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16 PAGES

150 FILS

Amir praises new curriculums



Amiri Diwan photo

HH the Amir receives Minister of Education.

KUWAIT CITY, June 30, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received at Bayan Palace on Monday Minister of Education

Jalal Al-Tabtabaei who presented to His Highness public high school results for the academic year 2024/2025.

Continued on Page 5

Kuwait Amir receives UK King's Foundation officials

KUWAIT CITY, June 30, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received at Bayan Palace on Monday visiting Deputy Chair of the British King's Foundation Michael Jary and Executive Director for Education Dr. Simon Sainsbury.

Present at the meeting were Director General of the Kuwait Foundation for Advancement of Sciences (KFAS) Dr. Ameenah Rajab Farhan and Director General of the Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority (KDIPA) Sheikh Meshal Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.

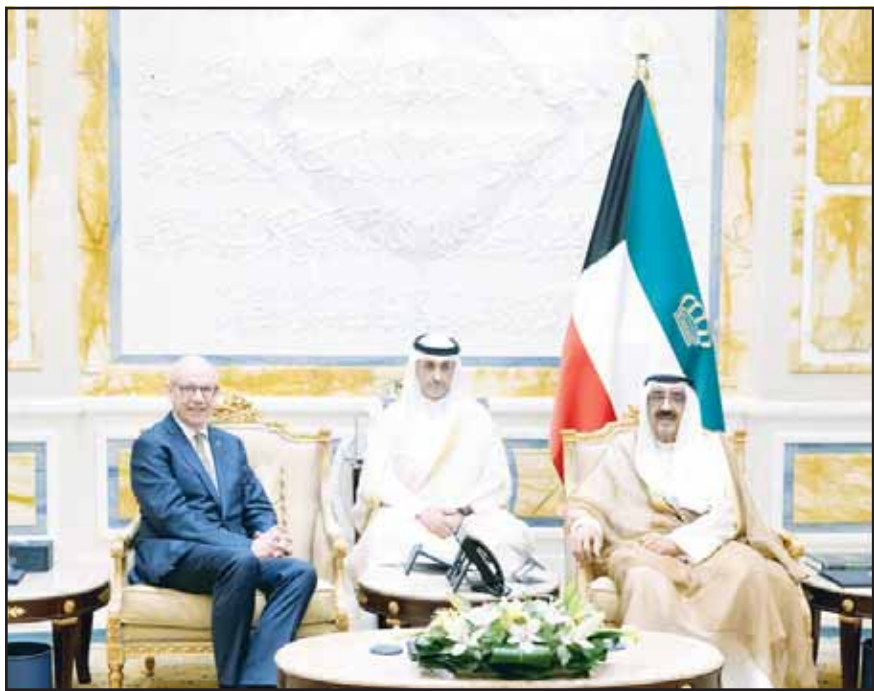
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Macron invites Amir to France in official letter

KUWAIT CITY, June 30, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received on Sunday a handwritten letter from France's President Emmanuel Macron regarding ways to strengthen bilateral ties, as well as the latest regional and global developments.

In a statement, the Kuwaiti Ministry of Foreign Affairs said that the letter also included an invitation for His Highness the Amir to visit France.

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Amiri Diwan photo

HH the Amir receives Deputy Chair of the British King's Foundation.



Opinion

Ahmed Al-Jarallah

Editor-in-Chief, the Arab Times

Suspending services harms citizens

TOUGH measures such as suspending services are unjustifiable under both Sharia and the law. Therefore, courts always uphold the spirit of the law, adhering to the principle that doubts should be resolved in favor of the accused.

Based on this principle, suspending services to any citizen or resident for unpaid electricity bills, municipal fines, or other dues, thereby denying them access to government services, should be approached with caution. Such measures treat individuals as if they were convicted of a criminal offense, requiring them to settle their debts and obtain clearance certificates before receiving services.

For example, citizens traveling for medical treatment or other urgent reasons often find government departments blocking their transactions. This includes difficulties in obtaining vital documents such as birth certificates, along with many other obstacles that create huge trouble for them.

The Court of Cassation, the highest judicial authority, has issued rulings prohibiting any infringement on individuals' basic rights, including access to essential services, as these are acquired rights that cannot be suspended. It is well known that decisions issued by the highest judicial authority are binding and carry greater authority than legal texts, which may sometimes contain flaws.

Therefore, in countries worldwide, the force of judicial rulings prevails over other laws and is adopted as binding precedent for the future.

I say this because Kuwaiti citizens have no other homeland. Therefore, the natural rights enshrined in the constitution cannot be suspended. They are as essential as the air they breathe. Suspending services to citizens is, in effect, suspending their very lives.

Such strict measures do not exist in any civilized country.

Some Gulf states have abolished any penalties that result in the suspension of services to individuals,

including debtors, based on legal, jurisprudential, and Sharia principles. These principles stipulate that creditors are responsible for protecting their assets and ensuring sufficient guarantees before lending money. In those countries, the government resorts to travel bans only for individuals accused of criminal offenses, not minor misdemeanors.

In Kuwait, the legislative mindset still clings to the unsound principle that every accused person is guilty until proven innocent.

Can anyone imagine a citizen fleeing their country simply for unpaid utility bills like electricity? There are dozens of measures available to collect fines, fees, or bills. Resorting to extreme threats should never be one of them.

How can a citizen be prevented from withdrawing money from their account to buy food for their children, or from renewing their driver's license or car registration needed to carry out their work? Cutting off electricity to a home where a family member may be ill and reliant on electrical appliances amounts to involuntary manslaughter.

Therefore, in the interest of fairness and humanity, we sincerely hope that His Highness the Prime Minister and His Excellency the First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Justice will reconsider these policies and refrain from suspending services to citizens. Many humanitarian cases suffer under these harsh and unrealistic measures, which are tantamount to a slow death sentence.

I emphasize the need to end the suspension of services to debtors, so that state institutions do not become mere collectors of others' debts.

Follow me on:

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Scan QR code to visit the website: aljarallah.com

Kuwait rolls out MNE top-up tax

KD 250 million boost for economy expected

KUWAIT CITY, June 30: In line with the New Kuwait 2035 vision to diversify the sources of income and achieve financial sustainability, the Ministry of Finance announced the issuance of Ministerial Resolution No. 55/2025 on the executive regulations of Decree-Law No. 157/2024 concerning the Multinational Entity Group (MNEs) Tax.

This includes the implementation of a supplementary Domestic Minimum Top-up Tax (DMTT), in accordance with the requirements of the second pillar of

the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

In a press release issued by the Ministry of Finance, it stated that the new regulations aim to clarify and interpret the law's provisions, define procedures and implementation mechanisms, enhance transparency, and provide stakeholders with a clear understanding, in line with international policies and standards in this field.

In this regard, Minister of Finance and Minister of State for Economic Affairs and Investment Noura Al-Fassam affirmed that the issuance of these regulations marks a major milestone in Kuwait's economic reform journey, highlighting their role

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Photo by Rezk Tawfiq

Travelers queue at Kuwait Airport check-in counters on Monday, waiting for their bags to be weighed and to receive boarding passes as new exit permit rules for private sector workers take effect July 1.

Kuwait braces for 4 days of severe dust, 49°C heat

KUWAIT CITY, June 30, (KUNA): The acting Director of the Meteorological Department Dhirar Al-Ali says the country will be affected by hot, dry, and occasionally strong winds that will stir up dust and reduce visibility, especially in open areas, from Tuesday, July 1 until the afternoon of Friday, July 4.

Al-Ali told Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) on Monday that weather maps and numerical models indicate the country will be influenced by the extension of the Indian monsoon low-pressure system, accompanied by a hot, dry air mass and northwesterly winds ranging from moderate to active, sometimes strong, with speeds between 20 and 60 kilometers per hour.

He explained that these winds will raise dust, reducing horizontal visibility in some areas to less than 1,000 meters, particularly in open areas, and will cause sea waves to rise above six feet.

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Up to KD 20,000 fine for exam fraud Cheating now a crime in Kuwait

By Jaber Al-Hamoud

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 30: The official gazette "Kuwait al-Yaum" published in its Monday supplement the Decree No. 77/2025 that amends Penal Code No. 16/1960 to strengthen measures against cheating, exam leaks, and grade tampering.

Article 1 of the draft law adds two new articles to the Penal Code, numbered 259-bis and 259-bis-a.

Article 259-bis criminalizes printing, publishing, broadcasting, promoting, selling, offering for sale, or leaking questions or answers for intermediate or high school exams,

whether in private or public schools, by any means.

Offenders face imprisonment from two to five years and/or a fine ranging from KD 1,000 to KD 5,000.

The penalty is increased if the perpetrator is responsible for supervising, preparing, organizing, transporting, delivering, or storing the exams. In such cases, the punishment is imprisonment for up to seven years and/or a fine ranging from KD 5,000 to KD 10,000, along with the confiscation of any seized items used in committing the crime.

To differentiate legitimate acts from criminal ones, the article explicitly excludes question and answer materials

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Commerce now calls price shots

KUWAIT CITY, June 30, (KUNA): Ministry of Social Affairs, Ministry of Commerce and Industry and Kuwait Union of Consumer Cooperative Societies (KUCCS), signed, Sunday, a trilateral cooperation protocol to transfer the pricing authority.

In a joint statement, both ministries said the agreement included creating a legal framework to transfer all electronic systems and pricing records to the ministry of commerce.

This move came in line with Cabinet directive to shift the pricing committee's responsibilities to the ministry of commerce, in accordance with existing laws, while safeguarding the legal rights and obligations of all involved parties, the statement added.

All three parties agreed to form joint teams to monitor prices, protect consumers, and promote market stability.

Ministry of Defense stresses health readiness in disasters



KUNA photo

Undersecretary of Kuwaiti Ministry of Defense Sheikh Dr. Abdullah Meshal Al-Sabah delivers a speech during the 'Principles of Disaster Preparedness in Healthcare' conference.

KUWAIT CITY, June 30, (KUNA): Undersecretary of Kuwaiti Ministry of Defense Sheikh Dr. Abdullah Meshal Al-Sabah stressed Monday the ministry believes that advanced preparation to face crises and disasters is a fundamental pillar for reducing their effects and ensuring the continuity of services, especially in health, which constitutes the first line of defense for human life.

This came in his speech during his patronage of the 'Principles of Disaster Preparedness in Healthcare' conference held by Kuwait Medical Association in cooperation with the Military Medical Services Authority of the Ministry of Defense and Directorate of Medical Services Administration in the National Guard.

The conference aims to discuss the issue of enhancing national preparedness in the field of health care during

Continued on Page 5



Photo by Rezk Tawfiq

Firefighters from Kuwait Fire Force race to contain a raging blaze on Monday after flames engulf a warehouse owned by Al-Qabas daily.

— See Page 3 —



2 Al-Jarallah lauds 'Shiraa Award' concept, goals

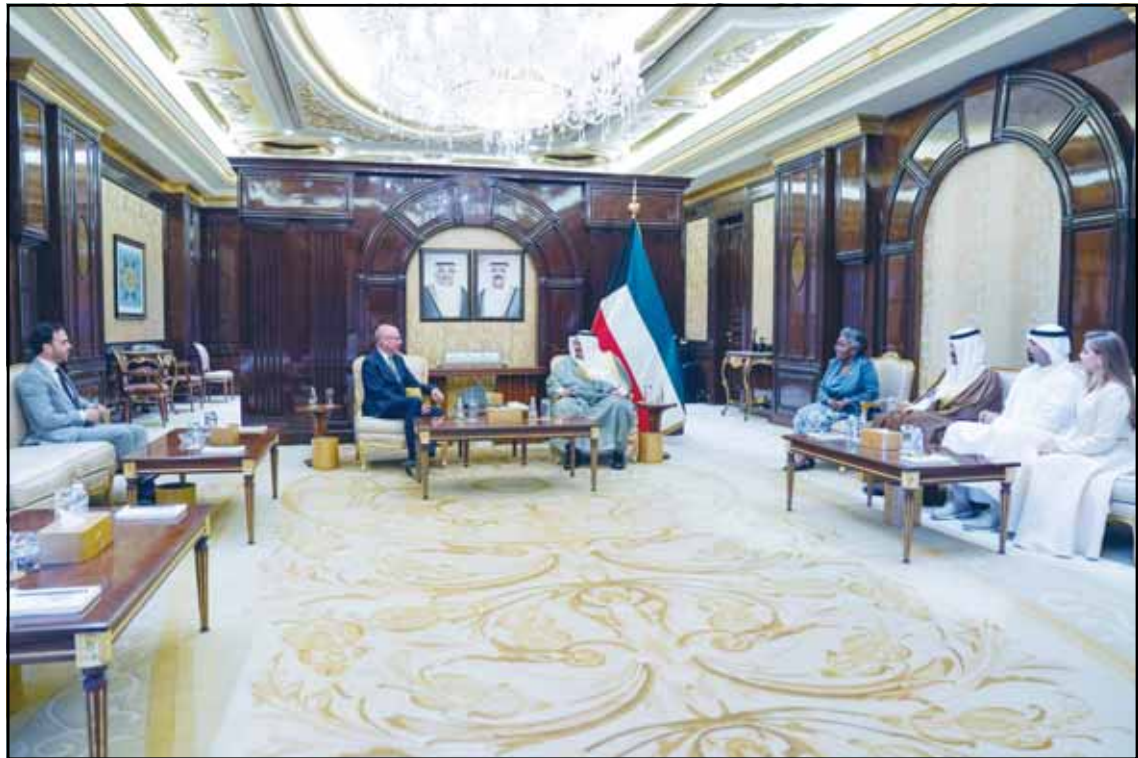
8 KFH launches 5th training program in cooperation with KSH



9 Zain launches 5G Advanced, unlocking new horizons for Kuwait's digital economy and technological innovation

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 receives visiting Deputy Chair of the British King's Foundation Michael Jary and Executive Director for Education Dr. Simon Sadinsky.

Kuwait PM receives UK King's Foundation officials

KUWAIT CITY, June 30, (KUNA): His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah received at Bayan Palace on Monday visiting Deputy Chair of the

British King's Foundation Michael Jary and Executive Director for Education Dr. Simon Sadinsky. Present at the meeting were Director General of the Kuwait Direct Investment

Promotion Authority (KDIPA) Sheikh Meshaal Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah and Director General of the Kuwait Foundation for Advancement of Sciences (KFAS) Dr. Ameenah Rajab Farhan.



Editor-in-Chief of Al-Seyassah and Arab Times newspapers Ahmed Al-Jarallah in talks with Chairman of the Supreme Committee for Kuwait Media Award (Shiraa) Saad Al-Ali, committee member Iman Al-Awadhi. Colleague Saud Al-Farhan (extreme right)

Al-Jarallah lauds 'Shiraa Award' concept, goals

KUWAIT CITY, June 30: Dean of Kuwaiti Journalism and Editor-in-Chief of Al-Seyassah and Arab Times newspapers Ahmed Al-Jarallah met with Chairman of the Supreme Committee for Kuwait Media Award (Shiraa) Saad Al-Ali and committee member Iman Al-Awadhi at his office on Monday afternoon.

The visit is part of the commitment of the committee to promote the national award and encourage media institutions to participate.

Al-Jarallah welcomed the visiting delegation, while praising the concept of the award and its ambitious goal of supporting media creativity in various fields.

"Such initiatives raise the level of professional competition and provide a platform for qualified media professionals, especially the youths, to showcase their talents and expand their influence in the local media landscape," Al-Jarallah stated.

He also affirmed the full support of Al-Seyassah and Arab Times newspapers for any national effort that contributes to the development of Kuwaiti media and strengthening its position.

Meanwhile, Al-Ali expressed his gratitude to Al-Jarallah for supporting the committee; indicating that applications for the first edition of the Shiraa Award are accepted until July 18.

Al-Ali explained that the Shiraa Award honors outstanding works in various media platforms -- print, visual, audio and digital; in addition to the individual and group awards like Best Interviewer, Best Investigative Report, Best Work Using Artificial Intelligence (AI) and other categories.

He praised the role of Al-Seyassah newspaper, its deep rooted history, and vital position in the Kuwaiti media landscape.

He pointed out that the support of pioneer media figures, led by Dean of Kuwaiti Journalists Ahmed



Photos by Rizk Tawfiq
Editor-in-Chief of Al-Seyassah and Arab Times newspapers Ahmed Al-Jarallah receives the Chairman of the Supreme Committee for Kuwait Media Award (Shiraa) Saad Al-Ali.

Al-Jarallah, is considered an important pillar for the success of the award; and a motivation for creative individuals to participate with enthusiasm and confidence.

He said the general conditions for participating in the award include the assurance that submitted works adhere to professional and ethical values, as well as preserving intellectual property rights.

Kuwait Media Award (Shiraa)
■ Launched by Minister of Information Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi
■ Application for the award is open until July 18

■ The award covers all media forms: visual, audio, print and digital
■ The award is divided into 16 categories; including investigative reports, press articles, photography, caricatures, content creation and more...

■ For more information, visit the website of the award – Shiraa.media.gov.kw

MEW ponders e-linking for data, output

By Mohammad Ghanem
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 30: The Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy is currently studying the use of a central electronic linking system for the outputs and data of renewable energy projects in the country.

Sources from the ministry revealed that the concerned sector is currently preparing a contract for the supply and installation of the electronic system; including servers, software and databases that will be linked with the energy management system of the ministry.

Sources indicated that the ministry included the project contract in its plan for the current fiscal year, and it is likely to be floated soon through the Central Agency for Public Tenders (CAPT) to pre-qualify specialized companies in this field and then select the most technically and financially feasible bid for implementation.

Sources added that the planned electronic system is in line with the commitment of the ministry and the Public-Private Partnership Authority (PPPA) to implement major renewable energy projects; such as Shagaya with a total capacity of 4,500 megawatts and Abdaliya with a production capacity of 250 megawatts, among other projects.

Other Voices

British and American...and Bayan schools

By Ahmad alsarraf

IN the early 1980s, I enrolled my children in Al-Bayan School. However, circumstances required special education for my eldest son due to his health condition, which has remained largely unchanged for over 40 years.

After moving to Britain, despite the cultural differences, the new surroundings, and the almost hostile environment they faced, my children performed well and achieved good grades.

Perhaps their success stems from the excellent educational foundation they received at Al-Bayan School, which, along with its sister institutions - the British School and the American School - was, and perhaps still is, one of the best providers of quality education in Kuwait.

For context, St. Hilda's School, which my sons attended in Britain, was a distinguished institution serving middle-class and affluent Jewish students, something I discovered later.

What applies to education also applies to nearly every other sector. I believe that while the private sector can achieve a high level of mastery, the public sector often falls short in comparison.

For example, in the United States, the most advanced and complex activities such as space exploration, satellite launches, and similar projects are contracted out by NASA to private companies. This approach enables NASA to consistently deliver the best results at the lowest cost. It is widely acknowledged that governments are often inefficient contractors and poor managers.

What I want to emphasize is that private education, especially distinguished institutions, has proven over more than half a century that its outcomes far surpass those of public schools.

American universities, including Princeton University, used to send interviewers to personally assess applicants and select the most outstanding private high school graduates without hesitation or prior standardized testing, relying solely on these interviews.

Therefore, some experts believe that developing education requires pursuing two parallel paths. The

first is continuing to implement the Minister of Education's plan to develop curricula, raise teaching standards, and eliminate political partisanship from the education system.

The second parallel path is to partner with distinguished private high schools by contracting with their management to utilize vacant public school buildings in residential areas for reasonable rents. The revenue generated would help finance a significant portion of tuition fees for students who cannot afford to pay. This proposal is supported by the fact that public school buildings in some residential areas have become largely deserted, as residents increasingly prefer to enroll their children in private schools, even if these schools are located far from their homes.

If this proposal is implemented, it will achieve the following:

1. Significantly reduce traffic congestion around private schools in areas such as Hawally, Jabriya, and Salwa.
2. Provide quality education to a larger percentage of students whose families cannot afford private school fees.
3. Redistribute peak-hour traffic pressures over a wider geographic area by situating private schools in typical residential neighborhoods, easing the burden on parents who currently have to transport their children to distant schools.
4. Rehabilitate dozens of vacant educational buildings in residential areas.
5. Alleviate pressure on both private and public schools, as many citizens will continue to prefer public schools. This will enable the Ministry of Education to retain qualified teachers and remove ineffective educators and administrators.

Most importantly, it will expand access to quality education for the greatest number of students.

These are not new ideas but rather a brief summary or continuation of studies previously discussed at the Supreme Planning and Development Council. However, the inability or unwillingness of successive education ministers to take on new responsibilities has left this unique proposal neglected, becoming a burden none were willing to carry.

Will His Highness the Prime Minister and His Excellency the First Deputy Prime Minister rescue this proposal, retrieve it from the closed drawers, and breathe new life into it?



email: a.alsarraf@alqabas.com.kw

Weather

Expected weather for next 24 hrs:

By Day: Very hot and dusty with moderate to fresh strong at times northwesterly wind, with speeds of 20-60 km/h and some high clouds will appear.

By Night: Hot to rather hot and dust will subside gradually with

light to moderate freshening at times over coastal areas northwesterly wind, with speeds of 15-50 km/h.

Station	Max Exp	Min Rec
Kuwait City	49	36
Kuwait Airport	49	30

Abdaly	49	30
Jahra	50	34
Salmiyah	43	32
Ahmadi	44	31
Nuwaisib	47	31
Wafra	48	28
Salmiyah	48	33
Managish	49	33

HH Amir, leadership congratulate Congolese leader on National Day

KUWAIT CITY, June 30, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent a cable on Monday to President of the Republic of Congo Felix Tshisekedi, congratulating him on his country's national day.

His Highness the Amir wished the Congolese President and the Congolese people good health, wellness, and prosperity.

Crown Prince

His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled

Al-Hamad Al-Sabah sent a cable on Monday to President of the Republic of Congo Felix Tshisekedi, congratulating him on his country's national day.

His Highness the Crown Prince wished the Congolese President good health and wellness.

Prime Minister

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah sent a cable on Monday to President of the Republic of Congo Felix Tshisekedi, congratulating him on his country's national day.

Kuwait to recruit workers from Myanmar

By Fares Ghaleb

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 30: Head of the Union of Domestic Labor Offices Khaled Al-Dakhnan announced the union's intensified efforts to open new recruitment channels for domestic workers in Kuwait.

Al-Dakhnan revealed that a union delegation recently visited the Embassy of the Republic of Myanmar to discuss the possibility of recruiting domestic workers from that country.

He praised the quality of Myanmar's labor force and their level of commitment to Gulf Cooperation Council

(GCC) countries, highlighting the Myanmar ambassador's positive understanding of Kuwait's market requirements.

Al-Dakhnan said the union urged relevant authorities, especially the Public Authority for Manpower (PAM) and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, to adopt and support this initiative, due to its potential to enhance the diversity and stability of Kuwait's domestic labor market.

Furthermore, Al-Dakhnan highlighted the positive signs regarding recruitment requests from Ethiopia, expressing optimism about their resumption to meet the needs of Kuwaiti families

within legal and regulatory frameworks.

In addition, he announced the union's plan to conduct an official visit to Jakarta, Indonesia, in September, hoping it will coincide with clear government action to expedite the recruitment of Indonesian domestic workers.

Al-Dakhnan emphasized the importance of joint coordination between the public and private sectors, working as one team to address challenges in the domestic labor market and to provide a stable and fair contractual environment for both employers and workers.

Kuwait provides care for 'no parents' kids

Integrated with families: minister

By Fares Ghaleb

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 30: Minister of Social, Family and Childhood Affairs Dr. Amthlal Al-Huwailah confirmed that the ministry prioritizes protecting the rights of children and raising family awareness through the implementation of a set of integrated programs based on the principles of comprehensive care and in line with international agreements on the rights of the child.

In a statement to the newspaper, Al-Huwailah touched on the most important programs in the Social Care Sector at the Ministry of Social Affairs; such as the Family Foster Care Program that aims to care for children of unknown parentage by integrating them with alternative families according to social and psychological regulations that ensure a safe and supportive family environment.

She also cited the Alternative Mother Program being implemented in childcare



Dr Al-Huwailah

centers. She revealed the program includes the provision of maternal love and care through specialized supervisors who act as mothers to provide daily psychological and social support to children residing in the centers.

She said the Juvenile Care and Rehabilitation Program, implemented by the Juvenile Care Department, aims to protect children from delinquency and rehabilitate them through educational, skills, religious and psychological initiatives that enable them to return to society as good individuals. She affirmed that the department plays a crucial role in protecting children from delinquency; not only through intervention after the problem occurs, but also through proactive preventative programs targeting at-risk groups in society.

She added that these programs include awareness campaigns for families and schools, and workshops to promote positive values and behaviors through the Psychological and Social Counseling Program for Children and Families offered by the Psychological and Social Counseling Center. She revealed the program consists of counseling services, early intervention, and psychological support for children at risk or experiencing psychological difficulties, in addition to mental health programs.

She confirmed the implementation of family awareness and education programs, including a series of workshops and lectures conducted by the Awareness and Counseling Department, in order to spread the culture of positive parenting and preventing domestic violence.



KPC and subsidiaries

'Second phase of merging oil companies underway'

By Najeh Bilal

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 30: In preparation for the second phase of merging the subsidiaries of the Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC), informed sources revealed that the executive phase of merging Gulf Oil Company with Kuwait Oil Company (KOC) has begun through the transfer of the corporation's shares in the capital of the Gulf Oil Company to KOC.

They highlighted a meeting held recently between the two companies' CEOs to start making administrative decisions regarding this matter.

The sources explained that the second phase, following the initial merger of KIPIC with the Kuwait National Petroleum Company, is part of KPC's strategy to restructure the oil sector. This phase commenced with a meeting between KOC's CEO Ahmed Al-Eidan,

acting CEO of Gulf Oil Company Bader Al-Munaifi, and representatives from the oil sector's leadership and workforce.

The meeting also discussed the implications of Decision No. 60/2024, issued on May 5, 2024, concerning the transfer of KPC's ownership of shares.

Al-Eidan affirmed the importance of job stability and preserving all benefits of Gulf Oil employees.

It was decided that the legal and administrative status of Gulf Oil Company will remain unchanged at this stage, including the company's name, logo, and operational sites at its headquarters and joint operations in Khafji and Al-Wafra.

The sources clarified that Al-Eidan indicated the change is limited solely to the transfer of share ownership, with KOC becoming the owning entity instead of KPC. Consequently, the highest authority will be the Board of Directors of KOC, without affecting daily operations or the current institutional structure.



‘Vigilant Mol officers true guardians of the nation’

“IN a scene that reflected the state’s vigilance and high institutional presence, the acting Undersecretary of the Ministry of Interior Major General Ali Misfer Al-Adwani conducted field visits to several Hussainiyas (congregational mosques) in Kuwait during the month of Muharram. These visits are part of the ministry’s efforts to ensure the security of religious rituals during this month that hold great spiritual and historical importance in our hearts,” Saudi writer **Hajar Al-Salem** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

“Observers noted that this active field engagement by the Ministry of Interior, under the direct guidance of Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef, who continues to support and strengthen the role of security services, goes beyond protection. It also serves to instill a sense of reassurance among citizens attending Hussainiyas to commemorate the nights of Muharram.



Hajar Al-Salem

“The Ministry of Interior’s plan for this year, as witnessed during Major General Al-Adwani’s inspection tour, was marked by precision and thoughtful organization, from the strategic deployment of patrols and checkpoints to the visible readiness of security personnel on the ground from early evening until late at night.

“The execution reflected a professional security vision that anticipates potential challenges and confronts them calmly and effectively. Major General Al-Adwani had underscored the importance of coordination and heightened preparedness in all units. Perhaps the most striking aspect of this scene is the image deeply rooted in societal consciousness. It is that the state is present, working quietly, efficiently, and respectfully to protect religious rituals and reinforce trust between citizens and security forces. This comes at a time when the region is facing major security challenges.

“His Excellency the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior, Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef, has come to embody calm strength and balanced leadership, placing national security and stability at the core of his priorities. Since assuming office at the Ministry of Interior, a noticeable qualitative shift in security performance has been evident. It is based on firm decision-making, openness to society, and constant readiness for all challenges. The high level of coordination and organization displayed during sensitive religious occasions clearly reflects a conscious leadership that plans, monitors, and executes with sophisticated professionalism.

“Under the minister’s wise leadership and unwavering support for the security forces, the ministry has gone beyond mere administration to shape a deep sense of reassurance among all residents of Kuwait. My sincere appreciation and gratitude go to His Excellency Minister Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef, Undersecretary Major General Ali Al-Adwani, and every security officer for steadfastly ensuring Kuwait’s security and stability. These are the true guardians of the nation.”

Also:

“Tourism and media are two topics that occupy much of my mind. As a journalist, media is my foremost passion, more so even than dining at a five-star restaurant,” Kuwaiti journalist **Hassan Ali Karam** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

“What concerns me most in the media today is the official or government media, particularly its two main branches - radio and television. These represent the foundation and primary source of government information and, ultimately, shape public opinion. “Since the mid-1950s, I have been

attached to radio and journalism like a baby clings to its mother. I have always enjoyed listening to the radio, hopping from one station to another in different countries. Back then, there were only a handful of radio stations such as Radio Baghdad, Cairo’s Voice of the Arabs, Radio Israel, Voice of America, among others that broadcast on short or long waves. Many of these stations have since vanished due to technological shifts that gave rise to audio-visual media. Satellites spread across the globe, and the wires and antennas that once received radio signals gradually disappeared.

“Space is now flooded with thousands of radio and television transmitters, and many other technologies I still don’t fully understand, amid a global frenzy where something new is heard or seen every day. Here in “This Kuwait,” we are neither a revolutionary nor an expansionist state. We are a peaceful country, content with our status as a small nation focused solely on living in harmony with others and avoiding conflict. Therefore, our visual media, which presents itself to viewers and listeners, often seems cloaked in sadness, even though, thank God, we remain well, safe, and secure.

“Hence, I believe our media should wear a cloak of joy and project optimism, as if we live in a garden filled with colorful flowers, roses, palm trees, and a pleasant atmosphere. We, and no one else, competed in drama shows, evening gatherings, and music, supporting Kuwaiti, Arab, and international artists alike. At one time, the Kuwaiti public knew the famous Iranian singer Googoosh well, while she was virtually unknown in neighboring countries.

“Through our media, we introduced the world to others, and the world looked at us with admiration, as if we came from another planet. Where do we stand now compared to that golden era of Jaber Al-Ali’s media (May God have mercy on him)? The sadness and gloom that pervade our audio and visual media drive viewers and listeners to seek out channels that better match their tastes and are media savvy.

“For example, the Ministry of Information has established a news channel. But has it truly succeeded in delivering news content worthy of the name “news channel”? Has the entertainment channel managed to provide engaging entertainment, drama, or musical content? Has it succeeded in showcasing Kuwaiti artists, many of whom are confined to their homes, overlooked by radio, and forgotten by the National Assembly?

“Moreover, there are no local art companies actively supporting these artists, encouraging their work, or producing and recording their music. Two days ago, I read in a local newspaper about a complaint from a Kuwaiti artist who lamented that he had found no government or private entity willing to record his artistic work. The company he had contracted to produce his works has since declined and ceased operations. Where are our artists supposed to turn, Mr. Minister of Information, and you, esteemed members of the National Assembly? What kind of media and culture are you supporting?

“Isn’t it a shame that gloom and despair are spreading across the country? Why doesn’t the government take responsibility for producing the works of Kuwaiti artists or establish an institution dedicated to supporting their creations?

“Media and culture are two inseparable pillars. If the state cannot provide skilled local media professionals, it must at least recruit talent from abroad. We do not want a lifeless media, nor do we want to say, “May God have mercy on our media as it once was.” Rather, we must acknowledge that our media urgently needs a comprehensive overhaul—from top to bottom.”

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



Photo by Rizk Tawfiq

Fire-fighters battling the newspaper warehouse blaze in scorching heat.

Al-Jarallah offers support in ‘Al-Qabas’ newspaper fire

By **Munif Nayef**
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 30: Fire broke out in the paper warehouse belonging to the sister newspaper “Al-Qabas daily” on Al-Sahafa Street in Shuwaikh Industrial on Monday afternoon. No casualties were reported.

The Editor-in-Chief of Arab Times and Al-

Seyassah newspapers Ahmed Al-Jarallah contacted the Editor-in-Chief of Al-Qabas newspaper Walid Al-Nisf to check on the situation and offer support. He expressed full readiness of Al-Seyassah and Arab Times newspapers to provide any assistance.

In response, Al-Nisf expressed his gratitude to Al-Jarallah, confirming that the damage was confined to the paper warehouse and that the newspaper’s operations are continuing as usual.

Meanwhile, a press release issued by Kuwait Fire Force (KFF) revealed that four firefighting teams rushed to the location after receiving information about the warehouse on fire, and extinguished it before it spread further, despite the high temperatures.

Personnel from the Ministry of Interior and Emergency Medical Services were also present at the scene.

Guard to hang in ‘rape’ of teacher

Ex-MP fined in libel lawsuit

By **Jaber Al-Hamoud**
Al-seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 30: The Court of Cassation upheld the death sentence imposed on an Egyptian school guard for kidnapping and raping an Egyptian teacher when he forcibly detained her in the Art Room at a school in Ahmadi Governorate.

Case files indicate the guard pushed the teacher into the Art Room, where he immobilized her and placed tape over her mouth to prevent her from screaming. He then raped her at knifepoint.

The Criminal and Appeals courts sentenced the guard to death by hanging, as the pieces of evidence -- including medical reports -- proved his guilt.

The Criminal Court confirmed that the crime occurred in a supposedly safe environment, and that the assault bore the hallmarks of betrayal of trust and flagrant violation of human dignity, warranting the maximum penalty.

The final ruling of the Court of Cassation brings to a close a case that shook the educational community and public opinion.

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Ex-MP fined in libel suit: The Misdemeanor Section in the Court of Appeals fined former MP Bader Al-Dahoum KD150 for defaming Attorney Bassam Al-Asousi in connection with the remarks Al-Dahoum made about Al-Asousi’s legal contract with Al-Majlis TV.

According to the court ruling, the statements of Al-Dahoum had defamatory content that harmed the reputation and professional integrity of Al-Asousi. The court found the comments to be slanderous and beyond the bounds of legitimate criticism concluding that such statements are considered a personal attack rather than a fair expression of opinion.

In his first public reaction to the verdict, Al-Asousi welcomed the decision of the court. He said, “the conviction of Al-Dahoum confirms the falsehood of the repeated accusations he directed at me over time. Praise Allah before all and after all – this ruling is fair and a deterrent. Resorting to the judiciary was the appropriate course of action to confront this campaign of insults. Such rulings reinforce the importance of responsible speech and draw a clear line against unfounded defamation.”

Al-Asousi emphasized that the case highlights the role of the judiciary in upholding professional dignity and maintaining public discourse grounded in truth and accountability.



Mol photo

Customs personnel found cigarette packets hidden in food containers at the border.

Customs foils attempt to smuggle cigarettes

KUWAIT CITY, June 30: The Kuwait General Administration of Customs (KGAC) announced that the Nuwaiseeb Customs Department thwarted an attempt to smuggle approximately 323 cartons of cigarettes concealed inside food containers as a means of camouflage, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

KGAC explained that during the inspection of two containers carrying food supplies, customs officers discovered large quantities of various cigarette brands hidden within the shipments. The two vehicles involved are owned by two brothers, and the necessary customs procedures have been initiated against them.



Machines installed at border posts.

Biometrics will begin soon for border staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 30: Acting Director General of the Land Border Security General Department at the Interior Ministry Brigadier General Bader Mufleh Al-Rashidi has instructed the concerned departments to implement the fingerprint attendance system for all military and civilian staff, reports Al-Anba daily.

The daily obtained a copy of the circular stating “with reference to the letter of the Police Force Affairs General Department and in accordance with the instruction of First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousuf to implement the fingerprint attendance system for all members of the police force -- including officers, soldiers and civilian employees -- effective July 1, and pursuant to the directive of Director General of the Land Border Security General Department Brigadier General Bader Mufleh Al-Rashidi; the fingerprint attendance system will be applied on all employees of the department. Attendance and departure will also be recorded in the civil status register starting from the aforementioned date.”

A security source confirmed that the ministry has completed the installation of fingerprint devices in all sectors, departments and sections. The source revealed that the ministry will apply the fingerprint system to all military and civilian employees.

He clarified that attendance has already been implemented in several sectors, which significantly improved work processes and employee compliance. He said this success prompted the expansion of the system throughout the ministry.

He went on say that previously, attendance was recorded manually in the civil status register by logging the military personnel’s name and signature. “However, this process lacked oversight, as it relied primarily on the direct supervisors to verify records,” he explained.

The source pointed out that the installation of fingerprint devices is part of the efforts of the ministry to modernize operations and enhance accountability. “The system will help reduce absenteeism, link attendance records to promotions and bonus disbursements (including reservation allowances), and better regulate travel procedures for military personnel and others who must obtain a permit before traveling,” he concluded.

Kuwait on track to hit 95 pc in fresh water reserves – report

KUWAIT CITY, June 30: The freshwater reserves of the country have risen to 93 percent -- an indication that they are on track to reach 95 percent in the coming days, reports Al-Jarida daily quoting sources from the Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy.

Sources said this increase reflects stability and full preparedness to meet higher demand during the summer months. Sources affirmed this is the result of the dedication of ministry employees in various sectors, especially those in charge of desalination and water production projects. “The ministry remains committed to ensuring reliable freshwater supplies for the public; considering the rising seasonal demand,” sources added.

Sources praised the diligent work and continuous coordination among the concerned teams to maintain sustainable water security, highlighting the

proactive plans and measures in place to keep reserves at safe and stable levels.

Sources added that the ministry is pressing ahead with its strategic plans to strengthen the water sector’s infrastructure. “This includes expanding desalination plants, upgrading networks, and increasing storage capacity to accommodate population growth and urban development, as well as to enhance resilience against future emergencies or challenges in this vital sector,” sources disclosed.

In a related development, the Central Agency for Public Tenders (CAPT) has approved the second three-month extension -- beginning July 25 -- for annual maintenance work in the seawater reverse osmosis (RO) desalination unit project at Shuwaikh Power and Water Distillation Plant. This extension was granted without additional cost, pending the awarding of a new tender for these services.

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Gulf countries unite against regional aggression

Deputy PM Sheikh Fahad highlights advanced tech enhancing surveillance and coastal protection

Kuwait launches unmanned surface vessels to boost maritime security

KUWAIT CITY, June 30, (KUNA): Kuwait's First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef Saud Al-Sabah on Monday inaugurated the unmanned surface vessels (USV's) that have joined the fleet of the Kuwait Coast Guard at the General Directorate of the Coast Guard.

The inauguration ceremony was attended by Major General Ali Mesfer Al-Adwani, Acting Undersecretary of the Ministry of Interior and Major General Mujbil Fahd bin Shawq, Assistant Undersecretary for Border Security Sector, as part of a comprehensive plan implemented by the Kuwait Coast Guard to enhance maritime security through new technologies.

Commodore Sheikh Mubarak Ali Al-Sabah, Director General of the Coast Guard, provided a detailed briefing on the advanced operational capabilities of the USV's, saying they can function autonomously for days without direct human intervention.

He added that their pivotal missions include surveillance, continuous monitoring, interception of suspicious maritime targets, support for search and rescue operations, monitoring environmental pollution, protecting natural resources, and overall maritime security enforcement within Kuwait's territorial waters.

The report highlighted that Sheikh Fahad also inspected the advanced maritime monitoring system currently being implemented. This system covers the entirety of Kuwait's maritime domain and integrates coastal radars, sensors, high resolution cameras, and unmanned surface vessels under a unified command and control system powered by artificial intelligence.

Additionally, Sheikh Fahad toured the maritime operations center, in addition to the control center that controls and operates the USV's, reviewing their operational mechanisms, monitoring systems, and the electronic network linking the maritime units with command centers.

Sheikh Fahad praised the General Directorate of the Coast Guard for executing this major project, confirming that the launch of unmanned surface vessels represents a significant step forward in developing Kuwait's maritime security system through modern technologies.

He noted that this initiative reflects the Ministry of Interior's commitment to operational readiness and adopting solutions to protect the Kuwaiti coast's and territorial waters, thereby supporting national security, stability, and safeguarding Kuwait's national interests.



The First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior, Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah, inaugurates the operation of the remote-controlled marine boats that have joined the fleet of the General Directorate of Coast Guard. Inset: Unmanned surface vessel in motion.

Minister outlines phased approach

Al-Mutairi presents future media strategy aligned with nat'l goals

KUWAIT CITY, June 30, (KUNA): Kuwaiti Minister of Information, Culture and State Minister for Youth Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi stated that the Ministry's new strategy for the years 2026-2030, is built on the progress achieved in the past years, stressing the importance of the participatory approach adopted by the ministry in developing it.

This came in a statement issued by the Ministry of Information on Monday following a meeting between the Minister Al-Mutairi with the ministry's leaders and the strategy team, in the presence of the Undersecretary of the Ministry Dr. Nasser Muhaisen.

Minister Al-Mutairi commented saying that this is a translation of the state's leadership and an implementation of its development plan.

During the meeting, an initial presentation was given on the methodology for preparing the new strategy, scheduled to be launched in the coming period.

The Minister explained that the tangible achievements made in the media field during the past four years are a direct result of the implementation of the ministry's current strategy (2021-2026).

He asserted that the next phase will represent a transition from challenges to opportunities through an integrated vision and a clear practical methodology.

Minister Al-Mutairi explained that the methodology is divided into four main stages; identifying future directions through in-depth studies and research, formulating measurable objectives and performance indicators, developing executable strategic initiatives, and preparing operational plans and timetables to ensure effective implementation.

He stressed that the next stage will include extensive discussion sessions with ministry employees, as well as partners from the private sector, civil society, and citizens.

The Minister stressed the importance of coordination and communication with all sectors of the ministry to achieve the required integration and ensure the achievement of the ministry's future goals.

He appreciated the efforts made by the strategy preparation team and the keenness to involve various sectors and relevant parties in shaping the directions of Kuwaiti media for the upcoming phase.

Outstanding KU students honored for academic and moral excellence



Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research Dr. Nader Al-Jalal with the top students of Kuwait University.

Al-Jalal calls tribute a spark for ongoing success

By Abdulrahman Al-Shammari
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times

KUWAIT CITY, June 30: Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research Dr. Nader Al-Jalal has stressed that honoring the top students of Kuwait University is “a real motivation for the students to continue their excellent academic performance until graduation.”

In a statement at the ceremony in honor of the top students, Al-Jalal praised the efforts of the students who obtained high grades and made themselves distinguished

through perseverance and diligence. He pointed out that “Kuwait University depicts the bright scientific image of the nation.” He then thanked the university and everyone who contributed to supporting and honoring this group of distinguished students.

Meanwhile, President of the university Dr. Dina Al-Maillem confirmed this honoring ceremony is in appreciation of the efforts exerted by the outstanding students to achieve excellence in the academe. She considers this an affirmation of the mission of the university to support efforts to spread the culture of academic excellence.

She said “the outstanding students stand today at the forefront of an academic journey that the university is

proud of. They have been a model that should be emulated in their diligence and hard work. This celebration reflects the bright image of Kuwait and its solid scientific standing in a world governed by knowledge, where nations compete with the efforts of their children and the fruits of their minds.”

Dean of Student Affairs at the university Prof. Dr. Jassim Al-Hamdan asserted that the university has occupied a lofty position as a beacon of knowledge and thought, and a field of innovation since its founding. “It has refined minds and instilled in its students the values of diligence; presenting to society a constellation of outstanding students who represent hope and the future, and whom we celebrate today, along with their achievements and excellence,” he added.

Al-Hamdan said the university has taught its students that patriotism is not translated by slogans, but rather by work, dedication and knowledge. He added that academic excellence is the fruit of tremendous efforts, discipline, awareness and mental distinction; which the students achieved and reaped through diligence and hard work.

He urged the students to always remember that true excellence increases in value when it is adorned with high morals and a noble human spirit. “Society does not rise with knowledge alone, but with scholars who carry values and instill a positive influence on those around them. They should always be distinguished by their minds and continue the journey with the same determination, as they are the hope of Kuwait and the makers of its bright tomorrow,” he asserted.



The Minister of Information reviews the initial presentation of the methodology for preparing the new strategy.

Ministry of

crises and disasters through the exchange of expertise and enhancing coordination between authorities.

Sheikh Abdullah Al-Sabah stressed the importance of honoring scientists and medical personnel who have contributed to the development of the healthcare system on both local and international levels, praising their pioneering efforts in this vital field.

He pointed out that the Ministries of Defense, Health, and the National Guard continue to cooperate and coordinate with authorities within the framework of enhancing health preparedness and emergency response.

He called for continued cooperation and integration between authorities to ensure optimal readiness to confront any future challenges.

He applauded the efforts of the medical services of the Ministry of Defense, the National Guard, and the Ministry of Health, in addition to the Kuwait Medical Association. He also praised the joint efforts of different institutions that prepared to face health crises and disasters with professionalism and high efficiency.

On his part, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Kuwait Medical Association, Dr. Ibrahim Al-Tawala, said

that the existing cooperation with the health sector in both the Ministry of Defense and the National Guard embodies the highest forms of national integration in serving Kuwait and motivates and enhances the capabilities of medical personnel to confront all circumstances and developments.

Al-Tawala pointed out that the Kuwait Medical Association has paid great attention to training and continuous development programs and has been keen to organize conferences, courses, workshops, and community awareness events in various medical specialties.

He noted that the number of scientific medical events organized by the association during the first half of 2025 amounted to approximately 83 events.

Kuwait rolls

in providing a fair investment environment and promoting tax equity.

She emphasized that the new legislation reflects Kuwait's commitment to achieving fiscal balance and diversifying revenue sources away from reliance on the oil sector.

Minister Al-Fassam stressed that preliminary estimates suggest the tax could generate approximately KD

250 million annually, thus strengthening the state's capacity to build a resilient and sustainable economy capable of withstanding future challenges.

She announced that the ministry plans to hold a series of awareness workshops in the coming period to support the law's implementation and clarify the details of the executive regulations for relevant authorities and specialists, with dates to be announced in due course.

In other news, the Ministry of Finance issued Ministerial Resolution No. 54/2025 that amends the regulations governing the use of state-owned properties and service fees specified in Resolution No. 40/2016, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

Minister of Finance and Minister of State for Economic Affairs and Investment Noura Al-Fassam explained that the new amendments aim to achieve a fair balance between the use of such properties by individuals and entities and the public interest, ensuring clear procedures and enhancing transparency in transactions.

The amended regulations cover the use of various activities, including chalets, rest houses, shopping malls, cooperative societies, banks,

warehouses, as well as sports clubs, schools, and hospitals.

The resolution includes stabilizing agricultural plot prices to support food security and encourage local production. She said the amendments were based on an extensive study of pricing trends at both Gulf and international levels.

Minister Al-Fassam explained that the revised prices are lower than the average prices in GCC countries, taking into account Kuwait's economic and social conditions. The aim is to ensure equal opportunities for all as well as enhance state revenues on a sustainable basis.

Kuwait braces

The general weather is expected to be extremely hot and dusty during the day, and hot to warm at night, with dust gradually settling in the evening.

The expected maximum temperatures would range between 47 and 49 degrees Celsius, while minimum temperatures range between 31 and 34 degrees Celsius.

Al-Ali urged drivers on highways to exercise caution due to sudden drops

Kuwait Amir

Also on Monday, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah received at Bayan Palace visiting Deputy Chairman of the King's Foundation in Michael Jary and the foundation's Executive Director of Education Dr. Simon Sainsbury.

Present at the meeting were Director General of the Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority (KDIPA) Sheikh Dr. Meshaal Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah and Director General of the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences (KFAS) Dr. Ameenah Rajab Farhan.

Macron invites

Undersecretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah received the letter during his reception of France's Ambassador to Kuwait Olivier Gauvin.

Amir praises

The Minister also introduced to His Highness the Amir the new curriculums, which bring into effect a new educational philosophy relying on knowledge, skills and principles.

His Highness the Amir praised the efforts of those who developed the curriculums with the purpose of building a better future and bolstering the educational system in the country.

His Highness also wishes the students success in their future endeavors.

Cheating now

used solely for practice or exam preparation from criminalization.

Article 259-bis-a criminalizes the unlawful alteration of answers or marks awarded to students in the specified educational exams. The offender is punishable by imprisonment for up to seven years and/or a fine ranging from KD 5,000 to KD 10,000.

The penalty increases if the offender is an employee responsible for correcting, evaluating, or recording grades, with imprisonment for up to ten years and/or a fine ranging from KD 5,000 to KD 20,000.

Continued from Page 1



Law enforcement and emergency responders at Cherry Hill Park off 15th Street on June 29, following reports of an ambush shooting attack on Canfield Mountain, in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho. (AP)

Violent ambush in Idaho leaves 2 firefighters dead and one injured

BOISE, Idaho, June 30, (AP): Authorities say two firefighters were killed and another was badly injured after they were ambushed and shot while responding to a wildfire near Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, on Sunday afternoon.

Kootenai County Sheriff Bob Norris said firefighters first responded to an early afternoon report of a brush fire at Canfield Mountain, a popular and scenic hiking and biking area near the outskirts of town. But once the firefighters arrived, someone began shooting at them.

The fire was set to lure the firefighters into an ambush, Norris said.

Law enforcement officials responded, locking down the neighborhoods near the hiking area and trying to find the shooter in hilly terrain that had plenty of cover, with thick brush and trees and smoke from the fire nearby.

Over the next few hours, it wasn't clear if hikers or other recreationists were stuck on the mountain, or if any civilians had been injured in the shooting, Norris said. What was clear was the danger the firefighters and responding law enforcement faced. They exchanged gunfire with the shooter, he said.

"We don't know how many suspects are up there, and we don't know how many casualties there are," Norris told reporters at a 4:30 p.m. news conference. "We are actively taking sniper fire as we speak."

A spokesperson with Kootenai Health, later confirmed that three patients were transported to the hospital - two were dead by the time they arrived, and a third was injured.

The deceased included a firefighter from the Coeur d'Alene Fire Department and one from Kootenai County Fire and Rescue. A third firefighter was badly injured but had made it through surgery and was "fighting for his life," Norris said later that night.

Faced with more than 17,000 square feet (1,580 square meters) of containment area, part of it burning, authorities used cell phone data to narrow their search. They identified a cell signal around 3:15 p.m. and noticed it had not changed location for some time, Norris said.

A tactical response team went to the location and found a deceased man with a weapon nearby. Officials believe the man was the shooter, the sheriff said.

The fire was burning close to the body of the suspect, and so authorities had to "scoop the body up" before it was engulfed in flames, Norris said.

Crews were stationed around the area overnight and the sheriff said the investigation would continue Monday morning.

Norris said investigators believe that once they are able to fully search the area, they may find that more weapons had been placed by the suspect.

The names of the slain and injured firefighters have not been released.

Nor has the name of the suspect, whose identity authorities are waiting to confirm, Norris said.

A procession of fire and law enforcement vehicles accompanied the bodies of the fallen firefighters as they were taken from the hospital in Coeur d'Alene to the medical examiner's office in Spokane, Washington, a neighboring city just across the state line.

'It's a moment that calls for personal courage of members of Congress'

US Democrats wrestle with how to conduct oversight as Trump officials crack down

WASHINGTON, June 30, (AP): Just hours after she pleaded not guilty to federal charges brought by the Trump administration, New Jersey Rep. LaMonica McIver was surrounded by dozens of supportive Democratic colleagues in the halls of the Capitol. The case, they argued, strikes at the heart of congressional power.

"If they can break LaMonica, they can break the House of Representatives," said New Jersey Rep. Yvette Clarke, chair of the Congressional Black Caucus.

Federal prosecutors allege that McIver interfered with law enforcement during a visit with two other House Democrats to an Immigration and Customs Enforcement facility in Newark, New Jersey. She calls the charges "baseless."

It's far from the only clash between congressional Democrats and the Republican administration as officials ramp up deportations of immigrants around the country.

Sen. Alex Padilla of California was forcibly removed by federal agents while attempting to speak at a news conference for Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem. At least six groups of House Democrats have recently been denied entry to ICE detention centers. In early June, federal agents entered the district office of Rep. Jerry Nadler, D-N.Y., and briefly detained a staffer.

Congressional Republicans have largely dismissed Democrats' behavior as inflammatory and inappropriate, and some have publicly supported the prosecution of McIver.

Often in the dark about the Trump administration's moves, congressional Democrats are wrestling with how to perform their oversight duties at a time of roiling tensions with the White House and new restrictions on lawmakers visiting federal facilities.

"We have the authority to conduct oversight business, and clearly, House Republicans are not doing that oversight here," said New Jersey Rep. Rob Menendez, one of the House Democrats who went with McIver to the Newark ICE facility.

"It's our obligation to continue to do it on site at these detention facilities. And even if they don't want us to, we are going to continue to exert our right."

The prospect of facing charges for once routine oversight activity has alarmed many congressional Democrats who never expected to face criminal prosecution as elected officials. Lawmakers in both parties were also unnerved by the recent targeted shootings of two Minnesota lawmakers and the nation's tense political atmosphere.

"It's a moment that calls for personal courage of members of Congress,"



US Congresswoman Rep. LaMonica McIver, D-N.J., exits the grounds at Delaney Hall, an ICE detention facility on May 9, in Newark, NJ. (AP)

said Rep. Summer Lee of Pennsylvania. "I wish that we had more physical protection. I think that's one of those harsh realities that members of Congress who are not in leadership recognize: that oftentimes, we do this job at our own peril, and we do it anyway."

The arrests and detentions of lawmakers have led some Democrats to take precautionary measures. Several have consulted with the House general counsel about their right to conduct oversight. Multiple lawmakers also sought personal legal counsel, while others have called for a review of congressional rules to provide greater protections.

"The Capitol Police are the security force for members of Congress. We need them to travel with us, to go to facilities and events that the president may have us arrested for," said Rep. Jonathan Jackson of Illinois.

As the minority party in the House, Democrats lack the subpoena power to force the White House to provide in-

formation. That's a problem, they say, because the Trump administration is unusually secretive about its actions.

"There's not a lot of transparency. From day to day, oftentimes, we're learning about what's happening at the same time as the rest of the nation," said Rep. Lucy McBath, D-Ga., who led a prayer for McIver at the Capitol rally.

Democrats, to amplify their concerns, have turned to public letters, confronted officials at congressional hearings and digital and media outreach to try to create public pressure.

"We've been very successful when they come in before committees," said Rep. Lauren Underwood of Illinois, who added that she believed the public inquiries have "one hundred percent" resonated with voters.

Congressional Democrats say they often rely on local lawmakers, business leaders and advocates to be their eyes and ears on the ground.

A handful of Democrats say their best sources of information are across the political aisle, since Republicans typically have clearer lines of communication with the White House.

"I know who to call in Houston with the chamber. I think all of us do that," said Texas Rep. Sylvia Garcia of how business leaders are keeping her updated.

Garcia said Democrats "need to put more pressure" on leading figures in the agriculture, restaurant and hospitality sectors to take their concerns about the immigrant crackdown to Trump's White House.

"They're the ones he'll listen to. They're the ones who can add the pressure. He's not going to listen to me, a Democrat who was an impeachment manager, who is on the bottom of his list, if I'm on it at all," Garcia said.

Rep. Jason Crow of Colorado, for instance, had a working relationship with a for-profit ICE facility in his district until DHS in February ended reports as part of an agency-wide policy change. A member of Crow's staff now regularly goes to the facility and waits, at times for hours, until staff at the Aurora facility respond to detailed questions posed by the office.

Still, many House Democrats concede that they can conduct little of their desired oversight until they are back in the majority.

Rep. Marc Veasey, D-Texas, said that "real oversight power and muscle" only comes "when you have a gavel."

"Nothing else matters. No rousing oratory, no tours, no speeches, no social media or entertainment, none of that stuff," Veasey said. "Because the thing that keeps Trump up at night more than anything else is the idea he's going to lose this House and there'll be real oversight pressure applied to him."

German foreign minister visits Kyiv and pledges continued support for Ukraine

KYIV, Ukraine, June 30, (AP): Germany aims to help Ukraine manufacture more weapons more quickly as Kyiv looks to strengthen its negotiating position in peace talks with Russia about ending their more than three-year war, the top German diplomat said Monday.

"We see our task as helping Ukraine so that it can negotiate more strongly," Foreign Minister Johann Wadephul said during a visit to the Ukrainian capital, Kyiv, accompanied by German defense industry representatives.

U.S.-led international peace efforts have failed to make progress on halting the fighting. Russian President Vladimir Putin has effectively rejected a ceasefire and hasn't budged from his war goals.

"When Putin speaks of peace today, it is pure mockery," Wadephul told a news conference with Ukrainian Foreign Minister Andrii Sybiha. "His apparent readiness to negotiate is only a façade so far."

Russia's invasion shows no sign of letting up. Its grinding war of attrition along the roughly 1,000-kilometer (620-mile) front line and long-range strikes on civilian areas of Ukraine have killed thousands of troops and civilians.

Ukraine is outgunned and short-



German Foreign Minister Johann Wadephul attends a flower laying ceremony at the Memory Wall of Fallen Defenders of Ukraine in Kyiv, Ukraine on June 30. (AP)

handed on the front line and international aid has been vital for Ukraine's resistance against its neighbor's bigger army and economy. Germany has been Ukraine's second-largest military backer after the United States, whose continuing support is in doubt.

"We want to build new joint ventures so that Ukraine itself can produce

faster and more for its own defense, because your needs are enormous," Wadephul said while standing next to Sybiha.

"Our arms cooperation is a real trump card - it is a logical continuation of our delivery of material," Wadephul said. "And we can even benefit mutually from it - with your wealth of ideas and your experience, we will become better."

Wadephul was also due to meet with Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelenskyy.

The top German diplomat's trip to Kyiv came less than 48 hours after Russia launched its biggest combined aerial attack against Ukraine over the weekend, Ukrainian officials said, in an escalating bombing campaign that has further dashed hopes for a breakthrough in peace efforts.

Ukraine's air force said Monday it detected 107 Russian Shahed and decoy drones in the country's air space overnight.

Strikes in Ukraine's northeastern Kharkiv region left two civilians dead and eight injured, including a 6-year-old child, regional Gov. Oleh Syniehubov said Monday.

The aerial onslaughts are calculated by Russia to squeeze Ukraine into submission, according to the Institute for the Study of War.



Spain's Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez, (center), next to United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, pose for a photo with nation leaders and representatives, at the start of the four-day Financing for Development meeting, in Seville, Spain on June 30. (AP)

Nations meet to drum up trillions to combat poverty – but US isn't going

BARCELONA, Spain, June 30, (AP): Many of the world's nations are gathering starting Monday in Spain for a high-level conference to tackle the growing gap between rich and poor nations and try to drum up trillions of dollars needed to close it. The United States, previously a major contributor, pulled its participation, so finding funding will be tough.

The four-day Financing for Development meeting in the southern city of Seville is taking place as many countries face escalating debt burdens, declining investments, decreasing international aid and increasing trade barriers.

"Financing is the engine of development. And right now, this engine is sputtering," United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said in his opening comments at the conference.

"We are here in Seville to change course, to repair and rev up the engine of development to accelerate investment at the scale and speed required."

The UN and Spain, the conference co-hosts, believe the meeting is an opportunity to reverse the downward spiral, close the staggering \$4 trillion annual financing gap to promote development, bring millions of people out of poverty and help achieve the UN's wide-ranging and badly lagging Sustainable Development Goals for 2030.

Even though the gathering comes amid global economic uncertainty and high geopolitical tensions, there is hope among the hosts that the world can address one of the most important global challenges - ensuring all people have access to food, health care, education and water.

"The government of Spain believes that this summit is an opportunity for us to change course, for us to raise our voice in the face of those who seek to convince us that rivalry and competition will set the tone for humanity and for its future," Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez told the delegates as he inaugurated the conference.

High-level delegations, including more than 70 world leaders, are attending in Seville, the UN said, along with several thousand others from international financial institutions, development banks, philanthropic organizations, the private sector and civil society.

Europe

Serbia police remove street blockades: Serbian police removed street blockades in the capital Belgrade early Monday that were set up as part of a protest over a spate of arrests of anti-government protesters after a massive rally demanding an early parliamentary election.

Thousands of demonstrators placed metal fences and garbage containers at various locations in Belgrade and elsewhere throughout the country Sunday evening, including a key bridge over the Sava River in the capital. Protesters say they plan to return Monday. (AP)

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Azerbaijan cancels events: Azerbaijan has canceled all cultural events planned by Russian state and private institutions in protest over the deaths of two Azerbaijanis after police raids in the Russian city of Yekaterinburg, Azerbaijani officials said Sunday.

Azerbaijan's Culture Ministry wrote on X that concerts, exhibitions, festivals and performances were canceled on account of "the demonstrative targeted and extrajudicial killings and acts of violence committed by Russian law enforcement agencies against Azerbaijanis on ethnic grounds in Yekaterinburg."

According to Azerbaijan's Foreign Ministry, Russian law enforcement raided homes of Azerbaijani residents in the industrial city in Russia's Ural Mountains on Friday. Two Azerbaijanis were killed, it said, along with several others seriously injured and nine detained. (AP)

ANKARA, Turkey, June 30, (AP): Forest fires fanned by high winds and hot, dry weather damaged some holiday homes in Turkey as a lingering heat wave that has cooked much of Europe led authorities to raise warnings and tourists to find ways to beat the heat on Monday.

A heat dome hovered over an arc from France, Portugal and Spain to Turkey, while data from European forecasters suggested other countries were set to broil further in coming days. New highs are expected on Wednesday before rain is forecast to bring respite to some areas later this week.

"Extreme heat is no longer a rare event - it has become the new normal," tweeted U.N. Secretary-General António Guterres from Seville, Spain, where temperatures were expected to hit 42 Celsius (nearly 108 Fahrenheit) on Monday afternoon.

Reiterating his frequent calls for action to fight climate change, Guterres added: "The planet is getting hotter & more dangerous - no country is immune."

In France, which was almost entirely sweltering in the heatwave on Monday and where air conditioning



People protect their heads during a heat wave on June 30, in Paris. (AP)

remains relatively rare, local and national authorities were taking extra effort to care for homeless and elderly people and people working outside.

Some tourists were putting off plans for some rigorous outdoor activities.

"We were going to do a bike tour today actually, but we decided because it was gonna be so warm not to do the bike tour," said Andrea Tyson, 46, who was visiting Paris from New Philadelphia, Ohio.

Kim meets Russian culture minister

North Korea notifies US-led United Nations Command of border fortification plans

TOKYO, June 30, (Agencies): North Korea has informed the US-led UN Command of its plans to build fortifications inside the border between the two Koreas, marking the first notification of its kind in more than six months, Yonhap News Agency reported Monday, citing Seoul's Defense Ministry.

The North notified the multinational command tasked with monitoring inter-Korean border activities last week that it would resume construction of barriers and barbed wire fences on its side of the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ), it said.

Since April last year, North Korea has deployed troops near the military demarcation line within the DMZ to plant mines, erect anti-tank barriers and reinforce barbed wire fences after the country's leader Kim Jong-un described inter-Korean ties as those between "two states hostile to each other" in late 2023.

"Our military is closely monitoring North Korean military activities and will respond in accordance with principles if they violate the MDL," Col. Lee Sung-jun, spokesperson of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, was quoted as saying in a briefing.

The ministry said the North's notification could be seen as a "meaningful" message to ease inter-Korean tensions after the launch of the President Lee Jae Myung administration in Seoul this month, which has vowed to mend bilateral ties, but noted it was too soon to make a judgment.

Meanwhile, the UN Command said the North's delivering prior notifications in general is "useful" to mitigate risk of misinterpretation and miscalculation.



In this photo provided by the North Korean government, North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, right, meets with Russian Minister of Culture Olga Lyubimova, left, at the headquarters of the Central Committee of the Workers' Party of Korea in Pyongyang, North Korea on June 29. (AP)

being of the two countries and two peoples, Kim noted.

"It is necessary to further expand the exchanges and cooperation in the field of culture and art to know well about each other's excellent cultural traditions and learn more," he added.

Kim and Lyubimova exchanged views on prospective plans for cultural ex-

changes and cooperation, the KCNA reported.

Lyubimova announced on her Telegram channel Sunday that **Russia** and the DPRK have signed a cultural cooperation plan for 2025-2027.

The plan includes a series of cultural initiatives such as exhibitions, performances and exchange programs to be held in both Moscow and Pyongyang over the next three years.

"I am confident that today's signing of the interdepartmental cooperation program will contribute to the successful implementation of already planned and promising events," Lyubimova said.

During her visit, Lyubimova also met with DPRK Culture Minister Sung Jong Gyu.

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SEOUL: South Korean President **Lee Jae-myung's** approval rating fell 0.6 percentage points over the week to 72.8 percent last week, a weekly poll showed Monday.

The negative assessment on Lee's conduct of state affairs rose 0.6 percentage points to 24.2 percent, according to computer assisted telephone interviewing (CATI) by local pollster Flower Research.

The ruling liberal Democratic Party's approval score recorded this year's high of 56.4 percent, 32.9 percentage points higher than the conservative opposition People Power Party's 23.5 percent.

Support rate for both the minor left-leaning Rebuilding Korea Party and the minor rightist New Reform Party logged 3.7 percent last week.

The pollster's separate survey of automated response system (ARS) showed that Lee's approval rating increased 2.1 percentage points to 71.2 percent last week compared to the previous week.

Both the CATI and the ARS surveyed 1,008 voters from Friday to Saturday. They had plus and minus 3.1 percentage points in margin of error with a 95-percent confidence level.

Lithuania, Philippines sign pact to build alliance against aggression

MANILA, Philippines, June 30, (AP): The Philippines and Lithuania signed an agreement to build a security alliance resulting from their mutual alarm over what they perceive as growing aggression threatening their regions.

The memorandum of understanding signed Monday in Manila by Philippine Defense Secretary Gilberto Teodoro Jr. and his Lithuanian counterpart, Dovilė Šakalienė, would foster defense cooperation particularly in cyber security, defense industries, munitions production, addressing threats and maritime security, the Department of National Defense in Manila said.

Šakalienė described Lithuania's alarm over an emerging "authoritarian axis" of Russia, China, North Korea and Iran, which she raised in an international defense forum in Singapore last month. The emerging alliance needed to be confronted by a unified response from pro-democracy countries, she said.

"What we see now is that authoritarian states are really cooperating very efficiently," Šakalienė said at a news conference with Teodoro. "One of the worst results is the cooperation on Ukraine."

Their joint actions are threatening the free world, are threatening the democracy in this world ... and we do not have a luxury to allow this to be annihilated," she added.

Chinese officials did not immediately comment on the remarks.

Šakalienė cited China's actions toward Taiwan and Filipino fishermen in the disputed South China Sea, which Beijing has claimed virtually in its entirety. The Philippines, Vietnam, Malaysia, Taiwan and Brunei have been involved in prolonged territorial stand-offs but confrontations between Chinese and Philippine coast guard and naval forces have particularly spiked in recent years.



Philippine Defense Secretary Gilberto Teodoro Jr. (right) and Lithuanian Minister for National Defense Dovilė Šakalienė talk during a press conference at a hotel in Makati, Philippines on June 30. (AP)



Brazil's former president Jair Bolsonaro, (in blue), takes part in a protest against his Supreme Court trial, in which he is accused of involvement in a 2022 coup attempt, in Sao Paulo on June 29. (AP)

Bolsonaro rallies supporters in Sao Paulo to protest trial

Former Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro on Sunday attended a public demonstration in Sao Paulo to protest against his ongoing Supreme Court trial in the South American country. A couple of thousand people gathered on Paulista Avenue, one of the city's main locations, in a demonstration that Bolsonaro, before the event, called "an act for freedom, for justice."

Bolsonaro and 33 allies are facing trial over an alleged plot to overturn the 2022 presidential election results and remain in power. They were charged with five counts related to the plan.

The former president has denied the allegations and claims that he's the target of political persecution. He could face up to 12 years in prison if convicted. (AP)

UN peacekeeping chief warns that conflict in Sudan spilling into CAR

UNITED NATIONS, June 30, (Agencies): The conflict in Sudan is spilling across its southwestern border into Central African Republic, a country already battered by its own conflict with rebels, the United Nations peacekeeping chief warned.

Undersecretary-General Jean-Pierre Lacroix told the UN Security Council that the attack that killed a U.N. peacekeeper near the country's border with Sudan last Friday was carried out by "armed Sudanese elements." His comments were the first identifying Sudanese armed fighters as responsible for the attack on the peacekeepers.

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres also said in a new report to the Security Council that vehicles suspected of belonging to the Rapid Support Forces - the key actors in Sudan's civil war - were sighted on several occasions in the areas of Am Dafok and Aouk (Vakaga Prefecture) of Central African Republic, where U.N. peacekeepers are present.

In the report covering the period from mid-February to mid-June, Guterres said, "In the northeast (of CAR), armed incursions linked to the conflict in the Sudan continued."

Sudan plunged into civil war when rival generals heading the country's armed forces and paramilitary Rapid



Smoke is seen rising in Khartoum, Sudan, April 15, 2023. (AP)

Support Forces started fighting each other in mid-April 2023. Since then, at least 24,000 people have died, about 13 million Sudanese have fled their homes, famine is setting in and cholera is sweeping across the country. Both sides have been accused of war crimes.

Meanwhile, CAR has been battling conflict since 2013, when predominantly Muslim rebels seized power and forced then President François Bozizé from office. It is among the first countries in Africa to welcome Russia-backed forces, with Moscow seeking to help protect authorities and fight armed groups.

Also:

JEDDAH: The Muslim World League expressed sincere condolences for Sudan over the Sudanese government and people, and the families of the victims of the gold mine collapse in the northern desert area of **Howaid**.

In a press release, issued on Sunday, the MWL wished the injured a quick recovery.

Earlier today, the Sudanese Company for Mineral Resources said at least 11 gold miners were killed and seven others injured in the tragic accident in the area, located between the two states of River Nile and Red Sea.

China lifts nearly 2-year ban on seafood from Japan over Fukushima wastewater

BEIJING, June 30, (AP): China has reopened its market to seafood from Japan after a nearly two-year ban over the discharge of slightly radioactive wastewater from the tsunami-destroyed Fukushima nuclear power plant.

A notice from the customs agency said the ban had been lifted Sunday and that imports from much of Japan would be resumed.

The ban, imposed in August 2023, was a major blow to Japan's scallop and sea cucumber exporters. China was the biggest overseas market for Japanese seafood. The decision to lift the ban coincides with efforts by China and Japan to improve ties as both face economic uncertainty because of the American tariffs imposed by President Donald Trump.

"This is a major turning point for Japan, which sees seafood as an important source of exports," said Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries Minister Shinjiro Koizumi, the son of former Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi.

The nuclear plant at Fukushima was heavily damaged by a deadly tsunami that followed a huge off-



Seafood are displayed at a market in Beijing on Dec 29, 2024, after China banned seafood imports from Japan in August 2023. (AP)

shore earthquake in 2011. Water still must be pumped in to cool the radioactive fuel. The water is then stored in what was an ever-growing complex of tanks on the property.

After years of debate, the utility won Japanese government permission to discharge the water gradually into the sea after treating it to remove most of the radioactive elements and diluting it with seawater. Japanese officials said the wastewater would be safer than international standards and have negligible environmental impact.

China disagreed and imposed a ban, saying the discharge would endanger the fishing industry and coastal communities on its east coast. Over months of talks, Japan agreed to let China take samples of the water for testing. The sampling has not found any abnormalities, the customs agency notice said

Week of monsoon rains and floods across Pakistan kill 46 people

PESHAWAR, Pakistan, June 30, (Agencies): Nearly a week of heavy monsoon rains and flash floods across Pakistan have killed at least 46 people and injured dozens as continuing severe weather similar to past emergencies remains possible, officials said Monday.

The fatalities caused by abnormally strong downpours since Tuesday include 22 in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, 13 in eastern Punjab province, seven in southern Sindh and four in southwestern Balochistan, National Disaster Management Authority and provincial emergency officials said.

"We are expecting above-normal rains during the monsoon season and alerts have been issued to the concerned authorities to take precautionary measures," said Irfan Virk, a Pakistan Meteorological Department deputy director.

Virk warned forecasters cannot rule out a repeat of the "extreme situation" seen during devastating floods in 2022. Rains inundated a third of the country, killing 1,737 people and causing widespread destruction.

Also:

ISLAMABAD: Security forces have foiled a major terror attack in **Pakistan's** northwest **Khyber Pakhtunkhwa** province, killing a suicide bomber and his handler during an intelligence-based operation, the Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) said.

In a statement, the CTD said the operation was carried out in Shamshato area on the outskirts of **Peshawar**, the provincial capital, following credible intelligence about a planned large-scale suicide attack targeting a sensitive installation in the city.

During the exchange of fire, two militants affiliated with a banned outfit were killed, the CTD said.



Motorists drive through a flooded road caused by heavy monsoon rains, in Lahore, Pakistan on June 29. (AP)

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KABUL: A total of 25 Afghan nationals who were released from Pakistan jails recently returned to their country Afghanistan on Saturday, reported the state-run Radio and Television of Afghanistan on Sunday.

All the repatriated former detainees, after registration and receiving necessary aid from the Afghan authorities at the crossing point, have been transported to their home provinces, the state-owned media outlet added.

Pharmaceutical factory explosion and fire kill 12 people in southern India

NEW DELHI, June 30, (AP): An explosion and fire at a pharmaceutical factory in India's southern state of Telangana killed at least 12 people and injured several others, authorities said Monday.

The fire department recovered the charred bodies of 10 workers in an industrial area about 50 kilometers (31 miles) from the state capital Hyderabad (31 miles), the state's fire services director G.V. Narayana Rao told The Associated Press.

Two other workers succumbed to burns and were pronounced dead at a hospital, Rao said, adding that debris of the gutted pharmaceutical unit of Sigachi Industries was being removed to find out if any more workers were trapped. Nearly three dozen injured workers were admitted to hospitals, he said.

"It was an explosion in a spray dryer unit of the factory, which is used to process raw material into fine powder for making drugs," Rao said.

India is home to some of the world's top pharmaceutical companies, playing a pivotal role in the global supply



Rescue workers look for survivors after an explosion and a fire at a pharmaceutical factory in an industrial area in Sangareddy, some 50 kilometers (31 miles) from Hyderabad, India on June 30. (AP)

of generic medicines and vaccines. The country's robust manufacturing and cost-effective production have made it a hub for pharma giants.

Also:

NEW DELHI: At least 34 people were killed, four reported missing, and 74 were injured in the monsoon rains dur-

ing the past nine days in the northern Indian state of **Himachal Pradesh**, officials said Sunday.

The cumulative damages to the infrastructure during this period have been estimated at 8.32 million U.S. dollars, according to a report released by the State Emergency Operations Centre.

Kuwait's oil exports to Japan down 22.2%

TOKYO, June 30, (KUNA): Kuwait's crude oil exports to Japan declined by 22.2 percent in May compared to the same month last year, reaching 4.23 million barrels, or 137,000 bpd, according to government data released Monday. The figure marked the second consecutive monthly decline.

Kuwait ranked as Japan's fourth-largest crude oil supplier in May, accounting for 5.7 percent of the East Asian nation's total imports, down from 8.3 percent in May 2024, the Japanese Natural Resources and Energy Agency said in a preliminary report.

Business

‘Bank seeks to empower individuals with special needs and promote integration into work environment’

KFH launches 5th training program in cooperation with KSH

KUWAIT CITY, June 30: In line with its continuous efforts to promoting social responsibility and sustainability, Kuwait Finance House (KFH) has launched its fifth training program in collaboration with the Kuwait Society for the Handicapped (KSH) and with the attendance of KFH Acting Group Chief Human Resources and Transformation Officer, Ahmad Alhammad.

KFH Senior Manager Employee Experience and Communication, Sara AlSalem, said that the long-standing program is one of the major aspects of KFH's social responsibility and sustainability strategy, reflecting the Bank's commitment to empowering individuals with special needs and promoting their integration into the work environment. This strategic initiative plays a significant role in strengthening employee engagement at KFH as it reflects the Bank's interest in this segment that is an integral part of society.

She noted: "This year's program builds on the success of previous editions by expanding the training scope and including more participating departments, providing trainees with hands-on, real-world experience that hones their skills and prepares them for employment."

AlSalem mentioned that 10 trainees from KSH will take part in



Sara AlSalem

this year's program. They will be assigned to various departments across KFH, including new divisions participating for the first time in the training plan, highlighting the Bank's continued efforts to enhance and expand the scope of the program each year.

She commended the trainees' interaction with the department heads during the program's launch ceremony, where the Bank ensured the presence of its managers to meet the trainees and personally hand over their official work IDs, marking the

beginning of their training journey.

She added: "Running from July through November 2025, the program offers a comprehensive training journey tailored to offer real-life meaningful opportunities to develop practical skills in a supportive, inclusive environment, allowing participants of special needs to interact and grow."

AlSalem affirmed that KFH remains committed to developing this program on an annual basis in collaboration with KSH. This strategic partnership aims to support and empower individuals with special needs, in addition to promoting awareness within state institutions about the importance of integrating this segment into the social development plans.

Meanwhile, Director General of the Kuwait Society for the Handicapped, Baraa Al-Jenae said: "We take pride at KSH in the extended partnership with KFH, now in its fifth consecutive year."

He added that the initiative is a strong example of effective cooperation between the financial sector and civil society institutions, contributing directly to empowering people with special needs and equipping them with practical experience and skills that improve their chances of integration and independence in the



Some of the participants at the ceremony from both sides.

workplace.

Al-Jenae affirmed that this strategic partnership is an extension of a well-established relationship that

has, over the years, proven its positive impact in developing the participants' capabilities and strengthening their self-confidence. "This is clearly

reflected each year in the progress of the program's outcomes and its lasting impact on the trainees' future," he remarked.

Bourse ends mixed amid heavy trading

Main Market drops; Premier gains

KUWAIT CITY, June 30, (KUNA): Boursa Kuwait closed trading on Monday with its general index rising modestly by 16.68 points, or 0.2%, to reach 8,455.16 points. The session saw robust activity with 680.2 million shares exchanged across 35,040 cash transactions, totaling 183.6 million Kuwaiti dinars (ap-

proximately 600.4 million US dollars).

However, the market showed mixed results across its segments. The Main Market Index declined by 50.57 points, or 0.7%, closing at 7,194.56 points. This segment recorded the trading of 340.7 million shares through 18,970 transactions, valued at 52.8 million dinars (around 172.6 million dollars).

In contrast, the Premier Market Index gained 34.29 points, or

0.37%, ending the day at 9,187.51 points. The Premier Market saw 339.5 million shares traded in 16,070 transactions, worth 130.7 million dinars (approximately 427.4 million dollars).

Meanwhile, the Major 50 Index fell by 35.20 points, or 0.49%, closing at 7,221.16 points. This index recorded 258.2 million shares traded through 10,350 transactions, with a total value of 36.7 million dinars (about 120 million dollars).

Tariff fears loom, Fed eyes inflation

Global shares mixed after US stocks hit record high

BANGKOK, June 30, (AP): World shares started the week mixed, with European markets opening lower, after U.S. stocks closed at an all-time high following their recovery from the shocks of the Trump administration's trade policies.

Canada's decision to cancel a plan to tax U.S. technology firms that had led President Donald Trump to halt trade talks helped to steady the markets.

U.S. stock futures advanced after Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney said the talks had resumed. The future for the S&P 500 was up 0.4% while that for the Dow Jones Industrial Average gained 0.5%.

Germany's DAX edged 0.2% lower to 23,979.42, while the CAC 40 in Paris also gave up 0.2%, to 7,676.98. Britain's FTSE 100 lost 0.3% to 8,773.30.

In Asian trading, Tokyo's Nikkei 225 climbed 0.8% to 40,487.39.

Hong Kong's Hang Seng lost 0.9% to 24,072.28, while the Shanghai Composite index advanced 0.6% to 3,444.43.

China reported that its factory activity improved slightly in June after Beijing and Washington agreed in May to postpone imposing higher tariffs on each others' exports, though manufacturing remained in contraction.

In South Korea, the Kospi gained 0.5% to 3,071.70. Australia's S&P/ASX 200 rose 0.3% to 8,542.30.

Taiwan's Taiehs lost 1.4% and the Sensex in India was down 0.6%. In Bangkok, the SET gained 0.7%.

On Friday, the S&P 500 rose 0.5% to 6,173.07, above its previous record set in February. The key measure of Wall Street's health fell nearly 20% from Feb. 19 through April 8.

The Nasdaq composite gained 0.5% to 20,273.46, its own all-time high. The Dow Jones Industrial Average rose 1% to 43,819.27.

The gains on Friday were broad, with nearly every sector within the S&P 500 rising. Nike soared 15.2% for the biggest gain in the market, despite warning of a steep hit from tariffs.

An update on inflation Friday showed prices ticked higher in May, though the rate mostly matched economists' projections.



Currency traders watch monitors near a screen showing the Korea Composite Stock Price Index (KOSPI), top left, and the foreign exchange rate between U.S. dollar and South Korean won, top center, at the foreign exchange dealing room of the KEB Hana Bank headquarters in Seoul, South Korea, Monday, June 30, 2025. (AP)

Inflation remains a big concern. Trump's on-again-off-again tariff policy has made it difficult for companies to make financial forecasts and strained household budgets. A long list of businesses from carmakers to retailers have warned that higher import taxes will likely hurt their revenues and profits.

The U.S. has 10% baseline tariffs on all imported goods, along with higher rates for Chinese goods and other import taxes on steel and autos and the threat of more severe tariffs continues to hang over the economy. The current pause on a round of retaliatory tariffs against a long list of nations is set to expire on July 9. Failure to negotiate deals or further postpone the tariffs could once again rattle investors and consumers.

In an interview with Fox News Channel's "Sunday Morning Futures," Trump said his administration will notify countries that the trade penalties will take effect unless there are deals with the United States. Letters will start going out "pretty soon" before the approaching deadline, he said.

The Federal Reserve is monitoring the tariff situation with a big focus on inflation. The rate of inflation has been

stubbornly sitting just above the central bank's target of 2%. In a report Friday, its preferred gauge, the personal consumption expenditures index, rose to 2.3% in May. That's up from 2.2% the previous month.

The Fed cut interest rates three times in late 2024 following a historic series of rate hikes to cool inflation, but has held back this year due to worries that the tariffs could reignite inflation. The PCE was as high as 7.2% in 2022, while the more commonly used consumer price index hit 9.1%.

Economists still expect at least two rate cuts before the end of the year.

Bond yields held relatively steady. The yield on the 10-year Treasury fell to 4.26% from 4.27% late Friday. The two-year Treasury yield, which more closely tracks expectations for what the Federal Reserve will do, stood at 3.73%.

In other dealings early Monday, U.S. benchmark crude oil lost 15 cents to \$65.37 per barrel. Brent crude, the international standard, gave up 18 cents to \$66.62 per barrel.

The U.S. dollar fell to 144.26 Japanese yen from 144.46 yen. The euro fell \$1.1721 from \$1.1725.

Trade penalties to start soon without deals

Trump sets July 9 deadline for tariffs

WASHINGTON, June 30, (AP): President Donald Trump says he is not planning to extend a 90-day pause on tariffs on most nations beyond July 9, when the negotiating period he set would expire, and his administration will notify countries that the trade penalties will take effect unless there are deals with the United States.

Letters will start going out "pretty soon" before the approaching deadline, he said.

"We'll look at how a country treats us - are they good, are they not so good - some countries we don't care, we'll just send a high number out," Trump told Fox News Channel's "Sunday Morning Futures" during a wide-ranging interview taped Friday and broadcast Sunday.

Those letters, he said, would say, "Congratulations, we're allowing you to shop in the United States of America, you're going to pay a 25% tariff, or a 35% or a 50% or 10%."

Trump had played down the deadline at a White House news conference Friday by noting how difficult it would be to work out separate deals with each nation. The administration had set a goal of reaching 90 trade deals in 90 days.

Negotiations continue, but "there's 200 countries, you can't talk to all of them," he said in the interview.

Trump also discussed a potential TikTok deal, relations with China, the strikes on Iran and his immigration crackdown.

Here are the key takeaways:

A group of wealthy investors will make an offer to buy TikTok, Trump said, hinting at a deal that could safeguard the future of the popular social media platform, which is owned by China's ByteDance.

"We have a buyer for TikTok, by the way. I think I'll need, probably, China approval, and I think President Xi (Jinping) will probably do it," Trump said.

Trump did not offer any details about the investors, calling them "a group of very wealthy people."

"I'll tell you in about two weeks," he said when asked for specifics.

It's a time frame Trump often cites, most recently about a decision on whether the U.S. military would get directly involved in the war between Israel and Iran. The U.S. struck Iranian nuclear sites just days later.

Earlier this month, Trump signed an executive order to keep TikTok running in the U.S. for 90 more days to give his administration more time to broker a deal to bring the social media platform under American ownership.

It is the third time Trump extended the deadline. The first one was through an executive order on Jan. 20, his first day in office, after the platform went dark briefly when a national ban - approved by Congress and upheld by the Supreme Court - took effect.

U.S. strikes on Iran "obliterated" its nuclear facilities, Trump insisted, and he said whoever leaked a preliminary intelligence assessment suggesting Tehran's nuclear program had been set back only a few months should be prosecuted.

Trump said Iran was "weeks away" from achieving a nuclear weapon before he ordered the strikes.

"It was obliterated like nobody's ever seen before," Trump said. "And that meant the end to their nuclear ambitions, at least for a period of time."

Iran's supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, said Sunday on X that Trump "exaggerated to cover up and conceal the truth." Iran's ambassador to the United Nations, Amir Saeid Iravani, told CBS' "Face the Nation" that his country's nuclear program is peaceful and that uranium "enrichment is our right, and an inalienable right and we want to implement this right" under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. "I think that enrichment



President Donald Trump speaks during an event to announce new tariffs in the Rose Garden at the White House, on April 2, 2025, in Washington. (AP)

will not - never stop."

Rafael Grossi, the head of the International Atomic Energy Agency, said on CBS that "it is clear that there has been severe damage, but it's not total damage."

Grossi also said the U.N. nuclear watchdog has faced pressure to report that Iran had a nuclear weapon or was close to one, but "we simply didn't because this was not what we were seeing."

Of the leak of the intelligence assessment, Trump said anyone found to be responsible should be prosecuted. Journalists who received it should be asked who their source was, he said: "You have to do that and I suspect we'll be doing things like that."

His press secretary said Thursday that the administration is investigating the matter.

As he played up his immigration crackdown, Trump offered a more nuanced view when it comes to farm and hotel workers.

"I'm the strongest immigration guy that there's ever been, but I'm also the strongest farmer guy that there's ever been," the Republican president said.

He noted that he wants to deport criminals, but it's a problem when farmers lose their laborers and it destroys their businesses.

Trump said his administration is working on "some kind of a temporary pass" that could give farmers and hotel owners control over immigration raids at their facilities.

Earlier this month, Trump had called for a pause on immigration raids disrupting the farming, hotel and restaurant industries, but a top Homeland Security official followed up with a seemingly contradictory statement. Tricia McLaughlin said there would be "no safe spaces for industries who harbor violent criminals or purposely try to undermine" immigration enforcement efforts.

Trump praised a recent trade deal with Beijing over rare earth exports from China and said establishing a fairer relationship will require significant tariffs.

"I think getting along well with China is a very good thing," Trump said. "China's going to be paying a lot of tariffs, but we have a big (trade) deficit, they understand that."

Trump said he would be open to removing sanctions on Iranian oil shipments to China if Iran can show "they can be peaceful and if they can show us they're not going to do any more harm."

But the president also indicated the U.S. isn't afraid to retaliate against Beijing. When Fox News Channel host Maria Bartiromo noted that China has tried to hack U.S. systems and steal intellectual property, Trump replied, "You don't think we do that to them?"

Layoffs stay low amid slow job growth

Fewer Americans seek unemployment aid

WASHINGTON, June 30, (AP): The number of Americans applying for unemployment benefits fell last week, the Labor Department said Thursday, a sign that companies aren't cutting many jobs.

Jobless claims for the week ended June 21 dropped 10,000 to 236,000, a historically-low level. The four-week average of claims, which smooths out weekly volatility, dipped 750 to 245,000.

Applications for unemployment aid are a proxy for layoffs, and so the decline is evidence that businesses are mostly holding onto their employees. Yet separate data suggests hiring also remains cool, in what economists are referring to as a "no hire, no fire" job market.

The unemployment rate remains low, though there are signs that the

economy is slowing. So far this year, employers have added a solid but unspectacular 124,000 jobs a month, down from an average 168,000 last year. Most of the hiring has been concentrated in a few industries, specifically health care, restaurants and hotels, and government. Layoffs have mostly remained low, but hiring has also been weak.

Yet for many job-seekers, the sluggish creation of new jobs has been a challenge. Recent college graduates are facing the toughest job market in more than a decade. The unemployment rate for grads aged 22 to 27 is now higher than the overall jobless rate, and the gap between the two is the widest it has been in more than 30 years.

The difficulty many of the unemployed are having in finding work can be seen in the number of people con-

tinuing to claim unemployment aid, which rose 37,000 to 1.97 million for the week ending June 14. That is the most since November 2021.

Separately, the economy shrank 0.5% at an annual rate in the first three months of the year, the Commerce Department said Thursday, a worse showing than its previous estimate of a 0.2% decline. A flood of imports swamped the economy as companies rushed to bring in foreign goods before the Trump administration's tariffs took effect.

A category within the GDP data that measures the economy's underlying strength rose at a 1.9% annual rate from January through March, down from 2.9% in the fourth quarter of 2024. This category includes consumer spending and private investment but excludes volatile items like exports, inventories and government spending.

30 days free trial for eligible postpaid customers to celebrate the launch

Zain launches 5G Advanced, unlocking new horizons for Kuwait’s digital economy and technological innovation

KUWAIT CITY, June 30: Zain has officially launched its next-generation 5G Advanced network, delivering nationwide coverage across most of Kuwait. The rollout marks a major step forward in unlocking the full potential of the digital era and establishing a highly advanced infrastructure that supports ultra-fast internet speeds throughout the country.

Zain affirmed that its 5G Advanced network was built according to the highest global standards to meet the growing demand for data services, support smart city applications, power the Internet of Things, and accommodate the evolving digital lifestyle across sectors.

The launch follows the official announcement by the Communication and Information Technology Regulatory Authority (CITRA) regarding the activation of 5G Advanced in Kuwait, a milestone toward building robust digital infrastructure and laying the groundwork for the adoption of 6G technologies in the near future.

Kuwait now ranks among the first countries worldwide to deploy 5G Advanced commercially, underscoring its pioneering role in adopting cutting-edge telecom technologies and enhancing its position as a forward-looking digital hub.

Zain Vice Chairman and Group CEO, Bader Nasser Al-Kharafi, stated: “This milestone reflects the directives of His Highness the Amir, Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, to foster a thriving investment environment in which the ICT sector drives economic growth and positions Kuwait as a regional hub for the digital economy.”

Al-Kharafi praised the extensive support from the government, particularly the efforts of the Minister of State for Communications Affairs Omar Al-Omar, and Acting Chairman of CITRA Sheikh Athbi Jaber Al-Sabah, for enabling this successful and seamless launch both technically and commercially.

He continued: “This progress places Kuwait among the first nations globally to launch 5G Advanced commercially, reinforcing the country’s leadership in providing high-performance digital infrastructure. It opens vast opportunities to accelerate digital transformation, power smart services and IoT, and redefine the connectivity experience for all.”

Al-Kharafi added that the launch aligns with Zain’s recently announced 4WARAD strategy, which focuses on continuity, acceleration, collaboration and digital innovation: “Through this launch, we reaffirm our commitment to meeting growing data demands, exploring new digital business models, and continuing our journey to evolve into a fully integrated technology company.”

He further noted: “We have heavily invested in upgrading our network to support the latest global advancements. We look forward to deepening our collaboration with government entities to help achieve the Kuwait Vision 2035 and place the country at the heart of the global technology revolution.”

Nawaf Al-Gharabally, CEO of Zain Kuwait, commented: “With the launch of 5G Advanced, we are contributing to a new chapter in Kuwait’s digital transformation journey, an extension of Zain’s longstanding efforts in national digital development since its inception in 1983.”

He emphasized: “This deployment reflects the outcomes of early investment in infrastructure, rigorous technical readiness, and successful nationwide field testing by Zain’s network team, which ensured seamless coverage across most of the nation from day one.”

“This strategic move enhances Zain’s proactive vision and operational excellence in delivering next-generation connectivity that meets the highest

Bader Al-Kharafi:

■ “This achievement embodies the vision of H.H. the Amir to transform Kuwait into a regional hub for the digital economy.”



Bader Nasser Al-Kharafi, Zain Vice Chairman and Group CEO



Nawaf Al-Gharabally, CEO of Zain Kuwait

global benchmarks and offers a more advanced and reliable communications experience to the largest customer base in Kuwait,” he added.

Al-Gharabally continued: “We have strengthened our collaboration with global technology partners and leveraged our international expertise to adapt 5G Advanced in line with national priorities. We are proud to play a vital role in a leap that will benefit individuals, businesses, and the community at large.”

To commemorate the launch,

Al-Gharabally revealed that Zain has released a new TV commercial that reflects the human essence of technology: “This campaign celebrates the moments that touch people’s hearts and adds emotional depth to the connectivity experience.”

He continued: “The launch of this creative content aligns with our belief that technology is not solely defined by speed, but by its ability to build bridges between people and empower them to live their most wonderful moments. That is the true value we aim to deliver through



Zain 5G Advanced

Nawaf Al-Gharabally:

■ “The launch of 5G Advanced reflects the early investments we made in developing our infrastructure.”

■ Zain unveils an inspiring TVC: technology is not just about speed, but about bringing people closer and enabling them to Live Their Wonderful.

5G Advanced.”

30-Day Free Trial from Zain

As part of its efforts to bring this next-generation experience to its customers, Zain is offering a free 30-day trial* of the 5G Advanced service to eligible postpaid subscribers starting 30 June until 29 July 2025.

Eligible users will be automatically upgraded to the 5G Advanced network on their compatible devices at no additional cost during the offer period. To activate the service, customers can follow the simple steps provided on Zain’s website and official communication channels.

*Terms and conditions apply. For more information, visit kw.zain.com.



Scan to watch the new TVC

A Leap in Network Capability

5G Advanced represents a significant leap in network performance, delivering much higher speeds compared to standard 5G. It is ideal for ultra-high-definition streaming, large file downloads, and lag-free online gaming, even during peak usage times.

The technology also features ultra-low latency, enabling lightning-fast data transmission between devices and the cloud. This results in seamless performance for real-time applications like cloud gaming, video calls, connected vehicles, and AI-based services.

Additionally, 5G Advanced offers smart bandwidth management through Component Carrier Aggregation, which allows the network to handle heavy usage efficiently without

congestion or performance degradation.

“Live Your Wonderful”: A Human-Centric Campaign

To mark this technological milestone, Zain launched a new marketing campaign under the theme “Live Your Wonderful”, which includes a heartfelt television commercial highlighting the emotional impact of technology in our lives.

The campaign takes viewers on an emotional journey through simple, everyday moments that become deeply meaningful when shared with loved ones. With 5G Advanced from Zain, these moments feel closer and more profound, perfectly reflecting the company’s vision of using technology to enrich human connection.

This campaign is part of Zain’s ongoing efforts to connect with customers on a human level, and to spotlight how modern technology can enhance the beauty, meaning, and connectivity of daily life.

Zain: A Pioneer in Tech Innovation

The launch of 5G Advanced is the latest in a long line of achievements for Zain in leading Kuwait’s telecom and technology sector. Since its founding in 1983 as the region’s first mobile operator, Zain has consistently introduced groundbreaking technologies that shaped the local market.

The company pioneered GSM services in 1994, followed by the country’s first nationwide 4G LTE rollout in 2012, and became the first in the GCC to commercially launch 5G in 2019.

Zain’s commitment to excellence was reaffirmed in 2024 when it received five Speedtest Awards from Ookla, the global leader in network intelligence and connectivity insights. Zain won the titles of Fastest Mobile Network, Best 5G Gaming Experience, Best 5G Video Experience, Best Mobile Network, and Fastest 5G Network in Kuwait.

The results were based on hundreds of thousands of consumer-initiated tests across the country during the second half of 2024, placing Zain clearly at the forefront of network performance nationwide.

With this official launch, Zain Kuwait once again reaffirms its role as a leader in shaping the country’s digital future, delivering innovative services that enhance customer experience and contribute to the growth of a robust digital economy. Zain remains a trusted partner in connecting Kuwait to what’s next.



Zain Kuwait HQ Building

Fireworks costs set to soar as US-China trade tensions cloud tradition

Tariffs could mute July 4 fireworks show



Fireworks burst above the National Mall and, from left, the Lincoln Memorial, Washington Monument and the U.S. Capitol building, during Independence Day celebrations in Washington on July 4, 2023. (AP)

“A 90-day pause on what had been massive tariffs brought some temporary relief, but industry experts acknowledge that the tiff has lit a fuse of uncertainty as the price tag for future fireworks displays could skyrocket if an agreement isn’t reached.”

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M., June 30, (AP): Like clockwork, Carla Johnson sends out letters every spring asking for donations to help pay for the annual Fourth of July fireworks show that draws tens of thousands of people to New Mexico’s largest lake. And she has no reservations about doling out verbal reminders when she sees her patrons around town. There’s too much at stake to be shy about fundraising when donations collected by Friends of Elephant Butte Lake State Park are what make the tradition possible. But even Johnson’s ardent efforts as the group’s fundraiser might not cut it next year if the U.S. and China remain locked in a trade war. With nearly all of the aerial shells, paper rockets and sparkly fountains that fuel America’s Fourth of July celebrations being imported from China, volunteer groups like Johnson’s and cities big and small have been closely watching the negotiations.

A 90-day pause on what had been massive tariffs brought some temporary relief, but industry experts acknowledge that the tiff has lit a fuse of uncertainty as the price tag for future fireworks displays could skyrocket if an agreement isn’t reached. There were similar concerns in 2019 as trade talks between the U.S. and China dragged on. Industry groups had called on officials then to exempt fireworks from escalating tariffs. The American Pyrotechnics Association and the National Fireworks Association reignited the lobbying effort this spring, noting in letters to President Donald Trump that fireworks play a crucial role in American celebrations. The groups say the industry is made up mostly of family-owned companies that are often locked into long-term contracts that leave them unable to raise prices to offset cost surges brought on by higher tariffs. And there are few options for sourcing the more than 300

million pounds (136 million kilograms) of fireworks needed to feed demands. China produces 99% of consumer fireworks and 90% of professional display fireworks used in the U.S., according to the APA. “I think overall it’s the uncertainty,” said Julie Heckman, the APA’s executive director. “Yeah, we have a 90-day pause, but are the negotiations with China going to go well? Or is it going to go sky-high again? You know, triple digits. It’s very hard for a small business to plan.” Fireworks have their roots in China. To ward off evil spirits, people would throw bamboo stalks into a fire, causing them to pop as the air inside the hollow pockets heated up. These early firecrackers evolved into more sophisticated fireworks after the Chinese developed gunpowder in the 9th century. By the 15th century, Europe was using fireworks for religious festivals and entertainment. In 1777, they were used in Philadel-

phia and Boston for what were the first organized Independence Day celebrations. Now, fireworks are synonymous with the summer holiday and with ringing in the new year. Shows have become elaborately choreographed displays that are often synced to live music. In Nashville, the Music City’s award-winning symphony orchestra puts its own spin on the festivities. In New York City, organizers of the Macy’s show will fire off 80,000 shells, with some reaching heights of 1,000 feet (304 meters). The National Park Service promises a spectacular show on the National Mall in Washington, D.C. At Elephant Butte in southern New Mexico, they’re going old school and will light the fireworks by hand. Charlie Warren, vice president of the Friends of Elephant Butte Lake State Park, said it’s like spectators are getting two shows at once as the colors reflect on the water below

and the loud booms reverberate off the lake. Johnson, who also serves as the group’s treasurer, gets emotional describing the experience. “Oh man, in my heart and sometimes out loud, I’m singing the Star-Spangled Banner. I’ll sing it out loud to the top of my lungs when I watch that show,” she said. “It makes you proud to be in this country, and we’re celebrating our freedom, and I’m going to start crying now. Don’t get me started.” Organizers in Nashville ordered fireworks for that show over a year ago so they weren’t affected by the tariffs. It was the same in one of New Mexico’s largest cities, where Rio Rancho officials planned to spend a little more to go bigger and higher this year. In Oklahoma, Big Blast Fireworks supplies nonprofit groups so they can fundraise by setting up fireworks stands. The company received its first container from China in January before the tariffs hit. The second container arrived in February and was subject to a 10% tariff. The third container was put on hold to avoid the highest tariffs, meaning inventory could be tight later this year if nothing changes. “As a small business, we are passionate about watching our price points and intentional about passing along as much savings on to customers as possible,” said Melissa Torkleson, a managing partner at Big Blast. With some orders on hold, industry experts say Chinese manufacturers throttled back production as warehouses filled up. The backup in the supply chain also has resulted in competition for shipping space aboard ocean vessels, and Heckman, the APA’s director, said it will take much more than flipping a light switch to ease either situation. If the trade war drags on, she said, there are ways that show organizers can adjust and spectators might not notice. A minute or two could be shaved from a show or certain types of fireworks could be substituted with less expensive options. As for this year, Warren said the price tag for the Elephant Butte show was unchanged and he and Johnson can’t wait to see spectators lining the shoreline, on the surrounding hillsides and on boats bobbing on the lake. The mission every year is to make sure “that the T’s are all crossed,” Warren said. “Because this community would not be happy if this show didn’t come off,” he said.

Borrowers to see credit scores reflect repayment habits

Buy Now, Pay Later loans on credit radar

“For consumers who pay back their BNPL loans in a timely way, the new credit scoring model could help them improve their credit scores, increasing access to mortgages, car loans, and apartment rentals.”

NEW YORK, June 30, (AP): Hundreds of millions of ‘Buy Now, Pay Later’ loans will soon affect credit scores for millions of Americans who use the loans to buy clothing, furniture, concert tickets, and takeout. Scoring company FICO said Monday that it is rolling out a new model that factors the short-term loans into their consumer scores. A majority of lenders use FICO scores to determine a borrower’s credit worthiness. Previously, the loans had been excluded, though Buy Now, Pay Later company Affirm began voluntarily reporting pay-in-four loans to Experian, a separate credit bureau, in April. The new FICO scores will be available beginning in the fall, as an option for lenders to increase visibility into consumers’ repayment behavior, the company said. Still, not all Buy Now, Pay Later companies share their data with the credit bureaus, and not all lenders will opt in to using the new models, so widespread adoption could take time, according to Adam Rust, director of financial services at the nonprofit Consumer Federation of America. Here’s what to know. Typically, when using Buy Now, Pay Later loans, consumers

pay for a given purchase in four installments over six weeks, in a model more similar to layaway than to a traditional credit card. The loans are marketed as zero-interest, and most require no credit check or only a soft credit check. The main three credit reporting bureaus, Experian, TransUnion, and Equifax, haven’t yet incorporated a standard way of including these new financial products in their reports, since they don’t adhere to existing models of lending and repayment. FICO, the score of the Fair Isaac Corporation, uses data from the bureaus to calculate its own credit score, and is independently choosing to pilot a new score that takes the loans into account. BNPL providers promote the plans as safer alternatives to credit cards, while consumer advocates warn about “loan stacking,” in which consumers take on many loans at once across several companies. So far, there’s been little visibility into this practice in the industry, and the opacity has led to warnings of “phantom debt” that could mask the health of the consumer. In a statement, FICO said that their new credit score model is accounting for the growing significance of the loans in the U.S.

credit ecosystem. “Buy Now, Pay Later loans are playing an increasingly important role in consumers’ financial lives,” said Julie May, vice president and general manager of business-to-business scores at FICO. “We’re enabling lenders to more accurately evaluate credit readiness, especially for consumers whose first credit experience is through BNPL products.” FICO said the new model will responsibly expand access to credit. Many users of BNPL loans are younger consumers and consumers who may not have good or lengthy credit histories. In a joint study with Affirm, FICO trained its new scores on a sample of more than 500,000 BNPL borrowers and found that consumers with five or more loans typically saw their scores increase or remain stable under the new model. For consumers who pay back their BNPL loans in a timely way, the new credit scoring model could help them improve their credit scores, increasing access to mortgages, car loans, and apartment rentals. Currently, the loans don’t typically contribute directly to improved scores, though missed payments can hurt or ding a score. Since March, credit scores have

declined steeply for millions, as student loan payments resume and many student borrowers find themselves unable to make regular payments on their federal student loans. Nadine Chabrier, senior policy and litigation counsel at the Center for Responsible Lending, said her main concern is that the integration of the loans into a score could have unexpected negative effects on people who are already credit-restrained. “There isn’t a lot of information out there about how integrating BNPL into credit scoring will work out,” Chabrier said. “FICO simulated the effect on credit scoring through a study. They saw that some users’ scores increased. But if you factor in something that, last week, didn’t affect your credit, and this week, it does, without having very much information about the modeling, it’s a little hard to tell what the consequences will be.” Chabrier cited research that’s shown that many BNPL users have revolving credit card balances, lower credit scores, delinquencies, and existing debt. Women of color are also more likely to use the loans, she said. “This is a credit vulnerable community,” said Chabrier.

Rust, of the Consumer Federation of America, said he doesn’t expect this to be a game-changer for consumers who already have a credit profile. “Are we at a point where using BNPL loans will dramatically alter your credit profile? Probably not,” he said. “I think it’s important that people have reasonable expectations.” Rust said the average BNPL loan is for \$135, and that repaying such small loans, even consistently, might not result in changes to a credit score that would significantly move the needle. “It’s not about going from 620 to 624. It’s about going from 620 to 780,” he said, referring to the kind of credit score jumps that affect one’s credit card offers, interest rates on loans, and the like. Still, Rust said that increased transparency around the loans could create a more accurate picture of a consumer’s debts, which could improve accurate underwriting and keep consumers from over-extending themselves. “This addresses the problem of ‘phantom debt,’ and that’s a good thing,” he said. “Because it could be something that keeps people from getting too deeply into debt they can’t afford.”

‘F1’ yet to cross the finish line on profit

‘F1’ opens with \$55M, delivering Apple its biggest hit

NEW YORK, June 30, (AP): Apple has its first box-office hit.

“F1 The Movie” debuted with \$55.6 million in North American theaters and \$144 million globally over the weekend, according to studio estimates Sunday, handing the tech company easily its biggest opening yet.

Though Apple Original Films has had some notable successes in its six years in Hollywood - including the 2021 Oscar-winner “CODA” - its theatrical results have been decidedly mixed. Misfires like “Argylle” and “Fly Me to the Moon” and big-budget awards plays like Ridley Scott’s “Napoleon” and Martin Scorsese’s “Killers of the Flower Moon” have been better at driving viewers to Apple TV+ than movie theaters.

But “F1” was Apple’s first foray into summer blockbuster territory. It won a bidding war for the project from much of the production team behind the 2022 box-office smash “Top Gun: Maverick.” Apple then partnered with Warner Bros. to distribute the film starring Brad Pitt, Damson Idris and Kerry Condon.

With a production budget over \$200 million, “F1” still has several laps to go to turn a profit. But for now, “F1” is full speed ahead.

“The film’s outstanding debut reflects both the excitement of Formula 1 and the deeply emotional and entertaining story crafted by the entire cast and creative team,” said Zack Van Amburg, who heads worldwide video for Apple with Jamie Erlicht. “Their dedication and innovation have fueled an unforgettable cinematic experience.”

Car racing movies have often struggled in theaters; crash-and-burn cases include Ron Howard’s “Rush” (2013) and Michael Mann’s “Ferrari” (2023). But “F1” built off the Formula 1 fandom stirred up by the popular series “Formula 1: Drive to Survive.” And it leaned on “Top Gun: Maverick” director Joseph Kosinski and producer Jerry Bruckheimer to deliver another adult-oriented action thrill ride.

As in “Top Gun: Maverick,” the filmmakers sought an adrenaline rush by



This image released by Apple TV+ shows Damson Idris as Joshua Pearce,

(left), and Brad Pitt as Sonny Hayes in a scene from ‘F1 The Movie.’ (AP)

placing IMAX cameras inside the cockpit in “F1.” IMAX and large-format screens accounted for 55% of its ticket sales. IMAX, whose screens are much sought-after in the summer, has carved out a three-week run for the movie.

Warner Bros. expected “F1” to perform well overseas, where the sport is more popular than it is in the U.S. Jeffrey Goldstein, distribution chief for Warner Bros., said Pitt was the movie’s “secret sauce.” The \$144 million global launch is the actor’s biggest opening weekend.

“We came up with multiple campaigns based on where you are in the world,” said Goldstein. “We planned for an audience-winner: screen the movie and get it out there. People talking about this movie drove this movie.”

Reviews have been very good for “F1” and audience reaction (an “A” via CinemaScore) was even better. That suggests “F1” could hold up well in the coming weeks despite some formidable coming competition in Universal Pictures’ “Jurassic World Rebirth.”

Paul Dergarabedian, senior media analyst for data firm Comscore, praised Warner Bros. for making “F1” a theatrical event. The studio was also behind the year’s other big original release, “Sinners.”

“For Apple, this demonstrates to them the prestige factor of having a big theatrical release,” said Dergarabedian. “It elevates their brand.”

Universal’s “M3gan 2.0” had been expected to pose a greater challenge to “F1.” Instead, the robot doll sequel didn’t come close to matching the 2022 original’s box-office launch.

“M3gan 2.0” collected \$10.2 million in 3,112 theaters. Memes and viral videos helped propel the first “M3gan” to a \$30.4 million opening and a total haul of \$180 million, all on a \$12 million budget.

Still, the Blumhouse Productions horror thriller could wind up profitable. The film, written and directed by Gerald Johnstone, cost a modest \$25 million to make. A spinoff titled “Soulm8te” is scheduled for release next year.

M3gan 2.0” ended up in fourth place. The box-office leader of the last two weekends, “How to Train Your Dragon,” slid to second with \$19.4 million. The DreamWorks Animation live-action hit from Universal Pictures has surpassed \$200 million domestically in three weeks.

After a debut that marked a new low for Pixar, the studio’s “Elio” gathered up \$10.7 million in sales in its second weekend. That gives the Walt Disney Co. release a disappointing two-week start of \$42.2 million.

Film



This image released by Universal Pictures shows Allison Williams, (left), and M3GAN in a scene from ‘M3GAN 2.0.’ (AP)

Sequel trades horror for high-octane action

‘M3GAN 2.0’ goes big, maybe too big

LOS ANGELES, June 30, (AP): If you want to know how big an upgrade the “M3GAN” sequel has on the original, look no further than the very first scene. “M3GAN” was mostly set in a Seattle house, but “M3GAN 2.0” starts at the Turkish-Iranian border - with a murderous rampage in a secret military installation and the presence of Saudi intelligence, with US Defense Department officials covertly watching.

Two hours later, it’s not clear if this is really an upgrade.

Most of the same team that gave us the refreshing horror-comedy original two years ago have not only gone super-big, but also changed the franchise’s genre, turning “M3GAN 2.0” into an action movie with two AI robots, two villains, FBI units, wingsuits, neural implants, a “Mission: Impossible”-style vault heist, exosuits, a 250-mph street chase in a supercar, a power grid disaster, a countdown clock, the United Nations and the fate of the planet at stake.

If the evil doll M3gan in the first movie was responsible for the deaths of four humans and one dog, this time the screen is littered with the corpses of shootings, decapitations, severed limbs and laser slayings. There are double-crosses, impalings, blood splatter, cattle prods, tactical military soldiers, self-destruct sequences and insane close-combat martial arts. You can be forgiven for expecting a Tom Cruise appearance.

What you won’t get is much of the vibe of the original, which fused horror, cultural commentary and humor. This time, that’s muted in favor of an overly ambitious, horribly convoluted plot

that sometimes feels like the moviemakers just threw money at the sequel and tried to ape other franchises by going massive. The first had a bedroom feel; the new one starts, like we said, on an international border. The original’s \$12 million budget has been tripled.

“M3GAN 2.0” owes a lot to “Terminator 2: Judgment Day,” in which the robot killer in the first movie becomes the robot hero of the second. M3gan, it will come as no surprise, wasn’t killed at the end of the original. She’s just been laying low, waiting for her time to seize the day - and dance. Now she is reborn to fight another, better AI robot, played with sinister lethality by Ivanna Sakhno.

“M3GAN” arrived in 2023 just as AI technology like ChatGPT was beginning to go mainstream. Director and screenwriter Gerard Johnstone turns Allison Williams - who plays M3gan’s creator, Gemma - into a high-profile author and advocate for government oversight of artificial intelligence as the sequel opens. One of the more intriguing questions the movie explores is if parents are gradually outsourcing their responsibilities to technology.

Her niece Cady - the fabulous Violet McGraw - is now a budding computer programmer and rebellious. She has learned aikido and has a strong affinity for Steven Seagal, a running gag. Her protection is still the single focus of M3gan, who has apparently been in cloud networks between movies.

Facing a global existential threat, Gemma is convinced to build

a body for M3gan to go toe-to-toe with the military-grade AI killing machine known as Amelia. “Everyone deserves a second chance,” Cady tells her aunt. But whose side is M3gan really on? And what does Amelia really want?

Some of the movie’s best parts are when M3gan and Amelia face off. “You’re not family to them,” the new AI model says to the old. “You’re just the help.” There’s some cool robotic dancing - a highlight of the original - and a return of M3gan’s camel-colored silk sateen dress that became popular at Halloween.

Johnstone has smartly kept the offbeat humor of the original, this time with clever nods to “Knight Rider” and a surreal use of the Kate Bush song “This Woman’s Work.” Jemaine Clement from “Flight of the Conchords” has fun as an arrogant tech billionaire, while Brian Jordan Alvarez and Jen Van Epps return as Gemma’s tech teammates, this time crawling through ducts or getting choked almost to death.

We wouldn’t be here if someone had taken the advice of Ronny Chieng’s character in the original movie: “I want you to take this cyborg puppet show and put it in a dark closet where it belongs.” Not after grossing \$180 million worldwide. “M3GAN 2.0” was inevitable, but it didn’t have to be so inevitably too much.

“M3GAN 2.0,” a Universal Pictures currently in theaters, is rated PG-13 for “strong violent content, bloody images, some strong language, sexual material and brief drug references.” Running time: 120 minutes. Two stars out of four.

Variety

LONDON: The BBC said Monday it should have pulled a livestream of rap group Bob Vylan’s performance at Glastonbury Festival over “antiseemitic” chants against Israeli troops.

The British broadcaster has come under heavy criticism for broadcasting the rap punk duo’s performance

Saturday, when rapper Bobby Vylan led crowds attending the UK’s largest summer music festival in chants of “free, free Palestine” and “death, death to the IDF,” the Israel Defense Forces.

The BBC said Monday that it “respects freedom of expression but stands firmly against incitement to violence.”

“The antisemitic sentiments expressed by Bob Vylan were utterly unacceptable and have no place on our airwaves,” it said.

British Prime Minister **Keir Starmer** condemned the chants, saying there was no excuse for such “appalling hate speech.” (AP)

□ □ □

PARIS: The French Riviera resort of Cannes is imposing what its city council calls “drastic regulation” on cruise ships, banning any vessels carrying more than 1,000 people from its harbor starting next year.

The home of the world’s premier film festival is joining a growing global backlash against overtourism, which recently saw uproar over Jeff Bezos’ and Lauren Sanchez’ Venice wedding this weekend, water-gun protests in Spain and a surprise strike at the Louvre Museum.

“Less numerous, less big, less polluting and more esthetic” - that’s the aim of Cannes city councilors who voted Friday to introduce new limits on cruise ships in its ports starting Jan. 1. Only ships with fewer than 1,000 passengers will be allowed in the port, with a maximum of 6,000 passengers disembarking per day. Larger ships will be expected to transfer passengers to smaller boats to enter Cannes. (AP)

A die-hard Bond fan ready to honor the legacy

Denis Villeneuve to direct next James Bond movie

LOS ANGELES, June 30, (AP): In the 50-plus years of James Bond, the wait between films has never gone longer than six years. The next entry, and first since Daniel Craig’s dramatic exit, may test that - but things are speeding up.

Last Wednesday, Amazon MGM Studio announced that Denis Villeneuve will direct the 26th Bond movie, putting the franchise in the hands of one of the most respected big-budget filmmakers. Here’s what to know about that decision, and where things stand for 007.

Villeneuve, the 57-year-old French Canadian director, edged out other filmmakers who were reportedly eyed for the gig, including Edward Berger (“Conclave”) and Paul King (“Paddington 2”). Since emerging with 2010’s “Incendies,” Villeneuve has established himself as a steward of cinematic IP (“Blade Runner 2049,” “Dune”) and a specialist in dark, doom-laden spectacle (“Sicario,” “Arrival”).

“James Bond is in the hands of one of today’s greatest filmmakers,” said Mike Hopkins, head of Prime Video and Amazon MGM Studios.

The culmination for Villeneuve has been the “Dune” films. His first two entries have surpassed \$1 billion in box office and gathered a combined 15 Academy Award nominations, winning seven. Vil-

leneuve is expected to begin shooting the third “Dune” film this summer, with a cast including Timothée Chalamet, Florence Pugh, Zendaya and Javier Bardem.



Villeneuve

whose family has presided over Bond since the first film, 1962’s “Dr. No.”

The most likely timing would be production starting in 2026 and the film being released sometime in 2027.

No new 007 has been named, but that hasn’t stopped rumors and

conjecture from running rampant.

It’s pure speculation butts oddsmakers have a few expected contenders for the martini-sipping role. Those include Aaron Taylor-Johnson, Theo James, Aaron Pierre, Henry Cavill, James Norton and Jack Lowden. Expectations are that the new Bond will remain male and British, but producers have said nothing publicly to tip their hand.

Whoever it is will have big shoes to fill. In his five-film, 15-year stretch in the tuxedo, Daniel Craig was widely seen as one of the best Bonds, including the high point of “Skyfall” (2012) and the swan song of “No Time to Die” (2021).

Since Albert “Cubby” Broccoli obtained the movie rights to Ian Fleming’s books, James Bond has been a family business. That didn’t change after Amazon bought MGM, but it did earlier this year when Michael G. Wilson and Barbara Broccoli agreed to let the studio take creative control.

That handoff stoked concern from many Bond fans that 007 would be picked apart for spinoffs, series and the kind of intellectual property strip mining Hollywood has been known for in other franchises like “Star Wars.” So far, though, Amazon MGM has made no announcement about any spinoffs, and is prioritizing the 26th Bond movie.



A customer looks at Chinese porcelain wares at the official Jingdezhen porcelain flagship store in Istanbul, Türkiye, May 31, 2025. (Xinhua)



Chinese porcelain wares are seen at the official Jingdezhen porcelain flagship store in Istanbul, Türkiye, May 31, 2025. (Xinhua)

A shared heritage

Turkish master marks porcelain bond between Iznik and China

IZNIK, Türkiye, June 30, (Xinhua): In the historic town of Iznik in northwestern Türkiye, renowned for its centuries-old ceramic tradition, master artisan Adil Can Guven is devoted to preserving and revitalizing this ancient craft.

Widely recognized as a “culture bearer,” the 72-year-old has spent decades reviving and advancing the art of Iznik tiles, a passion that continues to shape his life and work.

In an interview with Xinhua, Guven reflected on his lifelong dedication to ceramics, his recent cultural exchange trip to China, and the enduring artistic dialogue between two of the world’s most celebrated porcelain traditions.

In 2023, Guven traveled to China at the invitation of the Chinese government, which took him to Jingdezhen, widely known as the “porcelain capital” of the world. It was his first visit to the historic city, and the experience left a deep impression on him. “They showed us not just the art, but the soul behind it -- the people, the stories, and centuries of craftsmanship,” Guven said.

Jingdezhen’s rich ceramic heritage resonated strongly with Guven, who has spent his career reviving the artistic and technical legacy of Iznik tiles. He was particularly impressed by the city’s modern restoration laboratories, a museum housed in a former brick factory, and the robust institutional support for ceramic research.

“There was a research center -- they called it a ‘gene bank’ --dedicated to material analysis and preservation. That kind of commitment is something we desperately need in Iznik,” Guven said, emphasizing the need for similar investment in his own town’s ceramic future.

During the visit, Guven also took part in hands-on workshops, working alongside Chinese artisans to shape clay and observe restoration techniques up close.

“The techniques may differ, but the passion is the same,” he said. “It reminded me that ceramic art transcends borders -- it’s a universal language.”

Regarding the historical connection between Chinese porcelain and Iznik ceramics, Guven said that while Iznik’s tradition was initially inspired by Chinese models, it eventually developed into a distinct Ottoman art form.

“The Ottoman court admired Chinese blue-and-white porcelain and asked local artisans to create something similar,” he explained. “But true porcelain requires firing at around 1300 degrees Celsius, which our kilns couldn’t reach. Kilns in Iznik, a town of potters, would often collapse above 950 degrees Celsius.”

To overcome this challenge, local artisans turned to an ancient Seljuk technique: adding frit, or ground glass, to the clay mixture.

“This created a white, durable ceramic body that looked like porcelain but was made from entirely different materials,” Guven said.

By the mid-15th century, Iznik’s ceramics had refined the technique. “These ceramics, fired at around 950 degrees Celsius, became the foundation of Iznik tiles,” he explained. “The earliest examples were blue-and-white and clearly influenced by Chinese designs, as requested by the palace.”

Over time, Iznik developed its own distinctive style, he noted. “But it all began with that cross-cultural inspiration.”

Today, at his workshop in Iznik, Guven continues to study and recreate ceramic works from 13 historical periods, using traditional materials, original techniques and age-old motifs. He is also committed to passing on his skills to younger generations, believing that preserving this heritage not only honors the past, but also helps shape the future.

Music mogul faces possible life sentence

Jury to begin deliberating in Combs’ sex trafficking trial

NEW YORK, June 30, (AP): Jurors are set to start deliberating Monday in Sean “Diddy” Combs’ sex trafficking case, weighing charges that could put the hip-hop mogul in prison for life.

After receiving legal instructions from federal Judge Arun Subramanian, the jury of eight men and four women will head behind closed doors to deliberate. They’ll sift through seven weeks of sometimes graphic and emotional testimony about the rap, fashion and reality TV impresario’s propensity for violence and his sexual predilections.

Combs, 55, has pleaded not guilty to federal charges of racketeering conspiracy, two counts of sex trafficking involving two of his ex-girlfriends, and two counts of transportation for illicit activities related to arranging to fly workers across state lines.

In closing arguments last week, federal prosecutors and Combs’ defense team took their last

shots at convincing jurors to convict or acquit the Grammy Award-winning founder of Bad Boy Records.

“The defendant used power, violence and fear to get what he wanted,” Assistant US Attorney Christy Slavik said. “He thought that his fame, wealth and power put him above the law.”

Defense lawyer Marc Agnifilo countered, “This isn’t about crime. It’s about money.” He noted that one of Combs’ accusers in the criminal case also sued him in civil court.

In all, 34 witnesses testified, headlined by Combs’ former girlfriends Cassie - the R&B

singer born Casandra Ventura - and “Jane,” who testified under a pseudonym. Both women stated that he was often violent toward them and compelled them to participate in numerous encounters with paid male workers.

Jurors also saw now-infamous security camera video of Combs beating, kicking and dragging Cassie at a Los Angeles hotel in 2016 and clips from videos of private encounters.

Combs chose not to testify, and his lawyers didn’t call any witnesses in their defense case. His attorneys elected instead to challenge the accusers’ credibility during lengthy cross-examination questioning.

The defense has acknowledged that Combs veered into violence, but his lawyers maintain that the intimate acts were consensual. They contend that prosecutors are intruding in Combs’ personal life and that he’s done nothing to warrant the charges against him.



Combs

Fashion



Beyoncé, (center), attends the men’s Louis Vuitton Spring-Summer 2026 collection, that was presented in Paris, Tuesday, June 24. (AP)

Beyoncé and Jay-Z become the main event

Paris crowns celebrity the hottest trend

PARIS, June 30, (AP): If any force dominated the global fashion industry this season - eclipsing fabric, form and even the wildest silhouettes - it was the spectacle of celebrity.

In a year marked by global anxiety and a hunger for fantasy, star power flooded Paris Fashion Week, turning runways into gladiator arenas where A-list icons, K-pop idols and digital megastars became the main event.

Beyoncé and Jay-Z didn’t just attend Louis Vuitton’s blockbuster show - they became the show.

As they swept into the Pompidou Center, cameras flashed and phones shot skyward. Before the first look even hit the runway, images of the couple ricocheted across the globe. K-pop idols like J-Hope and Jackson Wang livestreamed their arrival to millions, while crowds outside flooded social feeds with every glimpse of a star.

As the industry’s spring season wraps up Sunday, it’s clear: Fashion’s global audience is focused less on what’s worn and more on who’s wearing it.

This interplay between celebrity and fashion is hardly new, but in 2025, the desire for escapism and star-driven spectacle is peaking like never before.

“It’s about celebrity clickbait, and it’s at a tipping point now. Celebrities have replaced the designers and stylists as the tastemakers,” said Anna Barr, a fashion magazine editor who attended shows.

Beyoncé’s appearance this week encapsulated a truth that every major brand - from Louis Vuitton to Dior, Hermès to Saint Laurent - now understands: The real front row isn’t in Paris, but on Instagram, TikTok and Weibo. And nothing sells quite like a star.

The pop star’s head-to-toe denim - custom Louis Vuitton by Pharrell Williams - wasn’t just viral.

Within 24 hours, clips of her arrival amassed millions of views on TikTok, outpacing even Louis Vuitton’s own campaign content. When Williams presented her with a Speedy bag straight from the runway in the Paris dusk, the moment went viral - underlining that Beyoncé isn’t just an attendee, but a face of Louis Vuitton’s creative

vision.

But even as Beyoncé’s look became the week’s most shared image, her presence in Paris also sparked debate: a Buffalo Soldiers T-shirt she wore during her “Cowboy Carter” tour ignited criticism from some Indigenous and Mexican communities, reminding the industry that every viral moment can be a flash point.

This is the new dynamic of luxury: The most coveted runway seat is now in your hand, and what matters most isn’t just what you see, but who you see wearing it.

What once was a private preview for buyers and editors is now a worldwide entertainment event.

Designers don’t just stage shows - they produce spectacles. Williams, Louis Vuitton’s showman-in-chief, turned his runway into a snakes-and-ladders fantasy with a guest list to match: Beyoncé, Jay-Z, K-pop royalty J-Hope and Jackson Wang, reggaeton star Karol G, and Hollywood names like Bradley Cooper and Mason Thames.

Newsworthy

Each arrival triggered waves of posts and stories - making the crowd as newsworthy as the collection itself.

The modern runway has become a stage for celebrity, where the applause is measured in views and viral moments, and the line between performer and spectator disappears.

No other force is shifting menswear trends faster than K-pop. This season, stars like J-Hope, Jackson Wang, GOT7’s Bambam, and NCT’s Yuta were everywhere, livestreaming shows and igniting fashion frenzies from Seoul to Sao Paulo.

These idols are both tastemakers and trend translators, instantly transmitting what they see in Paris to millions of fans. Their attendance has become a commercial event in itself, driving the adoption of new styles on a global scale.

Even the clothes themselves now chase celebrity.

Beyoncé’s “ Cowboy Carter ” moment and Louis Vuitton’s nod to Western style sent cowboy hats, flared denim, and rhinestone shirts trending worldwide. Brands scramble to turn these viral moments into wearable trends - knowing that

what Queen Bey wears in Paris will be copied in malls and on apps within weeks.

“We make fashion, but we’re a house of travel,” Williams told reporters. In truth, it’s the celebrity’s journey through fashion that matters most.

The old fashion cycle is gone. It’s been said before. Where trends once took months to trickle down, now a celebrity-worn look can reach the high street soon after the show lights dim.

TikTok and fast fashion brands move at the speed of the repost. At Hermès, even the discreet luxury of woven leather ties and wide trousers took on new meaning as athletes and music stars documented their attendance. Their posts quickly turn exclusive details into mass-market “must-haves.”

Shein and Temu, the global fast-fashion juggernauts, have weaponized the viral moment - turning celebrity sightings into shoppable trends worldwide, sometimes in a matter of hours. The result: What debuts on the Paris catwalk can show up in online shopping carts from Atlanta to Addis Ababa almost instantly.

Beneath the celebrity glow, classic trends endure. Streetwear is still king, with oversized silhouettes, soft tailoring and activewear influences everywhere from Dior to Dolce & Gabbana.

The Hermès “cool city guy” and Dolce’s pajama dressing - rumpled but rich - are direct answers to how men want to live and move now. But even these trends go mainstream through star power, not just design. The models might debut the look, but it’s the front-row faces who make it stick.

The celebrity ascendancy isn’t just a front-row phenomenon - it’s woven into the industry itself. When LVMH’s Bernard Arnault tapped Williams, a global pop icon, to lead Louis Vuitton menswear in 2023, it wasn’t just a creative risk. It was a declaration that celebrity now runs the show.

All this spectacle reflects a bigger shift. Fashion isn’t just about what’s in - it’s about who’s in the room, and who’s watching. At Armani in Milan, at Saint Laurent in Paris, at every show, a galaxy of K-pop, Hollywood, and music stars now drive the narrative.

Okonkwo’s debut novel blends humor, heart

‘The Tiny Things’ reflects on youth, migration

NEW YORK, June 30, (AP): “The Tiny Things Are Heavier,” by author Esther Ifesinachi Okonkwo, is a reflection on young adulthood, migration, cultural misunderstanding and family relationships.

Okonkwo’s debut novel is at turns amusing and heartbreaking as it follows Tommy, a Nigerian graduate student trying to navigate her new life in Iowa. Lonesome and homesick, Tommy tries to fit in as she studies for her master’s degree, eventually befriendng several other women in their 20s and engaging in a complicated relationship with her gregarious Nigerian roommate, Bayo.

Through it all, Tommy is haunted by guilt over her brother Mezie’s attempted suicide just two weeks before she left her homeland for the United States. She’s also frustrated that Mezie answers her frequent phone calls and text messages with silence, leaving her to wonder what he’s thinking and where their relationship stands.

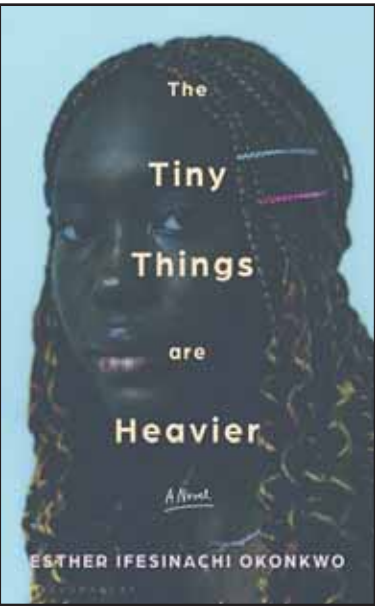
Okonkwo astutely captures the awkwardness and insecurities of a young woman from any country or culture starting an independent life as an adult. She also shows how relationships with family members can change when young people reach adulthood and head out on their own.

While still involved with Bayo, Tommy falls for Bryan, who was born to a white mother and a Nigerian father he never knew. After Tommy carries out her deceit for some time, Bayo eventually learns that his roommate is now with someone else and leaves deeply hurt.

Bryan and Tommy form a serious relationship and make plans to visit Nigeria so he can track down his father.

When they finally make the trip, Bryan’s quest to finally know his dad turns out to be highly disappointing. Tommy has some luck connecting with her brother, but she sees him with different eyes now that she’s an adult.

An unexpected tragedy during the Nigeria visit suddenly changes everyone’s future forever.



This cover image released by Bloomsbury shows ‘The Tiny Things Are Heavier’ by Esther Ifesinachi Okonkwo. (AP)

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WHO confirms cholera outbreak across all regions in Sudan

Israeli blockade severely limits Gaza medical evacuations

GENEVA, June 30, (KUNA): Director-General of the World Health Organization (WHO) Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus has confirmed that intensified Israeli restrictions on Gaza since March 18 caused a sharp drop in medical evacuations, with only 294 patients evacuated despite over 10,000 urgently needing care.

Speaking at a press conference in Geneva Ghebreyesus warned of a “near-total collapse of the health system in the Gaza Strip” with no hospitals currently operating in the north of Gaza or in Rafah and only 17 out of 36 hospitals partially functional across the Strip.

“The situation in Gaza is beyond catastrophic,” stressing severe shortages of fuel water and medical supplies and highlighting the growing pressure on hospitals in Gaza.

“In the past two weeks alone 500 people were killed while trying to access food at non-UN distribution points leading to a surge in injuries



A Palestinian wounded while returning from one of the Gaza Humanitarian Foundation distribution centers operated by the U.S.-backed organization, according to Nasser Hospital, are treated in Khan Younis, Monday, June 30, 2025. (AP)

that is overwhelming Gaza’s remaining hospitals” he added.

Ghebreyesus further stressed that everyone in Gaza is going hungry

worsening their vulnerability to disease reporting that since the beginning of the year an average of 112 children per day have been admitted for treatment of acute malnutrition.

He also reported that the WHO had recently retrieved fuel supplies from its warehouses helping support some hospitals adding that earlier this week WHO managed to deliver medical supplies into Gaza for the first time since March 2.

Ghebreyesus has also welcomed the ceasefire agreement between Israeli occupation and Iran expressing hope it would hold, noting that Iran had recorded over 600 deaths and 5,000 injuries between June 13 and 25.

□ □ □

The Director-General of the World Health Organization (WHO) Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus warned on Friday of the severe deterioration of the health situation in Sudan announcing that cholera has

now spread to all but one state of the country with a worrying spike in cases reported in Khartoum State.

Speaking at a press conference in Geneva Ghebreyesus said, “Health facilities are either out of service or only providing limited care and diseases are spreading fast,” stressing “the ongoing civil war means people are dying from a lack of access to health services and medicines.”

He further noted, “Ongoing fighting has displaced more people than any other crisis in the world,” emphasizing that this situation is further weakening the already fragile health system and hampering the emergency response to disease outbreaks.

Ghebreyesus announced that the Sudanese Ministry of Health, with support from WHO recently completed a 10-day cholera vaccination campaign targeting more than two million people in Khartoum and said “we’re already seeing signs of im-

provement.”

He confirmed that WHO and its partners are “stepping up the response in other states and exploring options to strengthen the response in the inaccessible states of Darfur and Kordofan through delivery of critical cholera supplies vaccines and medicines.”

WHO chief also highlighted the dangers faced by healthcare workers and facilities pointing out that “just last week Ben Mujila Hospital in West Kordofan was attacked and 40 civilians including children and health workers were killed” which he said reflects “the magnitude of the risks faced by health infrastructure and humanitarian personnel.”

Ghebreyesus reiterated his call for the “protection of health workers and ensuring access to conflict-affected areas in Sudan” stressing the urgent need for “immediate funding and humanitarian access to guarantee health care delivery.”



A nurse prepares a flu shot from a vaccine vial at the Salvation Army in Atlanta, Feb. 7, 2018. (AP)

Vaccine preservative

Thimerosal in flu shots: CDC finds no health risk

NEW YORK, June 30, (AP): The Trump administration’s vaccine advisers are bringing up an old flu-shot debate: whether it’s time to wipe out the last small fraction of those vaccines that contain a controversial preservative called thimerosal.

It’s a question seemingly laid to rest years ago, as studies showed no evidence that the preservative causes any health problems.

“This is really a nonissue,” said Dr. Sean O’Leary of the American Academy of Pediatrics.

Here are some things to know about the substance.

Thimerosal is a preservative used in certain vaccines since the 1930s, as well as in some other medical products.

It was mostly used in multi-dose vials of vaccine, to prevent bacterial contamination as the vessel was repeatedly punctured to withdraw a dose.

Questions about thimerosal were raised in the late 1990s because it contains a form of mercury.

It’s not the same as the toxic type found in some seafood, called methylmercury. Instead, it’s a different type called ethylmercury that the body can excrete, O’Leary explained.

The amount of ethylmercury per vaccine dose was small and studies found no evidence of harm. Nor was it used in all vaccines. For example, vaccines for chickenpox, polio and measles, mumps and rubella never contained it, according to the Centers for Disease Control

and Prevention.

But as a precaution, the U.S. phased the preservative out of childhood vaccines. Since 2001, all vaccines routinely recommended for children age 6 and younger in the U.S. come in formulas that don’t contain thimerosal.

The exception is a small subset of flu shot formulas in multi-dose vials that could be used for adults or kids. The vast majority of children, however, get their flu vaccination from a single-dose shot instead, O’Leary said.

According to the CDC, 96% of all flu vaccines in the U.S. administered last fall and winter - and an even higher share of those used in federally funded programs - were thimerosal-free.

U.S. Health Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. is a longtime antivaccine activist, and he has long contended there was a tie between thimerosal and autism.

On Thursday, his newly appointed vaccine advisers were set to hear a presentation from Lyn Redwood, a nurse practitioner who once ran the antivaccine group that Kennedy founded.

She will suggest that the remaining thimerosal-containing flu shots should be removed, according to meeting materials posted earlier this week. Among the claims were that they could be a risk to pregnant women.

A new CDC staff analysis prepared for the meeting again showed no link between the preservative and autism or any other neurodevelopmental disorders.

From cancer to courage, one paddle at a time

Canoeing helps cancer survivors heal in Brazil

RIO DE JANEIRO, June 30, (AP): When breast cancer turned her life upside down, Anna Lucia Amorim, a 63-year-old Brazilian from Rio de Janeiro state, fell into a deep depression sometimes struggling to get out of bed.

But everything changed, she said, after she started practicing Va’a canoeing in Niteroi, a city facing Rio across Guanabara Bay, with other women who have battled cancer or were undergoing treatment.

“Every time you put the paddle in the water, it’s like a new life,” she told The Associated Press on Thursday. “When you are there, you forget everything. You only see the sea and the sky.”

Amorim is part of Va’a Roses, a group of cancer patients and survivors between the ages of 52 and 70 who partake in local and national competitions of Va’a canoeing.

Originating in the Pacific region, Va’a canoes - which traditionally have outriggers and can be single or double-hull - are now popular worldwide.

In Niteroi, the Va’a Roses train twice weekly just after 7 a.m., departing from the sheltered Charitas Beach surrounded by harbors and sloping mountains, from which one can spot the famed Christ the Redeemer statue.



The Rosas Va’a Hawaiian canoeing team, whose members are women who have undergone cancer treatment, train near Charitas Beach in Niteroi, Rio de Janeiro state, Thursday, June 26. (AP)

Guanabara Bay has a reputation for being polluted by garbage and sewage, but members of the Va’a Roses say they regularly see turtles, rays and other fish - even dolphins.

“You wouldn’t think that Guanabara Bay has so much life,” said Flavia Bichara, a 52-year-old lawyer who is currently undergoing chemotherapy for lung cancer.

She said the hope of spotting a

turtle and watching the sun rise gives her ample motivation to get out of bed early. “The sunrise, for us, symbolizes coming back to life,” she said.

Polynesian canoeing and water sports in general have become increasingly popular in Niteroi over the last few years, said Isabel Swan, the municipality’s deputy mayor who has an Olympic bronze medal in sailing. The number of Polynesian canoeing clubs in the area has jumped from five to around 40 in the last decade.

“This boom occurred during the Covid-19 pandemic, because people can practice water sports while complying with social distancing rules,” she said.

In August, Niteroi will host the Va’a long distance world championship in which around a thousand athletes from 30 countries will compete. And alongside Rio, the city is a candidate to host the 2031 Pan American Games.

Estella Tourl, 68, was diagnosed with breast cancer four years ago. As well as the stunning setting, she says she loves the social aspect of the activity.

“We’re in nature, we exercise and we talk. Afterward everyone sits together, we have coffee and laugh. It’s stimulating - we want to live,” Tourl said.

Dad’s age may affect child’s growth

Paternal age linked to IVF miscarriage risk: study

PARIS, June 30, (AP): By isolating paternal age from female reproductive factors through the exclusive use of donor eggs from young women, the study provides robust evidence that male age plays a critical role in reproductive success, challenging the common assumption that sperm age has little impact once fertilisation occurs.

The retrospective study analysed 1,712 first oocyte donation cycles conducted between 2019 and 2023 across six IVF centres in Italy and Spain. All cycles used fresh donor oocytes and frozen sperm from male partners, with only the first single blastocyst transfer included. Female recipients had a mean age of 43.3 years.

Participants were divided into two groups: men

aged 45 or younger (n=1,066) and those over 45 (n=646). While fertilisation rates and embryo development were comparable between groups, significant differences emerged in clinical outcomes.

Miscarriage rates were notably higher among couples where the male partner was over 45, reaching 23.8% compared to 16.3% in the younger paternal age group. Similarly, live birth rates were significantly lower in the older paternal age group, at 35.1% versus 41% for men aged 45 or younger.

Discussing the findings, Dr. Maria Cristina Guglielmo, Embryologist at Eugin Italy, said, “Traditionally, maternal age has been the central focus in reproductive medicine, but our results

show that the age of the male partner also plays a crucial and independent role. Even when using eggs from young, healthy donors and transferring only a single, high-quality embryo, we observed poorer outcomes in men over 45.”

She also emphasised the importance of examining how paternal age affects the health of offspring. “There is growing evidence linking advanced paternal age to an increased risk of neurodevelopment disorders in children. Our future work will investigate the long-term health and developmental outcomes of children conceived through donor egg cycles with older fathers, where maternal factors are minimised, to isolate paternal effects more clearly.”

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Potgieter outlasts Greyserman for Rocket Classic title



Aldrich Potgieter, of South Africa poses with the trophy after winning a playoff during the final round of the Rocket Classic golf tournament at the Detroit Golf Club in Detroit. (AP)

McBride hits milestone as Lynx routs Sun

Hayes scores 21 points as Valkyries run away from Storm for big victory

SAN FRANCISCO, June 30, (AP): Tiffany Hayes scored 21 points, Veronica Burton contributed 15 points, five rebounds and five assists, and the Golden State Valkyries ran away from the Seattle Storm for a 84-57 victory.

Valkyries leading scorer Kayla Thornton headed to the locker room at the 9:22 mark of the third quarter appearing to hold her neck, and the team said she was undergoing further evaluation without providing details of the injury. She shot 1 for 9 and missed all five of her 3-point tries, held to two points while grabbing five rebounds. Her teammates picked up the slack - on both ends of the floor.

Skylar Diggins had 18 points, six assists and five rebounds for Seattle, which came in leading the league in field-goal percentage at 47.0% but was limited to a season-low 27% (20 for 74) by the stingy Golden State defense. The Storm had only been held below 40% once, shooting 33.3% in the season opener at Phoenix on May 17.

Laeticia Amihere added 15 points and eight rebounds as the Valkyries jumped out to a quick 7-0 lead before Nneka Ogumike's shot at the 6:58 mark and made five of their first eight shots for a 13-4 advantage.

Ogumike, who starred at nearby Stanford, finished with eight points on 3-of-10 shooting and seven rebounds. The Storm had won four of five.

Lynx 102, Sun 63

In Minneapolis, Napheesa Collier scored 23 points, Kayla McBride added 20 and the Minnesota Lynx



Golden State Valkyries' Kayla Thornton, center, drives to the basket in the first half of a WNBA basketball game against the Seattle Storm in San Francisco.(AP)

rolled to a win over Connecticut , the Sun's ninth straight loss.

Ahead by 10 after one quarter, the Lynx scored the first 21 points of the second to lead 50-26 at halftime. Collier had 15 points in the third quarter, when Minnesota outscored the Sun 27-15.

Courtney Williams had 12 points, nine rebounds, seven assists and two steals for the Lynx (14-2), who are 8-0 at home, Minnesota had 11 of 12 players score on the way to a season-high total. Only Karlie Samuelson, who sustained an ankle injury after playing three minutes in the first half, did not score.

McBride had five 3-pointers, one more than the Sun, to give her 653 for her career. That moved her past Kristi Tolliver for seventh in league history.

Aces 84, Mercury 81

In Phoenix, A'ja Wilson made the go-ahead basket with 22 seconds left and finished with 26 points, 18 rebounds and seven assists as the Las Vegas Aces beat Phoenix , ending the Mercury's six-game winning streak.

Wilson made a difficult layup on a feed from Chelsea Gray to make it 83-81 after Jackie Young snared an offensive rebound for the Aces. Aaliyah Nye made a free throw with 7.1 seconds left before the Mercury failed to get a good look on a third straight possession in the final minute.

Sky 92, Sparks 85

In Los Angeles, Angel Reese scored a season-high 24 points and became the first WNBA player with 15 or more rebounds in four straight

games, finishing with 16 boards and leading the Chicago Sky to a victory over the Los Angeles Sparks, who retired Candace Parker's No. 3 jersey at halftime.

Reese had 11 points in the fourth quarter and gave the Sky an 85-74 lead on a three-point play with 2 1/2 minutes to go. She had 19, 17 and 18 rebounds in her previous three games. She also had seven assists and two blocks on Sunday.

Parker, a two-time MVP and Chicago native, played 13 seasons for the Sparks, two for the Sky and one for the Las Vegas Aces. She won titles with the Sparks in 2016, the Sky in 2021 and the Aces in 2023, her final season. The Sky will also retire her jersey later this summer.

Dream 90, Liberty 81

In College Park, Brianna Jones tied a season high with 21 points, Allisha Gray had 20 points, nine rebounds and six assists, and the Atlanta Dream beat the New York Liberty.

Jordin Canada had 15 points and eight assists, Brittney Griner scored 13 points and Naz Hillmon had 10 for Atlanta (11-6). Rhyné Howard was hit hard in the second half and did not return due to an upper body injury. She finished with five points in 24 minutes.

Breanna Stewart had 21 points and nine rebounds, and Natasha Cloud scored 20 points for New York (11-5), which has lost four of its last five games. Sabrina Ionescu added 14 points on 5-of-15 shooting.

Atlanta held a double-digit lead the entire third quarter and for most of the fourth until Marine Johannes capped the scoring with 1:05 left on a 3-pointer.

Harrington wins another Senior Open

DETROIT, June 30, (AP): Aldrich Potgieter made an 18-foot birdie putt on the fifth playoff hole, outlasting Max Greyserman to win the Rocket Classic on Sunday for his first PGA Tour title.

The 20-year-old from South Africa is the youngest player on the tour and its biggest hitter. He became the ninth player to win for the first time this season.

Chris Kirk, who closed with a 5-under 67, missed a 9-foot putt for the win on the first playoff hole and was eliminated on the second extra hole when he missed a 4-foot par putt.

Greyserman missed a 12-foot birdie putt on the 18th hole in regulation, missing his chance to win and closing with a 67. Potgieter, who started with a two-shot lead, shot 69 to join Kirk at 22-under 266.

Michael Thorbjornsen (67) and Jake Knapp (68) finished a stroke out of the playoff.

Padraig Harrington came out on top of a major championship that felt more like match play, closing his round with seven straight pars at the U.S. Senior Open for a 3-under 67 to beat Stewart Cink by one shot.

Playing alongside Cink for the fourth straight day, Harrington finished at 11-under 269 on the tricky, heavily sloping Broadmoor. The Irishman sealed this match by hitting his approach to 8 feet on No. 18, putting pressure on Cink, who trailed by one but sat 30 yards in front of him on the fairway.

Cink's approach landed on the precipice of a ledge, but spun back to 35 feet away to set up a two-putt. Harrington took two putts for the win, his second U.S. Senior Open title in four years that gets him in the U.S. Open next year at Shinnecock Hills.

Patrick Reed lost the lead with a 3-over 75 and then atoned for it by making a 15-foot birdie putt on the first hole of a four-man playoff to win LIV Golf Dallas, his first title since joining the Saudi-funded league in 2022.

Reed, who started the final round with a three-shot lead, fell behind late in the day at Maridoe Golf Club until Jinichiro Kozuma made bogey on the 18th hole and then made par on his final hole at No. 1 for a 68. That got him into a playoff with Reed, Louis Oosthuizen (68) and Paul Casey (72).

On the first extra hole, Oosthuizen drove into the water and Casey took four shots to reach the green on the par-4 18th. Kozuma missed his 25-foot birdie try, setting the stage for Reed.

Jon Rahm finished out of the top 10 for the first time in LIV, while Sergio Garcia claimed the one LIV spot for the British Open.

Somi Lee poured in an 8-foot birdie putt on the first playoff hole to team with fellow South Korean Jin Hee Im to win the Dow Championship, denying Lexi Thompson her first LPGA title in six years.

Thompson's partner, Megan Khang, had a chance to extend the playoff, but she missed a 5-foot birdie putt that was on the low side of the hole from the start.

The final round was fourballs, but switched to foursomes for the playoff.

Thompson made an 8-foot birdie putt on the par-3 18th hole for the American duo to finish with a 10-under 60 in fourballs. They were the



Padraig Harrington waves his hat to the crowd after winning the U.S. Senior Open golf championship at the Broadmoor Golf Club in Colorado Springs, Colo. (AP)

first to post at 20-under 260. Lee made a 10-foot birdie putt to tie for the lead on the 17th. They shot 62.

Adrien Saddier claimed his first European tour title in his 200th start with a back-nine charge in the Italian Open, closing with a 4-under 66 for a two-shot victory over Martin Couvra.

Couvra, the 54-hole leader, closed with a 69 and appeared headed for victory until Saddier had five birdies over the final seven holes at the Argentario Golf Club on the Tuscan coast.

Saddier and Couvra earned places in the British Open field at Royal Portrush in Northern Ireland next month.

Calum Hill of Scotland and Dan Bradbury of England finished tied for third, four strokes behind.

Austin Smotherman holed out for eagle to take the lead for the first time and closed with an 8-under 63 for a one-shot victory over Alvaro Ortiz in the Memorial Health Championship.

It was the second Korn Ferry Tour victory this year for Smotherman, who moved to No. 1 on the points list and is virtually certain of returning to the PGA Tour next year.

Ortiz began had a four-shot lead going into the final round and his lead was down to one when he bogeyed the 11th hole. Smotherman followed by holing out for eagle on the 408-yard 12th hole. Both player made birdie on the par 5s coming in and Smotherman held on for the win.

Sandy Scott shot 60, with pars on the last two holes, to tie for third.

Jillian Hollis rallied from a three-shot deficit with a 4-under 68 and a one-shot victory over Kelli Ann Strand in the Otter Creek Championship on the Epson Tour.

Tatsunori Shogenji closed with a 6-under 65 for a one-shot victory over Ryuichi Oiwa (62) in the Japan Players Championship, his second Japan Golf Tour victory this year.

Shannon Tan of Singapore captured her second Ladies European Tour title with a 5-under 68 and a one-shot victory over Helen Briem of Germany in the Amundi German Masters.

David Horsey birdied the final hole for a 3-under 69, and then made birdie again to win a four-man playoff against James Allan, Joseba Torres and Daniel Young in Le Valudreuil Golf Challenge in France.

Shuri Sakuma closed with a 2-under 70 and won the Earth Mondahmin Cup by one shot over Nana Suganuma on the Japan LPGA.

Jiu Ko closed with a 5-under 67 to hold off Hyungjo Yoo (62) for a two-shot victory in the McCol-Mona Youngpyong Open on the Korea LPGA.

James to return for 23rd season after exercising \$52.6 mln option

LOS ANGELES, June 30, (AP): LeBron James is exercising his \$52.6 million option with the Los Angeles Lakers for 2025-26, further confirming that he will become the first player in NBA history to play a 23rd season, a person with knowledge of the decision said.

The person spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity because neither James nor the team announced the decision publicly.

ESPN and The Athletic were among those to first report the decision.

James, who recently returned to on-court workouts after taking several weeks to recover after spraining a knee ligament in the Lakers' final game of this past season's playoffs, told the AP earlier this month that he expected to be ready for training camp. That was an obvious sign he planned on returning for a 23rd year, one in which he'll break a tie with Vince Carter for longest NBA career by a player.

"I have a lot of time to take care of my injury, my knee, the rest of my body and make sure I'm as close to 100% as possible when training camp begins in late September," James said in that interview.

If any doubt existed even after that about James, the NBA's oldest current player, coming back for at least one more season, it's gone now. He had until Sunday afternoon to make his decision on the option, one that pushes his career on-court earnings to about \$580 million.

This coming season will be his first full year with Luka Doncic as a



In this file photo, Los Angeles Lakers forward LeBron James appears during the first half of an NBA basketball game against the Utah Jazz in Los Angeles. (AP)

teammate. Doncic was traded to the Lakers from Dallas in February, but the team - which entered the post-season as the No. 3 seed in a loaded Western Conference - still fell in Round 1 to Minnesota.

James turns 41 in December. He's been an All-NBA pick in 21 of his 22 seasons in the league, including a second-round nod this past season. No other player has more than 15 All-NBA selections.

He averaged 24.4 points, 7.8 rebounds and 8.2 assists this past season. The NBA's all-time scoring leader has appeared in 1,562 regular-season games, 49 behind Robert Parish's mark of 1,611 - the most in league history. If healthy, James would obviously figure to break that mark this coming season.

Palace must wait again for UEFA ruling on ownership ties

Kang takes over as president of Lyon as Textor resigns

PARIS, June 30, (AP): American businesswoman Michele Kang has taken over as president of seven-time French champion Lyon after John Textor resigned following the club's relegation over financial irregularities.

The South Korea-born Kang is also majority owner of the Lyon's women's team - OL Lyonnes - and has been on Lyon's board of directors since 2023.

Lyon said in a statement that Kang will play an "active role" in leading the club's appeal against the relegation handed down last Tuesday by the French league's soccer watchdog, known as DNCG. The case is expected to be heard within the next week.

That ruling could also decide whether Crystal Palace will be allowed to play in next season's Europa League, which Lyon also qualified for. Textor also held a 43% stake in Palace - which he has agreed to sell to New York



In this file photo, American businesswoman Michele Kang, owner of Olympique Lyonnais, on the tribune to watch the women's Champions League semifinals, first leg, soccer match between Arsenal FC and Olympique Lyonnais at the Arsenal Stadium, in London. (AP)

Jets owner Woody Johnson - and UEFA has rules against clubs with the same owner playing the same competition.

Lyon added that Textor has also resigned from the board of directors. He became Lyon president three years ago, taking over from longstanding incumbent Jean-Michel Aulas, who sold to Textor's Eagle Football Holdings.

The 66-year-old Kang will be supported in her role by Michael Gerlinger, the general manager of Eagle Football Holdings.

"A highly respected figure in European football administration, Michael brings over two decades of experience in governance, regulatory affairs and sports operations," Lyon said in its statement.

Lyon's run of Ligue 1 titles from 2001-08 made it the powerhouse of French soccer. Since Paris Saint-Germain took over at the top, fortunes have steadily dipped for Lyon.

The decision to relegate the club followed an audit of its finances by the DNCG, with Lyon's current debt estimated at 175 million euros (\$203 million).

The DNCG had already provisionally relegated Lyon to Ligue 2 in November, with the club reporting at the time that it had more than 500 million euros (\$581 million) of debt. A transfer ban was also imposed in the January transfer window.

Crystal Palace's participation in the Europa League next season is still uncertain after UEFA on Monday delayed a ruling on the FA Cup winner's ownership links to French club Lyon through American businessman John Textor.

Both clubs qualified for the Europa League on merit - the first time Palace has earned a spot in a European competition - but appear to have broken UEFA rules on multi-club ownership. UEFA has the power to remove teams that have the same owners or investors with decision-making influence.

Textor owns Lyon and held a 43% stake in Palace, which he has agreed to sell to New York Jets owner Woody Johnson. However, he appeared to have limited authority on decisions at the London club.

A complex case for UEFA could be settled in Palace's favor if Lyon's forced relegation from Ligue 1 due its persistent financial turmoil is confirmed.

Lyon, which placed sixth in the league this season, is set to have its appeal in that case heard within the next week.

UEFA said Lyon previously "agreed on an exclusion from the 2025-26 UEFA club competitions should the French authority (DNCG) confirm the club's relegation to Ligue 2."

Academy leaders call for support

Soccer academies in Kuwait grow as key hubs for youth talent and growth

By Hamad Al-Shemmeri

KUWAIT CITY, June 30 (KUNA): Soccer academies in Kuwait have emerged as a year-round destination for children and youth, offering both physical and mental development opportunities.

These academies not only enhance athletic skills but also teach essential values such as teamwork, sportsmanship, resilience in the face of defeat, friendship, and confidence, benefiting children's growth from as early as age four.

With limited vacancies in local clubs, many aspiring Footballers across age groups are turning to academies as viable alternatives. Although academies provide training comparable to clubs, families bear the cost of enrollment, and sessions are typically limited to a maximum of three days per week.

In a statement for KUNA, academy owner Mohammad Saleh said he established his licensed academy in 2019 after completing the necessary government procedures.

He emphasized the challenge posed by unlicensed academies, which often offer low-cost subscriptions with minimal training value and little adherence to the principles of sports.

Saleh noted that his academy has successfully graduated several players who have gone on to join Kuwait's national youth team. He stressed the importance of recruiting qualified coaches, as they are pivotal to any academy's success. His coaching staff is selected based on stringent criteria to ensure the delivery of high-quality training in Football fundamentals and ethics.

He pointed out that one of the persistent challenges facing academy opera-

tors is the shortage of suitable training grounds, with demand often exceeding availability. Ensuring player safety is also paramount, and all academies should be equipped with first aid materials to handle emergencies.

Regarding Kuwait's summer heat, Saleh noted that training sessions begin after sunset to avoid extreme temperatures, making it more comfortable for players. He added that summer months see increased enrollment due to the suspension of club activities, as families seek to keep their children physically active and productively engaged.

In a similar statement for KUNA, academy coach Yousef Khajah highlighted the importance of early Football education, whereas young ages are ideal for skill development.

Specialized coaches, he said, are better equipped to guide and improve young players, and the academy often invites well-known Kuwaiti Footballers to serve as role models and sources of inspiration.

Khajah added that his primary goal is to instill teamwork, mutual support, and sportsmanship in players, along with basic Football skills. He noted that keeping children active in such programs is far more beneficial than prolonged exposure to electronic games, which contribute to tiredness and distraction.

On his part, academy player Saleh Mohammad told KUNA that he has been part of the academy since its founding in 2019. Now a key player in the national youth team, he credited the academy with developing his talent and supporting his psychological well-being. He noted that several of his teammates also came through similar academies, highlighting their role in preparing national-level players.

He added that summer training at the academy helps him stay fit during the off-season, allowing him to resume club and national duties at peak physical readiness. He urged his peers to use their free time in summer constructively by engaging in sports activities.

On the other hand, academy owner Abdullah Abdulhassan told KUNA that his facility employs an experienced team of professional coaches, particularly from Spain, due to their advanced training techniques and tactical knowledge.

He emphasized the importance of inclusive age policies, accepting players aged four and above without an upper age limit to ensure that older participants can also benefit from physical activity.

Abdulhassan said working in the academy sector is rewarding, especially when a player advances to a professional club or national team, which motivates continued dedication. He underscored the importance of fostering self-confidence, friendships, and holistic development in young athletes, shaping them as individuals, not just players.

He acknowledged the financial burden some families face when enrolling multiple children, but stressed that the long-term benefits to their health, discipline, and personal growth far outweigh the costs as he called for the formation of a promising generation to serve Kuwaiti Football in the future.

He also noted that while local clubs pause activities during summer, many players prefer to remain active. As a result, families increasingly turn to academies to sustain physical fitness. Some academies rent indoor facilities, while others schedule sessions after sunset to avoid daytime heat.

Al-Qadsiya won't seek federation roles to boost player count

I'm ready to step down if Al-Hasawi decides to rejoin, says Sheikh Fahad

KUWAIT CITY, June 30: Sheikh Fahad Talal Al-Fahd, Vice President of Al-Qadsiya Club, confirmed that the club has no intention of running for any sports federation positions solely to increase player representation.

In press statements, Sheikh Fahad voiced his opposition to reducing the number of matches played by Al-Qadsiya, stressing that the club has consistently achieved strong results across the various tournaments in which it competes.

As head of the club's football department, Sheikh Fahad expressed his readiness to step down if Fawaz Al-Hasawi wishes to take over the management of the first team.

Al-Hasawi, speaking on the "Podcast with Mishari" hosted by former Qadsia player Mishari Jassim, revealed that he had been approached by team manager Musaed Neda to return to the club. However, he has yet to make a decision; citing concern that fans may not be patient with the team's rebuilding process, which he estimates will take four years.

Sheikh Fahad also affirmed that the Al-Qadsiya Board of Directors is open to engaging with both Kuwaiti and non-Kuwaiti fans regarding the club's future. He welcomed the new govern-



Sheikh Fahad Talal

ment registration system via the Sahel app, calling it a positive step forward. He further emphasized that the recent increase in General Assembly registration fees helps prevent mass sign-ups, noting that the current assembly includes 7,000 members: "I cannot manage such a large number alone," he said.

Kuwait Table Tennis opens door for a limited professional participation

KUWAIT CITY, June 30: The Board of Directors of the Kuwait Table Tennis Association, led by Chairman Falhan Al-Otaibi, has approved a series of amendments to its competition regulations, set to take effect starting from the next sports season.

Among the most notable changes is the introduction of a doubles tournament across all association competitions, along with a restriction allowing only one professional player per team in the Federation Cup for general age categories during the 2025-2026 season.

Chairman Al-Otaibi extended his gratitude to all clubs that supported the proposed technical updates. "These amendments reflect



Falhan Al-Otaibi, Chairman of Kuwait Table Tennis Association.

the Board's responsibility for the future of Kuwaiti table tennis and our commitment to the national teams' long-term development," he said.

"They are the result of a thorough technical and administrative study aimed at expanding the talent pool for future national team selection"

Looking ahead, Al-Otaibi revealed that a new age category (Under-11) will be introduced starting from the 2026-2027 season, allowing clubs ample time to prepare. He added that participation in the Buds and Cubs divisions (Under-11 and Under-13) for the upcoming season will be limited to Kuwaiti and GCC players only, ensuring fair competition and encouraging regional development.

He concluded by wishing all participating clubs success in the coming season.

Guatemala upsets Canada



Canada forward Tani Oluwaseyi, left, and Guatemala defender Aaron Herrera (7) battle for the ball during the second half of a CONCACAF Gold Cup quarterfinals soccer match in Minneapolis. (AP)

US gets past Costa Rica to reach Gold Cup semis

MINNEAPOLIS, June 30, (AP): José Morales sent Guatemala to the semifinals of the CONCACAF Gold Cup with the clincher over Canada in a 6-5 penalty-kick decision after a 1-1 draw.

Rubio Rubin scored the tying goal with a header in the 69th minute for Guatemala, which is 106th in the FIFA rankings and reached the semifinals for the first time since 1996. Guatemala will meet the United States in St. Louis on Wednesday, while Mexico plays Honduras in the other semifinal in Santa Clara, California. The championship is in Houston on July 6.

The seven-round shootout was a fitting end to a fast-paced and feisty contest that went down as one of the best of this biennial tournament for North America, Central America and the Caribbean. The blue-and-white-clad fans of Guatemala flocked to U.S. Bank Stadium and made the announced crowd of 32,289 sound almost like a sold-out NFL game inside the home of the Minnesota Vikings with the translucent roof.

Jonathan David scored on a penalty kick in the 30th minute for 30th-ranked Canada, which won its group with two wins and one draw but had to play the second half with 10 men.



United States players celebrate after winning a penalty kick shootout of a CONCACAF Gold Cup quarterfinals soccer match against Costa Rica in Minneapolis. (AP)

Canada has been bounced from the quarterfinals in four of the last five Gold Cup tournaments.

Canada forward Jacob Shiefelburg was ejected in first-half stoppage time for a second yellow card, after lowering his elbow during a mid-air collision for the ball that knocked Guatemala defender Steven Robles to the ground.

Dayne St. Clair, an MLS All-Star who plays just a few miles away for Minnesota United, made two saves for the Reds in regulation against a consistent if erratic attack as Guatemala had an 11-5 edge in shot attempts and a 58% possession rate.

Damon Downs scored in the sixth round of a shootout after three saves by Matt Freese, sending the U.S. to the semifinals with a 3-2

penalty-kicks win over Costa Rica after 2-2 draw.

The U.S. advanced to a Wednesday matchup in St. Louis against Guatemala, which upset Canada on penalty kicks in the opener of the quarterfinal doubleheader.

Mexico plays Honduras in the other semifinal on Wednesday in Santa Clara, California. The championship is in Houston on July 6.

The U.S. has reached the semifinals in 17 of 18 Gold Cups, including 13 straight since a quarterfinal loss to Colombia on penalty kicks in 2000.

Diego Luna and Max Arfsten scored in regulation for the U.S., which faced its highest-ranked opponent of the tournament in Costa Rica (54th) after breezing through

the group stage with an 8-1 goal differential.

Alonso Martinez scored the tying goal for the Ticos in the 71st minute with a left-footed shot after Carlos Mora split Luca de La Torre and Arsten to take a shot on Freese and seize the rebound to set up Martinez.

CONCACAF changed the rules for this edition of the biennial championship for North America, Central America and the Caribbean, eliminating extra time except for the championship game.

John Tolkin had the first chance to win the shootout for the U.S. Keylor Navas knocked down his try in the fifth round. Freese then denied Andy Rojas with a diving hand, climbing to his feet while nodding his head and sticking out his tongue toward his cheering teammates at mid-field. That set up the winner by the 20-year-old Downs.

Missing the tournament for the U.S. are regulars Christian Pulisic, Yunus Musah, Weston McKennie, Tim Weah, Gio Reyna, Antonee Robinson, Folarin Balogun and Sergio Dest, due to a variety of reasons from injuries to rest to Club World Cup commitments.

The Ticos played without four key players. Forward Manfred Ugaldé, who had three goals in the tournament, and midfielder Carlos Mora were suspended for yellow-card accumulation. Defender Ariel Lassiter (broken left hand) and forward Warren Madrigal (broken left leg) were sidelined by injuries.

Best of the Rest

Spain's problems grow ahead kickoff: Spain's preparations for the forthcoming Women's European Championships have been further complicated by the news that goalkeeper Cata Coll is suffering from tonsillitis.

Coll has to be considered a doubt after missing Monday's first training session in the Spanish training camp in Lausanne, after being diagnosed with the illness that can take up to a week to recover from.

If the FC Barcelona goalkeeper doesn't recover in time to face Portugal in Spain's opening match on July 3, that would present a problem for coach Montse Tome given that with 27 caps, Coll is a fixture for the reigning world champions, while substitutes Adriana Nanclores has just two caps and Ester Sullastres has made just one international appearance.

The news comes three days after it was confirmed that midfielder and two-times Ballon d'Or winner, Aitana Bonmati was taken to hospital suffering from viral meningitis. (Xinhua)

□ □ □

Evans announces retirement: Manchester United defender Jonny Evans announced his retirement from soccer on Monday, ending a playing career that included three Premier League titles.

The 37-year-old Evans will take up a new role at United overseeing loans and player development.

"I want to officially announce my retirement from my playing career, not with sadness, but with pride, gratitude and excitement for the next chapter ahead," he said.

Evans became a free agent at the end of the season following his second spell at United, having graduated through its academy. He also played for West Bromwich Albion and Leicester in a career in which he played 107 times for Northern Ireland. His other major trophies were the FA Cup and two English League Cups. (AP)

□ □ □

Kaderabek returns to Sparta: Veteran defender Pavel Kaderabek is returning to Sparta Prague after 10 years with Hoffenheim in the Bundesliga, the Czech club said on Monday.

Sparta did not give details about his contract.

The 33-year-old right back, who can also play in the midfield, came back to his old club after his deal with Hoffenheim expired.

Kaderabek moved from Sparta to Hoffenheim in 2015 and played a total of 287 games in all competitions for the German club.

In 2022, he retired from the Czech national team due to health reasons after playing 48 internationals.

His signing comes less than a month after Danish coach Brian Priske agreed to return to Sparta on a multiple-year contract after a stint at Feyenoord. (AP)

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NEWS



Carlos Alcaraz of Spain returns to Fabio Fognini of Italy during their first round men's singles match at the Wimbledon Tennis Championships in London. (AP)

Sports

Kuwait to play Egypt in two friendlies as part of U-23 qualifier preparations

By Hassan Mosa

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 30: The Kuwait Olympic soccer team will play two friendly matches against Egypt on July 17 and 20 as part of its overseas training camp, which begins on July 6. The camp is part of the team's preparation for the AFC U-23 Championship qualifiers to be held in Saudi Arabia in January 2026.

The technical staff, led by Croatian head coach Dario Bašić, has requested a third friendly match during the camp, with efforts underway to secure an additional opponent.

Currently, the team continues its training at the auxiliary stadium of Jaber Al-Ahmad International Stadium as it builds fitness and cohesion ahead of the qualifiers.

Kuwait will compete in Group B, alongside Japan, Afghanistan, and Myanmar, with Myanmar hosting the group matches from September 1 to 9, 2025.

According to the qualification sys-



The team holds training session in Kuwait.

tem, the top team in each of the ten groups, along with the five best second-placed teams, will advance to the tournament finals. They will join host nation Saudi Arabia in a 16-team competition divided into four groups.

Following the overseas camp, the Olympic team will begin a second

training phase, during which the squad will be evaluated and the final roster narrowed down for the qualifiers.

The team is scheduled to depart for Myanmar one week before the start of the qualifiers to adapt to the local weather conditions, which differ significantly from those in Kuwait.

By Hassan Mosa

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 30: Kazma Club has officially signed veteran midfielder Sultan Al-Enezi, who will join the team for the upcoming 2024-2025 season. The former Kuwait international returns to club football after parting ways with Omani side Dhofar in January.

Al-Enezi, who previously played for Al-Qadisiya and Al-Arabi, brings valuable experience to the midfield as Kazma continues to rebuild ahead of the new Premier League season starting September 12.

The "Orange" team has already made several moves to strengthen the squad. Kazma secured the services of Olympic team standout Bandar Al-Barazi from Al-Nasr Club, and renewed the contract of defender Bader Dhikrallah after his strong comeback season following a two-year academic absence.

Team renews key contracts

Kazma signs Al-Enezi ahead of new season



Sultan Al-Enezi runs with the ball in this file photo.

Striker Mishaal Al-Shammari, a vital part of Kazma's attack, also extended his stay with the club.

Meanwhile, club captain Hamad Al-Harbi departed to join Al-Arabi. Kazma is undergoing a managerial transition as well, with Croatian coach Dragan Tadić taking over from Bosnian Rosimir Cefko. The club has also bolstered its foreign contingent by signing Jordanians Ali Al-Azaizeh and Yousef Buzjer, while renewing the contracts of Anas Al-Awadat and Nigerian Samson Enekola after their solid performances last season.

As part of the overhaul, the club opted not to renew the contracts of Brazilian Janos Ramalo, Tunisian Montaser Lahtimi, and Nigerian Kinglesi Sokari.

In related transfer news, Fahheel added to its midfield by signing Salman Al-Boos, who recently left Al-Qadisiya. Despite limited appearances last season, Al-Boos has been a regular with the Olympic national team and is expected to play a key role at his new club.

PSG routs Inter Miami to set up blockbuster clash with Bayern



Inter Miami's Lionel Messi controls the ball past Paris Saint-Germain's Joao Neves during the Club World Cup round of 16 soccer match between PSG and Inter Miami in Atlanta. (AP)

Kane and Neves score double

NEW YORK, June 30, (Xinhua): Bayern Munich and Paris Saint-Germain will meet in a tantalizing FIFA Club World Cup quarterfinal after winning their round-of-16 matches.

In Miami, Harry Kane struck twice as Bayern Munich progressed with a 4-2 victory over a spirited Flamengo while Paris Saint-Germain eliminated Lionel Messi's Inter Miami with a 4-0 rout in Atlanta.

Bayern went ahead early at Hard Rock Stadium courtesy of an Erick Pulgar own goal and Kane doubled the lead with a long-range effort after a turnover.

Gerson reduced the deficit by rifling home from 15 yards before Leon Goretzka controlled a defensive clearance with his chest and thumped a 25-yard drive past Agustin Rossi.

The Brazilian side continued to press and Jorginho converted from the penalty spot after a Michael Olise handball just before the hour.

But the Bundesliga champions pulled away again through Kane, who slotted a low shot past Rossi after Kimmich's perfectly weighted pass.

"In the first 20 minutes we were playing well but the intensity of the game was ferocious," Bayern manager Vincent Kompany said.



Bayern Munich's Konrad Laimer, left, battles for the ball with Flamengo's Luiz Arajo during the Club World Cup round of 16 soccer match between CR Flamengo and Bayern Munich in Miami Gardens, Fla. (AP)

"I'm thinking, 'Okay, in this heat, against this opponent, is this going to carry on?' To be fair, we grew into the game and I think it was a good game for the fans. We are really happy to go to the next round." Kompany said his team would prioritize rest before turning its focus to Saturday's clash with PSG in Atlanta.

"The main thing is we have to rest now, recover from this game, use every single day that we've got to rebuild our energy," the former Manchester City defender said.

"What more do you want? Top sides playing each other on the biggest stage. We'll be ready for that." Earlier, Joao Neves scored twice as Paris Saint-

Germain netted four first-half goals en route to a comprehensive win over Inter Miami.

Portugal international Neves opened the scoring for the European champions by meeting a sumptuous free-kick from compatriot Vitinha to head home at the far post. Neves then combined with Fabian Ruiz for an easy tap-in after Sergio Busquets gave the ball away in front of his own box.

Nothing went right for the MLS club and Tomas Aviles inadvertently chested the ball into his own net after Desire Doue's cross from the right flank. Moroccan right-back Achraf Hakimi fired home a

fourth goal after his initial attempt from eight yards rebounded off the bar.

Eight-time Ballon d'Or winner Messi, playing against his former club, did his best to lift Inter Miami in the second half with a series of vintage dribbles and a near-miss with a header. But his team could do little more than limit the damage as PSG showed the gulf in quality between Europe's elite and the MLS.

"It's a great feeling. I think we started the match almost perfectly, controlling play and creating a lot of chances," PSG manager Luis Enrique said.

"The second half was different. We had less energy and they could have scored a goal, but I'm happy with all the players, with the mentality, with the attitude. We need to improve, like always because that's professional football, but I'm happy." Inter Miami boss Javier Mascherano said he could not have asked for more from his players.

"In terms of the tournament, my take is that we have accomplished the goals we set for ourselves," the Argentine said. "We have met the expectations that were placed on us."

"It's difficult when it's 4-0 and you know you don't have much chance. You don't expect to change the result but it was important to show a good image to the people. The players did really well in the second half, they tried to do their best, this is the way we want to play."

2-time runner-up Ons Jabeur quits

Medvedev loses at Wimbledon in another first-round GS exit

LONDON, June 30, (AP): Ninth-seeded Daniil Medvedev is out of another Grand Slam in the first round after losing to 64th-ranked Benjamin Bonzi 7-6 (2), 3-6, 7-6 (3), 6-2 at Wimbledon on Monday.

The 6-foot-6 Russian, a semifinalist at the All England Club the last two years, had also exited the French Open in the first round. And that followed a second-round loss at the Australian Open.

The last time Medvedev lost consecutive Grand Slam first-round matches was in 2017 - at Melbourne Park in his major tournament debut, followed by Roland-Garros.

Medvedev lost in five sets to Cameron Norrie in Paris this year. In 2023, the Russian was seeded No. 2 at Roland-Garros and lost in the first round to Thiago Seyboth Wild, a qualifier who was ranked 172nd at the time.

Two-time Wimbledon runner-up Ons Jabeur retired during her first-round match Monday after taking a medical timeout, the latest issue for her during an injury-filled season.

Jabeur, a 30-year-old from Tunisia, quit playing while trailing Viktoriya Tomova 7-6 (5), 2-0.

Jabeur was visited by a trainer in the first set. At one point, she sat on her sideline seat and cried into a towel.

"I wasn't expecting not to feel good. I have been practicing pretty well the last few days. But I guess these things happen," Jabeur said afterward. "I'm pretty sad. Doesn't really help me with my confidence and what I keep pushing myself to do even though it was a very tough season for me. I hope I can feel better."

She lost to Elena Rybakina in the 2022 final and to Marketa Vondrousova in the 2023 final. Jabeur also was a finalist at the 2022 U.S. Open, losing to Iga Swiatek.

Jabeur's 2024 season ended early because of a shoulder injury and she's dealt with leg problems this year.

Oliver Tarvet changed into his University of San Diego gear moments after a straight-set victory in his Grand Slam debut at Wimbledon on Monday.

The 21-year-old British qualifier, who is ranked No. 733, beat Leandro Reidi of Switzerland 6-4, 6-4, 6-4.

A bigger test awaits the communications major in the second round

"I'm just really overjoyed to be in this situation," he told the BBC in an on-court interview. "It's my first tour-level event. To come out here, come through qualifying, and also win first round at Wimbledon, have a chance to



Aryna Sabalenka of Belarus returns the ball to Carson Branstine of Canada during their first round women's single match at the Wimbledon Tennis Championships in London. (AP)

play maybe Carlos on Wednesday is just truly incredible. It's just a dream come true."

Tarvet hugged friends moments after his victory on Court No. 4 and took a San Diego cap from one of them. He then changed out of his shirt and donned a T-shirt with a similar "SD" logo.

Collegately, Tarvet was recently named the West Coast Conference player of the year for the second straight year.

Pro-Palestinian protesters urged Wimbledon to drop Barclays as a sponsor Monday because of the British bank's business dealings with Israel.

About two dozen protesters from Palestine Solidarity Campaign demonstrated by the main entrance of the All England Club as thousands of fans arrived for Day 1 of the tournament.

"They're the bank for the arms companies that are obviously supplying weapons to Israel," protester Khalid Zalmay told The Associated Press. "We should not be arming Israel, we should not be allowing anybody to facilitate arming them, and I think ties should be cut with Israel, the same way that ties were cut with Russia."

One protester held a sign that said Barclays is a "sponsor of Wimbledon and genocide."

Hamas-led militants killed some 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and abducted 251 people in the Oct. 7, 2023 attack that sparked the Israel-Hamas war.

Israel's military response has led to the death of 56,000 Palestinians, according to the Health Ministry, which does not distinguish between civilians and combatants. It says more than half of the dead were women and children.

Qatar joins race to host Club World Cup: reports

KUWAIT CITY, June 30: Media reports suggest that the 2029 FIFA Club World Cup could witness a significant shift, as Qatar has emerged as a new contender to host the global event. The development could mark a major change in direction for FIFA, which has been considering the United States as a recurring host nation.

According to The Mirror, Qatari officials held high-level discussions with FIFA representatives during the ongoing tournament in the U.S., expressing a strong desire to host the next edition in four years. However, the report highlights that staging the tournament in the Middle East could disrupt the English football calendar, as seen during the 2022 FIFA World Cup in Qatar, which required leagues worldwide to pause for over a month due to the winter schedule.

The report also noted that Qatar

made a compelling case, focusing on its ability to deliver a carbon-neutral tournament - a stark contrast to the current edition, where teams are flying across 11 U.S. cities, increasing both cost and environmental impact.

Qatar has emphasized the existing infrastructure from the 2022 World Cup, with nine state-of-the-art stadiums still operational. The country's compact geography further strengthens its bid by reducing travel costs and logistical complications for fans and teams alike - an advantage cited by both The Mirror and The Guardian.

In addition to Qatar, other potential hosts for the 2029 Club World Cup reportedly include Brazil, Spain, and Morocco, setting the stage for an intense competition to secure hosting rights for FIFA's expanded tournament.