti youth and cultivating a new generation of highly skilled tech professionals.

“We are proud to launch a new

edition of the Unicode Program, purposefully designed to equip participants with the most in-demand technical skills in today’s job market,” he said. “This year’s curriculum places a strong emphasis on practical, hands-on training in fintech and cybersecurity, offering an immersive learning experience aligned with the dynamic needs of the labor market.”

“Hosting the program at Boursa Kuwait provides participants with an immersive environment that elevates their learning journey and reinforces the program’s growing reputation as a vital step in their career development. CODED Academy remains committed to offering practical, high-quality training that aligns with the aspirations and ambitions of today’s students,” added Behbehani.

Founded in 2015, CODED Academy is the first coding academy in the Middle East, educating participants in software development, cybersecurity, data science and artificial intelligence, enabling the youth to navigate the evolving demands of a competitive job market and enter the workforce with confidence and readiness.

Boursa Kuwait’s Corporate Sustainability strategy stipulates ensuring initiatives apply and fall in line with the company’s corporate social responsibility (CSR), industry best practice standards, and investor expectations, creating strong and sustainable partnerships that ultimately achieve success and allow Boursa Kuwait to leverage the capabilities and strengths of other companies or organizations that have experience in different fields, and integrating sustainability efforts with the company culture, to achieve longevity and ongoing impact that is carried on and instilled in the day-to-day operations of the stock exchange.

As part of the strategy, Boursa Kuwait has launched many initiatives in partnership with local and international organizations, focusing on support for nongovernmental organizations and charity programs, financial literacy and capital market awareness, the empowerment of women, and environmental protection.

From ceasefire to rate cut expectations

Monetary winds swing as geopolitical tensions recede

By National Bank of Kuwait
Market Commentary

Relative calm returned to markets mid-week following the Middle East ceasefire, with focus shifting to monetary policy signals, macroeconomic releases, and evolving geopolitical expectations.

In the United States, Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell reiterated a cautious stance on inflation, though markets increasingly priced in a September rate cut.

The S&P Global Composite PMI slipped marginally to 52.8, with manufacturing stable at 52.0 and services easing to 53.1.

Goods exports contracted 5.2% in May, whilst Q1 GDP was revised down to -0.5% annualised. Core PCE came in at 0.2% MoM.

The US Dollar Index (DXY), which has depreciated 10.2% YTD, fell to its lowest level since early 2022. In Canada, headline CPI held at 1.7% in May, with core inflation easing to 3.0%, whilst GDP came in at -0.1% MoM; USD/CAD traded near 1.3689.

In Europe, Euro Area Composite PMI was unchanged at 50.2, with a modest rebound in Germany offset by continued contraction in France. EUR/USD strengthened to its highest level since September 2021, reaching a high of 1.1753.

In the United Kingdom, composite PMI stood at 50.7 whilst CPI remains elevated at 3.4%; 10-year gilt yield stuck lower. GBP/USD saw the strongest levels since October 2021, rising 2.0% on the week to reach 1.3719.

In Asia-Pacific, China’s industrial profits declined 9.1% YoY in May amidst news that the US and China finalised a trade truce. Australia’s CPI slowed to 2.1%, strengthening expectations of a July RBA rate cut.

Equity markets advanced, with the S&P 500 and Stoxx Europe 600 posting weekly gains of 3.44% and 1.32% respectively.

US Treasuries rallied modestly, with the curve steepening, and the 2s10s and 5s30s spread each widening by around ~6-8bps amidst more dovish Fed voices.

August Brent crude futures settled near USD 68a barrel, posting a 12.0% weekly decline as Middle East supply risks eased.

United States and Canada

Trump Eyes Fed Chair Successor; Powell Flags Tariff-Linked Inflation Uncertainty; Fed Proposes Easing Capital Rule

President Trump indicated he may fast-track his nomination of Powell’s replacement, reiterating criticism after shortlisting three to four candidates. Powell had told Congress this week that the inflationary effects of tariffs remain uncertain and difficult to quantify in advance, citing broader economic and geopolitical complexities.

Meanwhile, the Federal Reserve has proposed reducing the Enhanced Supplementary Leverage Ratio (eSLR) for systemically important banks, lowering holding company thresholds to 3.5 to 4.5% (from 5%) and banking subsidiary thresholds to the same range (from 6%).

The proposal, expected to cut capital requirements by USD 13B and reduce long-term debt requirements by 16%, drew support from Vice Chair Bowman but dissent from Governors Barr and Kugler, who warned of increased financial stability risks. DXY was last seen at 97.401.

US Consumer Spending Falls 0.3% in May; Core PCE Rises 0.2% Amidst Muted Inflation

US consumer spending declined by 0.3% in May,

marking the steepest contraction since January and reflecting broad-based weakness across discretionary and services categories. Personal income also fell, led by reduced government transfers, whilst the savings rate slipped to 4.5%.

Core PCE, the Federal Reserve’s preferred inflation gauge, rose 0.2% MoM and 2.7% YoY, consistent with moderate price pressures.

Wages increased 0.4% for a second consecutive month, but the slowdown in household demand raises concerns over the durability of domestic consumption.

Core services inflation excluding housing and energy edged up just 0.1%. The US yield curve steepened as overnight index swap markets now anticipate the next Fed rate cut by September, contingent on forthcoming CPI data and tariff pass-through effects.

US-China Finalise Trade Understanding; May Exports Sink 5.2%; Q1 GDP Revised to -0.5%

The United States and China have formalised a trade agreement, according to Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick, codifying the Geneva understanding, under which China commits to supplying rare earth materials essential for US industrial and defence applications.

US countermeasures will be eased upon delivery. Simultaneously, President Trump is preparing up to ten new trade agreements by July 9. US goods exports declined by 5.2% in May to USD 179.2B - the sharpest monthly drop since 2020 - amidst tariff-related disruptions.

Separately, Q1 GDP was revised to a -0.5% annualised rate, primarily due to a downward revision in consumer spending, which grew just 0.5% vs 1.2% previously reported.

Canada GDP Set to Contract 0.3% in Q2; May CPI Holds at 1.7% as Core Inflation Eases to 3%

Canada’s economy is projected to shrink 0.3% annualised in Q2 2025, following 0.1% GDP declines in both April and May, according to preliminary data from Statistics Canada.

The contraction reflects broad-based weakness, notably in manufacturing (-1.9%) and wholesale trade, amidst ongoing tariff-related disruptions.

Meanwhile, headline CPI remained unchanged at 1.7% in May, supported by lower gasoline prices (-15.5% YoY), whilst shelter inflation moderated to 3%. Core inflation measures - CPI-trim and CPI-median - eased to 3%, the upper bound of the Bank of Canada’s target range.

The soft growth and inflation prints increase pressure ahead of the BoC’s 30 July meeting, with swap markets discounting a 57% probability of maintaining the policy rate at 2.75%. USD/CAD was last seen at 1.3689.

Europe and the United Kingdom

Eurozone Composite PMI Steady at 50.2 in June; Germany Rebounds to 50.4, France Contracts Further to 48.5

The Eurozone’s private sector remained stagnant in June, with the S&P Global Composite PMI holding at 50.2, marginally above the growth threshold and below economist expectations of 50.5.

Services returned to 50.0, whilst manufacturing lingered at 49.4 - marking a 36th consecutive month of sub-50 readings. Germany’s Composite PMI rose to 50.4 (May: 48.5), led by manufacturing at 49.0, its highest since August 2022. Conversely, France’s Composite PMI slipped to 48.5 (May: 49.3), its tenth straight month of contraction, with manufacturing at 47.8.

The data signal minimal second-quarter growth for the bloc, as firms remain hindered by trade uncertainty, geopolitical tensions, and weak external demand as Germany leads in seeking to reboot its economy. EUR/USD was last seen at 1.1719.

NATO Commits to 5% Defence Spending Target Amidst Heightened Geopolitical Tensions

At the NATO summit in The Hague, member states agreed to raise defence spending to 5% of GDP - comprising 3.5% in core outlays and 1.5% in broader investments - marking a substantial increase from the current 2% target.

The declaration reflects intensifying concerns over Russia’s long-term threat and global security risks. All 32 members are expected to meet the prior 2% threshold in 2024, with Germany pledging to lead in conventional force buildup.

The announcement also reinforced Article 5 commitments and support for Ukraine. However, Spain and Slovakia voiced reservations over feasibility.

Spending trajectory will be reviewed in 2029, with Ukraine aid contributions included in national targets.

BoE Cautions on Labour Market, Inflation Risks and Gilt QT Amidst Elevated UK Bond Yields; UK Composite PMI at 50.7

Bank of England Governor Andrew Bailey reiterated concerns over medium-term inflation persistence, despite growing signs of slack in the labour market.

The Monetary Policy Committee held rates at 4.25% last week, with Bailey noting pay growth is easing but remains above levels consistent with the 2% inflation target, with May seeing 3.4% CPI YoY.

June PMI data showed composite activity at 50.7, with services at 51.3 and manufacturing at 47.7, indicating weak growth and continued industrial contraction.

This came after the -0.3% MoM April GDP reading released earlier this month.

The BoE is reviewing its GBP 100B annual quantitative tightening pace ahead of its September decision, amidst global yield curve steepening and elevated 30-year gilt yields. GBP/USD was last seen at 1.3719.

Asia-Pacific

China Targets Mega-Consumer Economy as CIC Cuts US Exposure Amidst Rising Trade Tensions

Chinese Premier Li Qiang reaffirmed Beijing’s commitment to shifting towards a consumption-led growth model, stating that China is building a “mega-sized consumer powerhouse” atop its manufacturing base.

At the World Economic Forum in Tianjin, Li underscored domestic demand expansion, referencing strong May retail sales and overwhelming uptake of a home appliance trade-in scheme, for which the government has allocated the remaining CNY 138B (USD 19.2B).

Simultaneously, China Investment Corporation, the country’s USD 1.3T sovereign wealth fund, is reducing exposure from US private assets amidst US-China tensions.

CIC reduced its alternative asset allocation to 48% in 2023, below its 50% target, reflecting Beijing’s strategic decoupling from Western capital markets.

USD/CNY was last seen at 7.1726.

Tokyo Core Inflation Slows to 3.1% in June; Japan Cuts Super-Long Bond Issuance by USD 22B for FY25

Tokyo core CPI (excluding fresh food) rose 3.1% YoY in June, down from 3.6% in May and below the 3.3% consensus, reflecting easing energy price pressures and temporary utility subsidies ahead of Japan’s 20 July upper house election.

Electricity inflation slowed to 5.3% YoY (from 10.8%), gasoline prices fell 1% (vs +6.3%), and water charges declined 34.6% YoY.

Meanwhile, Japan’s Ministry of Finance approved a JPY 3.2 trillion (USD 21.7B) cut in FY25 super-long bond issuance, reducing 20-, 30-, and 40-year bond supply to ease recent yield volatility.

Short end issuance will rise to partially offset the adjustment; nonetheless, overall annual market issuance will edge down by JPY 500B to JPY 171.8 trillion.

The BOJ remains cautious of inflation risks. USD/JPY was last seen at 144.65.

Australia Monthly CPI Slows to 2.1% in May; Trimmed Mean Falls to 2.4%, Strengthening Case for July Rate Cut

Australia’s Monthly CPI Indicator rose 2.1% YoY in May, down from April’s 2.4% and below the consensus of 2.3%, bringing the headline inflation figure closer to the lower bound of the Reserve Bank of Australia’s (RBA) 2-3% target range.

The trimmed mean, the RBA’s preferred measure, eased to 2.4% from 2.8%, its lowest level since November 2021. This marks the 10th consecutive month with headline CPI within the target band. Core disinflation, alongside subdued electricity prices (-5.9% YoY) and easing rent growth (4.5% YoY vs 5.0% prior), has raised swap market-implied probability of a July rate cut to 97%, with the cash rate currently at 3.85%.

AUD/USD was last seen at 0.6530.

Kuwait

USD/KWD closed last week’s holiday-shortened trading week at 0.30565.

FX Rates – June 29, 2025							
Currencies	Previous Week Levels				This Week's Expected Range		3-Month
	Open	Low	High	Close	Minimum	Maximum	Forward
EUR	1.1523	1.1454	1.1754	1.1719	1.1610	1.1900	1.1789
GBP	1.3451	1.3371	1.3771	1.3719	1.3610	1.3900	1.3723
JPY	146.10	143.75	148.03	144.65	142.50	145.70	143.18
CHF	0.8178	0.7958	0.8199	0.7990	0.7800	0.8100	0.7899



Four Asian giants rely on Hormuz, renewables lag

Mideast oil critical vulnerability for Asia



Smoke billows from an oil refinery in Kawasaki, southwest of Tokyo, on Oct. 21, 2013. (AP)

‘China and India are the biggest buyers of oil and LNG passing through the potential chokepoint at the Strait of Hormuz, but Japan and South Korea are more vulnerable.’

HANOI, June 29, (AP): Asia’s dependence on Middle East oil and gas — and its relatively slow shift to clean energy — make it vulnerable to disruptions in shipments through the Strait of Hormuz, a strategic weakness highlighted by the war between Israel and Iran. Iran sits on the strait, which handles about 20% of shipments of the world’s oil and liquefied natural gas, or LNG. Four countries — China, India, Japan and South Korea — account for 75% of those imports. Japan and South Korea face the highest risk, according to analysis by the research group Zero Carbon Analytics, followed by India and China. All have been slow to scale up use of renewable energy. In 2023, renewables made up just 9% of South Korea’s power mix — well below the 33% average among other members of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, or OECD. In the same year, Japan relied more heavily on fossil fuels than any other country in the Group of Seven, or G7.

A truce in the 12-day Israel-Iran war appeared to be holding, reducing the potential for trouble for now. But experts say the only way to counter lingering uncertainty is to scale back reliance on imported fossil fuels and accelerate Asia’s shift to clean, domestic energy sources. “These are very real risks that countries should be alive to — and should be thinking about in terms of their energy and economic security,” said Murray Worthy, a research analyst at Zero Carbon Analytics. China and India are the biggest buyers of oil and LNG passing through the potential chokepoint at the Strait of Hormuz, but Japan and South Korea are more vulnerable. Japan depends on imported fossil fuels for 87% of its total energy use and South Korea imports 81%. China relies on only 20% and India 35%, according to Ember, an independent global energy think tank that promotes clean energy. “When you bring that together — the share of energy coming

through the strait and how much oil and gas they rely on — that’s where you see Japan really rise to the top in terms of vulnerability,” said Worthy. Three-quarters of Japan’s oil imports and more than 70% of South Korea’s oil imports — along with a fifth of its LNG — pass through the strait, said Sam Reynolds of the Institute for Energy Economics and Financial Analysis. Both countries have focused more on diversifying fossil fuel sources than on shifting to clean energy. Japan still plans to get 30-40% of its energy from fossil fuels by 2040. It’s building new LNG plants and replacing old ones. South Korea plans to get 25.1% of its electricity from LNG by 2030, down from 28% today, and reduce it further to 10.6% by 2038. To meet their 2050 targets for net-zero carbon emissions, both countries must dramatically ramp up use of solar and wind power. That means adding about 9 gigawatts of solar power each year through 2030, according to the

thinktank Agora Energiewende. Japan also needs an extra 5 gigawatts of wind annually, and South Korea about 6 gigawatts. Japan’s energy policies are inconsistent. It still subsidizes gasoline and diesel, aims to increase its LNG imports and supports oil and gas projects overseas. Offshore wind is hampered by regulatory barriers. Japan has climate goals, but hasn’t set firm deadlines for cutting power industry emissions. “Has Japan done enough? No, they haven’t. And what they do is not really the best,” said Tim Daiss, at the APAC Energy Consultancy, citing Japan’s program to increase use of hydrogen fuel made from natural gas. South Korea’s low electricity rates hinder the profitability of solar and wind projects, discouraging investment, a “key factor” limiting renewables, said Kwanghee Yeom of Agora Energiewende. He said fair pricing, stronger policy support and other reforms would help speed up adoption of clean energy.

China and India have moved to shield themselves from shocks from changing global energy prices or trade disruptions. China led global growth in wind and solar in 2024, with generating capacity rising 45% and 18%, respectively. It has also boosted domestic gas output even as its reserves have dwindled. By making more electricity at home from clean sources and producing more gas domestically, China has managed to reduce imports of LNG, though it still is the world’s largest oil importer, with about half of the more than 11 million barrels per day that it brings in coming from the Middle East. Russia and Malaysia are other major suppliers. India relies heavily on coal and aims to boost coal production by around 42% from now to 2030. But its use of renewables is growing faster, with 30 additional gigawatts of clean power coming online last year, enough to power nearly 18 million Indian homes. By diversifying its suppliers with more imports from the U.S., Russia and other countries in the Middle East, it has somewhat reduced its risk, said Vibhuti Garg of the Institute for Energy Economics and Financial Analysis. “But India still needs a huge push on renewables if it wants to be truly energy secure,” she said. A blockade of the Strait of Hormuz could affect other Asian countries, and building up their renewable power generating capacity will be a “crucial hedge” against the volatility intrinsic to importing oil and gas, said Reynolds of the Institute for Energy Economics and Financial Analysis. Southeast Asia has become a net oil importer as demand in Malaysia and Indonesia has outstripped supplies, according to the ASEAN Centre for Energy in Jakarta, Indonesia. The 10-nation Association of Southeast Asian Nations still exports more LNG than it imports due to production by Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Myanmar. But rising demand means the region will become a net LNG importer by 2032, according to consulting firm Wood Mackenzie. Use of renewable energy is not keeping up with rising demand and production of oil and gas is faltering as older fields run dry. The International Energy Agency has warned that ASEAN’s oil import costs could rise from \$130 billion in 2024 to over \$200 billion by 2050 if stronger clean energy policies are not enacted. “Clean energy is not just an imperative for the climate — it’s an imperative for national energy security,” said Reynolds.

Drought-tolerant technology powers grain security drive

China’s agri-tech secures bumper harvests

‘Smart agriculture is flourishing across China with AI, low-altitude technology, and information technology being progressively integrated into farming and grain processing.’

JINAN, June 29, (Xinhua): As climate uncertainty and resource constraints pose an increasingly significant threat to traditional agriculture worldwide, China is turning to agricultural technology to safeguard grain security. Despite persistent droughts in key grain-producing regions earlier this year, these regions have provided encouraging news with predictions for a bumper summer harvest, thanks to advances in seed breeding, smart farming, and a new generation of tech-savvy farmers. Most wheat harvesting across central and northern regions has been completed this month. China, which has long prioritized grain security, has consistently promoted the adoption of advanced technologies and mechanization in its agricultural modernization drive. In 2024, the country’s total grain output exceeded 700 million tonnes for the first time, marking the 21st consecutive year of a bumper harvest.

Drought-tolerant varieties

Earlier this year, parts of northern China experienced a combination of prolonged drought, high temperatures and dry hot winds — factors that typically threaten wheat yields.

Data from the Ministry of Water Resources shows that by late May, the national average precipitation was nearly 20 percent below normal levels. Key northern winter wheat-growing regions had been affected by drought since March. “In the past, these conditions would have reduced yields,” said Liu Fengjun, head of an agricultural cooperative in the city of Gaomi, east China’s Shandong Province. “But with drought-tolerant wheat varieties, we expect an output of around 9.75 tonnes per hectare.” Shandong, one of China’s most important agricultural provinces, frequently experiences recurring droughts and water shortages in normal years. About one-sixth of its 4 million hectares of wheat farmland lacks adequate irrigation. “I’ve been planting drought-resistant varieties in dry plots for years. It is often said that farming depends on the weather — we can’t control the rain or sunshine, but with smart tech, we can plan ahead and be ready when needed,” Liu stated. “Breeding drought-tolerant varieties for extreme weather and less fertile soil conditions is critical for boosting grain production,” said Cao Xinyou, director of the Crop Research Institute, Shandong Academy of Agricultural

Sciences.

Smart farming

Elsewhere in the province, farming is transforming thanks to automation and information technology. In Jiaoqiao Township in the city of Zouping, fields baked under the summer sun while farmer Liu Shuguang managed operations from his air-conditioned room. With a few taps on his smartphone, he dispatched autonomous combine harvesters. After harvesting and transporting the wheat and sowing the corn, the machines returned to the garage — all without human intervention. “Despite the drought, my yields rose by up to 525 kilograms per hectare,” said Liu, who manages a 73-hectare farm using autonomous machinery with satellite navigation and remote sensing. “And I’ve cut labor costs by 80 percent.” His unmanned farm utilizes BeiDou satellite-guided robots to collect soil samples and drones for high-speed aerial surveys of the fields. Smart agriculture is flourishing across China with AI, low-altitude technology, and information technology being progressively integrated into farming and grain processing.

Data from China’s Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs indicate that scientific and technological advancements contribute to 63 percent of China’s agricultural output growth rate. Meanwhile, the country’s agricultural mechanization rate for crop production and harvesting has reached 75 percent. “We used to rely on farming experience, but that wasn’t always reliable in abnormal weather conditions,” said Liu Jie, who runs a family farm in the city of Dongying. “Now my phone tells me precisely when to irrigate, fertilize, or spray pesticides. With proper management, it is another bumper year.”

New generation of farmers

In Guangrao County, Yan Binghui, head of Tenghui Agricultural Cooperative, has also benefited from new technologies. “Our yield was estimated to rise by around 7 percent to hit 11.25 tonnes per hectare,” Yan said. The growth is attributed to precision irrigation. Yan’s farm utilizes a drip fertigation system that delivers water and fertilizers on demand, mitigating the effects of drought while reducing water usage by 40 percent. Seven years ago, Yan quit his

job in the city to start an agricultural cooperative in his hometown. He consolidated villagers’ small plots under centralized management, a trend that is emerging in China’s rural revitalization strategy. “We manage the 85-hectare wheat farmland with just four people,” he said. A growing number of more highly educated “new farmers” are returning to the countryside, helping to reshape Chinese agriculture by applying technology and business expertise to fields once dominated by manual labor. Meanwhile, agricultural experts are being dispatched to rural areas to help the farmers. In the Yanzhou District of Jining, agronomist Li Chuanliang from Shandong Agricultural University trained farmers in field management to respond to drought. His team has also introduced high-quality wheat varieties and technologies. Li is part of a provincial campaign this year, deploying 18,000 agricultural technicians at multiple government levels to support crop condition monitoring and provide technical training. “With these experts by our side, we farm with confidence,” said Liu Bingyu, deputy Party chief of Xiaomeng Township in Yanzhou District.

Singer embraces raw freedom and new sounds

Lorde enters ‘Virgin’ territory on her liberated album

NEW YORK, June 29, (AP): Fans of the New Zealand singer-songwriter Lorde have long commended the artist for her visceral pop craft. Her music, to certain ears, sounds like freedom. On her new album, it is as though Lorde is able to hear it, too.

On “Virgin,” the singer born Ella Marija Lani Yelich-O’Connor’s fourth studio album and first in four years, pop hits are devoid of any anxious filtering. She is raw.

When Lorde first emerged as a gothic popstar - with “Royals,” and its critique of celebrity culture and hyper consumerism - she did so with prescience. Her sparse production style and cursive-singing had come from the future, and its influence would be felt for many years to follow. Her debut, 2013’s “Pure Heroine,” suggested that she possessed something her contemporaries did not; the synesthesia synth-pop “Melodrama” in 2017 all but confirmed her greatness.

She took a step back from all that for the sleepy sunshine of 2021’s “Solar Power,” and then took another - veering

away from the spotlight all together. It seemed that this outsider dynamo had distanced herself from fame in an attempt to centralize artmaking once again. (Later, as it was revealed in a “Rolling Stone” cover story, she was mourning the longest romantic relationship of her life, making up the bulk of her twenties, and that she was overcoming an eating disorder and anxiety through MDMA and psilocybin therapy.) “Virgin” was born after that period of reflection.

Musically, “Virgin” threads the needle from “Melodrama” to the current moment. The lead single, the synthpop “What Was That,” is a reserved derivation of her previous work but no doubt a banger; on the syncopated rhythms of “Hammer,” she’s matured her racecar-fast pop. There’s a new malleability here. She sings, “Some days I’m a woman / Some days I’m a man.”

An album standout, the metamorphic “Shapeshifter,” possesses a tension between organic and electronic sounds that continue onto “Man of the Year,” with its bass and cello contributions from frequent collaborator Dev Hynes.

Credit is due to her new production partners Jim-E Stack (Bon Iver, Danielle Haim) and Daniel Nigro (Olivia Rodrigo, Chappell Roan).

Thematically, Lorde’s never been more fluid and feral than on “Virgin,” in her descriptions of gender experience (“Favourite Daughter”) and sexual autonomy (“Current Affairs,” with lyrics that might scandalize fans not expecting messy ‘passion’). “You tasted,” she sings, partnered with a sample of the dancehall record “Morning Love” by Dexta Daps.)

For a singer who has always performed physical pop songs, “Virgin” is her most bodily work to date as well. Take, for example, the shortest song on the record, the vocoder-affected a cappella performance of “Clearblue” - a play on the popular pregnancy test brand, and not the only place where motherhood appears on the album. (Fertility is another theme; the album cover features an X-ray of Lorde’s pelvis while wearing jeans; in it, an intrauterine device is visible.)



Lorde performs during the Glastonbury Festival in Worthy Farm, Somerset, England, Friday, June 27. (AP)

Film

From social media star to Sundance sensation

‘Sorry, Baby’ marks Eva Victor’s big debut

LOS ANGELES, June 29, (AP): The Oscar-winning producer of “Moonlight” really wanted to get in touch with Eva Victor.

Adele Romanski and her producing partner Mark Ceryak were “kind of obsessed” with the short, comedic videos Victor was putting out on various social media platforms. Titles of some that still exist online include “when I definitely did not murder my husband” and a series called “Eva vs. Anxiety.”

Romanski and Ceryak started bugging their Pastel productions partner Barry Jenkins, certainly the most well-known name of the bunch, to make the first move and send Victor a direct message. But they had to ask themselves a big question first: Would that be weird?

“We had to negotiate whether or not that was appropriate for Barry, a married man, to send Eva a DM,” Romanski said. “We were like ‘Yessss, do it!’”

What started as a curiosity about a distinct voice, someone whose observations about the world and society were hilarious, sharp and undeniable, just a few years later would become one of the most exciting debuts in recent memory. “Sorry, Baby,” which Victor wrote, directed and stars in, is a gentle film about trauma. It’s also funny and strange and fresh, a wholly original statement from an artist with a vision. And there’s a cat too.

The film opens Friday in New York and Los Angeles and expands nationwide in the coming weeks.

It’s a wild turn of events for Victor, who uses they/she pronouns and who never dared to dream that they could possibly direct.

Victor grew up in San Francisco in a family that cherished and pursued artistic endeavors, even if it wasn’t their primary careers. At Northwestern University, Victor focused on playwriting - it was something they could have control over while also pursuing acting. After college it was improv, writing for the satirical website Reductress (“Woman Seduced by Bangs Despite Knowing They’re Bad for Her,” “How to Cut Out All the People who are Not Obsessed with Your Dog”), some acting gigs, like a recurring role on the Showtime series “Billions,” and social media, where their tweets and videos often went viral.

Gratification

But there was an itch to work on something longer form, something beyond that immediate gratification of virality. Jenkins’ message came at the right time. Then at Victor’s first meeting at Pastel productions, he planted a seed of an idea: Maybe Victor was already a director.

“He said something that very profoundly impacted me: That the comedy videos I was doing were me directing without me realizing it,” Victor said. “It was just a different scale. That kind of stuck with me.”

“Sorry, Baby” was born out of a personal story that Victor had wanted to write about for a while. After the general meeting, they had a renewed sense of purpose and went away one snowy winter to a cabin in Maine to write, with their cat, movies and books as companions. The screenplay, in which a New England graduate student named Agnes is assaulted by her thesis adviser, poured out of them.

“I wanted to make a film that was about feeling stuck when everyone around you keeps moving that didn’t center any violence. The goal was to have the film and its structure support the time afterwards, not the actual experience,” Victor said. “I really think the thing it’s about is trying to heal and the slow pace at which healing comes and how it’s really not linear and how there are joys to be found in the everyday and especially in very affirming friendships and sometimes, like, a sandwich depending on the day.”

Somewhere along the way Victor started to also believe that they were the best person for the job. They were the only person standing in their way.

“The less focus there was on me as the creator of it, and the more focus there was on how to tell the story as effectively as possible, the more comfortable I became,” Victor said. “I understood exactly what I wanted it to look and feel like.”

But there was a lot to learn. Before the shoot, Victor also asked Jane Schoenbrun, who they’d met once for pie, if they could come to the “I Saw the TV Glow” set to just watch. Schoenbrun said yes.

“It was a completely wonderful, transforming experience of friendship and learning,” Victor said. “Jane is so confident about what they want in their films and it was a real honor to watch them so many decisions and stay so calm.”

Empowered by what they’d seen, Victor assembled a “dream team” of experts, like cinematographer Mia Cioffi Henry, who also teaches at NYU, and an editor, Alex



Actor-director Eva Victor poses for a portrait to promote ‘Sorry, Baby’ on Monday, June 16, in New York. (AP)

O’Flinn, who teaches at UCLA. Victor rounded out the cast with Lucas Hedges, as a kind neighbor, “Billions” alum Louis Cancelmi, as the thesis adviser, and Naomi Ackie as her best friend Lydie - the first person she talks to after the incident, the one who accompanies her to the hospital, and the one whose life doesn’t stop.

“We built the schedule in a way that allowed us to have all our friendship fun scenes at first,” Victor said. “We kind of got to go through the experience of building a friendship in real time.”

Ackie immediately connected to the script and thought whoever wrote it, “must be the coolest.” The reality of Victor, she said, did not disappoint.

“They don’t realize how magnetic their openness is,” Ackie said. “There’s something extremely honest about them and curious and playful.”

Romanski and everyone at Pastel productions knew they had something special, a gem even.

“They’re chasing something tonally that I’ve never seen anybody go after before,” Romanski said. “It’s the blend of

both a very, very specific, personal comedic tone and also a true sense of artistry.”

But nothing’s ever guaranteed until you put it in front of a public audience, which they did earlier this year at the Sundance Film Festival where it quickly became a breakout sensation, with standing ovations and the screenwriting award, whose past winners include Lisa Cholodenko, Kenneth Lonergan, Christopher Nolan and Debra Granik.

“You just don’t know. Then on the other side, you know,” Romanski said. “We felt it with ‘Aftersun.’ We felt it with ‘Moonlight.’ And we definitely felt it with ‘Sorry, Baby.’”

And like “Aftersun” and “Moonlight” before it, “Sorry, Baby” also found a home with A24, which promised a theatrical release. Among the giants of the summer movie calendar, in which everything is big, bigger, biggest, “Sorry, Baby” is the delicate discovery.

“I wanted it to exist in this space between reality and escape. I wanted it to be this immersive thing,” Victor said. “It’s a sensitive film. I hope it finds people when they need it. That’s my biggest wish.”

Festival performance sparks police review

Glastonbury acts draw fire over controversial chants

LONDON, June 29, (AP): British police said they were examining videos of a band that led chants of “death to the IDF” or Israel Defense Forces at Saturday’s Glastonbury Festival.

Rapper Bobby Vylan, of rap punk duo Bob Vylan, led crowds attending the festival in chants of “free, free Palestine” and “death, death to the IDF.”

Avon and Somerset Police said video evidence would be assessed by officers “to determine whether any offenses may have been committed that would require a criminal investigation.”

Health Secretary Wes Streeting on Sunday condemned the band’s actions as “appalling.” He told Sky News that the BBC and festival organizers had to answer questions about how the comments were broadcast live to millions.

The government said Culture Secretary Lisa Nandy has spoken to the BBC director general about Bob Vylan’s performance.

The BBC said it issued a warning on screen about “very strong and discriminatory language” during the live stream.

Saturday’s festival lineup also included Irish-language rap group Kneecap, which gave an impassioned performance for tens of thousands of fans despite criticism by British politicians and a terror charge for one of the trio.

Liam Óg Ó hAinídh, who performs under the stage name Mo Chara, has been charged under the Terrorism Act



Raye performs during the Glastonbury Festival in Worthy Farm, Somerset, England, Saturday, June 28. (AP)

with supporting a proscribed organization for allegedly waving a Hezbollah flag at a concert in London in November.

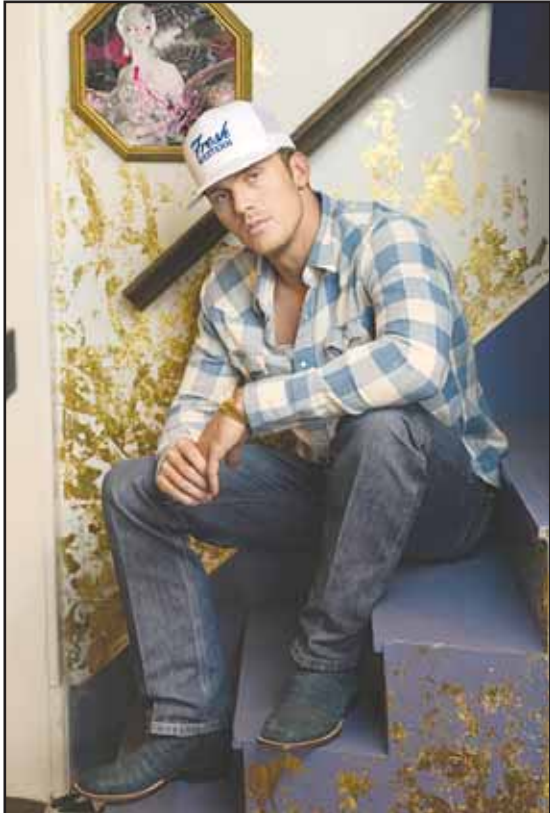
The rapper, who was charged under the anglicized version of his name, Liam O’Hanna, is on unconditional bail before a further court hearing in August.

The group has faced criticism for lyrics laden with expletives and drug references, and for political statements, especially since videos emerged allegedly showing the band shouting “up Hamas, up Hezbollah” and calling on people to kill lawmakers.

On Saturday band members led the audience in chants of “Free Palestine” and “Free Mo Chara.” They also aimed an expletive-laden chant at UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer, who has said he didn’t think it was “appropriate” for Kneecap to play Glastonbury.

About 200,000 ticket holders have turned up in southwest England for Britain’s most prestigious summer music festival, which features almost 4,000 performers on 120 stages.

Between high-energy numbers that had fans forming a large mosh pit, the band members led the audience in chants of “Free Palestine” and “Free Mo Chara.” They also aimed an expletive-laden chant at UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer, who has said he didn’t think it was “appropriate” for Kneecap to play Glastonbury.



Parker McCollum poses for a portrait on Saturday, June 7, in Nashville, Tenn. (AP)

Dreams come true

McCollum chases fresh challenges

NEW YORK, June 29, (AP): Imagine you come from a small town in Texas and you have big dreams of being a country music star. Imagine those aspirations come true, tenfold: You win a couple Academy of Country Music Awards, a CMT Music Award and you have a couple platinum singles to your name. What’s next?

If you’re Parker McCollum, it’s new challenges. Surpassing his wildest expectations meant reveling in the carte blanche that follows - the freedom to do whatever you want. For the 33-year-old singer, that’s the release of his fifth full-length project, a self-titled album out Friday.

“I would hang my hat on this record seven days a week,” he says of the album. “It’s just the most focused I’ve ever been.”

He’s self-assured now, but the road to “Parker McCollum,” the album, wasn’t so steady. He originally recorded half a full-length with his longtime collaborator, producer Jon Randall. It wasn’t working. “I was comfortable,” McCollum says. “I was like, ‘I gotta go get as uncomfortable as I can.’”

So, he scrapped what he had, went to New York, worked with a new producer, Frank Liddell (Miranda Lambert, Lee Ann Womack, Chris Knight), and recorded what became the final album in a week.

“It sounds absolutely ridiculous when you say it out loud,” McCollum says. “That’s a crazy way to do it, but I think it worked.”

It helped that McCollum had most of the songs written. “I wrote ‘Permanent Headphones’ when I was 15. I wrote ‘My Blue’ in 2019. I wrote a lot of songs last year,” he says. Still, they cut “a couple songs a day.” He credits Liddell for pulling the best songs out of him, as well as New York’s industrious energy, for helping him realize the record.

Glowing

“I’m glowing when I’m there,” he says of the city. “When I was in high school dreaming about being on a major label cutting records, you know, ‘It’s going to be in New York City and it’s gonna be ... like a movie. And, you know, I just decided to try and actually do that.’”

The album possesses that vigor, from the slow-building, John Mayer-esq. “New York Is On Fire” to more country-and-then-some fare: “Solid Country Gold,” “Sunny Days,” and “What Kinda Man.”

There’s also a spirited cover of Danny O’Keefe’s folk classic “Good Time Charlie’s Got The Blues” with fellow Texan singer Cody Johnson, the album’s sole feature. “I’ve played that song my entire life,” McCollum says.

He thought, “That song is going to be cut at some point or another in my career. Might as well make it now.”

The narrative opener “My Blue” was the first song McCollum and Liddell recorded in the studio, and it was “a breeze,” as McCollum describes it, “And the worst thing happened that could have possibly happened.” They thought the rest of the process would be effortless, but that’s not how it goes. “It was just an absolute emotional grind for the next six and a half days. But I wouldn’t have it any other way.”

That led to experimentation, too. “I’ve always wanted to be a country singer. And the more that I listen to what I do, I’m like, ‘This doesn’t really sound like country music to me,’ which is hard to put your thumb on nowadays, of course, what country music really is. It’s just not as narrow as it used to be. But I’m like, I just don’t really even care anymore. You know, maybe I’m not a country singer. I don’t know. I don’t give a (expletive) anymore. Whatever it is that I do sound like, you know, that’s what I wanna do.”

As long as the songs “make you feel something.”

That’s something fans have long connected to, since the release of his debut, “The Limestone Kid,” a decade ago.

“It really eats at me to put out music that hits you where music hits me,” he says. “I really enjoy that chase and that journey of, ‘Am I going to write songs that are good enough?’ ... I’m trying to find those answers.”

Tourists seek UNESCO-listed treasures

Türkiye’s ancient sites to fuel heritage tourism surge

ANKARA, June 29, (Xinhua): With the 2025 tourism season in full swing, travelers from around the world are flocking to the country’s rich tapestry of ancient cities, sacred monuments, and UNESCO-listed treasures -- fueling a surge in cultural tourism that experts say could drive record-breaking visitor numbers this summer.

Türkiye generated 9.4 billion US dollars from international tourism between January and March, marking a six percent increase compared to the same period last year, according to data issued by state statistics agency on April 30.

While sun-and-sea holidays remain popular, tourism professionals say cultural and heritage tourism is growing at a faster rate, driven by targeted marketing, site restoration, and global interest in ancient history.

“Türkiye is incredibly rich in historical assets, and the world is rediscovering that,” said Kaan Sahinalp, Türkiye representative of German tourism company TUI.

“Sites like Ephesus, Troy, and Mount Nemrut are be-

coming top-tier destinations, not just add-ons to beach holidays,” said the Ankara-based tourism expert.

One of the most visible symbols of this shift is Gobekli-tepe, considered the world’s oldest known Neolithic temple complex. Located near Sanliurfa in southeastern Türkiye, the site welcomed over 709,000 visitors in 2024 and the number is projected to exceed 1.5 million this year, according to the Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism.

“Tens of thousands of international travellers are flocking to Gobekli-tepe each month and this is expected to increase,” Sahinalp noted.

Türkiye is currently home to 21 UNESCO World Heritage Sites and has 84 more on the tentative list, ranging from the Hittite capital of Hattusha in central Anatolia to the Seljuk-era Divrigi Great Mosque located in the Eastern Sivas province, which has seen a resurgence in visitors following extensive restoration.

Murat Toktas, a board member of the Turkish Ho-

teliers Federation, said the rise of heritage tourism is reshaping the country’s tourism economy.

“Cultural tourism used to be secondary. Now, it’s front and center,” he told Xinhua. “Hotels near historical zones, even in previously overlooked inland regions, are reporting near-full capacity during peak months,” he noted.

Toktas added that smaller, locally owned boutique hotels are benefitting most from this trend. “Guests want authenticity, to eat regional cuisine, to sleep in stone houses, to experience history where it happened,” he said. “It’s a powerful shift from the resort package model.”

According to the UN World Tourism Organization, Türkiye attracted 56.7 million foreign tourists in 2024, rising to fourth place in the world in terms of international visitors, Turkish Culture and Tourism Minister Mehmet Nuri Ersoy announced on Tuesday on his X account.



This photo taken on June 25, 2025 shows statues at the tomb sanctuary on the top of Mount Nemrut in Adiyaman Province, Türkiye. (Xinhua)

Fashion

Kawakubo redefines men’s suits

Hermès showcases quiet strength, deep craft in Paris



A model wears a creation as part of the men's Hermes Spring-Summer 2026 collection, that was presented in Paris Saturday, June 28. (AP)

PARIS, June 29, (AP): While much of Paris Fashion Week chased spectacle, Hermès chose a different path.

On Saturday, artistic director Véronique Nichanian unveiled a Summer 2026 men's collection that spoke in a language of quiet strength, deep craft and calm luxury.

Models walked beneath soaring mirrors in sharply cut jackets, high-waisted woven leather trousers, and sleeveless tops - pieces that fused house tradition with a modern, easy sensuality.

Nichanian’s colors were cool and exact: coffee, slate, taupe and beige, each one a lesson in subtlety. There was no shouting here, only precision.

What made the collection powerful was its restraint. Where others go wide, Hermès goes narrow - offering tailored silhouettes and a sense of order when the rest of fashion is busy making noise. Fine leather, featherlight silks, and bandanas with a whisper of fringe reminded the crowd that true luxury is about touch, not flash.

Nichanian’s playful touches - zig-zag motifs, the wink of an unbuttoned shirt, a glint of silver hardware - kept things human, not stiff. It was a masterclass in how to make classic codes feel new, even radical, simply by refusing to chase trends.

In a season marked by designer shake-ups and economic jitters, Hermès stood alone: confident, focused, and unwilling to compromise. As Nichanian took her bow to



Fashion designer Veronique Nichanian acknowledges applause after the presentation of the men's Hermes Spring-Summer 2026 collection. (AP)

cheers, she sent a clear message - at Hermès, luxury is about the pleasure of the wearer, not the applause of the crowd.

Rei Kawakubo

Rei Kawakubo, the ever-restless force behind Comme des Garçons, delivered a characteristically unpredictable twist on men’s tailoring, dismantling the traditional suit and remaking it in her own radical image.

Titled “Not Suits, But Suits,” the Paris Fashion Week show had models striding through a packed, overheated concrete venue Friday even-

ing in looks that both nodded to and defied the idea of formalwear.

Classic suit elements, jackets, lapels, pressed trousers, were reimagined with sharp, architectural interventions: bulging hips, layered or panniered silhouettes, and unexpected splashes of color.

Some jackets appeared as if spliced apart and reassembled, while skinny pants revealed hidden panels and bursts of pattern through carefully placed zippers.

Layering abounded, with cropped jackets stacked over pleated shirting, kilts and shorts. Knitwear was shredded and reconstructed, echo-



A model wears a creation as part of the men's Hermes SS 2026 collection.



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

ing a sense of disorder within the tailored frame. Accessories pushed the eccentricity further - models wore oversized, multi-brimmed caps crafted from suiting fabrics, paired with long braided wigs and formal shoes.

The collection evoked the need for something transformative in un-

settled times. Its atmosphere only heightened the collection’s message: in Kawakubo’s world, the suit is not a uniform of conformity but a canvas for disruption.

As guests spilled out into the night, applause rang out for a designer who continues to turn fashion’s certainties inside out.

‘Anonymouse’ mini world finds new home

Swedish artists ‘Banksy Mouse’ go from street to museum

LUND, Sweden, June 29, (AP): After nine years scurrying in the shadows, the two-person Swedish street art collective known as “Anonymouse” - dubbed “Banksy Mouse” by Swedish media - has finally stepped out of the dark and into a museum exhibition.

The mystery began in late 2016 when miniature homes and businesses, all measuring well below knee height, began appearing on the streets of southern Sweden.

It looked like a bunch of mice had opened a tiny restaurant named “Il Topolino” and a neighboring nut delicatessen “Noix de Vie.” There was no clue as to who created them besides a signature from anonymous artist group “Anonymouse.”

The following years saw more mouse homes and businesses appear in unexpected places: UK in Sweden, then all over the world from the First to Canada.

The original creation on Bergsgatan, a busy

street in Malmö, quickly attracted attention and went viral, drawing crowds. The project was even featured on the popular U.S. TV show “The Late Late Show with James Corden.”

The two artists behind the whiskey art project stepped out of their anonymity earlier this year. Swedes Elin Westerholm and Lupus Nensén both work in show business, making props and sets for film and television.

“The sweet part is that we’re building something for children. Most of us have some kind of relationship to a world where mice live parallel to ours,” said Nensén, citing numerous child-focused fairy tales.

On Friday, a selection of the duo’s creations went on display at the Skissernas Museum in Lund, a short trip from Malmö, to celebrate nine years of “mouse pranks and creativity.”

The duo say the idea for “Anonymouse” came during a trip to Paris in 2016. Sitting in the



Elin Westerholm, (left), and Lupus Nensén, members of Anonymouse art collective, pose for a photo at Skissernas Museum in Lund, southern Sweden, Friday, June 27. (AP)

French capital’s Montmartre district, they soaked up Art Nouveau influences. Their first creation took six months to build, before they secretly installed it on Bergsgatan one cold, dark night.

“It’s amazing to see a 70-year-old come over with crutches, and people help them down and have a look,” said Nensén. “It really does bring out the child in everyone.”

The artists have since created a mini pharmacy in the Swedish city of Lund, a pastry shop near Stockholm, a castle on the Isle of Man, and a radio studio in Quebec, Canada. The duo created between two and three projects a year.

Record store “Ricotta Records,” which the pair installed in Lund in 2020, features tiny, mouse-sized record covers, such as “Back to Brie” by Amy Winemouse and “Goodbye Yellow Cheese Roll” by Stilton John.

Westerholm said “part of the game is taking something that’s a bit dumb really seriously.”

Variety

BRUSSELS: Belgium rolled out the blue carpet Saturday for **Rihanna** and other stars who turned out for the world premiere of the new Smurf movie.

Rihanna produced “Smurfs” and voices Smurfette in the summer family film, a live-action animated reboot that takes the little creatures on a Smurfette-led rescue mission to save Papa Smurf.

At Saturday’s showing in Brussels, the visibly pregnant Grammy winner chatted with children, linked arms with someone dressed as her cartoon alter-ego, and joined the audience arm in arm with A\$AP Rocky.

Film director Chris Miller held Smurf toys and other cast members at the premiere included James Corden and Dan Levy. Many of the guests wore a shade of Smurf-ish blue.

The movie premieres in the US on July 18.

Belgian comics artist Peyo created the Smurfs — known here as “Schtroumpfs” — and the Belgian capital embraced the premiere with a weekend of events.

It took place in central Brussels, not far from a Smurf museum. The city’s famed Mannekin Pis statue was dressed for the occasion as No Name Smurf. The city’s Grand-Place held Smurf-themed events all weekend, and tourist buses and train cars were decorated in blue. (AP)



Rihanna

COLORADO SPRINGS, Colo.: A video of Padraig Harrington arguing with NBC on-course reporter Roger Maltbie for not helping him look for a lost ball during his opening round is generating buzz at the US Senior Open.

“Never on a golf course stand and look at somebody looking for a golf ball,” Harrington is seen telling Maltbie on video captured by a local TV reporter outside the scoring area. “You’ve played golf all your life. You understand.”

The argument stemmed from Thursday’s round, when Harrington teed off into a thicket of trees on the 15th hole. After about a dozen people unsuccessfully searched for the allowed three minutes, Harrington went back to the tee box for his third shot. He ended up saving bogey, and went into the weekend tied for the lead.

Maltbie, the longtime on-course reporter who played on the PGA Tour in the 1970s and ‘80s, was in the area. He told Golf.com on Saturday he was being asked to report on the scenario and couldn’t step away from his job to help in the search.

A day after the episode, Harrington and Maltbie aired out their differences near the scoring area. (AP)

LOS ANGELES: Police are investigating a break-in at a home reportedly owned by Brad Pitt, who has been on a globe-spanning promo tour for his new movie, “F1.”

The Los Angeles Police Department confirmed they responded to a break-in Wednesday night at a house on the 2300 block of North Edgemont Street in the Los Feliz neighborhood of Los Angeles.

Three suspects broke into the residence through the front window, ransacked the home and fled with miscellaneous property, said Officer Drake Madison.

Madison said he could not identify who owned or lived in the home, and no information is currently available on what was stolen.

Pitt reportedly bought the home for \$5.5 million in April 2023, according to Traded, a commercial real estate website.

A Pitt representative declined comment.

Pitt has been out of the country on a promotional tour for the “F1” movie. He attended the international premiere in London on Monday. (AP)

ABIDJAN: Cote d’Ivoire on Thursday launched the third edition of its International Audio-Visual Content Fair (SICA), a three-day event aimed at strengthening the African audiovisual industry through digital sovereignty and the global promotion of African storytelling.

More than just a fair, SICA 2025 aims to become a “true hub of digital and creative transformation” for the continent.

In his inaugural speech, Ivorian Minister of Communication Amadou Coulibaly highlighted Africa’s potential in audiovisual creation, advocating for the better structuring of the sector, skills enhancement, and the promotion of co-productions. (Xinhua)

3D bioprinting milestone offers hope for diabetes patients

Experts create functional human islets for type 1 diabetes therapy

LONDON, June 29, (AP): A team of international scientists has made a major leap forward in diabetes research by successfully 3D printing functional human islets using a novel bioink. Presented at the ESOT Congress 2025, the new technology could pave the way for more effective and less invasive treatment for people living with type 1 diabetes.

The breakthrough involved printing human islets - the insulin-producing clusters of cells in the pancreas - using a customised bioink made from alginate and decellularised human pancreatic tissue.

This approach produced durable, high-density islet structures that remained alive and functional for up to

three weeks, maintaining strong insulin responses to glucose and showing real potential for future clinical use.

Traditional islet transplants are typically infused into the liver, a process that can result in significant loss of cells and limited long-term success. In contrast, the 3D-printed islets were designed to be implanted just under the skin, a simple procedure requiring only local anaesthesia and a small incision. This minimally invasive approach could offer a safer and more comfortable option for patients.

“Our goal was to recreate the natural environment of the pancreas so that transplanted cells would survive and

function better,” explained lead author Dr. Quentin Perrier. “We used a special bioink that mimics the support structure of the pancreas, giving islets the oxygen and nutrients they need to thrive.”

The bioprinted islets stayed alive and healthy, with over 90% cell survival. They responded better to glucose than standard islet preparations, releasing more insulin when it was needed. By day 21, the islets showed a stronger ability to sense and react to blood sugar levels - an important sign that they could work well after being implanted.

The constructs maintained their structure without clumping or breaking down, overcoming a common hur-

dle in earlier approaches.

Additionally, the 3D-printed structures featured a porous architecture that enhanced the flow of oxygen and nutrients to the embedded islets. This design helped maintain cell health and promoted vascularisation, both of which are critical for long-term survival and function after transplantation.

“This is one of the first studies to use real human islets instead of animal cells in bioprinting, and the results are incredibly promising,” noted Dr. Perrier. “We’re getting closer to creating an off-the-shelf treatment for diabetes that could one day eliminate the need for insulin injections.”

ADHD hacks from adults who’ve been there

How to manage ADHD at work and turn it into strength and advantage

NEW YORK, June 29, (AP): Jeremy Didier had taken her son to a psychologist for a possible ADHD evaluation when she spotted an article about women with the condition. As she read it in the waiting room, she thought to herself: They’re describing me.

“Lots of risk-taking, lots of very impulsive behavior growing up,” Didier said. As the magazine described, she’d excelled in school but gotten in trouble for talking too much. She’d amassed too many speeding tickets as an adult. She turned to her husband and said, “I think I might have ADHD.”

Didier is now the board president of Children and Adults with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder, a nonprofit advocacy and support organization. Her realization mirrors the experiences of other adults who wonder if they have ADHD after a child’s diagnosis.



Judy Sandler, who was diagnosed in her 50s with ADHD, walks in the woods near her home, Jan 23, 2025, in Lincolnville, Maine. (AP)

function is a set of mental skills that includes making plans, managing time and flexible thinking. It also includes working memory, which helps us keep track of what we’re doing.

To keep from getting derailed, experts recommend breaking large tasks into chunks, writing detailed to-do lists and taking breaks.

Personal chef Bill Collins, 66, who was diagnosed with ADHD two years ago, writes structured lists when he’s making a meal for a client. He creates categories for kitchen areas - counter, stove and oven - and then lists tasks such as “chop carrots, boil water for pasta” underneath each category. Then he numbers each task so he knows exactly what to do, where and when.

“That’s how I got around my unknown ADHD early on, just making lists,” Collins said. “If it’s something I don’t want to do, I put it at the top of the list so I can be done with it.”

Another technique is called “body doubling,” which involves a pair of work colleagues meeting over Zoom or in-person to focus on completing projects. The two may choose to perform separate tasks - one might build a presentation deck while the other files tax reports - but help each other stay accountable.

“You’re just sitting there during that dedicated time, getting things done,” Didier said.

Insurance company Liberty Mutual provides an AI tool that helps break down large projects into manageable tasks and provides reminders about deadlines, to help employees with ADHD stay focused and organized, said Head of Benefits Verilinda DiMarino.

Meetings can be difficult for people with ADHD if their minds drift or they feel an urge to get up out of a chair. They also may struggle with impulse control and find it hard to wait their turn to speak.

Nicole Clark, CEO of the Adult and Pediatric Institute, a mental health practice in Stuart, Florida, suggests asking for meeting topics in advance and writing up talking points. If you think of questions during the meeting, write them down.

doesn’t always lead to a quick fix. While doctors often recommend medication and therapy, not everyone can take medication, and those routes don’t necessarily eliminate all symptoms.

Floundered

Didier floundered with a messy house and lots of yelling as she and four of her five children were diagnosed with ADHD. She experimented with medicine, diets and reward charts, and discovered what helped her the most: a community of parents who had children with ADHD.

“There’s nothing like talking to other people who are going through what you’re going through to help you feel ... that you’re not alone,” she said.

Didier eventually became a social worker and now runs support groups for adults with ADHD, teaching skills they can use at work.

Some organizations have employee resource groups organized around neurodiversity to provide camaraderie and support to adults with ADHD, autism, dyslexia and other conditions.

People with ADHD often struggle with executive function, which Didier describes as “your brain’s GPS” for navigating your day. Executive



An H-2A rocket carrying Global Observing SATellite for Greenhouse gases and Water cycle, or GOSAT-GW satellite, lifts off from a launch pad in Tanegashima Space Center in Tanegashima, southern Japan, early Sunday, June 29. (AP)

H2A rocket on final mission

Japan launches climate change monitoring sat on H2A rocket

TOKYO, June 29, (AP): Japan on Sunday successfully launched a climate change monitoring satellite on its mainstay H-2A rocket, which made its final flight before it is replaced by a new flagship model designed to be more cost competitive in the global space market.

The H-2A rocket lifted off from the Tanegashima Space Center in southwestern Japan, carrying the GOSAT-GW satellite as part of Tokyo’s effort to mitigate climate change. The satellite was safely separated from the rocket and released into a planned orbit about 16 minutes later.

Scientists and space officials at the control room exchanged hugs and handshakes to celebrate the successful launch, which was delayed by several days due to a malfunctioning of the rocket’s electrical systems.

Keiji Suzuki, a Mitsubishi Heavy Industries official in charge of rocket launch operations, said he was more nervous than ever for the final mission of the rocket, which has been his career work. “I’ve spent my entire life at work not to drop H-2A rocket ... All I can say is I’m so relieved.”

Sunday’s launch marked the 50th and final flight for the H-2A, which has served as Japan’s mainstay rocket to carry satellites and probes into space with a near-perfect record since its 2001 debut. After its retirement, it will be fully replaced by the H3, which is already in operation, as Japan’s new main flagship. “It is a deeply emotional moment for all of us at JAXA as a developer,” Hiroshi Yamakawa, president of the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency, told a news conference.

The GOSAT-GW, or Global Observing SATellite for Greenhouse gases and Water cycle, is a third series in the mission to monitor carbon, methane and other greenhouse gases in the atmosphere. Within one year, it will start distributing data such as sea surface temperature and precipitation with much higher resolution to users around the world, including the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, officials said.

Finland to procure first own satellites for defense needs

HELSINKI, June 29, (Xinhua): Finland’s Ministry of Defense has signed a letter of intent with Finnish space technology company ICEYE to procure synthetic aperture radar (SAR) satellites, marking the first time Finland will acquire its own satellites specifically for defense purposes, the ministry announced in a press release on Friday.

Founded in 2014, ICEYE operates one of the world’s largest constellations of SAR imaging satellites. These satellites can capture high-resolution images of any location on Earth, regardless of weather or lighting conditions, providing critical capabilities for intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR).

The agreement represents a major step toward establishing Finland’s independent space-based ISR capabilities, the ministry noted.

“By acquiring our own satellites, we are strengthening our independent space-based intelligence and surveillance capabilities,” said Minister of Defense Antti Hakkanen, adding that the initiative also supports Finland’s domestic high-tech defense industry and opens new avenues for cooperation with international allies and partners.

The letter of intent outlines a preliminary procurement plan and timeline, including technical arrangements and infrastructure to support the Finnish Defense Forces in building autonomous space surveillance capabilities.

‘Age checks’

Law to protect minors online

NEW YORK, June 29, (AP): The Supreme Court has upheld a Texas law aimed at blocking children under 18 from seeing online pornography by requiring websites to verify the ages of all visitors. Many states have passed similar age verification laws in an attempt to restrict access to adult material from minors, but digital rights groups have raised questions about such laws’ effects on free speech and whether verifying ages by accessing sensitive data could violate people’s privacy.

The law requires websites hosting pornographic material to verify the ages of users in hopes of stopping those under 18 from visiting. Adults would need to supply websites with a government-issued ID or use third-party age-verification services. The law carries fines of up to \$10,000 per violation - fined against the website - that could be raised to up to \$250,000 per violation by a minor.

Texas has argued that technology has improved significantly in the last 20 years, allowing online platforms to easily check users’ ages with a quick picture. Those requirements are more like ID checks at brick-and-mortar adult stores that were upheld by the Supreme Court in the 1960s, the state said.

Exempt

However, internet service providers, search engines and news sites are exempt from the law.

It’s already illegal to show children pornography under federal law, however it’s rarely enforced. But various measures already exist to verify a person’s age online. Someone could upload a government ID or consent to the use facial recognition software to prove they are the age they say they are.

Websites and social media companies such as Instagram parent company Meta have argued that age verification should be done by the companies that run app stores, such as Apple and Google, and not individual apps or websites. This would mean that app stores need to verify their users’ ages before they allow them to download apps. Unsurprisingly, Apple and Google disagree.

“Billed as ‘simple’ by its backers, including Meta, this proposal fails to cover desktop computers or other devices that are commonly shared within families. It also could be ineffective against pre-installed apps,” Google said in a recent blog post.

Critics, such as Pornhub have argued that age-verification laws can be easily circumvented with well-known tools such as virtual private networks (VPNs) that reroute requests to visit websites across various public networks. Questions have also been raised about enforcement, with Pornhub claiming those efforts would drive traffic to less-known sites that don’t comply with the law and have fewer safety protocols.

Discovery offers new path for Parkinson’s care

SYDNEY, June 29, (Xinhua): Scientists have achieved a major breakthrough in Parkinson’s disease research, identifying a brain protein that may unlock new possibilities for treatment, a new research has revealed.

A team at the University of Sydney’s Brain and Mind Center has discovered that a malfunctioning form of the protein SOD1 plays a key role in the progression of Parkinson’s disease, according to a news release from the university.

Parkinson’s, the world’s second most common neurological disorder, affects over 150,000 Australians and millions worldwide, causing tremors and movement problems as dopamine-producing brain cells die. Current treatments are limited and can not stop disease progression, the study showed.

Australian researchers first found abnormal SOD1 in Par-

kinson’s patients’ brains in 2017. While normally protective, this protein becomes defective in the disease, clumping and harming brain cells, it said.

Treating mice with a copper-based drug targeting the faulty protein improved their movement, while untreated mice’s motor function declined, said the study published in Acta Neuropathologica Communications.

“All the mice we treated saw a dramatic improvement in their motor skills which is a really promising sign it could be effective in treating people who have Parkinson’s disease too,” said Kay Double from the University of Sydney’s Brain and Mind Center.

The researchers stressed that more studies and clinical trials were needed, but the findings offered hope that targeting SOD1 could lead to better treatments for Parkinson’s.

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Vega ends drought, Mexico edges Saudi Arabia to reach Cup semis



Saudi Arabia defender Nawaf Bu Washl (13) and Mexico forward Julián Quiñones (16) chase after the ball during a CONCACAF Gold Cup quarterfinal soccer match in Glendale, Ariz. (AP)

GLENDAL, Ariz., June 29, (AP): Alexis Vega snapped a 19-match scoreless streak in international play with a goal in the 49th minute and defending champion Mexico beat Saudi Arabia 2-0 in the CONCACAF Gold Cup quarterfinals on Saturday night.

Mexico will face Honduras in the semifinals on Wednesday in Santa Clara, California. Honduras beat Panama in a penalty shootout earlier Saturday after the teams played to a 1-1 draw in regulation.

The 27-year-old Vega scored after finding some room to work following a nice pass from Raúl Jiménez. His first shot bounced off goalkeeper Nawaf Alaquidi, but the forward quickly corralled the rebound and sent it through Alaquidi's legs and into the net.

Vega was initially ruled offside but after review, the goal was allowed and Mexico had a 1-0 lead.

Mexico coach Javier Aguirre was pleased with how his team played, particularly after half-time. He said they're heading in the right direction going into the semifinals.

Vega's goal snapped a scoreless streak in international play that dates back to 2022. It also ended a dry spell for Mexico, which scored for the first time in



Honduras goal keeper Edrick Menjivar (1) pushes the ball away during a CONCACAF Gold Cup quarterfinal soccer match against Panama in Glendale, Ariz. (AP)

166 minutes of play. El Tri's final match in group play ended with a scoreless draw against Costa Rica.

Mexico pushed ahead 2-0 in the 81st minute on an own goal by Saudi Arabia's Abdullah Madu. Mexico's Mateo Chavez sent a crossing pass to Roberto Alvarado, who never made contact with the ball. Instead, it caromed off a defending Madu and into the net.

Saudi Arabia stifled Mexico's offense for much of a scoreless, physical first half. The tension escalated just before the halftime break - Saudi Arabia's Ali Majeed and Mexico's Jesús Gal

lardo were both being shown yellow cards after the two exchanged shoves.

Gallardo will be suspended for the semifinal round because he has too many yellow cards in the tournament.

Gilberto Mora - a 16-year-old midfielder - made his international debut for Mexico and played well over 72 minutes. He's the youngest player to ever play for El Tri.

Mexico is in the knockout stage of the Gold Cup for the 18th consecutive time. Saudi Arabia is playing in its first Gold Cup as an invited guest and advanced to the quarterfinals after beating Haiti,

losing to the U.S. and playing to a draw with Trinidad and Tobago.

El Tri is two wins away from a 10th Gold Cup championship, which would be the most in the tournament's history. The United States has won seven times while Canada won once.

Saudi Arabia has never beaten Mexico in international play, with six losses and a draw.

Carlos Pineda scored the decisive goal as Honduras beat Panama 5-4 on penalty kicks after the teams played to a 1-1 draw.

It's the first time Honduras has made the Gold Cup semis since 2013.

Honduras struggled to generate many scoring opportunities until coming alive late in the second half. Los Catrachos evened the score in the 82nd minute when Anthony Lozano deflected a shot from Carlos Pineda into the corner of the net following a corner kick.

Both teams made four out of five shots in the initial round of kicks. Honduras had a chance to win with its fifth attempt, but Orlando Mosquera made a diving stop on Lozano's shot.

Panama's Eduardo Guerrero sailed the next penalty kick over the net, giving Honduras another chance to win. This time, Pineda took advantage, burying his shot into the bottom left corner to give Honduras the shootout win.

Bid to relaunch career after doping ban

Pogba signs 2-year deal with Monaco

PARIS, June 29, (AP): Former France midfielder Paul Pogba joined Monaco on a two-year contract in a bid to relaunch a stellar career derailed by injuries and a doping ban.

Monaco confirmed the widely expected transfer on the club website, and in a video posted on X, with the 32-year-old Pogba wearing the club's red-and-white jersey.

The former Juventus and Manchester United player will play in the French top flight for the first time.

Monaco finished third in Ligue 1 last season and Pogba, who has been without a club since leaving Juventus last year, gets the chance to play Champions League soccer again providing Monaco gets through qualifying.

Pogba honed his technique in France at Le Havre's academy but signed with Manchester United at age 16 in 2009.

Previously one of the world's top midfielders, Pogba made more headlines in recent years with his off-field problems.

Last year, Juventus said it came to "a mutual agreement" with him to cancel his contract despite the 2018 World Cup winner having a ban for doping slashed. The Serie A club never seemed enthusiastic about welcoming him back after his four-year ban for doping was cut to 18 months by the Court of Arbitration for Sport.

Pogba tested positive for testosterone in 2023 and was handed the maximum punishment by Italy's anti-doping court. CAS judges reduced it as they acknowledged a lack of intent and said his positive test was the result of erroneously taking a prescribed supplement.



In this file photo, France's Paul Pogba runs with the ball during an international friendly soccer match against Cote d'Ivoire at the Velodrome stadium in Marseille, France. (AP)

In 2016, Paul became the then-most expensive soccer player in history when he returned to United from Juventus for a fee of 105 million euros (\$116 million).

He has played 91 times for France and scored in the World Cup final when Les Bleus beat Croatia 4-2.

Kylian Mbappé, who also scored in the 2018 final and enjoyed a good relationship with Pogba, posted a message on Instagram saying "Pogback" and "Daghe Munegu" (which in Monaco dialect means "Go Monaco.")

Overall, Pogba netted 39 goals for United in 226 games.

He returned to Juventus as a free agent in 2022, but injuries limited him to 12 matches in his second spell at the club.

Monaco's signing of Pogba shows an intent to mount a stronger challenge for the French title next season after wasting a good start last season.

Palestinian striker El-Hamlawi leaves Polish club camp without permission

KUWAIT CITY, June 29: Polish club Szczecin Wroclaw announced on Monday that Palestinian striker Assad El-Hamlawi left the team's pre-season training camp without obtaining official approval from the club's management.

According to Al-Masry Al-Youm, El-Hamlawi has recently been linked with possible transfers to Egyptian giants Al-Ahly and Zamalek during the ongoing summer transfer window.

In an official statement released via its social media channels, Szczecin Wroclaw confirmed that El-Hamlawi unexpectedly departed the team's camp in Trzebnica, despite having actively participated in training sessions and a recent friendly match. The club condemned his departure, describing it as an unacceptable breach of professionalism.

"Assad El-Hamlawi chose to leave the team's camp of his own accord - an act we strongly oppose," the statement read. "His behavior fails to meet the standards of professionalism expected from our players and represents a clear violation of both his contract and the internal regulations of the club and the Polish Football Association."

The club also revealed that El-Hamlawi and his agent had been applying



Palestinian striker Assad El-Hamlawi.

pressure on the management to facilitate a transfer, despite the fact that none of the offers received matched the minimum release clause specified in his contract. As a result, the club exercised its right to reject the bids.

The incident has cast further doubt over the striker's future, as speculation continues to swirl around a potential move to Egypt's top-flight league.

Best of the Rest

Nole crashes Aryna news conference: Novak Djokovic offered some lighthearted advice to top-ranked Aryna Sabalenka at Wimbledon on Saturday after gatecrashing the Belarusian's news conference.

Djokovic and Sabalenka spent some time practicing together at the All England Club this week ahead of the start of the grass-court Grand Slam tournament. Djokovic, a seven-time Wimbledon champion, then playfully interrupted the end of Sabalenka's news conference on Saturday by telling her to hurry up so he could take over the podium.

Sabalenka then took on the role of interviewer as reporters had been asking her about their session on court. (AP)

"What did you think about hitting with me?" the three-time major winner asked Djokovic. "How do you see my level? Am I good?" (AP)

Nashville tops DC United to extend unbeaten run

Toronto takes down Timbers for rare home win

TORONTO, June 29, (AP): Alonso Coello and Tyrese Spicer each scored to help injury-depleted Toronto beat the Portland Timbers 3-0.

Toronto (4-10-5) snapped a five-game winless run (0-4-1) at home. Before Saturday, it had collected just five of a possible 33 points at home (1-7-3).

Portland (8-5-6) entered having lost just one of its last seven outings (3-1-3).

Coello scored on a free kick in the 11th minute when he fired the ball past the Portland wall and Canadian goalkeeper James Pantemis for his second MLS goal.

Spicer made it 2-0 in the 56th. Pantemis made a lunging one-handed save to stop Kosi Thompson's header but the ball went back to Spicer, who sent it home for his second of the season.

Sam Surridge scored his league-leading 16th goal on a penalty kick in the first half and Joe Willis made it stand up as Nashville SC extended its unbeaten run to 13 matches with a 1-0 victory over D.C. United.

Surridge, who had a hat trick on Wednesday in a 3-2 win over the New England Revolution, scored in the 18th minute to give him a goal in a club-record six straight matches. Hany Mukhtar had five



Toronto FC forward Theodor Corbeanu (7) shoots the ball past Portland Timbers defender Dario Zuparic (13) during second half MLS action in Toronto. (AP)

in a row in 2022. The PK was awarded after Mukhtar was fouled by Lucas Bartlett.

Evander scored two goals for the second time this week and Cincinnati held off a late charge by Orlando for a 2-1 victory.

Cincinnati (12-5-3) secured its third road win in a row and seventh this season in 10 attempts. FCC leads the league in points earned on the road with 22 and have been the best road team since the start of 2023, winning 25 times.

Orlando (9-5-6) entered on a

two-game winning streak, with wins in five of the last seven.

Evander's free kick in first-half stoppage time caught goalkeeper Pedro Gallese leaning the other way and it snuck inside the near post to give Cincinnati a 1-0 lead.

Evander also scored on a breakaway in the 74th minute for his 11th goal of the season to make it 2-0. After an Orlando turnover near midfield, Kei Kamara raced the other way and fed Evander on the left side for a bending shot inside the far post.

Victor Loturi scored in the 23rd minute and Montreal won its first home game this season in nine attempts with a 1-0 victory over New York City FC.

Montreal (3-12-5) completed the season sweep over New York (8-7-4) for the first time ever.

Dante Sealy found himself isolated with a defender on the right side of the 18-yard box and he sent in a powerful shot that was spilled to Loturi for a one-touch finish. It was Loturi's first goal for the club.

Montreal had two other good opportunities to double the lead in the second half.

Luca Petrasso was left unmarked in front of the goal following a corner kick, but he was unable to control the bouncing ball. Moments later, Jules-Anthony Vilsaint was denied by a fingertip save from Tomas Romero.

Jonathan Sirois secured his fourth clean sheet of the season.

Montreal will face Inter Miami on July 5 if the Florida side is eliminated from the Club World Cup.

Ezequiel Ponce scored in the second half and Jonathan Bond made it stand up as the Houston Dynamo snapped a three-match skid with a 1-0 victory over St. Louis City.

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NEWS



Chairman of Kuwait Club's Board of Directors, Khaled Al-Ghanim speaks to reporters after the Handball Cup final match.

Sports

Kuwait Club continues Handball Cup dominance

Al-Ghanim promises bigger goals

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

KUWAIT CITY, June 29: Kuwait Club continued its stronghold on local handball by narrowly defeating Al-Qadsia 30-29 in the final of the 57th edition of the Handball Cup at Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Sports Complex in Sabah Al-Salem. In the third-place playoff, Al-Salmiya secured a 34-28 win over Kazma.

This latest triumph marks Kuwait Club's 15th Handball Cup title and its 12th consecutive victory in the competition. The win also completes a remarkable league and cup double for the 2024-2025 season, while Kazma claimed the Super Cup.

Khaled Al-Ghanim, Chairman of Kuwait Club's Board of Directors, emphasized that the championship was the result of exceptional teamwork and collective effort, which have cemented the club's prominence in the local handball scene. "Our successes come not only from the dedication of our players and staff but also from the unwavering support of our fans—the strongest and most vital link in our journey," he said.

Al-Ghanim expressed gratitude to the Minister of Information and Culture and Minister of State for Youth Affairs, Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi, for his dedication to Kuwaiti sports and for fostering media coverage that enhances the nation's sporting achievements. He also congratulated Al-Qadsia for their spirited performance and exemplary sportsmanship during the final.

He praised the Handball Association's Secretary-General, Qaid Al-Adwani, and the Board of Directors for organizing a highly successful season, noting that the intense final between Kuwait Club and Al-Qadsia was among the most competitive in recent years.

Highlighting Kuwait Club's dominance, Al-Ghanim remarked that winning nearly all team sports championships this season aligns with the club's long-term ambition to consistently reach the top.

Looking ahead, he revealed that the club's technical and administrative teams will convene soon to develop plans for the upcoming season, including decisions on both professional and local player lineups.

Kuwait Handball Association Secretary Qaid Al-Adwani thanked the enthusiastic crowds at the final, underscoring how their presence added a special atmosphere. "Kuwait Club and Al-Qadsia delivered a spectacular match that showcased the strength and evolution of Kuwaiti handball," he said.

Adwani also shared optimism about the 2025-2026 season, which promises to feature an even higher level of competition and innovative initiatives from the Board. The association is exploring sponsorship opportunities for the Premier League, including financial incentives for players, aimed at raising the quality and excitement of the league.

Ali Al-Khader, head coach of Al-Ameed handball team, reflected on the long and challenging season, noting it spanned from national team commitments with Haitham Al-Rashidi to the leadership of esteemed Saeed Hejazi. He highlighted the team's achievement in winning both the league and cup titles and revealed



Kuwait Club players celebrate with the championship trophy as officials look on during the awarding ceremony.

plans to participate in six local and international tournaments, with preparations set to begin in August.

Abdulaziz Al-Shammari of Al-Abyad congratulated his teammates for overcoming injuries and player absences to defeat a strong Al-Qadsia squad. He also praised the fans and club management for their vital roles in this success.

Meanwhile, Kuwait Club's Hussein Al-Mutawa credited the team's excellent performance this season to the hard work of the technical and administrative staff, and the steadfast support of club management led by Khaled Al-Ghanim, who helped the team overcome challenges to secure both league and cup titles.

Long & disrupted season affected players: Al-Zaabi

KUWAIT CITY, June 29: Kuwait national team manager Abdulaziz Al-Zaabi described the past handball season as one of the longest in the sport's history in Kuwait, citing frequent league suspensions due to international commitments and other factors. These interruptions, he explained, negatively impacted the players' physical fitness, competitive edge, and mental focus.



Kuwaiti national team manager Abdulaziz Al-Zaabi.

Al-Zaabi noted that the technical level of the league stagnated, as many top players were regularly engaged in international tournaments, disrupting team consistency and competitive intensity. He further pointed out that the league's overall structure contributed to this issue, with the season effectively concluding at the midpoint of the Premier League schedule, leaving two unplayed full rounds. This led to predictable match outcomes and reduced excitement.

However, he confirmed that the Kuwait Handball Association is aware of these challenges and is working on restructuring the

league for the upcoming season to enhance competitiveness and player development. Al-Zaabi also emphasized a positive trend among clubs: a growing focus on developing local talent by giving young Kuwaiti players more playing time in league matches. This approach not only strengthens team depth but also broadens the selection pool for the national team, particularly with the Asian Championship set to be hosted in Kuwait. Integrating young players with seasoned veterans remains a key goal as preparations intensify.

Blues score three goals in extra time to beat Benfica

Chelsea, Palmeiras to meet in Club World Cup quarters

NEW YORK, June 29, (Xinhua): Chelsea scored three goals in extra time to beat Benfica 4-1 and set up a Club World Cup quarterfinal with Palmeiras, which edged past Botafogo 1-0 courtesy of a 100th-minute strike from Paulinho.

The Premier League side overcame a late equalizer and a near two-hour storm delay in Charlotte to pull away in the added 30 minutes.

Chelsea captain Reece James struck with a 64th-minute free kick before Angel Di Maria equalized with a stoppage-time penalty following a Malo Gusto handball.

Benfica was reduced to 10 men early in extra time when Gianluca Prestianni was sent off for a second booking. Chelsea made the advantage count as Christopher Nkunku, Pedro Neto and Kiernan Dewsbury-Hall sealed the progression.

"I'm very happy because we are in the last eight teams of this fantastic competition," Chelsea manager Enzo Maresca said after the match, which took more than four hours to complete.

"For 85 minutes, we didn't concede anything and had enough chances to win the game. It was probably one of our best performances in the last two weeks or the last month." The Italian admitted his players had struggled to deal with the weather interruption.

"When you have a two-hour break it's not the same game because you break the tempo. We tried to go out and continue to play in the same way, but it's difficult.

"It's not random that for 85 minutes, we didn't concede anything, and then in five minutes [after the restart] we conceded chances. You see they score because they need to chase. We were inside and winning, we go back outside and the



Chelsea's Christopher Nkunku scores his side's second goal against Benfica during the Club World Cup round of 16 soccer match between Benfica and Chelsea in Charlotte, N.C. (AP)

mentality is different. It was really difficult." Earlier in Philadelphia, a 100th-minute strike from substitute Paulinho gave Palmeiras a 1-0 victory over Botafogo in their all-Brazilian round-of-16 duel.

Following 90 minutes with few chances, Paulinho - a 64th-minute replacement for Vitor Roque - broke the deadlock in extra time with a low finish into the far corner.

The match took another turn when Palmeiras defender Gustavo Gomez was sent off for a second yellow card six minutes later.

Botafogo dominated the closing stages and almost found an equalizer when Joaquin Correa's delivery to the back post was met

by Vitorino, who could only drill it into the side netting.

Palmeiras survived to become the first team to progress to the competition's last eight.

"It was a fair victory," Palmeiras manager Abel Ferreira told reporters. "We tried to win from the first to the last second. As we always do, but not always in the same way," Ferreira admitted that Botafogo's 1-0 victory over Paris Saint-Germain in the group stage forced Palmeiras to adopt a different approach.

"We saw how well Botafogo defended against Paris Saint-Germain and we realized that if we played that way we would hit the wall," he said, before praising the reigning Brazil-

ian Serie A and Copa Libertadores champions.

"The game showed how balanced Brazilian football is. I told my dear friend Renato Paiva (Botafogo's manager) beforehand that no matter what happens today, one of us will get through and continue to represent Brazil." Paiva reflected positively on Botafogo's performance, expressing gratitude to his players.

"The first feeling I had when the referee blew his whistle, regardless of the result, was one of pride," he said. "Pride in the journey we've been on and the effort the players put in against a strong team that we knew well. The game was decided by small details."

OCA confirms 14 sports for Asian Beach Games in Sanya

SANYA, China, June 29: The Olympic Council of Asia (OCA) has officially approved the inclusion of 14 sports in the program for the 6th Asian Beach Games, set to take place in Sanya, Hainan Province, China, from April 22 to 30, 2026. The decision was made during a recent meeting of the OCA Executive Committee.

The confirmed sports for the event include:

Open water swimming, Water polo, 3x3 basketball, Beach athletics, Dragon boat racing, Beach soccer, Beach handball, Jiu-jitsu, Beach kabaddi, Sailing, Teqball, Triathlon (athlon), Speed climbing, Beach volleyball, Beach wrestling

The OCA also confirmed that the



The Olympic Council of Asia logo.

Sanya Asian Beach Games Organizing Committee (SABGOC) will soon distribute the full details of the sports program to relevant international and continental federations. This step is part of the ongoing preparations aimed at delivering a highly organized and prestigious edition of the Games, further solidifying Asia's leading role in hosting major multi-sport events.

Norris holds off Piastri to win Austrian Grand Prix

SPIELBERG, Austria, June 29, (AP): Lando Norris held off a race-long challenge from his McLaren teammate Oscar Piastri to win the Austrian Grand Prix on Sunday and lift his Formula 1 title hopes.

Norris and Piastri battled for the lead early on, with the Australian briefly into the lead before Norris took the position back. A rash lunge by Piastri nearly caused a collision soon after.

Piastri lost ground at the pit stops and was run wide onto the grass by Alpine's Franco Colapinto while cutting through

traffic. He soon made up ground on Norris but wasn't quite close enough to try overtaking.

Over the radio, Norris called it a "beautiful one-two" finish for the team. "We had a great battle, that's for sure," he added later. "A lot of stress, but a lot of fun. A nice battle, so well done to Oscar."

More than ever this season, the title fight focuses on the two McLarens after defending champion Max Verstappen was hit by Kimi Antonelli on the opening lap, ending his race. Overall leader Piastri leads second-placed Norris by 15

points, with Verstappen still third but now 61 off the lead.

Piastri apologized to McLaren for the near-collision between the two, which came one race after Norris collided with him in Canada. The Australian said he regretted not making more of his few seconds in the lead earlier in the race.

"I hope it was good watching because it was pretty hard work from the car," Piastri said. "I tried my absolute best and probably could have done a better job when I just got ahead momentarily. It was a good battle, a bit on the edge at times.



McLaren driver Lando Norris of Britain holds the trophy after winning the Austrian Formula One Grand Prix in Spielberg, Austria. (AP)