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Mubarak Port, green energy top agenda

## PM urges quick rollout of Kuwait-China agreements

KUWAIT CITY, July 3, (KUNA): His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, on Thursday urged the concerned ministers to follow up on the implementation of the agreements and memoranda of understanding (MoU) signed between Kuwait and China.

This came in a meeting headed by His Highness to follow up on the implementation of agreements and memoranda of understanding signed between the governments of Kuwait and China.

The 17th meeting of the committee touched on the latest developments of projects included in the agreements between the governments of the two countries on cooperation in the Mubarak Al-Kabeer Port project, the electrical power system, the development of renewable energy,

low-carbon green system for waste recycling, housing development, environmental infrastructure for wastewater treatment plants, and free and economic zones.

His Highness the Prime Minister directed the committee to follow up on the implementation of major development projects and the latest developments, and to accelerate the implementation procedures and steps taken by the ministries and authorities with Chinese government agencies, praising the visions presented by the committee to address all challenges and work on achieving highest possible coherency in minimizing procedures between state authorities to ensure the implementation of development and modernization projects and plans within the specified timeframe.

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HH the PM presides over a ministerial meeting focused on implementing strategic Kuwait-China projects. PM Diwan photo

### Other Voices

## Japan-Kuwait relations: A strong bond and contributions to Middle East peace

By MUKAI Kenichiro

Ambassador of Japan to the State of Kuwait

Peace and stability in the Middle East are extremely important to Japan and to the world. Since the beginning of the recent crisis which started on June 13th in the region, Japan has consistently called on all concerned parties to exercise maximum restraint and to work toward de-escalation. Prime Minister Ishiba emphasized the importance of diplomatic efforts to de-escalate the situation and to resolve Iran's nuclear issue during the G7 Summit meeting on June 16th. Japan sincerely hopes that the ceasefire agreement reached on June 24th will be faithfully implemented and will lead to reopening the path to dialogue with regard to Iran's nuclear issue.

As the only country in the world that suffered atomic bombings, Japan has actively worked to strengthen the international nuclear non-proliferation regime. Japan has taken various opportunities to share the Japanese position



MUKAI Kenichiro  
Ambassador of Japan to the State of Kuwait

with the countries concerned, including Israel, and urge those countries to join the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). In the meantime, Japan has consistently expressed serious concern over Iran's nuclear issue, reaffirming that Iran's development of nuclear weapons must never be al-

lowed for the sake of maintaining the international nuclear non-proliferation regime.

Japan and Kuwait share and always emphasize the importance of diplomacy. Amid the increasingly complex Middle East situation, Japan places great importance on its long-standing friendship with Kuwait. Kuwait, as a trusted mediator and advocate for dialogue in the Gulf region, has played a prominent role. During the recent crisis, Kuwait took proactive diplomatic steps as the Chair of the GCC. This leadership deserves high praise.

In May 2025, when His Highness Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled visited Japan and held talks with Prime Minister Ishiba, Prime Minister Ishiba expressed his respect for Kuwait's significant role in promoting regional peace and stability as GCC Chair, and both sides reaffirmed their commitment to cooperating toward long-term peace and stability in the region. As the Ambassador of Japan to the State of Kuwait, I hope to make efforts to

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## PACI staffer busted in 'residency scam'

Fake addresses sold for KD 120 each

KUWAIT CITY, July 3: The Ministry of Interior announced that the Anti-Financial Crimes Department in the Criminal Security Sector's General Department of Criminal Investigations has arrested an employee of the Public Authority for Civil Information (PACI) on charges of forging official documents and receiving bribes, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The ministry explained that it coordinated with senior PACI officials after receiving information that the accused abused his official powers to access the electronic system and transfer residents' addresses without their presence or the submission of official documents.

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Ministry of Interior photo  
Photo shows the arrested PACI employee alongside two brokers and seven individuals accused of paying bribes in a major residency forgery case.

Meth, heroin seized

## Kuwait-UAE drug bust nets KD 1.15 mln haul

KUWAIT CITY, July 3, (KUNA): The Ministry of Interior announced Thursday the seizure of around 100kg of meth and 10kg of heroin, worth an estimated KD 1.15 million, in a joint Kuwait-UAE security operation.

The operation, overseen by First Deputy Prime Minister Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah, was based on intelligence about a sea container linked to an international drug network.

In coordination with Customs, the container was tracked from Shuwaikh Port, leading to the arrest of an Asian national in Amghara. The Fire Force assisted in opening and securing its contents.

Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef thanked UAE Deputy Prime Minister Sheikh Saif bin Zayed Al-Nahyan for the intelligence and cooperation that ensured the operation's success, stressing the importance of continued security coordination.

The minister reaffirmed the Ministry's commitment to countering the drug threat and safeguarding national security through local and international partnerships.



Motorists battle swirling dust and low visibility on Kuwait's roads.

Photo by Rezk Tawfik

## Blistering temps, dust to blanket Kuwait weekend

KUWAIT CITY, July 3, (KUNA): The Meteorological Department forecast that the country's weather over the weekend will be hot and dusty during the day, and hot to warm at night.

The acting Director of the department Dhirar Al-Ali told the Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) that the country is currently affected by the extension of the Indian monsoon low-pressure system accompanied by a hot air mass, with moderate to active northwesterly winds, sometimes strong, causing dust storms that reduce horizontal visibility and raise sea waves.

He explained that the weather will be hot and dusty during the day time on Friday, with moderate to active northwesterly winds, sometimes strong, ranging between 20 and 60 km/h. Some high clouds will appear. The expected maximum temperatures will range between 43 and 45 degrees Celsius. The sea will be moderate to rough with waves between three and six feet.

On Friday night, the weather will be hot to warm with dust gradually settling. Northwesterly winds will be light to moderate, becoming active over coastal areas, and ranging between 15 and 50 km/h. The expected minimum temperatures will range between 29 and 31 degrees Celsius. The sea will be moderate to rough with waves between three and six feet.

During the day time on Saturday, the weather will be hot and dusty, with moderate to active northwesterly winds, sometimes strong, ranging between 20 and 65 km/h. The expected maximum

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## Kuwait's Al-Hayen denounces Israeli violations in Palestinian territories

GENEVA, July 3, (KUNA): The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) strongly condemned on Thursday the continued Israeli aggression, forced displacement policies, and attempts to change the demographic character of the occupied Palestinian territories, including Jerusalem.

This came in a speech delivered by Kuwait's Permanent Representative to the UN and other international organizations in Geneva and Chairman of the Council of Ambassadors of the GCC, Ambassador Nasser Al-Hayen, in the dialogue on the report of the UN Special Rapporteur on human rights in the occupied Palestinian territories.

The Ambassador expressed the GCC countries' appreciation for the efforts made by the UN Special Rapporteur within the framework of her mandate, expressing deep concern over the contents of her report, which highlight the seriousness of the ongoing violations against the Palestinian people.

Ambassador Al-Hayen reiterated the GCC's firm position on the Palestinian issue and the necessity of ending the Israeli occupation of all occupied Palestinian and Arab territories and enabling the brotherly Palestinian people

to exercise their legitimate right to self-determination, as well as establishing their independent state on the borders of June 4, 1967, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

Meanwhile, the Kuwaiti Ministry of Foreign Affairs strongly denounced recent calls by officials of the Israeli occupation regime for expanding the scope of Jewish settlements in the occupied Palestinian West Bank.

The planned settlement expansions constitute a serious violation of the international legitimacy and the relevant UN resolutions, the Ministry noted in a press release on Wednesday.

The State of Kuwait maintains its support to the brotherly people of Palestine in their struggle to regain their legitimate rights pursuant to the UN resolutions and the Arab initiative for peace, including their right to establish an independent state within the borders of 1967 with East Jerusalem as its capital.

The State of Kuwait renews the call for the UN Security Council to shoulder its responsibility for protecting international peace and security and defending the international legitimacy, according to the statement.



Al-Hayen

## 50% of Kuwait's development projects underway

By Mohammad Ghanem

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 3: The follow-up report of the Secretariat General of the Supreme Council for Planning and Development on the annual development plan for fiscal 2024/2025 revealed the accomplishments from April 1, 2024 to March 31, 2025.

The newspaper obtained a copy of the report, stating that the number of projects in the annual development plan totaled 133 distributed to nine programs. The sixth program, 'Building a Cohesive Infrastructure,' consists of the largest number of projects at 33; while the second program, 'General Privatization,' includes two projects implemented by government agencies. Some of the projects are implemented

through the public-private partnership system.

The report revealed that the annual plan has 122 ongoing projects and one new project, indicating 50 percent of these projects are in the implementation phase and 12 percent have not started yet.

The spending rate on development plan projects at the end of the third quarter reached 23.4 percent -- 1.4 percent decrease compared to the previous fiscal year (2023/2024) and equal to that of fiscal 2022/2023.

In addition, 26 percent of the projects are in line with the implementation schedule in the annual plan for fiscal 2024/2025, compared to 25 percent for the same period in 2023/2024 and 27 percent for 2022/2023. The percentage of projects behind schedule at the end of the third quarter

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KUNA photo  
Kuwait's Assistant Foreign Minister for Human Rights Affairs Sheikhha Jawaher Al-Sabah in talks with Tunisian officials to strengthen bilateral ties.

## Arab talks center on rights, women's role

TUNIS, July 3, (KUNA): Kuwait's Assistant Foreign Minister for Human Rights Affairs Ambassador Sheikhha Jawaher Al-Sabah met on Thursday Tunisian Minister of Defense Khaled Al-Suhaili to explore ways to strengthen bilateral ties between the two nations.

The meeting focused on exchanging experiences in human rights filed as well as exploring ways to empower women especially within the military sector.

Sheikha Jawaher is currently visiting Tunis to partake in the high-level Arab regional meeting in preparation for the Second World Summit for Social Development, scheduled in Doha this upcoming November.

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From biryani to Israel: When American diversity hits a wall



8 KFH organizes largest honor ceremony for top high school graduates



Prayer Timings			
Fajr .....	03:18	Asr .....	15:26
Sunrise ..	04:53	Maghrib ..	18:51
Zohr .....	11:52	Isha .....	20:23

# Local

Weather			
Expected weather for next 24 hrs: By Day: 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 over coastal areas northwesterly wind, with speeds of 15-50 km/h.			
Station	Max Exp	Min Rec	
Kuwait City	46	34	
Kuwait Airport	45	30	
Abdaly	44	28	
Jahra	45	32	
Salmiyah	40	35	
Ahmadi	40	29	
Nuwaibis	45	30	
Wafra	44	27	
Salmi	45	30	
Managish	46	31	



HH the Amir



HH the Crown Prince



HH the Prime Minister

## Kuwait Amir congratulates Belarus leader on Nat'l Day

KUWAIT CITY, July 3, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent on Thursday a cable of congratulations to President of Belarus Aleksandr Lukashenko on his country's National Day.

His Highness the Amir wished the president lasting good health, his country and people optimal progress and prosperity.

### Crown Prince

His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah sent on Thursday a cable of congratulations to President of Belarus Aleksandr Lukashenko on his country's National Day.

His Highness the Crown Prince wished the president lasting good health.

### Prime Minister

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah sent on Thursday a cable of congratulations to President of Belarus Aleksandr Lukashenko on his country's National Day.

## Other Voices

## From biryani to Israel: When American diversity hits a wall

By Abdulaziz Mohammed Al-Anjeri

The United States presents itself as a defender of pluralism and equality. But that image often fractures when a candidate from a nontraditional background gains real influence, especially if they challenge the political consensus on Israel.

Zohran Mamdani, born in Uganda, to an Indian father and an Indian American mother, moved to the U.S. at age seven and became a citizen in 2018. In June 2025, he won the Democratic primary for mayor of New York City, defeating former Governor Andrew Cuomo. He is now the party's nominee for the November election.

Mamdani's rise was initially hailed as a milestone for American diversity. But once his political momentum grew, the tone shifted. A video of him eating biryani with his hand was mocked online as "un-American." Criticism came from conservatives and liberals alike, revealing

how easily cultural difference can be weaponized.

The real trigger was political. Mamdani described Israeli policies as apartheid, opposed funding for settlement-linked organizations, and declined to pledge support for visiting Israel, saying he would remain with his constituents. His positions, popular with voters, unsettled influential interest groups.

Mamdani is not a religious conservative. He supports LGBTQ rights and embraces progressive values. Still, he was labeled as an Islamist. His offense was what he said.

President Trump responded by threatening to revoke Mamdani's citizenship and deport him, accusing him of aiding "communist agendas" and obstructing

immigration enforcement. It was a clear case of using state rhetoric to target dissenting minority voices.

A similar pattern emerged in March 2025, when Trump nominated Dr. Amer Ghalib, the Yemeni American mayor of Hamtramck, Michigan, as U.S. Ambassador to Kuwait. Ghalib's record is one of professional success and civic integrity. Yet his nomination sparked intense pushback, because he had supported local boycotts of companies tied to Israeli settlements.

Despite no misconduct, Ghalib faced the same accusations: extremism, anti-semitism, foreign loyalty. The message was clear—minority voices are accepted only within certain limits.

These cases reveal that diversity in America is often conditional. It is celebrated in form but restricted in substance. When a candidate crosses the red lines around Israel, inclusion gives way to exclusion.



Al-Anjeri

## 'Register on Sahel'

## 'Lottery system' to select pilgrims for 1447 AH Hajj

KUWAIT CITY, July 3: The Ministry of Islamic Affairs recently issued a circular to authorized Hajj organizers about the registration procedures for the 1447 AH Hajj season through the lottery system, reports Al-Jarida daily.

This is part of the ongoing cooperation aimed at serving pilgrims better and as per the decision of the Supreme Hajj and Umrah Committee during its first meeting for 1447 AH.

The circular states that registration for Kuwaitis wishing to perform Hajj will be through the Sahel application. The lottery-based registration ensures that all applicants are gradually screened and maintain their ranking in the queue until selected.

Following are the general conditions:

- Applicants must be Kuwaiti nationals who have not performed Hajj;
- A maximum of five relatives per group is allowed;
- Women can add one 'mahram' (who may have previously performed Hajj) and one resident relative;
- Applicants can change or reschedule their Hajj dates during the registration period by paying a non-refundable fee of KD10 (around \$32.80);
- Upon confirmation, an initial payment of KD1,500 (around \$4,900) is required;
- An application is canceled if payment is not made within the deadline.

The selected pilgrims will be registered with the Hajj caravans. They are allowed to switch to another caravan once, provided they do so before Jan 15, 2026. Vacated spots will be filled by the next candidate in the lottery queue. Candidates will have three days to complete the KD1,500 payment after selection.

Full refund is possible if cancellation is made before Jan 18, 2026; hence, there will be no refund after this date. Payment methods and registration dates will be confirmed in the next circular; while acceptance notifications and further instructions will be sent through Sahel.

## Kuwaitis now prefer to wed compatriots: study

KUWAIT CITY, July 3: The number of marriages between Kuwaitis and non-Kuwaitis declined by about 21 percent, reports Al-Rai daily.

According to statistical data obtained by the daily, the number of marriages between Kuwaiti men and Kuwaiti women increased to 2,101 in the first five months of 2025; compared to 2,046 during the same period in 2024.

In contrast, the number of marriages between Kuwaiti men and foreign women went down to 236 cases; compared to 297 in the same period last year.

Following is a breakdown per nationality:

- Marriages with Gulf women decreased to 75, compared to 96 in 2024
- Marriages with Bedouins decreased to 33, compared to 51
- Marriages with Asian women dropped significantly to 16, compared to 36
- Marriages with European women declined to six, compared to 10
- Marriages with American women fell to just one, compared to four last year

Meanwhile, some categories witnessed an increase: ■ Marriages between Kuwaiti men and Syrian women rose to 25, compared to 17 in 2024 ■ Marriages to Iraqi women increased to 18 -- up from 16 ■ Marriages to Lebanese women increased from eight to 12 On the other hand, the number of marriages to Jordanian women remained at 12 and to Egyptian women at nine.

## One dead in Farwaniya apartment fire, says KFF

KUWAIT CITY, July 3: Fire engulfed an apartment in a building in Farwaniya recently, resulting in the death of an individual.

According to a press release issued by Kuwait Fire Force, firefighters from Farwaniya and Subhan fire stations rushed to the location and extinguished the fire before it spread to other apartments in the building. The deceased and the site were referred to the relevant authorities for necessary action.



KFF photo

The room is totally wrecked by the fire.

## KRCS, WHO to unite in current scenario

MoU to be signed soon: Dr Hafeez



KUNA photo

Vice Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Kuwait Red Crescent Society, Dr. Nasser Al-Tannak, meets with the representative of the World Health Organization and Head of Mission in Kuwait, Dr. Asad Hafeez.

KUWAIT CITY , July 3, (KUNA) : Dr. Nasser Al-Tannak, Vice Chairman of the Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS), underscored the significance of strengthening collaboration with the World Health Organization (WHO) in various health and training sectors, particularly amid the growing health challenges facing communities worldwide.

Speaking to KUNA following his meeting with Dr. Asad Hafeez, WHO Representative and Head of Mission in Kuwait, Dr. Al-Tannak revealed that KRCS is working toward signing a memorandum of understanding with the WHO office in Kuwait. The agreement aims to enhance cooperation in key areas such as mental health, risk awareness, addiction prevention, and the development of specialized training programs.

He emphasized that the KRCS board is committed to establishing a comprehensive strategy to train and qualify staff and volunteers to the highest standards. The goal, he noted, is to ensure their effective performance, particularly during emergencies and disasters.



Farwaniya Governorate photo

Governors of six Kuwaiti governorates meet in Farwaniya Governor's office.

## Kuwait governors meet, seek to work for welfare of citizens

KUWAIT CITY, July 3: During a coordination meeting held this morning at the Farwaniya Governorate office, Farwaniya Governor Sheikh Athbi Nasser Al-Athbi Al-Sabah received fellow governors - Capital Governor Sheikh Abdullah Salem Al-Ali Al-Sabah, Mubarak Al-Kabeer Governor and acting Hawally Governor Sheikh Sabah Badr Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah, Jahra Governor Hamad Jassim Al-Habashi, Ahmadi Governor Sheikh Hamoud Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, as well as Director General of the General Department of Administrative Affairs Sheikh Nasser Mohammed Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah.

According to a press release issued by Farwaniya Governorate, the meeting focused on enhancing joint cooperation, developing the functions of governorates, discussing the roles of governorate councils, and addressing issues of mutual interest aimed at boosting development and improving public services and facilities.

The governors emphasized that the meeting is part of ongoing coordination efforts between governorates and relevant authorities to unify efforts and work collectively toward realizing the vision of the political leadership and improving service delivery to meet citizens' needs.

At the end of the meeting, Sheikh Athbi Al-Nasser underscored that such coordination meetings reinforce integration, enhance operational mechanisms across all governorates, and support the state's public strategy in keeping pace with urban and population growth to better serve citizens and residents.

## Banks asked to process donations

By Fares Ghaleb

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 3: Acting Undersecretary of the Ministry of Social Affairs Dr. Khaled Al-Ajmi has asked the Central Bank of Kuwait to issue a circular to all local banks under its supervision permitting the resumption of receiving donations for charitable organizations through various methods --

deposits through money transfer companies, checks, bank transfers, online, ATMs, standing orders through electronic bank deductions, and deductions through bank websites.

At the end of April, the ministry addressed the Central Bank regarding the suspension of receiving all donations for charitable organizations; as well as two letters dated June 3, 2025 and June 17, 2025 regarding this matter.



Farwaniya Governorate photo

Farwaniya Governor Sheikh Athbi Nasser Al-Athbi Al-Sabah receives Turkish Ambassador to Kuwait Tuba Nur Sonmez.

## Farwaniya Gov., Türkiye envoy seek boost in science expertise

KUWAIT CITY, July 3: Farwaniya Governor Sheikh Athbi Nasser Al-Athbi Al-Sabah met Ambassador of the Republic of Türkiye to Kuwait Tuba Nur Sonmez in his office at the Farwaniya Governorate General Diwan on Wednesday.

The meeting focused on topics of mutual interest; including the visit of Sheikh Athbi Nasser Al-Athbi Al-Sabah to Samsun, Türkiye recently in a bid to strengthen fraternal ties between the two countries. They also discussed various aspects of the exchange of scientific expertise.

Sheikh Athbi Nasser welcomed Sonmez, indicating her visit strengthens the friendship between Kuwait and Türkiye and reflects the depth of such relationship. He affirmed that Kuwait and the Republic of Türkiye have been enjoying close and distinguished historical ties since ancient times.

Towards the end of the visit, Sonmez expressed her appreciation and gratitude to the Governor for his hospitality and warm welcome. She commended Sheikh Athbi Al-Nasser's role in strengthening bilateral relations between the two friendly countries, wishing him success. She also wished continuous development and prosperity for the State of Kuwait.



Al-Seyassah photo

Sewage water forms a pond as residents traverse the area on way to work and back.

## Municipality mulls 7 urgent solutions for Jleeb hell-hole

KUWAIT CITY, July 3: While awaiting long-term solutions that are expected to take between two and five years, Kuwait Municipality is intensifying efforts to implement urgent measures to address the existing challenges in Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh and prevent further deterioration, reports Al-Rai daily.

According to informed sources, the municipality conducted a comprehensive and detailed study of the area's current conditions, which resulted in a set of proposed solutions that include regulatory, legislative, and administrative measures.

He explained that the proposals include drafting and amending legislation to enhance the municipality's ability to carry out its oversight role. A draft law will be prepared to prohibit bachelors from residing in family residential areas, and to grant the municipality the authority to administratively evict violators and take necessary measures such as cutting off electricity and water services.

The proposals will also call for amending certain provisions of Municipal Law No. 33/2016 to allow for the issuance of immediate fines for violations. Property owners or contractors would be required to rectify or remove the violations within a period not exceeding six months.

Regarding regulatory measures, the source explained that the long-term plan includes establishing six labor cities and 12 worker housing complexes, with a total capacity of approximately 400,000 people. These developments are expected to take between two and six years to complete.

In the meantime, the municipality has outlined seven quick and short-term solutions to help mitigate the current challenges in the area:

1. Prohibiting the leasing of residential units for non-family housing purposes.
2. Allowing the construction of workers' accommodations within designated industrial plots.
3. Permitting the establishment of worker housing within agricultural holdings.
4. Authorizing the issuance of worker housing permits within major projects.

The above mentioned solutions aim to reduce the high number of bachelors in the area, ease security challenges, and lower the population density in the area by organizing labor clusters.

The remaining three solutions include:

5. Providing a grace period for violating properties to rectify their status once co-ownership data is updated. This follows a precedent set for processing real estate agencies' complaints, addressing the challenge posed by missing co-ownership records that hinder the municipality from identifying property owners for violations.
6. Coordinating with the Public Authority for Manpower to connect workers directly to designated government or private project sites.
7. Partially rehabilitating the most affected infrastructure.



An advertisement for Mughal Mahal Exotica restaurant. The top section features the restaurant's logo in Arabic and English, along with the slogan "Europe's First Choice". Below this, a large banner reads "نقدم خدمة صف السيارات مجاناً لضيوفنا" and "WE OFFER FREE VALET PARKING FOR OUR GUESTS". The main visual is a photograph of the restaurant's exterior at night, showing its yellow signage and glass facade reflecting palm trees. A black Mercedes-Benz car is parked in front, with a valet in a uniform standing beside it. An illustration of a hand holding keys is positioned near the car. In the bottom left corner, there is a QR code and a Google Maps icon. The bottom right corner contains the address "Terrace Mall Salmiya", "Overlooking Gulf Road, Salem Al Mubarak Street", and the phone number "CALL NOW: 92224674 / 75".



# Kuwait sets new building rules for agricultural sites

Two floors max for residential houses

By Inaas Awadh  
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 3: Minister of State for Municipal and Housing Affairs Abdullatif Al-Mishari on Wednesday issued a ministerial decision on regulating construction work and the attached schedules related to Table No. 13 stating the requirements and specifications for buildings in agricultural and livestock development areas.

The newspaper obtained a copy of the decision; which sets the permitted building percentages in the agricultural areas (Wafra, Abdali and Sulaibiya) at 10 percent of the size of the plot, with a maximum of 10,000 square meters. This includes residential buildings and family rest houses for the plot owner, with a total building area not exceeding 1,000 square meters, as well as workers' housing and guard rooms with an area not exceeding 2,000 square meters.

Furthermore, all buildings must be one-storey made of lightweight materials or reinforced concrete. Residential and family rest houses may only be built on two floors (ground and first), with a maximum height of nine meters.

The resolution stipulates that the setback for buildings must not be less than five meters on all sides of the boundaries of the plot, except for the designated area for garbage containers and the guard room and its facilities, which may be attached to one of the facades.

Regarding the building percentages for dairy farms, the decision stipulates that varying building percentages of the plot area are permitted. Five percent of the plot area is allocated for concentrated and bulk feed stores and a feed grinding unit, one percent for a repair shop and spare parts warehouse, three percent for a building for automated milking machines and their accessories, and 10 percent for workers' housing and administrative buildings. A veterinary clinic and family housing for the plot owner may be built within the plot, provided that the total family housing area does not exceed 1,000 square meters. Buildings must be one-storey, with a maximum building height not exceeding five meters; while the maximum height for barns and related buildings, such as workshops and warehouses, is 10 meters.



Al-Mishari

The decision sets the permissible building percentage for purebred Arabian horse breeding plots at 15 percent, distributed among administrative buildings, workers' housing, an electrical room, a security room, a rest area not exceeding 200 square meters, and a horse showroom with an area not exceeding 500 square meters, which is included in the total building percentage. All buildings shall be one-storey, with the height not exceeding five meters for the administrative buildings, workers' housing, security rooms, and rest areas; not exceeding seven meters for the horse showroom, stables and feed store; and not exceeding four meters for the circular horse trough.

Regarding the plots for livestock production projects in Kabad, Jahra and Wafra allocated by the Public Authority for Agriculture Affairs and Fish Resources (PAAAFR) for raising cows, livestock and camels; the decision specified the permissible building percentages for residential buildings, warehouses, the veterinary room, the guard room, and their services, at a total of 16 percent of the plot area, with a maximum of 300 square meters. The remaining vacant area of the plot is to be used for the purpose for which the plot is designated. Construction is prohibited. Only shelters for animals are permitted, provided that the shaded area does not exceed 40 percent; while the remaining open areas are permitted for cultivation.

The decision states that the building percentages for broiler and layer chicken breeding plots throughout the country are as follows: five percent for workers' housing and services, an egg hatchery building, and five percent of the total area for a warehouse for feed, machinery and tools. All buildings shall be one-storey. The maximum height for workers' housing and service buildings shall be five meters, eight meters for feed and equipment warehouses, and not less than 3.5 meters and not more than five meters for production and breeding plots. Regarding service plots located in Plot No. 10 in Wafra Agricultural Area -- which range in size from 500 square meters to a maximum of 5,000 square meters; the decision states a building ratio of a maximum of 60 percent of the plot area; out of which an area not exceeding 100 square meters must be used as administrative offices to service the plot. The building should be one-storey and should not exceed 10 meters in height.



Director General of The Scientific Center Eng. Musaed Al-Yassin, and Director General of the Kuwait Society for the Care of the Disabled Baraa Abdul Aziz Al-Janaei pose for a group photo.

## Advancing disability inclusion

# Scientific Center signs MoU with Disability Care Society

KUWAIT CITY, July 3: The Scientific Center, affiliated with the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences (KFAS), signed a memorandum of understanding with the Kuwait Society for the Care of the Disabled in the presence of Director General of The Scientific Center Eng. Musaed Al-Yassin, and Director General of the Kuwait Society for the Care of the Disabled Baraa Abdul Aziz Al-Janaei.

According to a press release issued by The Scientific Center, the MoU aims to support joint efforts in promoting scientific awareness and the inclusion of people with disabilities.

This agreement reflects the commitment of both parties to expand community cooperation by developing educational and awareness programs that enable people with disabilities to engage with scientific content in an inclusive and safe environment, taking into account their needs, and in-



KFAS photos  
Director General of The Scientific Center Eng. Musaed Al-Yassin, and Director General of the Kuwait Society for the Care of the Disabled Baraa Abdul Aziz Al-Janaei during the signing of MoU.

creasing their opportunities for active participation in educational activities. This cooperation is in line with The Scientific Center's vision to strength-

en its role as an educational and community institution, based on the principles of equal opportunity and the Sustainable Development Goals.

Director General of The Scientific Center Eng. Musaed Al-Yassin explained that the MoU extends the center's mission to promote scientific culture and equal opportunities. Through this agreement, the center aims to develop specialized educational programs tailored to the needs of a significant segment of the community, thereby reinforcing its position as a leading educational and community institution.

In addition, Director General of the Kuwait Society for the Care of the Disabled Baraa Abdul Aziz Al-Janaei expressed pride in the partnership, emphasizing that it represents a vital step in enabling people with disabilities to access scientific content and participate in educational and recreational activities that enhance their integration into society.

# JULY

## Room Promotion

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

Promo period from 1<sup>st</sup> July to 31<sup>st</sup> July 2025

Terms & conditions apply\*

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## ‘Mental health matters’

# WHO, Al-Nuwair Intitiave sign MoU

KUWAIT CITY, July 3: The World Health Organization (WHO) Office in Kuwait and Al-Nuwair Initiative have signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) aimed at strengthening cooperation in various public health fields; focusing on mental health, universal health coverage and community engagement, reports Al-Jarida daily.

The agreement outlines collaboration in three primary pillars: developing community-based mental health programs to tackle issues such as substance abuse; supporting national strategies to achieve universal health coverage through sustainable, community-led interventions; and empowering youths and the wider public through awareness campaigns linking health and environmental sustainability.

At the signing ceremony, both parties affirmed their commitment to improve health outputs in Kuwait and promote active community involvement, especially among young people.

“This partnership reflects our shared belief in the value of positive community engagement and the vital role of mental health, youths and the environment in building resilient, healthier societies,” said WHO Representative in Kuwait Dr. Asad Hafeez.

In addition, Sheikha Intisar Al Salem, Founder and Chairwoman of Al-Nuwair, described the collaboration as a reaffirmation of the initiative's mission. “A nation's prosperity begins with the health of its people. This partnership with WHO renews our dedication to advancing integrated mental health, strengthening individual resilience, and empowering youth and society to pursue a healthier, more prosperous future for Kuwait.”

The MoU marks a significant step toward aligning local public health initiatives with global best practices, as Kuwait continues to address evolving health challenges through inclusive and community-driven approaches.

## Maintenance in full swing from June 28 to July 3

# Extensive roadworks underway on major routes and residential blocks

KUWAIT CITY, July 3: As part of the ongoing efforts to develop the road network in the country, the Ministry of Public Works and the Public Authority for Roads and Transportation (PART) announced the implementation of radical maintenance work on vital roads and in several residential areas from June 28 to July 3, reports Al-Anba daily.

The radical maintenance works of PART stipulated in the new road contracts include Abdally Road, intersection of the Fourth Ring Road with Morocco Road, Fahaheel Road opposite Mishref-Salwa, flyover at the intersection of the Fourth Ring Road towards Salmiya, Subiya Road, Fourth Ring Road from the intersection of Morocco Road to the intersection of Damascus Street, Salmi Road towards Kuwait City, and Seventh Ring Road from Kilometer 24 to Kilometer 27 in both directions.

The ministry's works include the following:

- Jahra Governorate: Saad Al-Abdullah Block 11
- Mubarak Al-Kabeer Governorate: Abu Futaira Block 7; Mubarak Al-Kabeer Blocks 3 and 7; Al-Qurain Block 2; Messilah Block 6; and Al-Masayel Blocks 1, 2, 4, 5, 6 and 7
- Capital Governorate: Al-Faiha Blocks 1 and 2, Al-Nahda Blocks 2 and 3, Al-Qairawan Blocks 1 and 3, and Al-Nuzha Block 3
- Ahmadi Governorate: Sabah Al-Ahmad Residential Blocks A, B, D and E; Fahaheel Blocks 1, 2, 3 and 4; and Sabahiya Blocks 1, 2, 3, and 4
- Hawally Governorate: Bayan Blocks 7 and 8; Mishref Blocks 3, 4, 5 and 7; Salwa Blocks 10 and 11; Jabriya Blocks 10 and 11; Salmiya Block 12; and Mubarak Al-Abdullah Block 3
- Farwaniya Governorate: Abdullah Al-Mubarak Blocks 10 and 11; Al-Rehab Block 3; Omariya Block 1; Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh Block 3; and Al-Ardiya Residential Area Blocks 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5

## Ministry efforts push reserves to peak

# Kuwait's water reserves hit 96%

KUWAIT CITY, July 3: The Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy has increased its strategic water reserve to the highest ever recorded -- 96 percent -- with a total strategic reserve now exceeding four trillion imperial gallons, reports Al-Rai daily quoting sources.

Sources explained to the daily that “reintroducing production distillers into service after completing the maintenance work contributed to raising the strategic water reserve to its maximum

level.” Sources said the remarkable and commendable efforts of officials in the power plant, water operation and maintenance sectors greatly contributed to this accomplishment. Sources affirmed that the officials at the ministry are keen to stabilize the water reserve and the electricity grid to meet the needs of the ministry; which is witnessing increasing demand for water and electricity consumption rates year after year due to the urban expansion and construction of new residential cities.



Citizenship undergoes strict review

First Deputy PM chairs crucial Supreme Committee meeting

KUWAIT CITY, July 3, (KUNA): The Supreme Committee for the Investigation of Kuwaiti Citizenship held a meeting on Thursday, chaired by First Deputy Prime Minister Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah.

A statement by the Ministry of Interior revealed that the commit-



KUNA photo  
Dr. Turki Al-Saeed, Director of the Coastal and Marine Resources Program at the Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research.

## Kuwait upholds commitment to protecting marine environment

PARIS, July 3, (KUNA): Kuwait is firmly committed towards marine environment protection efforts, an official told the United Nation's cultural agency UNESCO amid talks on Wednesday, citing the country's rich maritime tradition.

Given the importance of the matter, Kuwait has delved into extensive research over the hydrological and chemical changes in the marine environment, Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research's (KISR) coastal and marine resources department chief Dr. Turki Al-Saeed said amid a gather-

ing of UNESCO's Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) in the French capital.

Kuwait has ratcheted up investments in a bid to bolster marine environment research through its own designated vessel designed to study scientific data at sea, equipped with modern and cutting-edge technology, he said.

On such data, he said it comprises the physical, chemical and biological factors affecting the marine environment, a field KISR has studied extensively through its own research platforms, the official underlined.

## CAIT unveils GCC award honoring digital government achievements

KUWAIT CITY, July 3, (KUNA): The GCC Digital Government Award, aims to honour outstanding achievements in the field of digital transformation across the GCC countries, said Najat Ibrahim, the Central Agency for Information Technology (CAIT)'s Acting Director General.

In a statement to KUNA, Ibrahim explained that applications will be available through the website awards.cait.gov.kw from July 1 to August 31.

This award represents a pioneering platform for fostering a spirit of competition and innovation among government agencies in the field of digital

transformation. She added that the award includes nine main categories, most notably Best Government Digital Service, Best Use of Artificial Intelligence, Best Open Data Initiative, Best Digital Inclusion Initiative, and Best Digital Community Participation.

This reflects the comprehensive diversity of the award and its support for various paths of digital excellence, the award stems from the GCC's efforts to enhance digital cooperation and achieve the goals of sustainable digital development in the GCC countries.

For any questions call the following number, +965 22929293.

# KCCI's Arbitration Center hosts seminar on Family Business Governance



KCCI photo  
Photo during the specialized legal seminar organized by the Kuwait Commercial Arbitration Center.

## Japan-Kuwait

strengthen cooperation between Japan and Kuwait towards rebuilding trust in the region through dialogue.

Under the framework of the "Comprehensive Strategic Partnership," which was announced during His Highness's visit, Japan will expand its cooperation with Kuwait in a wide range of fields, in energy security, humanitarian assistance, and the promotion of international dialogue. Kuwait's extensive diplomatic experience and regional influence enable it to serve as a valuable partner to Japan's diplomatic efforts.

Military confrontation only breeds distrust and destruction, which is not the future we seek. Based on the strong Japan-Kuwait relationship, Japan will continue working together with Kuwait, the current GCC Chair, to make constructive contributions to peace and prosperity in the Middle East, guided by mutual respect and cooperation.

## 50% of Kuwait's

(2024/2025) reached 70 percent, compared to 73 percent for the previous year and 70 percent for 2022/2023.

The implementation program with the largest number of delayed projects is the Cohesive Infrastructure Construction Program with 26 proj-

ects behind schedule.

The total budget for the 133 projects amounted to KD1.1 billion, with a total expenditure of KD263.9 million. Around 50 percent of the projects are in the implementation phase (67 projects), five percent are in the delivery phase (six projects), two percent are in the completion phase (three projects), 31 percent are in the preparatory phase (41 projects), and 12 percent have not started yet (16 projects).

The challenges to project implementation are classified into five, totaling 733 challenges. About 84 percent of these challenges (619) have been resolved, leaving 114 challenges.

The percentage of administrative challenges reached 43 percent -- the largest proportion, followed by technical challenges (30 percent), and then financial challenges (13 percent). Legislative challenges are the least frequent, accounting for only four percent of the total number of challenges.

The actual project completion rate is calculated by assigning relative weights to each project phase, which varies depending on the type of project -- developmental or construction. For a construction project, the relative weights for its phases are distributed as follows: 20 percent for the preparatory phase, 70 percent for the implementation phase and 10 percent for delivery. For a development project, the weights are as fol-

lows: 30 percent for the preparatory phase and 70 percent for the implementation phase.

Another model for implementation is through partnership projects and joint-stock companies, where the project goes through only one phase: the preparatory phase. In this case, the preparatory phase is assigned a relative weight of 100 percent and there is a financial completion rate, which is the percentage of the annual financial allocation spent.

The report recommended that authorities expedite the completion of draft laws included in the plan, as a number of 14 draft laws have been pending with the relevant authorities for a long period. This requires renewed momentum to implement the legislative program of the development plan.

It also emphasized the need to put an end to the stalled spending on some projects in the 2024/2025 Annual Development Plan due to delayed budget or disbursement approvals.

It emphasized the need to exert more effort to promote private sector stimulant projects, as the returns from such projects still fall short of expectations, especially the public-private partnership projects. Increased momentum is necessary to complete the preparatory work for these projects, prior to their launch and implementation; while identifying mechanisms to facilitate regulatory approvals.

## Delegation calls for unity and enhanced financing mechanisms

### Kuwait committed to global development funding



KUNA photo  
Sheikh Saud Salem Abdulaziz, Managing Director of the General Investment Authority, delivering a speech at the Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development (FFD) in Seville, Spain.

Sheikh Saud is leading Kuwait's delegation to the conference that includes Ambassador to Spain Ziad Al-Anbaei, acting director general of KFAED Waleed Al-Bahr and others.

The conference kicked off on Monday with the participation of more than 60 heads of state and premiers as well as over 200 official delegations.

# Education Ministry prepares for upcoming academic year

Efforts intensify to address labor shortages

the timely opening of schools.

Educational sector sources revealed that the meeting addressed a number of vital issues, specifically the labor shortage in schools. Sources confirmed that coordination is underway with the relevant authorities to guarantee the availability of the necessary personnel in all educational districts before the start of the school year.

Sources said a ministerial working group will conduct field inspections of schools in educational districts to monitor observations and submit detailed reports directly to the Minister of Education. "This will be in parallel with the efforts



Al-Dhafiri

of engineering departments, which have begun addressing technical observations previously raised by school administrations," sources added.

Sources stated that the meeting also focused on equipping new schools, providing basic services, and addressing the need for student and administrative furniture and educational equipment, as well as following up the delivery of textbooks. Sources affirmed that the plan for following up major and partial maintenance works was reviewed during the meeting.

Meanwhile, engineering departments in various educational districts have started submitting reports to the Facilities Sector on the condition of about 1,000 schools in preparation for their full refurbishment before September.

Sources said all maintenance contracts -- two in each district -- are still valid, and maintenance work is being carried out in accordance with the recommendations of the engineering de-

partments. Sources indicated that these recommendations include infrastructure repairs, maintenance of health and electrical facilities, securing clean water sources, repairing roofs and insulation before the rainy season, and maintaining gymnasiums and facilities according to each school's needs.

Aside from the field preparations, the ministry is racing against time to complete the amendment and development of the curricula, particularly the core subjects. Specialized teams are reviewing and scrutinizing the scientific content in preparation for final approval before printing and distribution to the schools.

Moreover, sources affirmed that the new organizational structure of the ministry is nearing completion. According to preliminary information that the newspaper obtained, this step includes the restructuring of some sectors and their transformation into departments reporting directly to the undersecretary of the ministry.

Continued from Page 1

KUWAIT CITY, July 3: The Kuwait Commercial Arbitration Center -- affiliated with Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI) -- on Tuesday organized a specialized legal seminar entitled, "Family Business Governance and Arbitration."

This is part of the efforts of the center to foster a stable business environment and raise legal awareness and culture among businesspersons and practitioners in the commercial sector.

Dr. Nasser Bouresli, a governance expert with PhD in Islamic Finance and Governance, conducted the seminar; which was held at the KCCI headquarters with the participation of a select group of legal experts and businesspersons.

The seminar touched on several key topics related to the challenges and sustainability of family businesses; including the importance of applying the principles of

good governance to ensure continuity and transparency, defining decision-making mechanisms, and addressing potential conflicts between partners and successive generations.

It also highlighted the role of arbitration as an effective tool for resolving disputes within a framework of fairness and speed, while explaining how governance contributes to reducing the need for disputes in the first place through the issuance of clear regulations on relationships and obligations within the family entity.

The center organized the seminar based on its belief in the importance of spreading legal culture and governance, as well as supporting entrepreneurs and family business owners through the provision of scientific and professional tools that will help them overcome future challenges with confidence and stability.

It called on the executive bodies participating in the plan to quickly complete their planning structures, which will allow these bodies to communicate seamlessly with the preparation and follow-up systems.

The Secretariat General of the Supreme Council for Planning and Development has been exerting tremendous efforts to develop systems for preparing and following up development plans, which greatly improved the achievement rates, as a result of resolving many obstacles early on.

It stressed the need to find radical solutions to the challenges, as some projects are suffering from significant delays despite the fact that no obstacle to their implementation has been recorded.

## PACI staffer

Investigations revealed the accused had added fake addresses in exchange for fees of up to KD 120 per transaction. It was discovered that the employee was involved in processing more than 5,000 such transactions since the beginning of the current year, in cooperation with several brokers inside and outside Kuwait.

The ministry also reported the arrest of two brokers and seven individuals who paid money to complete these transactions.

Further investigation revealed that the accused used the proceeds to purchase jewelry, gold bars, and other luxury items in order to conceal the source of the funds.

chase jewelry, gold bars, and other luxury items in order to conceal the source of the funds.

The accused and the seized assets were referred to the Public Prosecution for necessary legal action.

## Blistering temps,

temperatures will range between 42 and 44 degrees Celsius. The sea will be moderate to rough with waves between three and six feet.

On Saturday night, the weather will be hot to warm with dust gradually settling. Northwesterly winds will be light to moderate, becoming active at times, ranging between 15 and 50 km/h.

The expected minimum temperatures will range between 27 and 29 degrees Celsius. The sea will be light to moderate with waves occasionally rising between two and six feet.

## PM urges

The Assistant Foreign Minister for Asian Affairs and member and rapporteur of the Ministerial Committee, Ambassador Samih Jawhar Hayat, gave a detailed explanation of the daily discussions between the Kuwaiti and Chinese governments on following up on the developments in the implementation process of the agreements and MoUs signed



‘Dazzling displays of Americana and American history’

Trump to kick off yearlong celebration of America’s 250th anniversary with event in Iowa

WASHINGTON, July 3, (AP): US President Donald Trump campaigned on a promise to deliver a “spectacular” yearlong birthday party to mark 250 years of American independence. On Thursday, he will be in the US heartland to kick off the patriotic festivities leading up to next year’s anniversary.

The event at the Iowa State Fairgrounds in Des Moines will feature “dazzling” displays of Americana and American history, musical performances and a fireworks show to cap the night, said US Ambassador Monica Crowley, Trump’s liaison to the organizing group, America250.

Organizers see the coming year of festivities as a way to help unite a polarized nation and bridge partisanship - a monumental task given the country’s divides. Thursday’s event comes as the Republican-controlled Congress pushed for final passage of a sweeping tax cuts and spending package that’s at the heart of Trump’s legislative agenda but has united all Democrats against it. More U.S. adults also disapprove than approve of how the Republican president is doing his job.

Iowa was a “logical choice” for the kickoff, Crowley said, because of its central location and Trump’s affinity for the state, which supported him in each of the last three general elections. She also said Iowa’s middle-of-the-country geography is symbolic of the desire to use the coming celebrations to help bring people together.

“We’ve had so much division and so much polarization over the last many decades, but certainly over the last few years, that to be able to bring the country together to celebrate America’s 250th birthday through patriotism, shared values and a renewed sense of civic pride, to be able to do that in the center of the country, is incredibly important,” she said.

A recent Gallup poll showed the widest partisan split in patriotism in over two decades, with only about a third of Democrats saying they are proud to be American compared with about 9 in 10 Republicans.

About 4 in 10 US adults approve of Trump’s performance as president, according to a June AP-NORC poll, while about 6 in 10 disapprove. That poll also



A new flag pole on the South Lawn of the White House on June 18 in Washington. (AP)

showed a majority of Americans said the June military parade that Trump greenlit in Washington for the 250th anniversary of the US Army - an event that fell on his 79th birthday - was “not a good use” of government money.

Crowley spoke to the political and ideological schisms that left the country “torn apart” ahead of its last big birthday celebration, noting that 1976 closely

followed the Vietnam War and the Watergate scandal that led Richard Nixon to resign from the presidency.

“That moment was critical to uniting the country and moving forward, and I am very optimistic and hopeful that the yearlong celebration that we’re about to launch will do the same thing in this present moment,” she said in an interview.

America’s 250th birthday “is something that I think that all Americans can come together to celebrate and honor our history as well as our present and our future,” Crowley said.

On July 4, 1776, the Continental Congress adopted the Declaration of Independence, officially marking the 13 colonies’ split from Great Britain.

“We’re gonna have a big, big celebration, as you know, 250 years,” Trump said about the birthday during his Memorial Day address to a solemn audience at Arlington National Cemetery. “In some ways, I’m glad I missed that second term where it was because I wouldn’t be your president for that.”

Video of then-candidate Trump proposing a “Great American State Fair” in Iowa in May 2023 began to recirculate after his reelection last November. Iowa Gov. Kim Reynolds, a Republican, told the White House earlier this year that Iowa stood “ready” to host the event and that Trump had the state’s full support, according to a draft of Reynolds’ letter obtained by The Associated Press.

The culminating fair instead will be held next year on the National Mall in Washington, according to a White House official who was not authorized to share details publicly and spoke on condition of anonymity. But Trump honored his initial proposal with a kickoff in the first-in-the-nation caucus state.

The lineup Thursday night will include Lee Greenwood, according to social media posts advertising the event, whose song, “God Bless the USA,” is a regular feature at Trump rallies and official events. Also attending will be Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem and Agriculture Secretary Brooke Rollins.



Chicago police investigate the scene of a shooting that took place at Artis Restaurant and Lounge located on Chicago Avenue in the River North neighborhood on July 3. (AP)

Chicago shooting kills 4

Four people have died from gunshot wounds and 14 others have been hospitalized following a drive-by shooting in Chicago, police said Thursday. At least three were in critical condition.

The shooting happened late Wednesday in Chicago’s River North neighborhood. Several media outlets said it happened outside a restaurant and lounge that had hosted an album release party for a rapper.

Someone opened fire into a crowd standing outside, police said, and the vehicle immediately drove away.

No one was in custody, police said.

Preliminary information from police said 13 women and five men ranging in age from 21 to 32 were shot, and that the dead included two men and two women. Those shot were taken to multiple hospitals, police said. (AP)

US prez ramps up attack against NYC’s Mamdani

NEW YORK, July 3, (AP): US President Donald Trump has a new political foil: New York’s Democratic nominee for mayor, **Zohran Mamdani**. The president, who has a history of spewing sometimes vile insults at rivals, has in recent days escalated his attacks against the 33-year-old self-described democratic socialist. Trump has threatened to arrest Mamdani, to deport him and even to take over the country’s largest city if he wins the general election in November.

“As President of the United States, I’m not going to let this Communist Lunatic destroy New York. Rest assured, I hold all the levers, and have all the cards,” Trump wrote in an ominous message on his Truth Social site Wednesday morning. “I’ll save New York City, and make it HotLand Great again, just like I did with the Good Ol’ USA!”

Mamdani’s surprise victory over former New York Gov. Andrew



Mamdani

Cuomo has given Republicans a new target as they seek to paint the entire Democratic Party as extreme and out of touch with voters heading into elections this fall in New Jersey and Virginia and next year’s high-stakes midterm elections. Since Mamdani’s win, they have repeatedly highlighted his most controversial past comments and positions, casting him as dangerous, a communist, and an antisemite, and trying to tie him to all other Democratic officials.

That has included intense criticism of his platform, as well as blatantly xenophobic and Islamophobic attacks.

If Mamdani wins, he would become the city’s furthest-left mayor in modern history. He ran on a platform that included opening city-run grocery stores, making buses free, freezing rent on rent-stabilized apartments, and raising property taxes on “richer and whiter neighborhoods.”

Though he softened his stance as he campaigned, he called the New York Police Department “racist, anti-queer and a major threat to public safety” in a 2020 social media post, and in others, called for abolishing the entire prison system.



First responders work the scene at Cross Keys Airport in Gloucester County, NJ, after a skydiving aircraft went off the end of a runway and crashed into the woods on July 2. (AP)

15 injured in plane crash

Fifteen people were taken to the hospital after a skydiving aircraft radioed it was having engine trouble after takeoff and crashed on landing near an airport in southern New Jersey on Wednesday, according to authorities.

The single engine Cessna 208B was carrying 15 people when it crashed at about 5:30 p.m. at the Cross Keys Airport, about 21 miles (34 kilometers) southeast of Philadelphia, according to the Federal Aviation Administration.

“The plane did try to circle back and attempt a landing we are told but was unsuccessful in that attempt,” Andrew Halter, with Gloucester County Emergency Management, said during a news conference Wednesday night.

The injuries ranged from minor to critical and the plane was severely damaged, Halter said. Some of the people on board were covered in jet fuel and had to be decontaminated before being taken to the hospital, he said. (AP)



Firefighters use a hose as they try to extinguish a blaze near the town of Ierapetra on the south coast of Crete island, Greece on July 3, as a fast-moving wildfire prompted authorities to clear villages and coastal areas, officials said. (AP)

Wildfire on Greek island of Crete prompts evacuations

Firefighters were struggling Thursday to bring a major wildfire on Greece’s southern island of Crete under control, hampered by gale force winds whipping up the flames.

Thousands of people were evacuated from hotels and homes overnight after the fire started Wednesday afternoon in the Ierapetra area on the island’s southern coast, officials said.

The head of the hoteliers’ association of Ierapetra and southeastern Crete, Giorgos Tzarakis, told local media about 5,000 tourists had been evacuated from the area, and that several homes and businesses had

been damaged.

By Thursday morning, 230 firefighters backed by 10 water-dropping helicopters were battling the flames advancing through forest and farmland.

Gale force winds in the area, with gusts reaching about 50 miles (80 kilometers) per hour, “are constantly creating ... new outbreaks, making firefighting work very difficult,” said fire department spokesman Vassilis Vathrakogiannis. Two people were evacuated by boat overnight, while six private boats were on standby in case further evacuations by sea became necessary, the coast guard said. (AP)

Serbia police detain 79 protesters as dissent persists against Vucic

BELGRADE, Serbia, July 3, (AP): Serbian police said they detained 79 university students and other protesters as they broke up street blockades in several cities that are part of persistent dissent against President Aleksandar Vucic’s populist government.

Officers in riot gear intervened late Wednesday and early Thursday in the capital, Belgrade, the northern city of Novi Sad and the southern cities of Nis and Novi Pazar. Authorities denied reports of police brutality and excessive force against demonstrators.

University students behind the protests said police charged and injured many peaceful demonstrators. Witnesses told local media that riot police beat up protesters with batons and shields and that four students were hospitalized, including one with a broken clavicle.

Four officers were injured and a police vehicle was damaged, the Interior Ministry said in a statement, noting officers “acted in accordance with the law” while responding to the unrest Wednesday and early Thursday. Tensions in the Balkan country have soared since a rally Saturday demanding early parliamentary



Serbian gendarmerie officers remove a street blockade that was 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 in Belgrade, Serbia on June 30. (AP)

elections. The gathering by tens of thousands of people in Belgrade ended with clashes between riot police and groups of protesters.

Vucic has refused to schedule a snap vote despite more than eight months of

persistent demonstrations. The protests began in November after a renovated rail station canopy collapsed in Novi Sad, killing 16 people and triggering allegations of corruption-fueled negligence in state infrastructure projects.

Denmark’s PM backs Ukraine in its quest to join European Union

AARHUS, Denmark, July 2, (AP): Danish Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen vowed Thursday to back Ukraine in its quest to join the European Union, as Denmark officially launched its six-month presidency of the world’s biggest trading bloc.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy joined Frederiksen and European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen in the western city of Aarhus, where Denmark is marking the start of its eighth EU presidency since joining in 1973.

It comes after the Trump administration decided to halt some arms shipments promised to help Kyiv fight off Russia’s invasion.

Russia’s renewed push to capture more territory has put Ukraine’s defenses under severe strain, with the war now in its fourth year. Russian missiles and drones are battering Ukrainian cities. US-led efforts to find a peace settlement have stalled. “Ukraine belongs in the EU. It is in the interest of both Denmark and Europe. Therefore, the Danish Presidency will do everything we can to help Ukraine on its path towards EU membership,” Frederiksen said in a statement.

Ukraine’s EU membership path is being blocked by Hungary. Prime Minister Viktor Orbán insists that the country should remain a buffer zone between Russia and NATO countries.

Increased military support, cooperation with the Ukrainian defense industry and new sanctions against Russia were also due to be discussed between EU officials and Zelenskyy.



From left: Denmark’s King Frederik, museum director Rebecca Mathew, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, Denmark’s Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen and Denmark’s Queen Mary speak, during the official opening of Denmark’s EU presidency in Aarhus, Denmark on July 3. (AP)

“We must partly strengthen Ukraine. Partly weaken Russia. The first thing we do is increase military support. Ukraine is crucial for Europe’s security,” Frederiksen said. “The second thing we do is sanctions. We must increase the pressure on Russia.”

Her government has invested in Ukraine’s defense industry - which can produce arms and ammunition more quickly and cheaply than elsewhere in Europe - and has invited Ukrainian companies to set up shop on safer ground in Denmark.

Zelenskyy was also scheduled to

have an audience with King Frederik X of Denmark.

Presidencies rotate between the 27 EU member countries every six months. The nation in charge sets policy priorities and organizes the bloc’s working agenda. It’s supposed to act as an “honest broker,” setting aside national interests to foster consensus.

Denmark is entering its term with the motto “A Strong Europe in a Changing World.” Its aim is to help ensure the EU can take responsibility for its own security, boost economic competitiveness and tackle climate change.

Europe

**EU, China hold dialogue:** At the 13th round of China-EU High-level Strategic Dialogue Wednesday, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi and EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy **Kaja Kallas** agreed to deepen mutual understanding and work together to get well-prepared for the upcoming leaders’ meeting for enhancing cooperation.

Noting this year marks the 50th anniversary of bilateral diplomatic ties as well as the 80th anniversary of the founding of the United Nations (UN), Wang, also a member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, said the upcoming China-EU leaders’ meeting is drawing broad attention.

Looking back on the extraordinary journey of China-EU relations over the past five decades, Wang said, their relationship should be characterized as that of partners rather than rivals, with cooperation as the defining feature and ballast.

The two sides need to properly handle their differences through dialogue within this framework, he said.

China and Europe have no fundamental conflicts of interest but rather share extensive common interests, Wang said. Both sides support multilateralism and open cooperation,



Kallas

uphold the central role of the UN and the democratization of international relations, and are committed to resolving disputes peacefully through dialogue. (Xinhua)

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**Lithuanian govt OK’s proposal:** The Lithuanian government approved a proposal by the Energy Ministry on Wednesday to evaluate the potential for developing nuclear energy in the country. A special working group will be established to conduct the assessment.

“We are essentially talking about small modular nuclear reactors,” Energy Minister Zigmantas Vaiciunas said during a cabinet meeting, according to the Baltic News Service (BNS).

The Energy Ministry emphasized that, in light of climate change and the need for energy security, nuclear reactors with a combined capacity of up to 1.5 gigawatts (GW) could be installed in Lithuania. Projections indicate that electricity demand in the country will rise significantly over the coming decades, from 24 terawatt-hours (TWh) in 2030 to 48 TWh in 2040, and 74 TWh by 2050.

“To ensure sufficient electricity generation capacity and a reliable, accessible power supply, it is essential to consider new, clean, and controllable electricity sources in Lithuania,” the ministry stated. Lithuania previously operated the Soviet-era Ignalina Nuclear Power Plant, which was shut down in 2010 as part of the country’s commitments upon joining the European Union. A later referendum on constructing a new nuclear plant failed to gain public approval. (Xinhua)





This photo shows aircraft carrier Shandong sailing in Hong Kong waters, south China, July 3, 2025. A fleet of the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) Navy led by the aircraft carrier Shandong arrived in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) on Thursday morning, kicking off a five-day visit. (Xinhua)

Chinese aircraft carrier sails into HK to boost patriotism

China's first domestically-built aircraft carrier arrived in Hong Kong on Thursday as part of a drive to drum up patriotism, days after the former British colony marked the 28th anniversary of its return to Chinese rule.

The Shandong entered the city's waters alongside another vessel from its battle group in the early morning hours. According to state media, two destroyers and a frigate had accompanied the aircraft carrier into Hong Kong. The warships

will be open for public visits this weekend.

All 10,000 available tickets for visits have already been claimed by eager residents. Two thousand of them were for seeing the Shandong, while the others were for one of the destroyers and the frigate, local media reported.

The arrival of the carrier comes days after the Asian financial hub marked 28 years since it was turned over to China after more than a century of British colonial rule.

The ship is China's second aircraft carrier and first to have been fully self-built. It is smaller than US carriers, carrying 24 Shenyang J-10 fighters and weighing in at 70,000 tons fully loaded.

China has redoubled its patriotism drive in Hong Kong since crushing anti-government and pro-democracy street protests in 2019. A large number of opposition figures have been imprisoned after the passage of a sweeping new national security law. (AP)

President orders immediate rescue of victims

6 dead after ship sinks in Indonesia Bali Strait

GILIMANUK, Indonesia, July 3, (Agencies): Rescuers were searching Thursday for 24 people who were missing after a ferry sank and six people died the previous night near Indonesia's resort island of Bali.

As of Thursday afternoon, 31 people had been rescued from the ferry's 53 passengers and 12 crew members, the National Search and Rescue Agency said in a statement.

"The condition of this ship is fully submerged, so there is a possibility that there are people inside the ferry. But right now we are focusing on the surface of the water first," Surabaya Search and Rescue head Nanang Sigit said.

The six bodies located by rescuers will be taken to their families in Banyuwangi, Sigit said.

The KMP Tunu Pratama Jaya sank almost half an hour after leaving Ketapang port in the East Java town of Banyuwangi late Wednesday for a trip of about 5 kilometers (3.1 miles) to Bali's Gilimanuk port, authorities said.

A helicopter and 15 boats searched for survivors with assistance from fishermen and people onshore.

Weather was a significant factor in the search effort. Strong waves up to 2 meters (6.5 feet) high and darkness hampered emergency responders overnight. While conditions improved Thursday morning, Indonesia's Meteorology, Climatology and Geophysics Agency indicated waves reached up to



Members of Search And Rescue (SAR) teams depart for search and rescue mission from Tanjung Perak port in Surabaya, East Java, Indonesia on July 3. (Xinhua)

2.5 meters (8.2 feet) with strong currents and winds Thursday afternoon.

"For today's search we are focusing on searching on the water, as the initial victims were found in the water between the location of the accident toward Gilimanuk port," Sigit said in a statement Thursday morning.

An officer at the port witnessed the sinking before rescuers could be alerted.

"The ferry could not be contacted via radio from the beginning. Then it

could be contacted by other ships from the same company. But the ship was already in a tilting condition," Sigit said.

Many of those rescued were unconscious after drifting in choppy waters for hours, Banyuwangi Police Chief Rama Samtama Putra said. Indonesian authorities are investigating the cause of the accident. Survivors told rescuers there appeared to be a leak in the engine room of the ferry, which was carrying 22 vehicles including 14 trucks.

South Korea's President Lee vows to mend inter-Korean ties with US

TOKYO, July 3, (Agencies): South Korean President Lee Jae-myung said Thursday his administration will work to improve relations with North Korea based on cooperation with the US, but acknowledged that dialogue with Pyongyang looks difficult for now, Yonhap News Agency reported.

Speaking at a press conference marking his first month in office, Lee emphasized the importance of dialogue and cooperation with Pyongyang, saying "We should improve relations with North Korea based on fixed coordination with the US."

While acknowledging the challenges of resuming talks due to longstanding hostility and distrust, Lee expressed hope that Seoul's recent suspension of anti-North Korea loudspeaker broadcasts near the border could open the door to renewed engagement.

He added, "When we decided to suspend the loudspeaker broadcasts toward North Korea, I was concerned. But (the North's) response was very swift and exceeded expectations."



South Korean President Lee Jae-myung delivers a speech during a news conference to mark his first 30 days in office at Yeongbingwan of Blue House in Seoul, South Korea on July 3. (AP)

approved the appointment of prime minister nominee Kim Min-seok on Thursday.

The motion to appoint Kim, the ruling Democratic Party's four-term lawmaker, was approved with 173 votes in favor, three against and

three invalid.

Of the 300 members of the ruling party-controlled National Assembly, lawmakers of the conservative opposition People Power Party refused to vote on it, calling for Kim's voluntary resignation.

Emperor to honor POWs who were held in Mongolia

Japan upper house election campaign kicks off

TOKYO, July 3, (Agencies): The election campaign for Japan's House of Councillors, or the upper house of the Diet, was officially launched on Thursday.

The 17-day campaign will determine whether the ruling coalition, currently a minority in the lower house, can retain a majority in the chamber by securing at least 50 of the 125 contested seats.

A total of 519 candidates have registered across electoral districts and proportional representation, including 152 women, nearly 30 percent of the total, marking the second-highest female representation on record, national broadcaster NHK reported.

The central issue in the election is countering inflation, with parties proposing measures such as direct cash payments, reductions or abolition of the consumption tax, and interventions to address surging rice prices.

Additional debate is expected on pensions, social security, declining birthrates, and foreign policy, including responses to U.S. tariff pressures.

Voting is scheduled for July 20.

The upper house has 248 members, and elections are held every three years to choose about half of the seats. The ruling coalition currently holds a total of 75 non-contested seats in the House of Councillors, which means they need to win 50 more seats in the current election to maintain a majority in the



Japan's Emperor Naruhito speaks during a press conference in advance of his visit to Mongolia, at the Imperial Palace in Tokyo on July 2. (AP)

Upper House.

**Also:**

**TOKYO:** Japan's Emperor Naruhito said Wednesday that he will honor thousands of Japanese prisoners of World War II who were held under harsh conditions in Mongolia when he visits the country next week.

Naruhito, marking the 80th anniversary of the end of WWII, has been visiting some of the places where the bloodiest battles and bombings oc-

curred, including Iwo Jima, Okinawa and Hiroshima. It's part of his effort at atonement and remembrance of the tragedy of war fought in the name of his grandfather, Emperor Hirohito.

"I will pay tribute to the Japanese people who unwillingly died in the distant land away from home, and think of their hardships," Naruhito said at a news conference ahead of his July 6-13 trip to Mongolia. His Harvard-educated former diplomat wife, Empress Masako, will accompany him.

Nigeria's opposition leaders form alliance in effort to unseat ruling party in 2027

LAGOS, Nigeria, July 3, (AP): Nigeria's key opposition leaders on Wednesday unveiled a new coalition which they say is aimed at unseating the ruling party in Africa's biggest democracy ahead of the 2027 presidential elections.

The Africa Democratic Congress coalition, challenging President Bola Tinubu's All Progressives Congress party, is led by Atiku Abubakar and Peter Obi, both runners-up in the last presidential vote. They are joined by other top figures, including former federal lawmakers and former governors from the ruling party.

"The coalition will stop Nigeria from becoming a one-party state," said David Mark, a former Senate president and the interim chairman of the alliance, at the unveiling in the capital, Abuja.

Tinubu has been accused of plans to turn Nigeria to a one-party state by allegedly using state mechanisms to convince high-profile politicians to defect from opposition parties to the governing party.

Although the Nigerian leader has denied the allegations, some of his closest allies, including within ruling party



Atiku Abubakar, presidential candidate of the People's Democratic party, Nigeria's opposition party, during a traditional Friday prayers at the Moddibo Adama Mosque in Yola Nigeria on Feb 24, 2023. (AP)

leadership, appeared to be supporting it, triggering concerns in a region threatened with shrinking democratic space.

The battle for the country's top job has intensified, even two years ahead of the next elections, as several federal lawmakers and state governors have

defected to the ruling party in recent months, and opposition politicians have coalesced to contest Tinubu's second term.

The new coalition is reminiscent of the alliance that defeated Nigeria's former ruling party, the Peoples Democratic Party, in 2015 after an uninterrupted 16-year rule.

As was the case in 2015, many see the current administration as not delivering on their key promises to improve the country's ailing security and economic sectors.

Tinubu's government has battled the fallout of unpopular economic reforms after removing decades-long subsidies and floating the country's currency. The reforms have sparked an inflation crisis as the country deals with a resurgence of attacks by armed groups across the country.

Cheta Nwanze, lead partner at SBM Intelligence, a geo-political consultancy, said only a united opposition bloc stands a chance of unseating Tinubu in 2027.

"You cannot remove a sitting government if the opposition is disunited," Nwanze said.



In this photo released by Bureau of the Royal Household, Thailand's Acting Prime Minister Suriya Jungrunreangkit and his Cabinet members to take their oath in front of Thailand's King Maha Vajiralongkorn and Queen Suthida at Ampornsan Throne Hall in Bangkok on July 3. (AP)

Phumtham appointed as acting PM

Thailand swears in new Cabinet members

BANGKOK, July 3, (Agencies): Thailand swore in new Cabinet members Thursday with its government in flux after the Constitutional Court suspended the prime minister less than a year after the same court removed her predecessor.

Paetongtarn Shinawatra, who was suspended as prime minister while under an ethics investigation for a conversation with a senior Cambodian leader, returned to the Cabinet as culture minister.

Paetongtarn has faced growing dissatisfaction over her handling of a border dispute with Cambodia, including an armed confrontation in May in which a Cambodian soldier was killed.

In a leaked phone call with Cambodian Senate President Hun Sen, she

attempted to defuse tensions - but instead set off a string of complaints and public protests. Critics said she went too far in appeasing Hun Sen and damaged Thailand's image and interests.

The Constitutional Court voted unanimously Tuesday to review a petition accusing Paetongtarn of a breach of the ethics and voted 7-2 to immediately suspend her until it issues its ruling. The court gave Paetongtarn 15 days to give evidence to support her case. It's unclear when it will rule.

The same day, Thailand's king endorsed a Cabinet lineup in which Paetongtarn would be the culture minister.

Thailand's Cabinet on Thursday agreed to appoint Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister Phumtham Wechayachai as acting prime minister,

following the suspension of Paetongtarn Shinawatra.

Phumtham, who is listed as the first acting prime minister, will possess the same authority and responsibilities as the prime minister, the Thai government said in a statement issued after new Cabinet members were sworn into office.

Deputy Prime Minister and Transport Minister Suriya Jungrunreangkit, who previously took the role as acting prime minister, was named as the second acting prime minister.

Paetongtarn, who was previously appointed to double as culture minister in the Cabinet reshuffle, has been suspended from performing her prime ministerial duties by a constitutional court order pending an ethics investigation.

Haiti's gangs gain 'near-total control' of capital as violence escalates: UN

UNITED NATIONS, July 3, (AP): Haiti's gangs have gained "near-total control" of the capital and authorities are unable to stop escalating violence across the impoverished Caribbean nation, senior UN officials warned Wednesday.

An estimated 90% of the capital Port-au-Prince is now under control of criminal groups who are expanding attacks not only into surrounding areas but beyond into previously peaceful areas, Ghada Fathy Waly, executive director of the UN Office on Drugs and Crime, told the UN Security Council.

"Southern Haiti, which until recently was insulated from the violence, has seen a sharp increase in gang-related incidents," she said. "And in the east, criminal groups are exploiting land routes, including key crossings like Belladere and Malpasse, where attacks against police and customs officials have been reported."

Waly said the state's authority to govern is rapidly shrinking as gang control expands with cascading effects. Criminal groups are stepping



Security guards stand watch as Haiti's Prime Minister Alix Didier Fils-Aime, center, talks with the Mexico's Charge d'Affaires Jesus Cisneros after attending an event marking one year since the start of the Multinational Security Support Mission in Port-au-Prince, Haiti on June 26. (AP)

into the vacuum left by the absence or limited delivery of public services and are establishing "parallel governance structures," and gang control of

major trade routes has paralyzed legal commerce, leading to soaring prices for cooking fuel and rice, Haiti's staple food, she said.

Subcontinent

**30 Afghan inmates return home:** A total of 30 Afghan nationals who were released by Pakistan from prisons have returned home, the Radio and Television of Afghanistan said on Wednesday.

The Afghans were back in Afghanistan on Tuesday, and all of them received necessary aid at the crossing point.

Pakistan released 25 Afghan nationals from jails and sent them back to Afghanistan last week. (Xinhua)

**Nations exchange lists of prisoners:** Pakistan and India on Tuesday exchanged lists of civilian prisoners and

fishermen held in each other's custody, in line with a bilateral agreement on consular access, officials said.

The exchange took place simultaneously through diplomatic channels in Islamabad and New Delhi, as part of the Agreement on Consular Access signed in 2008, which mandates both countries to share such lists twice a year, on Jan. 1 and July 1.

According to Pakistan's Foreign Ministry, the government handed over a list of 246 Indian or believed-to-be-Indian prisoners, including 53 civilian prisoners and 193 fishermen, to a representative of the Indian High Commission in Islamabad.

In return, the Indian government shared details of 463 Pakistani or believed-to-be-Pakistani prisoners, comprising 382 civilians and 81 fishermen, with a diplomat from the High Commission for Pakistan in New Delhi. (Xinhua)



## Kuwait oil price up 46 cents to USD 69.05 pb

KUWAIT CITY, July 3, (KUNA): The price of Kuwait oil went up by 46 cents to USD 69.05 per barrel on Wednesday as opposed to USD 68.59 last Tuesday, said the Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) on Thursday.

Brent futures also went up by USD 2.00 to USD 69.11 pb and West Texas Intermediate rose by USD 2.00 to USD 67.45 pb.

# Business

Education and youth are essential for comprehensive development: Al-Ruwaieh

## KFH organizes largest honor ceremony for top high school graduates

KUWAIT CITY, July 3: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) has organized the largest honor ceremony to celebrate 140 high school top achievers in literature, science and religious studies for the academic year 2024-2025. The ceremony also recognized students from private schools and those who had received international recognition.

The event was held under the patronage of Minister of Education, Eng. Sayed Jalal Al-Tabtabai, with the attendance of KFH Deputy Group CEO Transformation, Technology and Operations, Haitham Al-Terkait, KFH Head of Public Relations and Media, Yousef Al-Ruwaieh, and Ministry of Education representative, the Assistant Undersecretary for Educational Development at the Ministry, Maryam Al-Enezi.

Al-Ruwaieh said: “On behalf of myself and KFH, I extend my heartfelt congratulations to our outstanding students. I also congratulate their parents, who supported them throughout their educational journey until they reaped the rewards of their dedication and success.” He stressed KFH’s commitment to organizing an annual ceremony to honor top high school students in collaboration with the Ministry of Education.

He expressed his appreciation to the Minister of Education, the undersecretaries, academics, and all staff at the Ministry for their efforts throughout the academic year, praising their role in advancing the educational process and enhancing the capabilities of students and youth.

Al-Ruwaieh emphasized that student excellence is a crucial milestone for shaping their future. He advised students to carefully select their university majors and to persevere in learning and working diligently. He stressed that continued success and sustained excellence are paramount. He also encouraged them to expand their knowledge, develop their skills, acquire new abilities, and foster their creativity and innovation to remain distinguished and active members of society.



Yousef Al-Ruwaieh



A word from one of the outstanding students.



Superior honor



Haitham Al-Terkait presenting a souvenir to Maryam Al-Enezi in the presence of Yousef Al-Ruwaieh.



Outstanding student with a certificate of appreciation from Kuwait Finance House.



Outstanding student with a certificate of appreciation from Kuwait Finance House.



Honoring outstanding special education students.



Top & above: A group of outstanding students.



Honoring one of the outstanding students.



Top & above: A group of outstanding students.



Interview with one of the top students.



Part of the audience.

## Gulf Bank hosts exclusive tufting and embroidery workshop for red cardholders

KUWAIT CITY, July 3: In line with its ongoing commitment to enriching the youth experience, Gulf Bank recently organized a creative workshop on tufting and embroidery arts for its red cardholders, in collaboration with the talented young Kuwaiti artist, Aseel Mubarak.

The workshop introduced participants to the techniques of punch needle embroidery and tufting – a form of textile art that involves threading loops of yarn through fabric to create soft, textured designs. Often referred to as “thread painting,” this art form offers a relaxing and expressive outlet for creativity.

A number of red customers took part in the engaging experience, where they learned the basics of this intricate art and crafted their own pieces under the guidance of Aseel Mubarak. With over 30 workshops led to date, Aseel has played a vital role in reviving and spreading the culture of textile arts across various segments of the community.

red is Gulf Bank’s youth-focused account, designed for individuals aged 15 to 25. It offers a wide range of benefits including prepaid cards, exclusive offers, rewards on purchases, and access to unique events and experiences that complement their lifestyle and aspirations.

The workshop is part of Gulf Bank’s broader strategy to deliver diverse and meaningful initiatives that resonate with younger generations, enabling them to explore



A group photo of a number of young people who are customers of the red account, with the creative Aseel Mubarak in the middle.

their passions and develop new skills – including in the areas of creativity and the arts.

This initiative also reflects Gulf Bank’s dedication to supporting emerging Kuwaiti talents and creatives, while reinforcing its role as a community-centered institution that prioritizes sustainability and national development.

As part of its long-standing efforts to empower youth in alignment with Kuwait’s national vision, Gulf Bank has maintained an active partnership with INJAZ Ku-

wait for 19 years – contributing to the training of over 22,000 students in entrepreneurship. The Bank also continues to sponsor LOYAC’s The Influencer “AlMoather” program, which hones public speaking skills among youth, along with a range of sports, educational, and social activities that cater to their evolving needs.

Gulf Bank remains committed to placing young people at the heart of its initiatives – nurturing the next generation of thinkers, creators, and leaders.

In line with its continuous support to the ‘Let’s Be Aware’ campaign

## NBK calls on customers to verify chalet bookings before processing payments

KUWAIT CITY, July 3: National Bank of Kuwait continued its effective participation in the “Let’s Be Aware” campaign launched by the Central Bank of Kuwait in collaboration with local banks and Kuwait Banking Association, with the aim to enhance banking culture and financial awareness and literacy in society.

To that end, NBK has been utilizing all its efforts to raise public awareness about fraudulent actions and ways to avoid them by publishing educational content such as videos, text messages, and pieces of advice through its social media platforms and other channels.

In this campaign, NBK warns against the fraudulent methods and various techniques scammers use to steal customer information or money through fake reservations of hotel apartments or chalets. Many unverified companies entice some customers through their social media pages by posting videos of a luxurious chalets with a stunning sea view for rent at a price lower than the actual market price, with the condition of obtaining a down payment for the reservation. After payment, it becomes clear that the reservation was made through a fake company or that the reservation was made for a completely different chalet than the one agreed upon.

Therefore, NBK warns against dealing with unverified websites or companies to book for hotels or chalets, emphasizing the need to first confirm the reliability of any company, website, or agent handling the reservation process by visiting the chalet before paying any money to avoid fraud.

Moreover, NBK warns against clicking on payment links, as fraudsters scammers deliberately send ones from outside Kuwait using numbers that appear to be local using AI.

NBK believes in the importance of enhancing financial literacy among all segments of society and raising awareness about the best ways to benefit from



Diraya logo

its diverse services through its branches and digital channels, which have the highest number of followers among all banks in Kuwait. NBK’s efforts to educate its customers are a fundamental pillar of its strategy, as it consistently emphasizes the need for customers to adhere to general instructions and guidelines to avoid digital fraud, as well as the importance of regularly changing bank card PINs and not sharing them with fraudsters claiming to be from the bank.

The “Let’s Be Aware” campaign is the largest in the region, aiming to raise banking and financial literacy among bank customers. It also addresses critical awareness topics, including the necessary steps to avoid fraud, the threats of high-risk investments, the best ways to benefit from banking services, and it promotes a culture of savings and investment along with other relevant topics.

It is worth mentioning that NBK is a key supporter and partner in all CBK’s initiatives and campaigns aiming to raise financial awareness and spread banking culture among all segments of society. As a leading financial institution in Kuwait and across the region, NBK frequently organizes various activities that contribute to raising awareness about all topics related to the banking sector. It also organizes various activities and training courses on combating fraud and financial crimes.



Al Muzaini Exchange latest branch at Kuwait International Airport – Terminal 4.

## Al Muzaini Exchange launches new branch at Kuwait International Airport Terminal 4

KUWAIT CITY, July 3: Al Muzaini Exchange, Kuwait’s leading name in currency exchange and remittance services, proudly announced the opening of its latest branch at Kuwait International Airport – Terminal 4 (T4) on 2nd July 2025. Located after passport control and near the Duty Free area, this branch brings seamless currency exchange services even closer to travelers.

With this strategic expansion, Al Muzaini continues its mission of being “Always Near You”,

offering passengers access to a wide range of global currencies just before they depart.

“Our new Terminal 4 branch reflects our ongoing commitment to customer convenience and service excellence. We understand the urgency of last-minute travel needs, and we’re proud to provide travelers with secure and efficient currency exchange, even after immigration,” said Hugh Fernandes, General Manager of Al Muzaini Exchange.

The T4 branch will operate 24/7, ensuring

round-the-clock accessibility for travelers heading abroad. Whether it’s a late-night departure or an early morning flight, customers can rely on Al Muzaini’s trusted services right until boarding.

This new addition strengthens Al Muzaini’s national presence, bringing the company’s total to 145+ branches across Kuwait. Travelers can also benefit from Al Muzaini’s digital platforms, including the Al Muzaini mobile app and website, to conveniently order foreign currency, send money, or locate the nearest branch.



US Senate rejects ‘AI amnesty’ for Big Tech

# GOP divide derails artificial intelligence regulations freeze

NEW YORK, July 3, (AP): A controversial bid to deter states from regulating artificial intelligence for a decade seemed on its way to passing as the Republican tax cut and spending bill championed by President Donald Trump worked its way through the U.S. Senate.

But as the bill neared a final vote, a relentless campaign against it by a constellation of conservatives - including Republican governors, lawmakers, think tanks and social groups - had been eroding support. One, conservative activist Mike Davis, appeared on the show of right-wing podcaster Steve Bannon, urging viewers to call their senators to reject this “AI amnesty” for “trillion-dollar Big Tech monopolists.”

He said he also texted with Trump directly, advising the president to stay neutral on the issue despite what Davis characterized as significant pressure from White House AI czar David Sacks, Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick, Texas Sen. Ted Cruz and others.

Conservatives passionate about getting rid of the provision had spent weeks fighting others in the party who favored the legislative moratorium because they saw it as essential for the country to compete against China in the race for AI dominance. The schism marked the latest and perhaps most noticeable split within the GOP about whether to let states continue to put guardrails on emerging technologies or minimize such interference.

In the end, the advocates for guardrails won, revealing the enormous influence of a segment of the Republican Party that has come to distrust Big Tech. They believe states must remain free to protect their citizens against potential harms of

the industry, whether from AI, social media or emerging technologies.

“Tension in the conservative movement is palpable,” said Adam Thierer of the R Street Institute, a conservative-leaning think tank. Thierer first proposed the idea of the AI moratorium last year. He noted “the animus surrounding Big Tech” among many Republicans.

“That was the differentiating factor.”

The Heritage Foundation, children’s safety groups and Republican state lawmakers, governors and attorneys general all weighed in against the AI moratorium. Democrats, tech watchdogs and some tech companies opposed it, too.

Sensing the moment was right on Monday night, Republican Sen. Marsha Blackburn of Tennessee, who opposed the AI provision and had attempted to water it down, teamed up with Democratic Sen. Maria Cantwell of Washington to suggest striking the entire proposal. By morning, the provision was removed in a 99-1 vote.

The whirlwind demise of a provision that initially had the backing of House and Senate leadership and the White House disappointed other conservatives who felt it gave China, a main AI competitor, an advantage.

Ryan Fournier, chairman of Students for Trump and chief marketing officer of the startup Uncensored AI, had supported the moratorium, writing on X that it “stops blue states like California and New York from handing our future to Communist China.”

“Republicans are that way ... I get it,” he said in an interview, but added there needs to be “one set of rules, not 50” for AI innovation to be successful.

Tech companies, tech trade groups, venture capitalists and multiple Trump administration figures had voiced their support for the provision that would have blocked states from passing their own AI regulations for years. They argued that in the absence of federal standards, letting the states take the lead would leave tech innovators mired in a confusing patchwork of rules.

Lutnick, the commerce secretary, posted that the provision “makes sure American companies can develop cutting-edge tech for our military, infrastructure, and critical industries - without interference from anti-innovation politicians.” AI czar Sacks had also publicly supported the measure.

After the Senate passed the bill without the AI provision, the White House responded to an inquiry for Sacks with the president’s position, saying Trump “is fully supportive of the Senate-passed version of the One, Big, Beautiful Bill.”

Acknowledging defeat of his provision on the Senate floor, Cruz noted how pleased China, liberal politicians and “radical left-wing groups” would be to hear the news.

But Blackburn pointed out that the federal government has failed to pass laws that address major concerns about AI, such as keeping children safe and securing copyright protections.

“But you know who has passed it?” she said. “The states.”

Conservatives distrusting Big Tech for what they see as social media companies stifling speech during the COVID-19 pandemic and surrounding elections said that tech companies shouldn’t get a free pass, especially on something that carries as much risk as AI.



Will Etheridge, CEO of Southern Energy Management, looks at a solar panel that will be installed on James Asbill's home in Chapel Hill, N.C., Wednesday, July 2, 2025. (AP)

## Climate goals in peril

# US solar sector warns of layoffs as credits face axe

WASHINGTON, July 3, (AP): As Republicans in Congress rushed forward with a massive tax and spending cut bill, a North Carolina renewable energy executive wrote to his 190 employees with a warning: Deep cuts to clean energy tax credits were going to hurt.

“(The changes) would almost certainly include the loss of jobs on our team,” wrote Will Etheridge, CEO of Southern Energy Management in Raleigh. “I’m telling you that because you deserve transparency and the truth - even if that truth is uncomfortable.”

The bill now in the House takes an ax to clean energy incentives, including killing a 30% tax credit for rooftop residential solar by the end of the year that the Biden administration’s Inflation Reduction Act had extended into the next decade. Trump has called the clean energy tax credits in the climate law part of a “green new scam” that improperly shifts taxpayer subsidies to help the “globalist climate agenda” and energy sources like wind and solar.

Businesses and analysts say the GOP-backed bill will likely reverse the sector’s growth and eliminate jobs.

“The residential solar industry is going to be absolutely creamed by this,” said Bob Keefe, executive director of E2, a business group that advocates for pro-environment policies.

President Donald Trump’s “Big Beautiful Bill” takes aim at renewables broadly, including phasing out tax credits enjoyed by utility-scale solar and wind. But cutting the residential solar credit will happen sooner.

Companies have announced more than \$20 billion in clean-energy investments in North Carolina in recent years. Etheridge, whose company installs solar panels and helps ensure buildings are energy efficient, was among many in the sector to lobby Republican U.S. Sen. Thom Tillis of North Carolina for changes in the bill.

Tillis ultimately was one of three Republicans to vote against the measure, but in a sign of Trump’s power over legislators to pass it, Tillis said he wouldn’t seek reelection after Trump said he’d likely support a primary challenger.

Now, Etheridge says losing the tax credit will likely mean laying off 50 to 55 of his workers. He called the elimination of residential tax credits a “bait and switch.”

“I made a decision from being an employee to taking out a loan from my grandmother to buy into my business and put my house on the line” in part because of the stability of the tax credits, he said. He said he’ll scramble now to figure out ways to diversify his business.

WASHINGTON, July 3, (AP): U.S. employers added 147,000 jobs in June as the American labor market continues to show surprising resilience despite uncertainty over President Donald Trump’s economic policies. The unemployment rate ticked down 4.1% from 4.2% in May, the Labor Department said Thursday.

Hiring rose modestly from a revised 144,000 in May and beat economists expectations of fewer than 118,000 new jobs and a rise in the unemployment rate.

The U.S. job market has cooled considerably from red-hot days of 2021-2023 when the economy bounced back with unexpected strength from COVID-19 lockdowns and companies were desperate for workers. So far this year employers have added an average 124,000 jobs a month, down from 168,000 in 2024 and an average 400,000 from 2021 through 2023.

Hiring decelerated after the Federal Reserve raised its benchmark interest rate 11 times in 2022 and 2023. But the economy did not collapse, defying widespread predictions that the higher borrowing costs would cause a recession. Companies kept hiring, just at a more modest pace.

But the job market increasingly looks under strain. A survey released Wednesday by the payroll processor ADP found that private companies cut 33,000 jobs last month. “Though layoffs continue to be rare, a hesitancy to hire and a reluctance to replace departing work-



Katy Frank, a former computer scientist at the NOAA Great Lakes Environmental Research Lab, who lost her job Thursday, protests outside the John D. Dingell Veterans Affairs Medical Center in Detroit, Friday, Feb. 28, 2025. (AP)

ers led to job losses last month,” said ADP chief economist Nela Richardson. (The ADP numbers frequently differ from the Labor Department’s official job count.)

Employers are now contending with fallout from Trump’s policies, especially his aggressive use of import taxes - tariffs.

Mainstream economists say that tariffs raise prices for businesses and consumers alike and make the economy less efficient by reducing competition.

They also invite retaliatory tariffs from other countries, hurting U.S. exporters.

The erratic way that Trump has rolled out his tariffs - announcing and then suspending them, then coming up with new ones - has left businesses bewildered.

Meanwhile, fewer Americans applied for unemployment benefits last week as layoffs in the U.S. remain low despite uncertainty about how tariffs will impact the economy.

The Labor Department reported

Thursday that jobless claims for the week ending June 28 fell by 4,000 to 233,000, less than the 241,000 that analysts forecast.

The four-week average of claims, which evens out some of the weekly volatility, fell by 3,750 to 241,500.

Applications for unemployment aid are considered a proxy for layoffs.

The total number of Americans collecting unemployment benefits the week of June 21 held steady at 1.97 million.

## Cutbacks in bid to advance AI ambitions

# Microsoft’s largest layoff in years hits Xbox, sales and other divisions

NEW YORK, July 3, (AP): Microsoft says it is laying off about 9,000 workers, its second mass layoff in months and its largest in more than two years.

The tech giant began sending out layoff notices Wednesday that hit the company’s Xbox video game business and other divisions.

Among those losing their jobs are 830 workers tied to Microsoft’s headquarters in Redmond, Washington, according to a notice sent to state officials Wednesday.

Microsoft said the cuts will affect multiple teams around the world, including its sales division, part of “organizational changes” needed to succeed in a “dynamic marketplace.” The company won’t say the total number of layoffs except that it was about 4% of the workforce it had a year ago.

A memo to gaming division employees Wednesday from Xbox CEO Phil Spencer said the cuts would position the video game business “for enduring success and allow us to focus on strategic growth areas.”

Xbox would “follow Microsoft’s lead in removing layers of management to increase agility and effectiveness,” Spencer wrote.

Microsoft employed 228,000 full-time workers as of June 2024, the last time it reported its annual headcount. Its latest layoffs would cut fewer than 4% of that workforce, according to Microsoft. But it has already had at least three layoffs this year and it’s unlikely that new hiring has matched the amount lost. Either way, a 4% cut would amount to somewhere in the range of 9,000 people.

Until now, this year’s biggest layoff was in May, when Microsoft began laying off about 6,000 workers, nearly 3% of its global workforce and its largest job cuts in more than two years.

The cutbacks come as Microsoft continues to invest huge amounts of money in the data centers, specialized computer chips and other infrastructure needed to advance its AI ambitions. The company anticipated those expenses would cost it about \$80 billion in the last fiscal year. Its new fiscal year began Tuesday.

Microsoft just last month cut another 300 workers based out of its Redmond headquarters, on top of nearly 2,000 who lost their jobs in the Puget Sound region in May, most of them in software engineering and product management roles, according to information it sent to Washington state employment officials.

Microsoft’s chief financial officer Amy Hood said on an April earnings call that the company was focused on “building high-performing teams and increasing our agility by reducing layers with fewer managers.”

The company has repeatedly characterized its recent layoffs as part of

a push to trim management layers, but the May focus on cutting software engineering jobs has fueled worries about how the company’s own AI code-writing products could reduce the number of people needed for programming work.

Microsoft CEO Satya Nadella said earlier this year that “maybe 20, 30% of the code” for some of Microsoft’s coding projects “are probably all written by software.”

The latest layoffs, however, seemed centered on slower-growing areas of the company’s business, said Wedbush Securities analyst Dan Ives.

“They’re focused more and more on AI, cloud and next-generation Microsoft and really looking to cut costs around Xbox and some of the more legacy areas,” Ives said. “I think they overhired over the years. This is Nadella and team making sure that they’re keeping with efficiency and that’s the name of the game in Wall Street.”



A Microsoft sign and logo are pictured at the company's headquarters, Friday, April 4, 2025, in Redmond, Wash. (AP)



Currency traders watch monitors near a screen showing the Korea Composite Stock Price Index (KOSPI) and the foreign exchange rate between U.S. dollar and South Korean won, top right, at the foreign exchange dealing room of the KEB Hana Bank headquarters in Seoul, South Korea, Thursday, July 3, 2025. (AP)

## Asian shares mostly higher

# Wall Street hovers near record highs

NEW YORK, July 3, (AP): Wall Street was largely unchanged early Thursday, hovering near record levels ahead of new U.S. jobs data that is expected to show unemployment ticked up to the highest rates since late 2021.

Futures for S&P 500, Nasdaq and Dow Jones Industrial Average each inched up less than 0.1% before the bell. Markets are closed Friday for the July 4 holiday.

Treasury yields edged lower ahead of the highly anticipated June jobs report from the Labor Department. Economists believe that hiring slowed again last month as President Donald Trump’s trade wars, federal hiring

freeze and immigration crackdown squeezes the American job market.

Economists project that U.S. employers added 117,500 jobs last month and that the unemployment rate ticked up to 4.3%, which would be the highest since October 2021. However, it’s still low enough to suggest that most American workers continue to enjoy job security.

Also coming Thursday is a separate report from Labor that will show how many people applied for jobless benefits last week. The report is considered a proxy for layoffs. Though the job market is broadly healthy by historical standards, it appears increasingly under strain as employers contend with

fallout from Trump’s policies, especially his aggressive tariffs.

Tariffs raise prices for businesses and consumers alike and the vast majority of economists believe they make the economy less efficient by reducing competition. They also invite retaliatory tariffs from other countries, hurting U.S. exporters and potentially driving businesses to freeze hiring or cut staff.

Many of Trump’s stiff proposed taxes on imports are currently on pause, but they’re scheduled to kick into effect next week. Unless Trump reaches deals with other countries to lower the tariffs, economists fear they could hurt the economy and worsen inflation.



# What's On



Lulu Hypermarkets in Kuwait kick off summer surprises with festive flair.

## Special promotions, themed contests and live shows mark celebration

# Lulu kicks off ‘Summer Surprises’ with big deals in Kuwait

KUWAIT CITY, July 3: Lulu Hypermarkets in Kuwait have kicked off a festive, week-long campaign titled “Lulu Summer Surprises,” running from July 2nd to 8th, across all their outlets. The celebration began with a vibrant launch event at Lulu Dajeej, setting the tone for a fun-filled summer extravaganza full of unbeatable offers, exciting activities, and family entertainment.

As part of the campaign, Lulu is offering exceptional discounts across a wide range of summer essentials. Shoppers can enjoy great savings on fresh fruits and vegeta-

bles, seasonal fashion, summer beverages, travel gear, home appliances, and more. The initiative is designed to make summer shopping not just affordable but enjoyable for every member of the family.

Among the standout promotions is the “Melon Fest,” featuring special deals on juicy, refreshing melons. “Sip Into Summer” highlights discounts on a variety of chilled beverages, perfect for the scorching summer season.

Those looking to stay cool at home can benefit from attractive air conditioner deals, including free delivery and installation. Health-conscious



Community contests highlight Lulu's festive summer start.

shoppers can explore the “Healthy Eats” section, which offers specially curated salads and light summer diet options. Meanwhile, fashion lovers

can take advantage of the “Buy 2, Get 1 Free” offer across selected apparel.

Adding to the excitement, Lulu has organized a series of competitions open to both children and adults. These include a melon carving contest, falooda-making challenge, summer salad showdown, and cold coffee creation contest, with valuable prizes awaiting the winners. These events are designed to bring families together and create a lively, engaging shopping atmosphere.

To further enrich the customer experience, the hypermarket has arranged for supplier sampling stalls,

giving shoppers the chance to try out a variety of new products. A summer mascot show and ongoing live entertainment and games round out the festivities, creating a carnival-like experience for visitors.

More than just a shopping campaign, Lulu Summer Surprises brings the spirit of summer to life, turning every visit to Lulu into a celebration. With a wide selection of offers and events crafted for fun and savings, Lulu continues to deliver on its promise of value and community engagement during the hottest season of the year.

Panelists share practical insights on integrating climate consciousness into modern living

# PPF Kuwait hosts Enviro '25 to mark World Environment Day

KUWAIT CITY, July 3: The Progressive Professional Forum (PPF) Kuwait successfully hosted the flagship event Enviro '25, a vibrant and impactful event marking World Environment Day, at the Park Inn by Radisson, Mahboula. The event brought together professionals, students, environmental advocates, and community leaders to promote sustainability and climate-conscious practices.

The General Secretary extended a warm welcome to all office bearers, invited guests, and panelists. The program was formally inaugurated by PPF President, Mr. Prasanth Warrior. A major highlight of the evening was the release of the Environment E-Magazine, featuring inspiring stories and impactful green initiatives. The magazine was unveiled by Mr. Saji Janardhan, General Secretary of the Malayalam Mission – Kuwait Chapter, and handed over by Editor Ms. Sherly Sasi Rajan.

A panel discussion on the theme “Sustainability and Well-being in the Real World” featured distinguished



Panelists share practical insights.

panelists: Dr. Susovana Sujith Nair, Mr. M. Valliappan, Mr. Hussein Gomma, and Mr. Shiju Thomas. The discussion was moderated by Mr. Prasanth Warrior and offered insightful perspectives on integrating sustain-

ability into both professional and personal life.

One of the most engaging segments of the event was a student presentation titled “The Cost of Space Tourism”, delivered by Elevate 2025 competition



Digital magazine launch promoting sustainability.

winners Adwita Saldanha, Priyanka Pradeep, and Andrea Ann Thomas from FAIPS-DPS, emphasizing the environmental impact of technological advancement.

Participants actively took part in an

interactive environmental quiz, with Mr. Robinson emerging as the winner. The ‘Capture Your Green Impact’ Photo Contest award was presented to Mr. Jose Kaitharath, honoring visual storytelling in sustainability.

Felicitations were presented to all panelists and sponsors, including Al Rashed International Shipping Company, Al Zayani, and Phoenix Power Company, in appreciation of their valuable support. The event concluded with a vote of thanks by Mr. Sooraj Sukumaran, General Convener of Enviro '25, followed by dinner and networking.

Key office bearers, including PPF Treasurer Mr. Sreejith S, Vice President Adv. Smitha Manoj, and Joint Secretary Mr. Jithin Prakash, were present at the event. The organizing arrangements were led by PPF Ex-Com members, Mrs. Sherly Sasirajan, Mr. Bipin Punathil, Mr. Kiran K.B., Mr. Gopikrishnan, Mr. Aseem, and Dr. V.V. Rangan, while Dr. Anila Albert served as the Master of Ceremony.

With meticulous planning, rich content, and enthusiastic participation, Enviro '25 reaffirmed PPF Kuwait's unwavering commitment to environmental awareness and meaningful community engagement.

## The Conversation

# Why traditional college major may be holding students back in rapidly changing job market

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

By John Weigand  
Miami University

Colleges and universities are struggling to stay afloat.

The reasons are numerous: declining numbers of college-age students in much of the country, rising tuition at public institutions as state funding shrinks, and a growing skepticism about the value of a college degree.

Pressure is mounting to cut costs by reducing the time it takes to earn a degree from four years to three.

Students, parents and legislators increasingly prioritize return on investment and degrees that are more likely to lead to gainful employment. This has boosted enrollment in professional programs while reducing interest in traditional liberal arts and humanities majors, creating a supply-demand imbalance.

The result has been increasing financial pressure and an unprecedented number of closures and mergers, to date mostly among smaller liberal arts colleges.

To survive, institutions are scrambling to align curriculum with market demand. And they're defaulting to the traditional college major to do so.

The college major, developed and delivered by disciplinary experts within siloed departments, continues to be the primary benchmark for academic quality and institutional performance.

This structure likely works well for professional majors governed by accreditation or licensure, or more tightly aligned with employment. But in today's evolving landscape, reliance on the discipline-specific major may not always serve students or institutions well.

As a professor emeritus and former college administrator and dean, I argue that the college major may no longer be able to keep up with the combinations of skills that cross multiple academic disciplines and career readiness skills demanded by employers, or the flexibility students need to best position themselves for the workplace.

I see students arrive on campus each year with different interests, passions and talents - eager to stitch them into meaningful lives and careers.

And yet, the moment students arrive on campus - even before they apply - they're asked to declare a major from a list of predetermined and prescribed choices. The major, coupled with general education and other college requirements, creates an academic track that is anything but flexible.

Not surprisingly, around 80% of college students switch their majors at least once, suggesting that more flexible degree requirements would allow students to explore and combine diverse areas of interest. And the number of careers, let alone jobs, that college graduates are expected to have will only increase as technological change becomes more disruptive.

As institutions face mounting pressures to attract students and balance budgets, and the college major remains the principal metric for doing so, the curriculum may be less flexible now than ever. In response to market pressures, colleges are adding new high-demand majors at a record pace. Between 2002 and 2022, the number of degree programs nationwide increased by nearly 23,000, or 40%, while enrollment grew only 8%. Some of these majors, such as cybersecurity, fashion business or entertainment design, arguably connect disciplines rather than stand out as distinct. Thus, these new majors siphon enrollment from lower-demand programs within the institution and compete with similar new majors at competitor schools.

At the same time, traditional arts and humanities majors are adding professional courses to attract students and improve employability. Yet, this adds credit hours to the degree while often duplicating content already available in other departments.

Importantly, while new programs are added, few are removed. The challenge lies in faculty tenure and governance, along with a traditional understanding that faculty set the curriculum as disciplinary experts. This makes it difficult to close or revise low-demand majors and shift resources to growth areas.

The result is a proliferation of under-enrolled programs, canceled courses and stretched resources - leading to reduced program quality and declining faculty morale.

Ironically, under the pressure of declining demand, there can be perverse incentives to grow credit hours required in a major or in general education requirements as a way of garnering more resources or adding courses aligned with faculty interests. All of which continues to expand the curriculum and stress available resources.

Universities are also wrestling with the idea of liberal education and how to package the general education requirement.

Although liberal education is increasingly under fire, employers and students still value it.

Students' career readiness skills - their ability to think critically and creatively, to collaborate effectively and to communicate well - remain strong predictors of future success in the workplace and in life.

Assuming the requirement for students to complete a major in order to earn a degree, colleges can also allow students to bundle smaller modules - such as variable-credit minors, certificates or course sequences - into a customizable, modular major.

This lets students, guided by advisers, assemble a degree that fits their interests and goals while drawing from multiple disciplines. A few project-based courses can tie everything together and provide context.

Such a model wouldn't undermine existing majors where demand is strong. For others, where demand for the major is declining, a flexible structure would strengthen enrollment, preserve faculty expertise rather than eliminate it, attract a growing number of nontraditional students who bring to campus previously earned credentials, and address the financial bottom line by rightsizing curriculum in alignment with student demand.

One critique of such a flexible major is that it lacks depth of study, but it is precisely the combination of curricular content that gives it depth. Another criticism is that it can't be effectively marketed to an employer. But a customized major can be clearly named and explained to employers to highlight students' unique skill sets.

Further, as students increasingly try to fit co-curricular experiences - such as study abroad, internships, undergraduate research or organizational leadership - into their course of study, these can also be approved as modules in a flexible curriculum.

It's worth noting that while several schools offer interdisciplinary studies majors, these are often overprescribed or don't grant students access to in-demand courses. For a flexible-degree model to succeed, course sections would need to be available and added or deleted in response to student demand.

Several schools also now offer microcredentials - skill-based courses or course modules that increasingly include courses in the liberal arts. But these typically need to be completed in addition to requirements of the major.

We take the college major for granted. Yet it's worth noting that the major is a relatively recent invention.

Before the 20th century, students followed a broad liberal arts curriculum designed to create well-rounded, globally minded citizens. The major emerged as a response to an evolving workforce that prioritized specialized knowledge. But times change - and so can the model. (AP)

## TKS Kuwait elects new Executive Committee

KUWAIT CITY, July 3: TKS Kuwait established in 1988, representing Telugu people in Kuwait from both Telugu States & registered with Indian Embassy has elected new Executive Committee comprising 5 Core Committee members and 7 Area Executives for year 2025-2026.

The newly elected office bearers are Mr Hemchand Basva - President, B C Sekhar Raju - Vice President, Kadali N.V.K. Prasad (Nani) - General Secretary, Achanta S.B. Krishna Priya - Joint Secretary, Sarika Satya Sreedhar - Treasurer. Area Executives are Mrs Naidu Vijaya Lakshmi (Abuhalfa), Nanabala Praneeth (Abuhalfa), Gunturi Suneel Kumar (Salmiya), Gatla Priyadar-



Hemchand



Dr. Raju



Raju



Prasad



Priya



Sreedhar



Lakshmi



Praneeth



Kumar



Reddy



Anuhya



Kumar



Nagamunireddy



## Yas Marina Circuit releases special 'Making Of' video

## Abu Dhabi celebrates its starring role in 'F1: The Movie'

ABU DHABI, UAE, July 3, (AP): Following the regional premiere of F1: The Movie which took place in a showstopping setting at Yas Marina Circuit, a special "Making Of" video has been released, with highlights and cast and crew comments on how some of the most adrenaline-charged scenes were captured during the 2024 Formula 1 Etihad Airways Abu Dhabi Grand Prix.

Celebrating Abu Dhabi's starring role in the film's creation and bringing the story full circle, the footage and images follows a red-carpet premiere event which was held on a custom-built cinema set directly on the circuit, transporting guests into the heart of the film, a real-life location that served as both a key filming ground and a central narrative backdrop.

Newly released behind-the-scenes images and footage reveal the scale and ambition of the Abu Dhabi shoot, featuring exclusive interviews with director Joseph Kosinski, producer Jerry Bruckheimer, and lead actor Brad Pitt as they reflect on their experience filming in the UAE capital. Kosinski described it as a "privilege to film in Abu Dhabi," citing its stunning locations, unwavering support, and the warmth of the people as key factors that made it a special place to create. Bruckheimer praised the "phenomenal cooperation" from local partners and expressed deep appreciation for the effort that brought the film's vision to life. Pitt added simply, "Abu Dhabi is so awesome," capturing the cast's appreciation for the unique setting and experience.

F1: The Movie, which is showing in cinemas now, was shot in Abu Dhabi on three separate occasions, totalling 29 filming days across iconic sites including Yas Marina Circuit, Zayed International Airport, and twofour54 Studios. Key racing sequences were shot live during the Grand Prix, a cinematic first showcasing



Behind the scenes images from F1: The Movie – on location in Abu Dhabi. (AP)

and a testament to city's ability to enable groundbreaking storytelling.

The project was made possible through the close collaboration of the Creative Media Authority (CMA), Abu Dhabi Film Commission (ADFC), and local

production partner Epic Films. More than 280 local crew members supported the shoot, alongside 15 UAE-based interns, who were embedded within the international production team to gain hands-on experience.

The production further underscores Abu Dhabi's growing reputation as a world-class hub for cinematic storytelling. With its iconic architecture, seamless production support, infrastructure, and production rebates, the Emirate has already attracted major global franchises including Mission: Impossible Dead Reckoning Part One and Dune: Part Two and continues to rise as a destination of choice for international filmmakers.

Mohamed Dobay, Acting Director General of the Creative Media Authority, commented: "From production to premiere, Abu Dhabi has played a signature role in bringing this story to life. This project is a milestone for our filmmaking ecosystem, from the scale of the collaboration to the depth of local talent involved. Hosting the premiere on the circuit is a proud moment for the Emirate."

Sameer Al Jaber, Head of Abu Dhabi Film Commission, added: "This film demonstrates the full scope of what Abu Dhabi offers as a global production destination. From live Grand Prix shoots to seamless logistics and a deeply skilled local crew, F1: The Movie is a prime example of how our rebate programme and ecosystem can support world-class filmmaking from start to finish."

The Abu Dhabi premiere experience featured a specially curated guest journey, including Formula 1 racing simulators, a close-up viewing of the official APXGP car, and exclusive access to props from the film, such as the helmet and racing suit featured on screen, further transporting attendees into the world of F1: The Movie.

## Partial acquittal

## Bail denied for 'Diddy' Combs

NEW YORK, July 3, (AP): **Sean "Diddy" Combs** dropped to his knees and prayed in the courtroom after he was acquitted Wednesday of sex trafficking and racketeering charges that could have put one of hip-hop's celebrated figures behind bars for life. The rapper was convicted of lesser prostitution-related offenses and denied bail as he awaits sentencing.



Combs

His lawyer Marc Agnifilo called the verdict a "great victory" and said the jury "got the situation right - or certainly right enough" as he stood outside Manhattan federal court at a stand of microphones. "Today is a victory of all victories."

The mixed verdict capped a sordid legal odyssey that shattered Combs' affable "Puff Daddy" image and derailed his career as a Grammy-winning artist and music executive, fashion entrepreneur, brand ambassador and reality TV star.

"I'll see you when I get out," Combs told family members including his mother and children just before leaving the courtroom to return to jail. "We're going to get through this."

Combs stands convicted of two counts of a crime - transportation to engage in prostitution - that carries a maximum sentence of 10 years in prison. But jurors cleared him of three charges, two of which carried a mandatory 15 years and a maximum of life.

## Violation

He was convicted of transporting individuals across state lines in violation of the federal Mann Act.

Combs' lawyers stated that under federal sentencing guidelines, he would likely face about two years in prison. Prosecutors, citing other factors, argued the guidelines call for at least four to five years. Combs has already served nine months since his September arrest.

"We fight on and we're going to win," Agnifilo said. "And we're not going to stop until he walks out of prison a free man to his family."

In a major victory for Combs, the jury of eight men and four women acquitted him of racketeering conspiracy and related charges involving allegations that he used his money, influence, and intimidation to control others in illegal activities.

Combs' defense team argued that the women were willing participants and that none of his violence justified the severity of the charges.

Agnifilo asked that Combs be released on bond immediately to await sentencing, saying the acquittals changed the calculus about whether he needed to be held.

"He's not going to flee. He's been given his life back," Agnifilo said.

Judge Arun Subramanian denied it, saying Combs - for now - had not met the burden of showing by clear and convincing evidence a "lack of danger to any person or the community."

Combs, 55, sat stoic as he heard the bond decision, then snapped his head toward Agnifilo and wrote several notes as the lawyer spoke. Finally Combs raised his hand and waved to get the judge's attention. But he ultimately did not speak after consulting with Agnifilo.

Leaving the courtroom for a final time, he paused to address relatives packed into rows of wooden benches who supported him throughout the eight-week trial.

"Be strong. I love you," he added, putting his hands to his lips and pushing a dramatic kiss toward loved ones.

## Film



This image released by Netflix shows, (from left), Henry Golding, Luca Marinelli, Marwan Kenzari, Charlize Theron and KiKi Layne in a scene from 'The Old Guard 2.' (AP)

## Theron and Thurman get half a movie

## 'The Old Guard 2' lacks final punch

By Lindsey Bahr

About 80 minutes into "The Old Guard 2," I found myself wondering how the filmmakers were going to wrap things up. There were a lot of threads dangling with Charlize Theron's gang of immortal warriors, split up and facing extinction, and she still had yet to face off with the new villain, Discord (apparently the first immortal), played by Uma Thurman.

The promise of a showdown between The Bride and Furiosa may not justify the existence of this sequel, now streaming on Netflix, but it was something to look forward to nonetheless. And while they do fight, for a little, something even crazier happens not too long after: The movie ends or, rather, stops mid-climax. An ending was never part of the plan.

This might be an attempt at a cheeky nod to the life of an immortal - what is an ending after all, I guess? But unlike the first film, which merely left the door open for the possibility of a sequel, "The Old Guard 2" cuts off mid-movie. Not only is there no option to "continue watching," there's no promise we'll even get an "Old Guard 3."

Moviegoers endure a lot of partial stories in these days of franchise filmmaking, ever desperate for a built-in audience. With some, you know a resolution is coming at a later date, as with "Mission: Impossible" or "Wicked." With others, like "Dune," a part two or three might have been a question mark, but the intention was unambiguously there. There's nothing fun or enjoyable about being surprised that

you've been watching a "part one" the whole time, especially on a service that has helped train us to click next episode.

Perhaps that also has to do with the quality of "The Old Guard 2," which feels like a step down from the first movie, which provided much-needed escapism in the summer of 2020 as we met Theron's Andromache the Scythian (Andy, for short) and welcomed KiKi Layne's new immortal Nile.

It ended with Booker (Matthias Schoenaerts) being exiled for a betrayal and the tease that Andy's old companion Quynh (Van Veronica Ngô), was still alive. Quynh is, understandably, not thrilled that she was left at the bottom of the ocean for centuries. She wants to punish Andy the most - the movie heavily implies that they were more than sisters in arms, but never quite goes so far as to confirm that their love was romantic, which is especially strange given that it doesn't shy away from letting Nicky (Luca Marinelli) and Joe (Marwan Kenzari) be an out gay couple.

One of the most significant behind-the-scenes changes is that Gina Prince-Bythewood ("The Woman King," "Love & Basketball") ceded directing duties to Victoria Mahoney, who has directed episodes of "Queen Sugar" and "You" and served as second unit director on "Star Wars: The Rise of Skywalker." Working off Greg Rucka and Sarah L. Walker's screenplay, the movies opens with a lively action sequence in which the immortals attempt to nab an arms dealer. Nicky and Joe are the distractors, getting their own James Bond-esque car

chase, while Nile, Andy and Copley (Chiwetel Ejiofor) get more hand-to-hand combat on the property. It sets a fun tone and allows for some (mostly) welcome exposition - "remember, you're not immortal anymore" - for those who might not have the best memory of something they watched at the height of the pandemic.

But the film never recaptures that energy again and devolves into an increasingly tedious meditation on time, death and the science of why Andy lost her immortality power (which is approaching "Face/Off" levels of insanity). Thurman has a mighty good scowl as the "bad immortal" who long ago decided she didn't have any desire to help the humans who persecuted her kind, but the movie seems to be saving her big moment for later.

Overall "The Old Guard 2" is fine, a bit of a background movie that's probably easy enough to tune in and out of (though Schoenaerts, a standout, gives it some real pathos). Its greatest sin is the non-ending, which might have moviegoers engaging in their own rants about wasted time. Cliffhangers are a gamble - when the movie is satisfying on its own, it can leave them wanting more. In this case, it might just leave them angry. Audiences in 2025 deserve better.

"The Old Guard 2," a Netflix release now streaming, is rated R by the Motion Picture Association for "sequences of graphic violence and some language." Running time: 105 minutes. Two stars out of four. (AP)

**LAS VEGAS:** Duane "Keffe D" Davis, who is awaiting trial in the 1996 killing of rap icon Tupac Shakur, has lost a bid for a new trial in a separate battery case tied to a jailhouse fight.

The ruling came Wednesday after a tense hearing in a Las Vegas courtroom that underscored the high-profile status of the defendant and his upcoming trial in one of hip-hop's most infamous crimes.

The jurors who convicted Davis of battery in the jailhouse fight were put on the witness stand Wednesday. One by one, each of them denied claims by Davis' son and a man who describes himself as a journalist that they overheard one of the jurors talking about the battery case during a lunch break ahead of deliberations.

Both Davis' son, Duane Davis Jr., and the self-described journalist, Richard Bond, testified Wednesday about hearing the juror's comments in the hallway outside of the courtroom on the final day of a two-day trial in April.

"Those two witnesses do have a relationship and a bias and a motive to testify in a certain way, whether subconsciously or not," Clark County District Judge Nadia Krall said while ruling from the bench. (AP)

## Real-life tales

## NBA athletes to turn filmmakers

LOS ANGELES, July 3, (AP): Lights, camera, layup.

The NBA Summer League is giving athletes another shot that takes place behind the camera. With assists from Hall of Famer Kevin Garnett and Hollywood power players Mark Wahlberg and Deon Taylor, the Summer League Film Festival is coming back starting July 17 in Las Vegas.

The three-day festival will bring big-screen storytelling through 34 selected projects, spotlighting stories produced by NBA stars past and present including Nikola Jokic, Luguentz Dort, Tony Allen, Nate Robinson, Cole Anthony, Keyon Dooling and Udonis Haslem.

"We have a ton of NBA players who own production companies," said Garnett, who won the NBA championship with the Boston Celtics. He cofounded the production company Content King Studios.

Garnett said he wants to highlight filmmakers who are telling authentic, real-life stories.

"So the SLFF is a great opportunity to get together to share our projects, give each other our flowers for doing the work, and provide an opportunity to get projects financed and even sold," he said.

The second annual film festival will take place at the Strip View Pavilion inside the Thomas & Mack Center, the longtime home of Summer League, which was cofounded in 2004 by Warren LeGarie and Albert Hall.

"I've always been a big hoops fan, so it's amazing to see NBA players bring these incredible stories to life," said Wahlberg, who has the production company Unrealistic Ideas.

## Acting

Deon and Roxanne Aven Taylor of Hidden Empire Film Group were brought on to help athletes explore the art of filmmaking and sharpen their acting chops.

"Today's athletes are more than players. They're storytellers, creators, and global influencers," said Deon Taylor, director of "Black and Blue," "The Intruder," "Meet the Blacks" and "Fatale." This marks another sports-driven venture for Hidden Empire, which teamed up with Skydance Sports and the NFL in March to host film training sessions for more than 20 current and former NFL players.

Taylor called the collaboration with Garnett, Wahlberg, Hall and the NBA a "culture shift." He said the festival would help athletes control their narrative through film, television and other media platforms.

"Together, we're redefining where sports, art, and culture collide," Taylor said.

The festival will feature the premiere of "UNLV: Kings of Vegas," showcasing the untold story of the UNLV Runnin' Rebels. The documentary will include interviews with popular figures ranging from Snoop Dogg, Chuck D and Jimmy Kimmel. It's produced by former UNLV stars Larry Johnson, Stacey Augmon and Greg Anthony along with Damien Big Percy Roderick and Hidden Empire Film Group.

Along with screenings, the festival will host various private events including a tipoff viewing of "Tony Allen: The Grindfather" and a wrap party.



Kevin Garnett speaks as he is enshrined in the 2020 class of the Basketball Hall of Fame, Saturday, May 15, 2021, in Uncasville, Conn. (AP)

## Variety

**LONDON:** Olivia Rodrigo, John Cena, Dave Grohl, Priyanka Chopra and Nick Jonas. There was as much star power - or maybe even more? - in the Royal Box at Wimbledon as there was down below on the Centre Court grass on Wednesday.

And that was on an afternoon that featured two-time defending men's champion Carlos Alcaraz, No. 1-ranked woman Aryna Sabalenka, and 2021 US Open champion Emma Raducanu of Britain all winning matches at the grass-court Grand Slam tournament's main stadium to reach the third round.

"It's so special in the Royal Box to have those kind of people in there. It definitely adds a bit of pressure, I guess, if you look up and you kind of recognize (them)," Raducanu said. "That's why I try and stay with my eyes on the court as much as possible. Only after, you kind of look up and take it all in, if they're still there."

The seats in the Royal Box behind one of the baselines are by invitation only, and there was quite a list of celebrities on hand for Day 3 of competition.

"I was trying not to look today," Sabalenka said

about the collection of boldfaced names, explaining that she might be distracted while competing.

"I was just trying to focus on my game. Later on, I'm going to open the social media (and ask), 'OK, who was there?'"

Well, Aryna, here's a rundown:

Rodrigo, fresh off headlining at music festival Glastonbury while on tour for her GUTS album, sat next to Cena, the professional wrestler and movie star. Rodrigo chatted at one point with former England soccer coach Roy Hodgson (the current person in that job, Thomas Tuchel, also was in attendance).

Grohl, a member of the rock bands Foo Fighters and Nirvana, made an appearance, too, as did the married couple Chopra and Jonas. Hollywood's Judd Apatow and Leslie Mann, who also are married, were on the Royal Box list, along with actor Dominic Cooper. (AP)

□ □ □



Overseas Chinese bring European flavors back home

Western food thrives in China’s mountain town

HANGZHOU, July 3, (Xinhua): A line had already formed by 10 a.m. outside a restaurant named La Vita in Italy in Qingtian County, east China’s Zhejiang Province. Tourists from across China waited patiently for a bite of its famed pizza quattro stagioni, a traditional Italian pizza topped with four different flavors.

While many Chinese cities are tapping into local specialties to draw visitors, Qingtian, a county nestled in rolling mountains, is betting on croissants, cappuccinos and carbonara. Notably, it is a wager that is proving a winner. The county, with fewer than 200,000 permanent residents, now hosts more than 100 Western-style bakeries and restaurants.

Local data reveal that Qingtian consumes over 2 million portions of steak and more than 120 tonnes of coffee beans every year.

Qingtian’s rise to a hotspot for Western cuisine

started with the county’s long history of emigration. The county is the hometown of about 381,000 overseas Chinese people living across over 140 countries and regions, of whom many are based in Europe.

For generations, Qingtian emigrants have carved out careers in Europe’s restaurant scene, working as chefs, waiters and business owners. Now, many are returning home, bringing with them the best flavors and dining concepts from the countries where they have lived -- ranging from Italian pastas and Spanish tapas to French pastries and specialty coffee culture.

Yang Haijie, owner of La Vita in Italy, is one of them. He left for Italy in 1997 and worked in the culinary sector there for many years before returning to Qingtian to open his own Italian restaurant. This restaurant has quickly become a local hit.

“In most places in China, Western-style food main-

ly appeals to younger consumers. But in Qingtian, it’s loved by everyone, from the elderly to young children,” Yang said. “It’s common to see families dining together in Western-style restaurants here.”

For Yang, a key reason behind Qingtian’s Western food boom lies in the growing reach of international logistics, which now enables chefs in Qingtian to source fresh and authentic ingredients from around the world with ease -- allowing them to recreate European flavors thousands of miles away.

The returning overseas Chinese community is serving as a bridge bringing more foreign ingredients and products to Qingtian. The county has been hosting the Overseas Chinese Imported Commodities Expo since 2018 to promote its trade industry and introduce high-quality global products to the Chinese market.



This video screenshot shows a scene during a coffee roasting course held in Qingtian, east China’s Zhejiang Province, on Oct. 29, 2024. (Xinhua)

Tourism



The walkway features a collection of crystals embedded in its floor and is adorned with tropical plants.

KUNA photo

Qatar unveils Crystal Walkway: the longest air-conditioned tourist path

On Gewan Island in the Qatari capital Doha, the Crystal Walkway has become a new tourist destination, featuring a collection of crystals embedded in the walkway floor, adding a sense of spirit and beauty to the path.

The Crystal Walkway stretches 450 meters in length, making it the longest air-conditioned walkway in Qatar, lined with restaurants, cafes, shops, tropical plants, and shaded by large canopies throughout the walkway. (KUNA)

Film explores Matsuhisa’s unique fusion cuisine

Chef Nobu serves his inspiring story in new docu

NEW YORK, July 3, (AP): World-famous chef Nobuyuki Matsuhisa has been tantalizing foodies for decades as he built his empire to include more than 50 upscale restaurants and several luxury hotels. The new documentary, “Nobu,” reveals the man behind the cuisine in an intimate look at how he found success, despite several major setbacks.

The film traces Matsuhisa’s journey to creating his unique fusion cuisine, blending traditional Japanese dishes with ingredients discovered while living in Peru. Matsuhisa, now 76, was driven to run his own restaurant but faced obstacles, including financial woes, doubters and a devastating fire at one of his first spots.

Candid and sometimes emotional interviews with Matsuhisa are interspersed with mouthwatering shots of his “Nobu-style” culinary treats, made with a precision and standard of excellence his diners have come to expect. “Nobu” released widely July 2.

Director Matt Tyrnauer and the chef himself sat down with The Associated Press to discuss his perseverance, creativity and influence on the culture. Answers have been edited for clarity and brevity.

**AP:** One of the most dynamic things about the film is the gorgeous food. How did you approach it, Matt?

**Tyrnauer:** Nobu started as a graphic designer, and you can really see it in the plates. The totality of his vision for creating a new type of cuisine, which he calls “Nobu style,” or the signature dishes, was really interesting, but also the beauty of the presentation, which is so important. We had cameras everywhere - on the ceiling, we had them over the shoulder, and anything to kind of



This image released by Vertical Entertainment shows chef Nobuyuki Matsuhisa in a scene from the documentary ‘Nobu.’ (AP)

get the precision and the detail. At a certain point in the film, you see him correcting some of the chefs who work for him and it’s a pretty tough process because he’s a perfectionist. I wanted to show that.

**AP:** There are many difficult moments in the film and you have to relive some pain from your past. How was that process for you Chef Nobu?

**Matsuhisa:** Even though my life was pain, but I learned from this pain. Also I learned lots and lots of love from people who supported me. So

nothing is losing, in my experience, I’d like to say, at my age, I can say, I did my life.

**AP:** Matt, were there any surprises when you were shooting the film?

**Tyrnauer:** When he broke down on camera and couldn’t stop crying, it was a big surprise. I didn’t understand the true wound of the loss of Nobu’s best friend, Sakai. I’ve interviewed a lot of people. I’ve never had anyone really be so emotional. I thought it was extraordinary and very beautiful, actually, and very honest. Nobu

invited me to go see the grave of his dear friend who had taken his own life and the pain and the suffering that we see on camera is unexpected in a movie that you think is just going to be about great food and the artistry of being a chef. There’s a soulfulness to it.

**AP:** Your world travel helped you develop your Nobu style. You’re still traveling and visiting restaurants. Can you talk about that?

**Matsuhisa:** I made the Nobu corporate teams. These teams that are traveling with me ... they stand by at all the locations, and they set up, then they’re training for the next generations. The Nobu teams keep growing like a family, and they (are) working there long times so they understand Nobu’s quality, philosophy, the passions, how to do service. We have good teams.

**AP:** From “The Bear” to reality TV, there is high interest in what goes on in restaurant kitchens in pop culture now. Did that play into the film?

**Tyrnauer:** What I wanted to do was show the process and put that on display. Part of the secret to his success is that he’s actually created a very civilized culture, and it comes from the top down. I think that’s why he goes around the world like he does and visits all these restaurants and trains the chefs personally in his own style. But his own temperament is exemplary.

**AP:** What do you want people to take away from the film?

**Matsuhisa:** I’m very glad because I didn’t give up on my life. That’s the message. Even (when) the young people has a problem, I like to say, “Don’t give up. Just don’t forget about the ambitions, passions and go step by step.”

Shanghai launches all-in-one platform for int’l travelers

China’s UNESCO-listed grotto site temporarily closed

LANZHOU, July 3, (Xinhua): The Maijishan scenic area, home to the UNESCO-listed heritage site Maijishan Grottoes, in northwest China’s Gansu Province, has been temporarily closed to visitors since Thursday morning due to heavy rain in the region.

Zhang Hui, deputy director of the Maijishan scenic area management committee, said the closure was prompted by concerns over cultural heritage protection and visitor safety.

The scenic area will remain closed until further notice and visitors who purchased tickets will receive refunds, Zhang added.

The scenic area in the city of Tianshui has recently entered its peak tourist season, receiving around 10,000 visitors per day.

Hu Junjian, a researcher with the Maijishan grottoes art research institute, said that the Maijishan Mountain is composed of red glutenite with a relatively loose structure and prolonged



This photo taken on July 3, 2025 shows a view of the Legoland Shanghai Resort in Shanghai, east China. (Xinhua)

heavy rainfall increases the risk of falling rocks.

Staff have been dispatched to closely monitor

high-risk areas and implement preventive measures, Hu added.

Torrential rains lashed parts of Tianshui from

Wednesday to Thursday morning and are forecast to continue in the next 24 hours, according to the Gansu Meteorological Service.

Following heavy rains in Tianshui and three other cities, the provincial water resources department has raised the flood emergency response to the third-highest level.

Meanwhile, Shanghai on Wednesday launched “Easy Go,” an all-in-one platform to streamline digital services for international visitors, leveraging China’s expanded visa facilitation and instant tax refunds.

The platform, developed by the Foreign Affairs Office of the Shanghai Municipal People’s Government, the People’s Bank of China Shanghai Head Office, along with other city departments, integrates consumption services and tourism information onto Alipay’s international version, eliminating the need for multiple app downloads and addressing previous language barriers.

Visa policy shift

UK’s Bob Vylan banned in US

WASHINGTON, July 3, (AP): When the United States revokes someone’s visa, it is typically confidential, with few exceptions. But with British punk-rap duo Bob Vylan and others, the **Trump** administration appears to have eased privacy restrictions to make a public point when it deems a case particularly egregious.

The State Department’s number two diplomat made headlines when he posted a social media message this week saying visas for the band for an upcoming US tour had been revoked. British police are investigating whether a crime was committed when the duo’s frontman led the audience in chants of “Death to the IDF” - the Israel Defense Forces - at a music festival in the UK.

Deputy Secretary of State Christopher Landau posted that their visas had been revoked

“in light of their hateful tirade at Glastonbury, including leading the crowd in death chants.”

The band rejected claims of antisemitism and said in a statement that it was being “targeted for speaking up” about the war in Gaza.

Under the Immigration and Nationality Act and certain statutes related to the privacy of government documents, the State Department has for years resisted or refused to discuss specific cases in which visas may have been denied or revoked. Certain exemptions apply, such as when foreign officials and their immediate family members are found to be ineligible for entry into the United States for violating anti-corruption or human rights regulations.

However, as the Trump administration pursues a nationwide crackdown targeted at visa holders it believes have engaged in antisemitic or pro-militant behavior, the standard for releasing once-privileged information seems to have been relaxed.

“Foreigners who glorify violence and hatred are not welcome visitors to our country,” State Department spokeswoman Tammy Bruce said when asked about the public announcement.



Trump

Revocations

She said one reason for announcing the revocations was to make clear that the administration is serious about the standards it will apply to visa holders and applicants.

“We’ve been public about that standard, and this was a very public event that violated that very basic standard about the nature of who we want to let into the country,” Bruce said.

Other recent cases have been less clear-cut, although some have ended up in public court cases.

Earlier this year, as part of an initiative to expel foreign students who are accused by the Trump administration of engaging in pro-Hamas, anti-Israel or antisemitic activity, Secretary of State Marco Rubio said he had rescinded at least 300 visas and expected that number to rise.

Many of those cases were not publicized individually. One that was: Rumeyssa Ozturk, who was detained by immigration authorities in Massachusetts for authoring an opinion piece criticizing Tufts University for not taking a tougher line on alleged Israeli atrocities in Gaza.

US officials said at the time that her visa had been revoked because of adverse foreign policy consequences if she remained in the United States.

Other high-profile and public cases of visa revocations for political reasons date back decades, including actor Charlie Chaplin in 1952 during the Truman administration and an ultimately unsuccessful deportation attempt against Beatles singer John Lennon in the 1970s.

“The practice of ideological exclusion has a long history in the United States, having been used for decades as a political tool to keep US audiences from being exposed to dissident viewpoints,” the human rights group Amnesty International said in a 2020 report.

“During the Cold War, in particular, the US government denied visas to some of the world’s leading intellectuals, writers and artists who, the government thought, might promote Communism or other ‘subversive’ views,” it said.



Innovation and research vital for improving disease outcomes

Kuwaiti expert highlights complex symptoms, treatment of cGVHD

KUWAIT CITY, July 3: Chronic graft-versus-host disease (cGVHD) is a long-term complication, which can occur after a stem cell transplant. It happens when the donor’s immune cells (the graft) attack the recipient’s (the host) body, causing damage to various organs and tissues, mistaking it for a foreign organism. While stem cell transplant can positively transform patients’ lives by offering hope, healing and a new beginning, the benefits are at times overshadowed by this serious complication.

Highlighting the complex nature of this disease, Dr. Sondos Alsharidah, Head of the Paediatric Stem Cell Transplant Unit in Kuwait, remarked that its symptoms can be highly unpredictable and diverse, ranging from skin rash, dry eyes or mouth, lung problems and joint stiffness to digestive issues. She also noted that, while these symptoms can be mild to life-threatening, no two patients experience it in the same way, making diagnosis rather difficult. For instance, some might only experience



Dr. Sondos Alsharidah

skin concerns, while others develop serious lung or liver complications. Early diagnosis of cGVHD continues to be a challenge as it can mimic other conditions. Moreover, once diagnosed, the condition needs to be managed by carefully administering immunosuppressants, without increasing the risk of infections. Current treatment options for cGVHD are also limited. While steroids continue to be the primary choice, patients often require long-term or second-line treatments, with

responses varying greatly. In such a scenario, it is essential to support ongoing research in this domain, driving the innovation of cutting-edge treatment and early diagnosis methods, which can significantly improve clinical outcomes. Lama Saleh, General Manager, General Medicines for Saudi Arabia & Gulf Countries at Sanofi commented that when it comes to challenging diseases like cGVHD, every breakthrough plays an important role in alleviating the burden of patients

and their families. He further highlighted that, while around 50 per cent of stem cell transplant patients could develop this condition, treatment options remain limited. In such a scenario, Sanofi is actively partnering with local healthcare systems to offer physicians new solutions that can cater to diverse patient needs. This also reflects the organisation’s dedication to ensuring that innovation reaches the people who need it the most, particularly those living with high unmet medical needs.

Athletes open up about mental health challenges

At Wimbledon, player’s lament about loneliness revives mental health talk

LONDON, July 3, (AP): When Naomi Osaka opened up about her anxiety and depression at the 2021 French Open, it sparked a conversation in sports - and society at large - about mental health and the importance of addressing such issues. In the time since, more and more players have spoken about the topic and seeking help, and whatever taboos there were seem to have faded. Still, the way three-time Grand Slam finalist Alexander Zverev discussed his state of mind after a first-round exit at Wimbledon this week revived the conversation.



Naomi Osaka of Japan reacts after beating Talia Gibson of Australia in their first round women’s singles match at the Wimbledon Tennis Championships in London, June 30, 2025. (AP)

“I feel very alone out there at times. I struggle mentally... I’m trying to find ways to kind of get out of this hole. I keep kind of finding myself back in it in a way,” said Zverev, who was the runner-up at the Australian Open in January but then went through a rough stretch of results this season when he had a chance to overtake Jannik Sinner at No. 1 in the rankings.

“I feel, generally speaking, quite alone in life at the moment, which is a feeling that is not very nice,” Zverev said. “It’s not a feeling on a tennis court, it’s just a life feeling in general.” Players at the All England Club were asked Wednesday about Zverev’s words.

They could empathize, some said. Others offered advice. Amanda Anisimova was a French Open semifinalist as a teen in 2019, then announced two years ago she was taking time off because of burnout. She’s been back for a while now and reached the third round at Wimbledon with a victory Wednesday. “It’s definitely tricky. Each and every one of us goes through something at some point in our lives. We have our bouts of negative times. It honestly

takes some self-reflecting, figuring out what’s going wrong or how can I create a lifestyle that I enjoy. I feel like there are so many factors. For me, personally, it was finding people that I could confide in and I trusted. People that I could talk to,” Anisimova said. “What Alex said about feeling lonely... a lot of people struggle with being lonely, especially on the pro circuit,” she said, adding that taking a break from tour life “really helped me and I’m happy I did that, because I came back with a new perspective, felt refreshed, and I feel like I learned a lot about myself.” Top-ranked Aryna Sabalenka, who owns three major trophies, said that

she worked with a therapist for five years. “It’s really important to talk openly about whatever you’re dealing with. ... It’s really important to be open and to talk about what are you experiencing, because if you’re going to keep it inside, it’s just going to destroy you. I think that’s kind of like something happening to him,” Sabalenka said. “I think (Zverev) just needs to open up to whoever is close to him.” At the Australian Open, title winner Madison Keys addressed her reliance on therapy and the ways in which it both allowed her to be happier, in general, and more successful at tennis - a sport in which losses are frequent and expectations can be a burden. “Our identity becomes very wrapped up in being a tennis player. That’s great, but when you have the tough kind of weeks, months, years on tour, that can really take a toll on how you think about yourself as a person,” Keys, a 30-year-old American, said Wednesday. “So being able to kind of dive into that and figure out how to separate the two and know that you’re not just a tennis player, you’re a full person that has all of these other really great attributes and other interests and just different things in your life.” When a reporter asked the No. 3-seeded Zverev after his loss to unseeded Arthur Rinderknech on Tuesday whether he might consider trying therapy, the 28-year-old German replied: “For the first time in my life, I’ll probably need it.” This is how he described his current mindset: “I’ve never felt this empty before. Just lacking joy, just lacking joy in everything that I do. It’s not necessarily about tennis. Just lacking joy outside of tennis, as well.”

Air pollution linked to lung cancer mutations

Scientists find proteins that could help fight cancer and slow aging

SYDNEY, July 3, (Xinhua): Australian scientists have identified a group of proteins that could transform approaches to treating cancer and age-related diseases. Researchers at the Children’s Medical Research Institute (CMRI) in Sydney have discovered that these proteins play a crucial role in controlling telomerase, an enzyme responsible for protecting DNA during cell division, according to a recent statement by the CMRI, which led the research. This breakthrough clarifies how telomerase both supports healthy aging and fuels cancer cell growth, highlighting new possibilities for treatments that slow aging or stop cancer by targeting these newly identified proteins. Telomerase helps maintain the ends of chromosomes, known as telomeres, which are vital for genetic stability. While telomerase is essential for the health of stem cells and certain immune cells, cancer cells often exploit this enzyme to grow uncontrollably, said the study published in Nature Communications.



Retired teacher Joanna Smithson, 54, sitting, who suffers from terminal lung cancer, is hugged during a prayer by family members and residents gathered during a community vigil on Monday, June 30, 2025, in Pasadena, Calif. (AP)

The team discovered that three proteins -- NONO, SFPQ, and PSCP1 -- guide telomerase to chromosomes ends; disrupting them in cancer cells prevents telomere maintenance, potentially stopping cancer cell growth. “Our findings show that these proteins act like molecular traffic controllers, making sure telomerase reaches the right destination inside the cell,” said Alexander Sobinoff, the lead author of the study. Hilda Pickett, head of CMRI’s Telomere Length Regulation Unit and the study’s senior author, noted that understanding how telomerase is controlled

opens new possibilities for developing treatments targeting cancer, aging, and genetic disorders linked to telomere dysfunction. Meanwhile, exposure to fine particulate air pollution is strongly associated with increased genetic mutations in lung cancer tumors among individuals who have never smoked, a new study led by the US National Institutes of Health (NIH) has found. The study, published Wednesday in the journal Nature, represents the largest whole-genome analysis to date of lung cancer in nonsmokers, offering new insights into how environmental pollutants may drive cancer in the absence of tobacco use. Researchers from NIH’s National

Cancer Institute and the University of California San Diego examined lung tumors from 871 nonsmoking patients across 28 regions worldwide as part of the Sherlock-Lung study. They found that air pollution exposure -- particularly from traffic and industrial sources -- was linked to cancer-driving mutations, including alterations in the TP53 gene and other mutational signatures typically associated with tobacco-related cancers. The study also revealed that air pollution was related to shorter telomeres, which are sections of DNA found at the end of chromosomes. Shorter telomeres are associated with aging and reduced cellular replication capacity, potentially accelerating cancer progression.

Ancient DNA links Egypt and Mesopotamia

WASHINGTON, July 3, (AP): Ancient DNA has revealed a genetic link between the cultures of ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia, according to research published Wednesday in the journal Nature. Researchers sequenced whole genomes from the teeth of a remarkably well-preserved skeleton found in a sealed funeral pot in an Egyptian tomb site dating to between 4,495 and 4,880 years ago. Four-fifths of the genome showed links to North Africa and the region around Egypt. But a fifth of the genome showed links to the area in the Middle East between the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers, known as the Fertile Crescent, where Mesopotamian civilization flourished. “The finding is highly significant” because it “is the first direct evidence



This image provided by researchers shows a facial reconstruction of a man radiocarbon dated to around 2855-2570 cal BCE found in Nuwayrat, Egypt. (AP)

Mesopotamia, as well as similarities in pottery-making techniques and pictorial writing systems. While resemblances in dental structures suggested possible ancestral links, the new study clarifies the genetic ties. The Nile River is “likely to have acted as an ancient superhighway, facilitating the movement of not only cultures and ideas, but people,” said Antoine, who was not involved in the study. The skeleton was found in an Egyptian tomb complex at the archaeological site of Nuwayrat, inside a chamber carved out from a rocky hillside. An analysis of wear and tear on the skeleton - and the presence of arthritis in specific joints - indicates the man was likely in his 60s and may have worked as a potter, said co-author and bioarchaeologist Joel Irish of Liverpool John Moores University.

Europe’s heatwaves fuel calls for action

BUCHAREST, July 3, (Xinhua): Extreme heat and worsening drought conditions are gripping large parts of Europe, fueling wildfires and prompting urgent weather alerts across multiple countries. Scientists and international agencies warn that this crisis is part of a broader “new era of drought,” driven by climate change and posing escalating threats to food security, ecosystems, and national economies. Germany is experiencing what may be its hottest day of the year on Wednesday, with temperatures forecast to reach 40 degrees Celsius, according to the German Weather Service, which has issued extreme heat warnings across much of the country and highlighted a rising risk of wildfires, especially in the southeast. The UNCCD urges countries to act immediately by investing in early warning systems, drought monitoring,

and nature-based solutions such as watershed restoration. Building resilient infrastructure, including off-grid energy and alternative water technologies, is also crucial. Similar conditions are unfolding across Central Europe. In the Czech Republic, the national meteorological institute warned of “very high temperatures” and increased fire danger, with some regions expected to reach 37 degrees Celsius. Prague’s emergency services have already responded to multiple heat-related incidents, and a fire ban remains in effect. Slovakia’s meteorological authority issued its highest-level red alert for 10 districts on Thursday, forecasting highs up to 38 degrees Celsius as warm air masses from the west intensify the heat. Neighboring Croatia and Romania are also on alert, with peak tempera-

tures expected to reach 39 degrees Celsius and 37 degrees Celsius, respectively. In the Netherlands, the Royal Netherlands Meteorological Institute confirmed the country’s first official heatwave in three years. De Bilt, the national reference station, recorded five consecutive days above 30 degrees Celsius, prompting a code orange alert in the southeastern provinces. Southern Europe is faring no better. Spain continues to endure a record-breaking heatwave, with June 2025 confirmed as the country’s hottest month on record. The Spanish meteorological agency AEMET reported an average monthly temperature of 23.6 degrees Celsius, hotter than typical July and August averages. Tragically, two farmers died on Tuesday in a wildfire that scorched 5,000 hectares in La Segarra, northeast Spain.

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The Tour will be 100% in France this year with no stages starting from abroad

# Dominant Pogacar and resurgent Vingegaard set to ignite Tour de France

PARIS, July 3, (AP): At just 26 years old, Tadej Pogacar is among cycling’s greats and also admired as a spectacular rider. The world champion wins on all terrains, and is favorite to win a fourth Tour de France title.

Pogacar lines up Saturday in the northern city of Lille with his confidence sky-high, boosted by a stellar first half of the season punctuated with prestigious wins in both one-day and stage races.

This year, the Slovenian rider won a third Liège-Bastogne-Liège title and other one day-classics. Most recently, he won the Critérium du Dauphiné, a Tour tune-up, with a dominant display in the mountains.

“I’m lucky to have had close to the perfect preparation this year,” the UAE Team Emirates leader said. “Everything has gone really smoothly, especially coming off a great altitude camp with my teammates.”

Pogacar posted back-to-back wins in 2020 and 2021, becoming the youngest double winner of the three-week showcase race. He was also runner-up in 2022 and 2023.

“It’s hard to believe it’s already my sixth Tour de France,” he said. “Time

flies.”

So does Pogacar.

His appetite for victory is insatiable and he has clearly established himself as the No. 1 rider in the world, drawing comparisons with the greatest of all time, Eddy Merckx. The Belgian great was known as “The Cannibal” for his ferocious taste for victory.

The 80-year-old Merckx believes Pogacar has already surpassed him.

“It’s obvious that he is now above me,” Merckx told L’Equipe newspaper after Pogacar won the world championship last year. “Deep down, I already thought as much when I saw what he did on the last Tour de France.”

A fourth Tour win will draw Pogacar level with British rider Chris Froome for the fifth-most wins of all time. Merckx, Jacques Anquetil, Bernard Hinault and Miguel Indurain have won cycling’s biggest race five times.

Pogacar’s team is formidable. He will be supported by experienced all-rounders and climbers.

His main threat appears to come from two-time Tour champion Jonas Vingegaard, who leads Team Visma-lease a Bike.



In this file photo, Tour de France winner Slovenia’s Tadej Pogacar celebrates as he crosses the finish line to win the twenty-first stage of the Tour de France cycling race in Nice, France. (AP)

The 28-year-old Danish rider was runner-up at the Critérium and arrives in much better shape than last year, when his preparations were hampered by a crash that left him with a broken collarbone and ribs, and a collapsed lung.

Vingegaard’s main concern is whether he can match Pogacar in the highest climbs. It is a key factor, since this year’s Tour features six mountain stages, with five summit finishes. The

support of teammates Wout van Aert, Matteo Jorgenson, Simon Yates and Sepp Kuss will be crucial to Vingegaard’s chances.

“From day one we will have to be there as a team to optimally assist Jonas,” said Grischka Niemann, the team’s head of racing. “We have an optimal preparation behind us and with that, we think we can get the best possible result.”

Although there are two clear favorites, the length and intensity of the Tour makes it a race of attrition, where bad days and crashes are always a threat, keeping the door open for other contenders.

Record four-time Spanish Vuelta champion Primož Roglič, who dramatically lost the 2020 tour to Pogacar in a time-trial, remains a dangerous outsider. Double Olympic champion Remco Evenepoel has recovered from multiple injuries sustained in a big crash last year, but may lack the endurance to hang with Pogacar over the distance. João Almeida, Pogacar’s teammate, is capable of leading any other team and could step in if needed. Vingegaard’s teammates Jorgenson and Yates could also emerge if their

leader struggles.

The Tour will be 100% in France this year with no stages starting from abroad.

A mostly flat first week starts from Lille and stays in cycling-mad northern France for three stages. The peloton will then head south, via Brittany and the mountainous Massif Central region.

Among the highlights of the route are a trio of Pyrenean stages including a time trial to Peyragudes on Stage 13, and a return to Luchon-Superbagnères. The climbing of the Mont Ventoux, the punishing ascent on which British rider Tom Simpson died in 1967, tests tired legs on Stage 16. The Alps could then decide the winner, with an ascent to Col de la Loze - the highest point of the race at 2,304 meters - and the ski resort of La Plagne in the Alps.

The final stage to Paris promises to be spicy.

Tour riders will climb the Montmartre hill three times during the stage - a significant break from tradition that adds a dose of suspense but could prove logistically challenging with heightened security measures required.

# Sri Lanka routs Bangladesh by 77 runs after stunning collapse in ODI opener



Sri Lanka’s Charith Asalanka plays a shot during the first ODI cricket match between Sri Lanka and Bangladesh in Colombo, Sri Lanka. (AP)

## Asalanka hits century

COLOMBO, Sri Lanka, July 3, (AP): Sri Lanka forced a spectacular Bangladesh collapse by taking seven wickets for five runs after captain Charith Asalanka’s century to win the one-day international series opener by 77 runs.

Asalanka, whose knock of 106 included four sixes, had won the toss and elected to bat first. His team was bowled out for 244 runs with four deliveries remaining in the final over at R. Premadasa Stadium.

Bangladesh was cruising at 100-1 in the 17th over when Milan Rathnayake’s classy piece of fielding to run out Najmul Hossain Shanto on 23 shifted the momentum.

That fielding effort ended a 71-run partnership for the second wicket between Shanto and Tanzid Hasan that led eventually to Bangladesh being dismissed for 167 runs in the 36th over.

Shanto played a shot to deep square leg and called for two quick runs, but Rathnayake picked up the ball and swung it right on top of the wicket in one motion, catching a diving Shanto on the crease when wicketkeeper Kusal Mendis removed the balls.

Sri Lanka’s leg spin bowler Wanindu Hasaranga (4-10), called to bowl the next over, took two wickets for two runs, trapping Litton Das (0) lbw and Hasan to a brilliant diving catch by Janith Liyanage. Hasan scored 62 runs off 61 deliveries.

Das’ wicket was Hasaranga’s 100th in 64 one-day internationals.

In the next over, spin bowler Kamindu Mendis bowled Towhid Hridoy (1). Hasaranga returned



Sri Lanka’s Wanindu Hasaranga celebrates the wicket of Bangladesh’s Mehidy Hasan Miraz during the first ODI cricket match between Sri Lanka and Bangladesh in Colombo, Sri Lanka. (AP)

to bowl the next over and in the first ball trapped Bangladesh captain Mehidy Hasan Miraz (0) lbw, leaving Bangladesh 103-6.

Then Kamindu Mendis had Tanzim Hasan Sakib (1) caught by Maheesh Theekshana and trapped Taskin Ahmed (0), and Bangladesh was 105-8.

Bangladesh No. 7 Jaker Ali was determined to stretch the game and was out last, after scoring his third ODI half-century. He faced 64 deliveries for his 51 runs, including four boundaries and four sixes.

Hasaranga returned best bowling figures for Sri Lanka, taking four wickets for 10 runs, while Ka-

mindu Mendis took a career-best 3-19.

Earlier, Bangladesh’s opening bowlers Taskin Ahmed and Tansim Hasan Sakib bowled tight lines and dried up runs, forcing Sri Lankan opening batters into false shots.

Sakib dismissed Pathum Nissanka without scoring, forcing an edge off him to wicketkeeper Litton Das.

Sri Lanka’s total was 5 when Nissanka was out in the fourth over of the innings.

Nissanka’s opening partner, Nishan Madushka (6), fell in the next over, trying to chase a ball from Taskin outside the off stump and dragging it to the wicket.

Kamindu Mendis also failed to score, hitting Taskin straight to captain Miraz at mid-off, putting Sri Lanka in a perilous position at 29-3.

Asalanka joined Kusal Mendis at this stage and the pair added 60 runs off 77 deliveries for the fourth wicket.

Kusal Mendis survived a catch behind review at 45 but in the very next delivery was judged lbw, giving left-arm spin bowler Tanvir Islam his maiden ODI wicket.

Asalanka and Liyanage further strengthened the Sri Lankan innings, adding 64 runs for the fifth wicket before part-time off-spin bowler Shanto had Liyanage (29) caught at long-on by Sakib.

Asalanka brought up his fifth one-day century, scoring 106 runs, hitting four sixes and six boundaries off 123 balls.

Fast bowler Taskin Ahmed took 4-47 for Bangladesh.

The second match will be played in the same venue on Saturday.

Sri Lanka had earlier won the two-match test series 1-0.

## Mavs sign Flagg to rookie contract

# Deandre to join LA Lakers after Trail Blazers buyout

EL SEGUNDO, Calif., July 3, (AP): Center Deandre Ayton has agreed to join the Los Angeles Lakers as a free agent, two people with knowledge of the deal told The Associated Press.

The people spoke on condition of anonymity because the deal could not yet be announced between the Lakers and Ayton, the No. 1 overall pick in the 2018 NBA draft - two spots ahead of Luka Doncic.

The Portland Trail Blazers bought out Ayton’s contract last weekend, and he has agreed to join Doncic and LeBron James on a deal for the upcoming season with a player option for 2026-27. He will be paid more than \$25 million by the Blazers while playing for the Lakers next year.

Ayton’s arrival fills the Lakers’ most glaring offseason need, providing a lob target for James and Doncic. And while Ayton isn’t known as a defensive stopper, the 7-footer will provide the size in the middle that the Lakers have missed since trading Anthony Davis to Dallas for Doncic.

Ayton, who turns 27 this month, spent his first five NBA seasons with Phoenix before joining the Trail Blazers two years ago as part of the three-team trade sending Damian Lillard to Milwaukee.

Ayton struggled at times in Portland while playing for mediocre teams, but he has averaged 16.4 points and 10.5 rebounds during his seven NBA seasons while making 59% of his shots. He played only 40 games for the Blazers last season, getting sidelined for the rest of the year in February by a strained calf.

Although Bronny James tries to stay off all social media, that strategy didn’t stop one of his friends from calling him up this week and asking him about LeBron James’ thoughts on the Los Angeles Lakers’ direction - and what it all might mean for Bronny’s future.

“I said, ‘I have no idea what you’re talking about,’” Bronny James said with a grin Wednesday after practice with the Lakers’ NBA Summer League team. “I don’t really pay attention to that stuff. There’s a lot of stuff going around that I don’t pay attention to.”

Bronny sounds ready to spend a long, hot summer ducking rumors, pleading ignorance on innuendo and concentrating on the work necessary to become a contributor during his second NBA season with the Lakers. add this part

The Dallas Mavericks have signed No. 1 overall draft pick Cooper Flagg to his four-year rookie contract, and a person with knowledge of the agreement said Wednesday the club is bringing back guard Dante Exum on a one-year contract.

The team didn’t disclose details in announcing Flagg’s deal. The total value of the contract for the top pick on the 2025-26 rookie wage scale is in the range of \$62.7 million, with a first-year salary of about \$13.8 million, according to Spotrac. Those numbers can fluctuate slightly.

There are team options in the third



In this file photo, Portland Trail Blazers center Deandre Ayton (2) and Denver Nuggets center Nikola Jokic (15) vie for the ball in the second half of an NBA basketball game in Denver. (AP)

and fourth seasons of rookie deals.

The Mavericks will have to clear a roster spot to re-sign Exum, the person told The Associated Press on condition of anonymity because Dallas can’t yet sign the eight-year veteran. Exum, who is set for his third season with the Mavs, will help fill the void in the backcourt while Kyrie Irving recovers from a torn ACL.

Flagg said during his introductory news conference last week that he intends to play in the Summer League in Las Vegas later this month. The Mavericks’ Summer League opener against the Los Angeles Lakers and Bronny James is set to be nationally televised on July 10.

The Dallas Mavericks are poised to add Frank Vogel to coach Jason Kidd’s staff in a reunion for a tandem that won an NBA title with the Los Angeles Lakers in 2020, a person with knowledge of the agreement said Wednesday night.

Vogel was the head coach and Kidd one of his assistants when the Lakers won their 17th championship in the Florida “bubble.” The roles will be reversed this time, with Vogel serving as associate head coach after spending this past season as a consultant for the Mavericks. Both coaches are 52.

The person spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity because the deal with Vogel isn’t finalized.

Kidd stayed with Vogel one more season in LA before replacing Rick Carlisle as coach of the Mavericks in 2021-22. Dallas went to the Western Conference finals that season, then to the NBA Finals two years later.

Kidd joined Vogel’s staff in LA after getting fired in Milwaukee. His head coaching career began in Brooklyn in 2013-14, immediately after the Hall of Fame point guard retired as a player.

The Lakers fired Vogel two years after winning the title. After a year away from the bench, Vogel spent just one season with Phoenix in 2023-24, getting fired after the Suns were swept in the first round of the playoffs.

Vogel also has been the head coach in Indiana and Orlando. He led the Pacers to consecutive trips to the Eastern Conference finals in 2013-14. Indiana lost to LeBron James and the Miami Heat both years.

## Best of the Rest

**Switzerland shocks France to reach last 8:** Host nation Switzerland upset basketball powerhouse France 86-79 in overtime in the Round of 16, advancing to the quarterfinals in its first-ever appearance at the 2025 FIBA U19 World Cup.

France, ranked No. 3 in the world, had finished third, second, and second in the past three editions of the tournament and was considered one of the top favorites this year. Switzerland, ranked 60th in the FIBA World Rankings for boys, had never competed in a FIBA U19 World Cup before 2025.

France took the first quarter 24-13, and both teams struggled offensively in the second, with France entering halftime holding a 12-point lead.

With five minutes, 34 seconds left in regulation, France led 66-54, but Switzerland responded with a 12-0 run to tie the game at 66-66 by the end of the fourth quarter. The Swiss maintained momentum in overtime, closing out the upset with a seven-point advantage.

Dayan Nessim posted 22 points and 15 rebounds for Switzerland, while teammate Oliver Sassella scored a game-high 25 points.

Switzerland will face New Zealand in the quarterfinals after the Kiwis defeated China 99-86.

In other Round of 16 action, the United States routed Jordan 140-67, Germany beat Serbia 92-83, Israel edged Cameroon 86-82, Australia downed the Dominican Republic 106-96, Slovenia slipped past Argentina 81-80, and Canada cruised past Mali 100-75. (Xinhua)

# Brisbane 2032 main stadium gets major funding boost

BRISBANE, Australia, July 3, (AP): Queensland state officials said Thursday they had secured a deal with the federal government for the 2032 Olympics in Brisbane which commits 50-50 funding for minor venues and 1.2 billion Australian dollars (\$788 million) toward a new main stadium at Brisbane’s Victoria Park.

The federal government is set to invest more than 3.4 billion Australian dollars (\$2.23 billion) in the Games - the single largest contribution towards sporting infrastructure in Australia’s history, federal Infrastructure Minister Catherine King said.

“It is about ensuring that when we hand the keys back after the closing ceremony, Queensland has the infrastructure it needs to build on this incredible legacy for decades to come,” King said.

The centerpiece of Brisbane 2032 is a proposed 63,000-seat stadium at the inner-city Victoria Park. Investigative works at the site have begun with geo-technical studies and soil sampling ongoing.

Brisbane 2032 chief executive Andrew Liveris welcomed the agreement and said he hopes construction will begin at major venues by the end of

2026.

“Today marks a significant shift in forward momentum following the Queensland government’s announcement in March of its 2032 Delivery Plan,” Liveris said.

The International Olympic Committee has backed the Queensland government’s 2032 venue plan after several false starts, saying the Brisbane Games are “on the right path.”

In May, Kirsty Coventry was in Brisbane for a three-day inspection visit before she took over as IOC president.



# Norway ruins Switzerland Euro 2025 opening party



Norway’s Ada Hegerberg, center, jumps for the ball during the Euro 2025, Group A, soccer match between Switzerland and Norway at St. Jakob-Park in Basel, Switzerland. (AP)



Dancers perform during the opening ceremony before the Euro 2025, Group A, soccer match between Switzerland and Norway at St. Jakob-Park in Basel, Switzerland. (AP)



Finland fans celebrate after the Euro 2025, Group A, soccer match between Iceland and Finland at Arena Thun in Thun, Switzerland. (AP)

## Kosola’s goal secures Finland’s 1-0 win over Iceland

**BASEL, Switzerland, July 3, (AP): Norway star Ada Hegerberg led her team to a 2-1 come-from-behind victory over host nation Switzerland despite missing a penalty in their opening game at the Women’s European Championship.**

The home team dominated the first half and went ahead in the 28th minute when Nadine Riesen capitalized on some pinball-machine Norwegian defending to score in off the left post.

Hegerberg equalized against the run of play with a header to Vilde Bøe Risa’s corner in the 54th, four minutes before Switzerland’s Julia Sterli scored an own goal trying to stop Caroline Graham Hansen’s cross for Hegerberg.

But Hegerberg - the all-time Women’s Champions League top-scorer - sent her penalty to the left of the post in the 70th after Géraldine Reuteler was penalized for hand ball while trying to defend against the Lyon star.

Reuteler had sent the ball crashing off the crossbar for the dominant Swiss in the first half.

Switzerland was awarded a penalty after Hegerberg’s miss only to have the decision overturned after a VAR review for an offside call.

The game - the second of the tournament after Finland’s 1-0 win over Iceland - was preceded by the Euro 2025 opening ceremony. Dancers used

long silver tubes in a carefully choreographed performance that paid tribute to Switzerland’s clock-making heritage and Alpine landscape.

UEFA said the modest ceremony celebrated “the pinnacle of European team spirit” while emphasizing “diversity, unity and the triumph of women’s football on its greatest stage.”

After missing three earlier chances, Katarina Kosola scored in the 70th minute to give Finland a 1-0 victory over Iceland.

Kosola cut in from the left flank to curl a rising right-footed shot into the net and fully take advantage of Iceland having a player sent off 12 minutes earlier.

In the first half, the 24-year-old Kosola forced Iceland goalkeeper Cecilía Rúnarsdóttir into a diving save and fired two more shots just over the crossbar.

Iceland’s own left winger Sveindís Jónsdóttir, who will join Angel City in the United States after the tournament, missed with a clear chance to level the game in the 75th. Jónsdóttir also went close deep into stoppage time.

Iceland went down to 10 players in the 58th when midfielder Hildur Antonsdóttir was shown a second yellow card for a dangerous tackle.

Both teams had failed to win a game at each of their previous two Euros tournaments.

“The result is important for our confidence,” Kosola said after Finland ended a winless run that stretched to Euro 2009. “It was the kind of goal I have been practicing a lot. I had a couple of chances in the first half.”

Finland’s win is a strong move in Group A, which has no clear standout team and is widely seen as the most finely balanced at the 16-nation tournament.

Host Switzerland was kicking off against Norway later in Basel after the official on-field opening ceremony for what is the second of 31 games in total. Basel hosts the final on July 27.

“It’s terrible to lose and we feel frustrated,” Iceland coach Thorsteinn Halldórsson said in comments reported by UEFA. “It is an even group and we knew Finland were good, but our first half wasn’t good enough.”

Iceland also was hurt by having captain and star defender Glódís Viggðsdóttir slowed by a stomach illness before being replaced at halftime, rather than a knee injury that forced her to miss playing time in Bayern Munich’s German league and cup-winning season.

Finland last won a game at the Women’s Euro in 2009, while Iceland had drawn 1-1 in each of its three group-stage games at Euro 2022 and lost all three at the 2017 edition.

Jónsdóttir’s fast-driving runs and long throw-ins were a regular threat, and two of Iceland’s most dangerous attacks were denied by Finland defender Emma Koivisto blocking the ball.

Finland defender Natalia Kuikka, who plays for Chicago Stars, said the last 15 minutes had been “pretty chaotic. At the end, Iceland were just coming at us, so it honestly didn’t feel like they were missing a player.”

## Determined push to rise again in Kuwaiti football

# Yarmouk rebuilds with new foreign signings

**By Hassan Mosa**  
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 3: Yarmouk reinforced its squad with the signings of Malian players Moriba Dialle and Reuben Akwa, as part of its ongoing preparations for the Zain First Division League, which kicks off on September 14.

Following a difficult season that saw Yarmouk finish 10th and last in the Premier League standings, the club is focused on rebuilding with strong talent to secure a swift return to the top flight.

The club recently secured the services of former Al-Salmiya player Othman Al-Dosari, and has now added further international experience with the acquisitions of Dialle and Akwa.

The 29-year-old Dialle, who plays as a defender, brings valuable experience from his time with ES Sétif in Algeria, where he spent three seasons. He also previously



Versatile midfielder Akwa.

featured for Stade Malien, one of Mali’s top clubs.

Akwa, born in 1996, is a versatile midfielder known for his attacking style. He played a key

role for Duhok SC in Iraq last season, helping the club win the Gulf Champions League title after defeating Al-Qadisiya with a 2-1 away win (following a 1-1 draw

in the first leg). His diverse experience includes stints with Dunajská Streda (Slovakia), Hartberg and Ried (Austria), Lokomotiva (Croatia), and Teuta Durrës (Albania).

Under the guidance of Dhaher Al-Adwani, who took charge last December following the departure of Serbian manager Goran Matkovic, Yarmouk is actively strengthening key positions. The goal is clear: to build a competitive side capable of delivering strong results and earning promotion back to the Premier League.

As part of the restructuring, Yarmouk opted not to renew the contracts of its five foreign players:

Mario Pietro (Italy)  
Ayoub Lakhdar and Habib Dahmani (Morocco)  
Kayali Kone (Ivory Coast)  
Reza Dost (Iran)

The club’s recruitment strategy reflects a determined push to rise again in Kuwaiti football.

## Al-Nasr welcomes Al-Enezi duo

KUWAIT CITY, July 3: The Al-Nasr Club’s Board of Directors has signed Mishari Al-Enezi and Abdulaziz Al-Enezi to reinforce the first volleyball team for the upcoming 2025-2026 season.

Meanwhile, the volleyball team, led by director Mohammed Al-Mutairi, recently welcomed Sultan Ahmed and Nasser Shuwaiker to represent the “Sons of Al-Julaib” in forthcoming competitions. The team is coached by Montenegrin Darko, assisted by Khaled Al-Saifan, and is currently seeking two additional professional players to complete the roster.

Last season marked Al-Nasr’s debut in the league under Tunisian coach Niaz Salam, with the team achieving an impressive second-place finish in the First Division League. This success is credited to the club’s management, technical and administrative staff, and dedicated players.

Al-Nasr Volleyball Manager Mohammed Al-Daihani expressed deep gratitude to the club’s management, especially board member Khaled Al-Ardi, for their strong support and efforts in overcoming challenges facing the team. He emphasized that the new season promises even stronger per-



Mishari Al-Enezi (left) poses with Khaled Al-Ardi.

formances as Al-Nasr aims to compete for the First Division League title.

Preparations will intensify starting mid-July with player gatherings, followed by a two-week training camp in Cairo scheduled for early August.

‘It is heartbreaking for the group that Elliot’s tour is over’

# Farrell summoned by British and Irish Lions after Daly ruled out of tour by broken arm

SYDNEY, July 3, (AP): Former England captain Owen Farrell was summoned by the British and Irish Lions to replace Elliot Daly on the tour of Australia on Thursday.

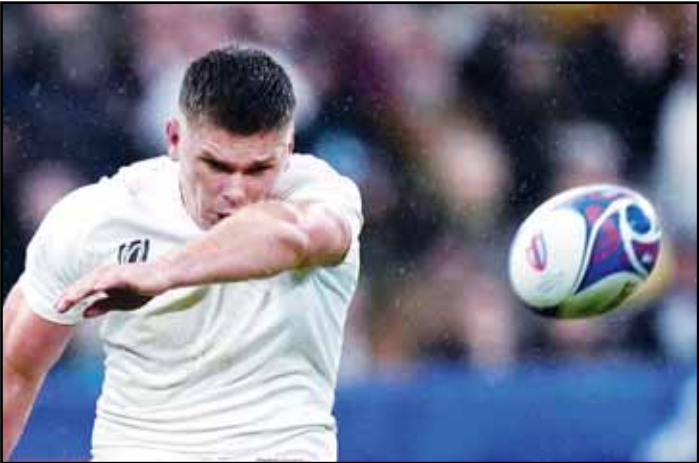
Daly broke his left forearm on Wednesday in the 52-12 win over the Queensland Reds in Brisbane.

“It is heartbreaking for the group that Elliot’s tour is over,” Lions coach Andy Farrell said in a statement. “He is a Lions legend who has added so much to the group on and off the field over the past few weeks and over the course of three tours.

“Owen will now come in and add to our options and bring his own Lions experience to the group.”

Owen Farrell will join his fourth tour, having played 18 times for the Lions, including six tests across the 2013, 2017 and 2021 tours.

However, he hasn’t played an international since leading England at the 2023 Rugby World Cup, after which he took a break from test rugby. He earned 112 England caps and is the team’s all-time points record-holder.



In this file photo, England’s Owen Farrell kicks the ball during the Rugby World Cup semifinal match between England and South Africa at the Stade de France in Saint-Denis, outside Paris. (AP)

Owen Farrell also hasn’t played any rugby in two months. He was concussed on May 4 while playing for Racing 92 in his last game for the French Top 14 side. He recently signed a new deal to return to his old English club Saracens.

He won’t arrive in Sydney until Friday, too late to be involved in the game against the New South

Wales Waratahs on Saturday. Tadhg Beirne will lead the Lions, returning to the second row to partner fellow Ireland lock James Ryan.

Fullback Hugo Keenan, wing Blair Kinghorn and reserve scrum-half Ben White will make their Lions debuts.

Keenan was withdrawn from

the Queensland game after falling ill, which prompted Daly’s inclusion and ill luck. Kinghorn joined the Lions only on Monday after helping Toulouse win the Top 14 title last weekend. White arrived this week after the tour-ending injury to Tomos Williams.

Northampton clubmates Alex Mitchell and Fin Smith are the halves and Scotland duo Sione Tuipulotu and Huw Jones are the centers.

Lions: Hugo Keenan (Ireland), Mack Hansen (Ireland), Huw Jones (Scotland), Sione Tuipulotu (Scotland), Blair Kinghorn (Scotland), Fin Smith (England), Alex Mitchell (England), Ben Earl (England), Josh van der Flier (Ireland), Henry Pollock (England), James Ryan (Ireland), Tadhg Beirne (Ireland, captain), Finlay Bealham (Ireland), Luke Cowan-Dickie (England), Pierre Schoeman (Scotland). Reserves: Dan Sheehan (Ireland), Ellis Genge (England), Tadhg Furlong (Ireland), Joe McCarthy (Ireland), Scott Cummings (Scotland), Jac Morgan (Wales), Ben White (Scotland), Marcus Smith (England).

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NEWS





Novak Djokovic of Serbia returns to Daniel Evans of Britain during their second round men's singles match at the Wimbledon Tennis Championships in London. (AP)

# Sports

## ‘Portuguese soccer completely devastated’

### Liverpool’s Jota and brother killed in car crash in Spain, police confirm

MADRID, July 3, (AP): Liverpool player Diogo Jota and his brother, André Silva, were killed in a car accident in Spain when the Lamborghini they were in veered off a road and burst into flames, police said Thursday.

The Spanish Civil Guard confirmed to The Associated Press that Jota and his brother were found dead near the northwestern city of Zamora.

Firefighters were called in as the fire spread into the nearby vegetation, authorities said.

Police were investigating the causes of the accident that happened past midnight local time. They said there were no other vehicles involved. The bodies were undergoing forensic analysis.

It wasn’t clear who was driving the car. Police were looking into the hypothesis that the accident happened because of a blown tire.

The accident occurred while they were driving eastward along an isolated stretch of highway about an hour west of Zamora.

The 28-year-old Jota and his 25-year-old brother, both Portuguese players, were the only ones in the car, police said.

Jota’s death comes weeks after he married Rute Cardoso and in a social media post wrote, “Yes to forever.” They had three children, the youngest born last year.

Jota also played for Portugal’s national team and helped it win the Nations League last month.

Silva played with Portuguese club Penafiel in the lower divisions.

Liverpool said the club was “devastated by the tragic passing.”

Liverpool FC will be making no further comment at this time and requests the privacy of Diogo and Andre’s family, friends, teammates, and club staff is respected as they try to come to terms with an unimaginable loss. We will continue to provide them with our full support.”

Jota joined Liverpool from Wolves in 2020 and won three major trophies with the Merseyside club - including the Premier League title last season.

The Portuguese soccer federation released a statement lamenting the deaths.



Liverpool’s Diogo Jota gestures during the English Premier League soccer match between Wolverhampton Wanderers and Liverpool at the Molineux Stadium in Wolverhampton, England. (AP)

Federation president Pedro Proença said Portuguese soccer was “completely devastated.”

“More than a fantastic player, with almost 50 appearances for the national team, Diogo Jota was an extraordinary person, respected by all his colleagues and op-

ponents. He had a contagious joy and was a reference in his community,” Proença said in the statement.

The Portuguese federation said it has requested a minute of silence before Thursday’s match between Portugal and Spain at the Women’s European Championship being played in Switzerland.

“We lost two champions,” Proença said. “Their deaths represent an irreparable loss for Portuguese soccer, and we will all do our best to honor their legacy daily.”

Portugal’s Prime Minister Luís Montenegro commented on the “unexpected and tragic” deaths. He said Jota was “an athlete who greatly honored Portugal’s name.”

“I extend my deepest condolences to their family,” he said. “It is a sad day for soccer and for national and international sports.”

Reaction also started pouring in from across the world, including from non-soccer players such as NBA star LeBron James and tennis legend Rafael Nadal.

“It doesn’t make any sense,” Jota’s Portugal teammate Cristiano Ronaldo said. “Just now we were together in the national team, just now you got married. My condolences to your family, to your wife, and to your children. I wish them all the strength in the world. I know that you will always be with them. Rest in peace, Diogo and André. We will all miss you.”

Former club Porto and former teammates lamented the deaths and sent condolences, as did other clubs, federations, and leagues.

The Premier League said it was “shocked and devastated.”

“Our sincerest condolences go to Diogo’s family, friends, Liverpool FC, and all their supporters at this heartbreaking time,” it said. “Football has lost a champion who will be forever missed. We will continue to support our friends and colleagues at the club.”

UEFA said its thoughts were with relatives, friends, and teammates affected by this heartbreaking loss.” It said a moment of silence will be observed at Euro 2025 matches on Thursday and Friday.

# US holds off Guatemala to set up Mexico final clash



Guatemala midfielder Pedro Altan (10) and United States midfielder Brenden Aaronson (11) battle for possession of the ball during the second half of a CONCACAF Gold Cup semifinal soccer match in St. Louis. (AP)

## Luna scores twice

**ST. LOUIS, July 3, (AP): Diego Luna scored twice in the first 15 minutes, and the United States hung on to beat Guatemala 2-1 on Wednesday night to reach its first CONCACAF Gold Cup final since 2021.**

Luna put the U.S. ahead with a left-footed shot in the fourth minute, then scored with his right in the 15th for his third goal in two games.

Olger Escobar, an 18-year who was born in Lynn, Massachusetts, cut inside and slid a shot from inside the area between Matt Freese and the far

post in the 80th for his second goal of the tournament. Freese parried José Morales’ shot toward the far post in the second minute of stoppage time.

The U.S. plays defending champion Mexico for the title Sunday at Houston, the Americans’ last competitive match before their World Cup opener next June. El Tri has won nine Gold Cups, the U.S. seven and Canada one.

The 16th-ranked Americans advanced to the Gold Cup final for the 13th time. All five losses in finals have been to Mexico.

The No. 106 Guatemala, which has never reached the final, outshot the U.S. 13-1 in the last 30 minutes of the first half and 20-12 in the game be-

fore a pro-Guatemala sellout crowd of 22,423 at Energizer Park.

Luna got his first goal after Alex Freeman crossed for Malik Tillman. He touched the ball to Luca de la Torre, whose shot was spilled by goalkeeper Kenderson Navarro. Luna reacted quickly and switched the ball from his right foot to his left, then shot over Navarro’s outstretched right hand.

Raúl Jiménez scored in the 50th minute off an assist from 16-year-old Gilberto Mora and Mexico advanced to its 12th CONCACAF Gold Cup final with a 1-0 victory over Honduras.

El Tri advanced to play the United States in the final Sunday night in Houston for the eighth meeting in the title game between the two coun-

tries with Mexico owning a 5-2 edge. Mexico has won nine Gold Cups, the U.S. seven and Canada one.

Mexico broke through early in the second half on a play started by Alexis Vega with a pass to Mora near the top of the box. Mora slid a pass to Jiménez, who beat Edrick Menjivar with a right-footed shot for his 42nd career international goal.

No. 17 ranked Mexico appeared to add to that lead a few minutes later when Edson Álvarez tapped in a goal off a set piece but that was negated when video review ruled he was off-side.

But El Tri managed to hold onto that lead as 75th ranked Honduras was unable to generate an equalizer.

## Al-Sharifi ‘replaces’ injured Falah in Kuwait U-23 squad



Kuwait U-23 players work out as part of their preparations for the qualifiers.

**By Hassan Mosa**

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, July 3: Kuwait Olympic team coach, Croatian Dario Pesic, has called up Al-Qadisiya player Mohammed Al-Sharifi to replace Mohsen Falah, who sustained an injury during recent training sessions.

The team continued its daily preparations at the auxiliary field of Jaber Al-Ahmad International Stadium, in anticipation of the AFC U-23 Championship qualifiers, scheduled to take place in Saudi Arabia in January 2026.

The team is set to hold its final training session in Kuwait next Sunday before departing for a training camp in Cairo the following day. The camp will feature three friendly matches, including two confirmed fixtures against Egypt on July 17 and 20. Discussions are ongoing to finalize a third match.

Kuwait has been drawn into Group B for the AFC U-23 qualifiers alongside Japan, Afghanistan, and Myanmar, with Myanmar designated as the host nation for the group matches from September 1 to 9.

According to the tournament format, the top team from each of the ten qualifying groups, along with the five best

second-placed teams, will advance to the finals. They will join host nation Saudi Arabia to complete a 16-team lineup, which will be split into four groups for the final tournament.

Following the Cairo camp, the Blues will continue their training to maintain momentum and fine-tune their readiness. The team is scheduled to arrive in Myanmar one week before the qualifiers begin, to acclimate to the local weather conditions.

Team manager Al-Ateeqi expressed confidence in the squad, emphasizing the players’ understanding of the responsibility they carry. “Our ambition is clear — to qualify for the final tournament. I believe in the capabilities of our players and trust they will rise to the occasion,” he said.

Meanwhile, Kuwait’s youth and junior national teams have also begun early preparations, launching training sessions at Jaber Al-Ahmad International Stadium’s auxiliary field earlier this week.

The Kuwait Football Association’s Technical Committee stressed the importance of starting training early to ensure full readiness ahead of upcoming Gulf, Arab, regional, and continental competitions.

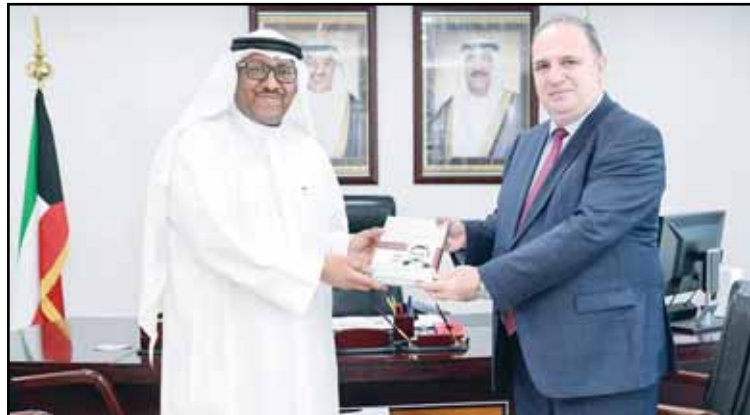
## Barjas meets Azerbaijani Ambassador

### Kuwait Basketball Association eyes joint events with Azerbaijan

KUWAIT CITY, July 3: Dhari Barjas, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Kuwaiti Basketball Association, welcomed His Excellency Emil Karimov, Ambassador of the State of Azerbaijan to Kuwait, at the Federation’s headquarters in the Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Indoor Halls Complex, Sabah Al-Salem.

The meeting featured friendly discussions on enhancing sports relations between Kuwait and Azerbaijan, with a special focus on basketball. Both sides explored opportunities to strengthen cooperation, including the possibility of hosting the Azerbaijani national basketball team in Kuwait and arranging for the Kuwaiti national team to play friendly matches in Azerbaijan.

Chairman Barjas wished Ambassador Karimov continued success and prosperity for Azerbaijan, appreciating the ambassador’s first visit to Kuwait’s sports federations. Ambassador Karimov expressed gratitude for the warm reception and extended his hopes for deeper collaboration to advance basketball development in both countries. The visit concluded with a ceremonial exchange of commemorative shields between Dhari Barjas and Ambassador Emil Karimov.



Barjas receiving the Ambassador of Azerbaijan.

### Djokovic sets another record at Wimbledon

LONDON, July 3, (AP): Novak Djokovic added another record to his name by reaching Wimbledon’s third round for a 19th time with a 6-3, 6-2, 6-0 win over Dan Evans on Centre Court on Wednesday.

It was Djokovic’s 99th match win at Wimbledon overall, and the 19 third-round appearances put him one ahead of Roger Federer for most by any man in the Open Era.

In the men’s draw, No. 11 Alex de Minaur ousted 115th-ranked Arthur Cazaux 4-6, 6-2, 6-4, 6-0 and 19th-seeded Gregor Dimitrov outlasted Corentin Moutet 7-5, 4-6, 7-5, 7-5.

In the women’s No. 7-seeded Mirra Andreeva and No. 10 Emma Navarro both advanced in straight sets. The 18-year-old Andreeva earned a 6-1, 7-6 (4) win

over Lucia Bronzetti of Italy, and Navarro cruised past Veronika Kudermetova 6-1, 6-2. No. 11 Elena Rybakina, the 2022 Wimbledon champion, beat Maria Sakkari 6-3, 6-1.

It’s hardly the most prestigious record for Djokovic, whose 24 Grand Slam titles - including seven at Wimbledon - are the most by a male player. But he could at least use it to poke fun at his new, and much younger, main rivals.

“Nineteen times, that’s a great stat,” said the 38-year-old Djokovic. “That’s probably almost as much as Sinner and Alcaraz have years in their lives.”

Well, not quite.

Carlos Alcaraz, who beat Djokovic in the last two Wimbledon finals, is 22, while No. 1-ranked Jannik

Sinner - who was playing later on Centre Court - is 23.

The growing rivalry between Sinner and Alcaraz - especially in the wake of their five-set final at the French Open last month - has helped tennis move on from the era of the Big Three, where Djokovic is the last man standing after Federer and Rafael Nadal retired.

But Djokovic is too focused on proving he can still win another Slam to sit back and reflect on everything he has accomplished at Wimbledon.

“I don’t pause to reflect, to be honest. I don’t have time,” Djokovic said in an on-court interview. “I would like to. But I think that’s going to come probably when I set the racket aside and then sip margarita on the beach with Federer and Nadal and just reflect on our rivalry and everything.”