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Amir hails Crown Prince's 2 years of dedicated service

KUWAIT CITY, June 1, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah on Monday has addressed a message of congratulations to His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah on the second anniversary in office.

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal, addressing His Highness the Crown Prince, stated, "On the occasion of the second anniversary of Your Highness assuming the position of Crown Prince, I am pleased to extend my sincerest congratulations and best wishes. This cherished national occasion reflects Your Highness' esteemed standing and pivotal role in advancing the prosperity and progress of our beloved homeland."

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"As we mark this significant occasion, we commend Your Highness' distinguished journey, characterized by dedication, sincerity and unwavering commitment to duty. These noble values have earned Your Highness the affection and appreciation of the people of Kuwait, who take pride in your continued efforts in service of the nation and its loyal citizens."

He wished His Highness the Crown Prince lasting good health and wellbeing, praying to His Almighty Allah to guide "Our steps for what is good for our homeland and its promotion, crown efforts of the citizens with success and distinctiveness to promote the civil process through attaining more of the aspired development achievements and safeguard the bounties of security, safety and prosperity."

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KUNA photo

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah with His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah

GLOBAL REBUKE ECHOES AFTER DRONES, MISSILES TARGET KUWAIT AGAIN

Kuwait repels renewed aerial threats

Iranian attacks, Hormuz blockade put world energy at risk: Kuwait envoy

KUWAIT CITY, June 1, (KUNA): Kuwait's air defenses intercepted hostile drones and missiles early Monday, triggering loud explosions heard across parts of the country, the Army General Staff confirmed, as a wave of regional and international condemnations followed the reported Iranian attacks.

The General Staff said the blasts resulted from mid-air interceptions and urged the public to adhere to safety instructions issued by relevant authorities.

Kuwait's Ministry of Foreign Affairs strongly condemned the attacks, describing them as a dangerous escalation and a direct assault on the country's security and stability. The ministry said the strikes constitute a blatant violation of international law, the UN Charter, and UN Security Council Resolution 2817 (2026), warning they pose a serious threat to civilians and vital infrastructure.

In a statement, the ministry reaffirmed Kuwait's categorical rejection of such acts and stressed its right to take all necessary measures to defend its territory, holding Iran fully responsible under international law and relevant UN resolutions. It cautioned that continued attacks would undermine de-escalation efforts and threaten broader regional stability.

Regional and international reactions were swift. Saudi Arabia strongly condemned what it described as repeated Iranian attacks against Kuwait, with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs stressing the Kingdom's categorical rejection of the strikes as a violation of Kuwait's sovereignty and international law, including the UN Charter. Riyadh warned that such actions undermine efforts to restore regional security and stability, reaffirming full solidarity with Kuwait and support for all measures taken to protect its sovereignty and the safety of its people.

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KUNA photo

Passengers make their way through Terminal 1 at Kuwait International Airport on Monday as Arab and foreign airlines resumed operations under a gradual reopening plan following the completion of airport upgrade and maintenance works.

Kuwait Airways powers ground ops

Kuwait T1 back in full swing

KUWAIT CITY, June 1, (KUNA): Kuwait International Airport on Monday resumed receiving and operating flights of Arab and foreign airlines as part of a gradual reopening plan following the completion of repair and upgrade works and enhanced operational readiness.

Passenger traffic resumed at Terminal 1 (T1), with operational measures in place to ensure smooth air traffic flow, facilitate travel procedures, and support the airport's readiness to handle flights under the approved plan.

The resumption is part of efforts to boost the efficiency of the air transport sector and restore the airport's operational capacity to meet the needs of travelers and airlines.

Meanwhile, Kuwait Airways is ready to operate Terminal 1 (T1) and provide ground handling services to all airlines from the terminal in line with the highest operational standards, Acting Chief Executive Officer Abdulwahab Al-Shatti said.

Speaking to KUNA, Al-Shatti said

the company began preparations early in coordination with the Public Authority of Civil Aviation, the Interior Ministry and other relevant authorities to ensure operational teams were ready to handle passengers and flights smoothly and efficiently.

He stated that reopening T1 aligns with a strategic plan to guarantee smooth passenger, aircraft, and airline operations from day one.

The terminal has undergone several upgrades, including exclusive check-in counters for first-class and business-class passengers in the main departure hall to enhance services and improve the travel experience, he added.

He said all operational and technical teams were ready from the moment the company was notified of the terminal's reopening, stressing that Kuwait Airways is fully prepared to support operations with its technical and human resources.

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1-hour less

Education staff shift to summer schedule

KUWAIT CITY, June 1: The acting Undersecretary of the Ministry of Education, Eng. Mohammed Al-Khaldi, issued a circular regarding the organization of official working hours during the summer, based on Circular No. 11/2026 of the Civil Service Commission (CSC) concerning the official working hours system in government entities, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

In the circular, the ministry explains that it has been decided to reduce working hours during the morning shift by one hour daily, making the actual working hours six hours instead of seven.

Adherence to the approved grace periods stipulated in the official working hours system will continue.

The flexible working hours mechanism for the morning shift will be from 7:00 am to 8:00 am, and employees are permitted to arrive at any time between this period. They can leave work after completing six actual working hours. All other regulations governing morning working hours will continue to apply.

The circular emphasized that the reduction in working hours does not entail any modification or impact on the legally established shift systems for employees working on a shift system.

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8 NBK Wealth, A global wealth platform driven by professional excellence



10 Gulf Bank completes its first Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory



10 Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait honors Shuwaikh branch with 'The Rising Branch 2025' title



Ministry of Foreign Affairs photo

Kuwait Foreign Minister Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah during his meeting with IAEA Director General Rafael Grossi.

Kuwait, IAEA explore deeper cooperation

Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah received Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency Rafael Grossi on Monday on his official visit to Kuwait.

In a statement, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs said that Sheikh Jarrah commended the agency for its professional and technical role in supporting efforts to promote the peaceful use of nuclear energy and strengthen nuclear safety and security standards.

The two sides reviewed cooperation relations between Kuwait and the IAEA and explored ways to enhance them further, in addition to discussing the latest developments in the region, the statement added.

Sheikh Jarrah also hosted a luncheon in honor of Grossi and the accompanying delegation. (KUNA) — See Also Page 4

Oman bets on Dhofar boom

Kuwaiti visitors to Oman rise 17.2 pct ahead of Dhofar 2026

By Fares Ghaleb

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 1: The Embassy of the Sultanate of Oman in Kuwait, in cooperation with the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism in Oman, organized a press conference on the preparations for

the 2026 Dhofar Autumn Festival, while highlighting the events and programs, tourism initiatives and developments in Dhofar Governorate to solidify its position as one of the leading tourist destinations in the region.

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Photo by Rezk Tawfiq

Officials from the Omani Ministry of Heritage and Tourism, led by Ambassador Dr. Saleh Al-Kharousi, pose for a group photo during a press conference in Kuwait on the 2026 Dhofar Autumn Festival.

All-out hunt for escapees

Kuwait orders probe as 3 prisoners flee custody



Mol photo

The three prisoners wanted following their escape from custody.

By Munif Naif

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 1: First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah issued a directive on the urgent formation of an investigative panel, following the escape of three prisoners from the correctional institutions.

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Prayer Timings

Fajr	03:15	Asr	15:20
Sunrise	04:49	Maghrib	18:43
Zohr	11:46	Isha	20:14

Kuwait marks 2 years of HH Crown Prince's reign

'Untiring journey for love, progress of Kuwait'



HH the Amir HH the Crown Prince HH the Prime Minister

Kuwait Amir receives Crown Prince, senior State officials

KUWAIT CITY, June 1, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir of Kuwait, Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received on Monday His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah. His Highness also received His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.

In addition, His Highness the Amir received First Deputy Premier and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yusuf Saud Al-Sabah.

His Highness the Amir further received Minister of Defense Sheikh

Abdullah Ali Abdullah Al-Salem Al-Sabah.

Meanwhile, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah received on Monday His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.

His Highness the Crown Prince also received First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yusuf Saud Al-Sabah.

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

KUWAIT CITY, June 1, (KUNA): Kuwait marks the second anniversary of naming His Highness Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah to the post of Crown Prince, a milestone reflecting his continued role in advancing Kuwait's progress and boosting its regional and international standing.

His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled was named Crown Prince by an Amiri Order issued on June 1, 2024 by His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, a decision that received broad public support across Kuwait.

In a speech delivered on the occasion before His Highness the Amir, His Highness the Crown Prince pledged loyalty and dedication to serving Kuwait, safeguarding its interests, preserving its security and stability and remaining committed to the country's national values and unity.

On June 2, the Cabinet, headed by His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, convened a special session to formally endorse His Highness the Crown Prince to his post, where he took the constitutional oath before Him.

His Highness the Crown Prince then took the constitutional oath before His Highness the Amir.

The anniversary comes as Kuwait continues to face regional and security challenges with diplomatic and field coordination that strengthened the country's stability and readiness.

Since the start of the Iranian attacks on February 28, 2026, His Highness the Crown Prince has carried out a series of inspection tours covering military and security facilities to review the country's defense and security capabilities.

On March 5, His Highness the Crown Prince visited the Ministry of Defense, where he conveyed greetings from His Highness the Amir, Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces, and praised the efforts of military personnel in defending the country and protecting its security and stability.

On March 7, His Highness the Crown Prince visited the Kuwait National Guard (KNG) headquarters and Kuwait Fire Force (KFF),



HH Sheikh Sabah Khaled

commenting their role in keeping up with developments and strengthening civil protection and emergency response.

His tours also included several military bases and strategic sites, in addition to the Joint Operations Center at the Ministry of Defense, the Air Force operations center and the decision-making room at the Interior Ministry.

On April 28, representing His Highness the Amir, His Highness the Crown Prince headed Kuwait's delegation to the extraordinary consultative GCC summit in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia.

Over the past year, His Highness the Crown Prince advanced Kuwait's global standing by leading high-level delegations at regional and international summits while closely overseeing local development projects.

He also patronized and attended several national events and inaugurations, received Arab and international officials and honored Kuwaiti figures recognized for distinguished achievements.

On September 15, 2025, His Highness the

Crown Prince headed Kuwait's delegation to the emergency Arab-Islamic summit in Doha, Qatar.

He later led Kuwait's delegation to the 80th session of the UN General Assembly and events marking the 80th anniversary of the United Nations in New York on September 19.

On September 22, His Highness the Crown Prince participated in the high-level international conference on the peaceful solution to the Palestinian cause and implementation of the two-state solution at UN headquarters in New York.

The following day, he delivered a speech on behalf of GCC states during an emergency UN Security Council session on the Middle East, including the Palestinian cause, before addressing the UN General Assembly on September 24.

His Highness the Crown Prince also visited the United Kingdom on September 27 and met Crown Prince William, Prince of Wales.

On November 2, His Highness the Crown Prince headed Kuwait's delegation in official talks held in Kuwait with Chinese Vice President Han Zheng.

On December 15, His Highness the Crown Prince attended the opening ceremony of the "Between Two Masterpieces" exhibition at the Kuwait Islamic Antiquities Museum.

Over the past twenty years, His Highness the Crown Prince has significantly shaped Kuwait's diplomacy by navigating regional changes and strengthening ties with Gulf, Arab, and international countries.

Born in 1953, His Highness the Crown Prince got a bachelor's degree in political science in 1977 and joined the Kuwait Foreign Ministry in 1978, where he later served as Kuwait's ambassador to Saudi Arabia and the country's representative to the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) between 1995 and 1998.

In 1998, he was appointed head of the National Security Bureau with Minister's rank.

He later served as minister of Social Affairs and Labor in 2006 and 2007, minister of Information in 2008 and 2009 and minister of Foreign Affairs in 2011.

In February 2012, His Highness was appointed Deputy Prime Minister, Foreign Minister and Minister of State for Cabinet affairs before becoming first Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign minister in 2014.

He was appointed Prime Minister on November 19, 2019, heading four successive governments through December 2021.



KUNA photo

A rare Blue Moon illuminates the Kuwait sky.

'Blue Moon' illuminates Kuwait sky

A rare Blue Moon illuminated the skies of Kuwait on Sunday evening, captivating local astronomers and stargazers.

The "Blue Moon" phenomenon refers to the second full moon appearing within a single Gregorian calendar month.

Despite the name, the moon retains its natural pearly gray or golden-orange hue rather than turning blue.

This astronomical event occurs approximately every two to three years. It is driven by the cyclical variance between the 29.5-day lunar cycle and the standard calendar month. (KUNA)

EPD relocated to Subhan region

By Munif Naif

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 1: The Ministry of Interior announced the relocation of the Environmental Police Department (EPD), which is under the Security Directorates Sector, from Jaber Al-Ahmad to its new headquarters in Subhan.

According to the ministry, the new headquarters of the department is on

the ground floor of the Specialized Training Center building, which is part of the Security Directorates Affairs Sector. It added that the department has started its full operation at the new location.

This move will raise the level of security preparedness, improve field operations, and provide a supportive work environment for the department to effectively carry out its tasks.

Kuwait slams expanded Israeli incursion in Lebanon

KUWAIT CITY, June 1, (KUNA): The State of Kuwait strongly condemned the Israeli occupation forces' continuous escalation against the Republic of Lebanon and their wide-scale ground incursion, which threatened civilians.

The Israeli occupation's military escalation is a blatant violation of Lebanon's sovereignty, security and stability, as well as international

law and UN Charter, the Foreign Ministry said in a statement.

It reaffirmed Kuwait's firm support to Lebanon's unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity, calling for immediate cessation of the escalation and withdrawal of all Israeli occupation forces from the Lebanese territories.

The Israeli occupation forces, it said, should

fully comply with UN Security Council resolution 1701 and relevant resolutions.

The foreign ministry urged the international community and UNSC to live up to their responsibilities and stop these violations in a manner that preserved Lebanon's security and stability, as well as rid the region from further instability.

GCC strategy derives future water sustainability

MUSCAT, June 1, (KUNA): The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Statistical Center said on Sunday that GCC countries have successfully implemented strategies to enhance water sustainability resources and achieve water security for future generations.

GCC-Stat said that this can be achieved by reducing reliance on groundwater and increasing the share of renewable water sources.

In a report on the sustainability of water resources in the region, the center said GCC countries recorded a three percent decline in the annual rate of groundwater extraction over

the past nine years, while the share of renewable water sources rose to 25.5 percent in 2024, reflecting growing interest in applying sustainable water resource management policies.

The center noted that this shift comes within the framework of GCC efforts to address water scarcity and climate change challenges and enhance water-use efficiency through the expansion of desalination projects, the reuse of treated water, and the adoption of modern technologies for water management and conservation.

It added that the increasing contribution of renewable water sources to the overall water re-

source mix reflects GCC countries' orientation toward diversifying water sources and reducing pressure on groundwater reserves, supporting sustainable development plans and strengthening water security across the region in the coming period.

The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Statistical Center, headquartered in Oman, serves as the official body for data, information and statistics related to GCC countries, in addition to supporting statistical centers and planning agencies across the GCC.



Minister of State for Development and Sustainability Dr. Reem Al-Fulaij meets the Ambassador of Uzbekistan to Kuwait Ayubkhon Yunusov.



KUNA photos
Minister of State for Development and Sustainability Dr. Reem Al-Fulaij meets the Ambassador of Serbia to Kuwait Filip Katic.

SDGs targeted in Kuwait, Serbia & Uzbek dialogue

KUWAIT CITY, June 1, (KUNA): Minister of State for Development and Sustainability Dr. Reem Al-Fulaij on Monday held separate meetings with Ambassador of Serbia to Kuwait Filip Katic and Ambassador of Uzbekistan to Kuwait Ayubkhon Yunusov to discuss ways of enhancing bilateral cooperation.

In a statement for KUNA following her meeting with the Serbian ambassador, Al-Fulaij said that discussions focused on strengthening cooperation in sustainable development and related projects that contribute to achieving development goals.

She added that the two sides also explored opportunities for cooperation in environmental protection and the exchange of

expertise in this field.

Regarding her meeting with the Uzbek ambassador, Al-Fulaij said discussions covered prospects for cooperation in development and sustainability, as well as opportunities to collaborate on implementing projects that support these objectives.

The talks also addressed environmental initiatives and the exchange of experiences and expertise related to preserving natural resources and addressing environmental challenges.

For his part, Serbian Ambassador Filip Katic extended his sincere congratulations to Kuwait on the occasion of Eid Al-Adha, wishing the country's leadership, government, and people continued progress and prosperity.

Other Voices

Myths about the book 'On the Origin of Species'

By Ahmad alsarraf

The book 'On the Origin of Species,' by the British scientist Charles Darwin, is considered one of the greatest books in human history. Since its publication in 1859, it has continued to spark debate, marking a turning point in the history of scientific thought.

The book did not merely explain the diversity of living organisms, but it redefined the fundamental question - how do species originate, how do they become established, and why do organisms differ in their characteristics, forms, and functions?

Darwin began with meticulous observation of nature, which revealed that individuals within the same species are not identical but share a degree of variation. This variation is the raw material upon which the environment acts over time.

Darwin started from a simple yet crucial observation - within each species there are differences, such as those between a crocodile and a lizard, between the same bird with different-sized beaks on two distant islands, and between a cat and a tiger. Not all creatures of the same species are exactly alike.

. They differ in strength, color, size, endurance, and other traits.

These differences may seem small, but when accumulated across generations, they have a significant impact on the survival of the species. Darwin believed that heredity transmits these traits to subsequent generations, with beneficial traits persisting and harmful ones disappearing over time.

All living things are engaged in a struggle for survival because resources in nature are limited. Food, shelter, warmth, and the ability to escape danger are not available to everyone without limits. Therefore, not all individuals can survive or reproduce; only those best adapted succeed.

This is the origin of the idea of natural selection, which states that nature does not choose consciously or intentionally, but rather preserves or allows those with better traits to survive under specific conditions.

Darwin concluded that small changes, if sustained over a long period, can lead to the emergence of new species. For Darwin, evolution is not a sudden leap, but a slow and cumulative process. Over time, groups of organisms may become separated from one another due to environmental differences or geographical isolation, and each group then develops in a different direction. With continued divergence, each branch can become an independent species.

Darwin places great importance on geographical isolation, such as islands, moun-

tains, and seas. When a group of organisms is separated from others, it begins to adapt to its unique conditions. Over time, its characteristics may change significantly from those of the original population. Therefore, in his view, islands were important natural laboratories for understanding evolution.

The book does not merely explain changes in species. It also attempts to explain the diversity of life on Earth. Instead of assuming that each species was created separately and unchanging, Darwin proposes that all species are distantly related, sharing ancient origins that branched out over time into multiple forms. Thus, for him, evolution resembles a large tree with constantly branching paths.

Despite the widespread controversy the book faced for challenging prevailing ideas, its scientific impact was immense. It laid a solid foundation for evolutionary biology and opened the door to new studies in genetics, classification, ecology, and behavior.

Despite advances in genetics and biology, the fundamental principles laid down 167 years ago remain central to contemporary scientific thought.

Contrary to popular belief, Darwin never claimed that humans descended from modern apes. Instead, he argued that both share a common ancestor from which their lineages subsequently diverged.



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Accountability vital to put problems on track

"KUWAIT is currently witnessing a renaissance, reflected in the improvement of infrastructure and the resulting boost to the work of contracting companies. This includes the rehabilitation of roads and the maintenance of sewage, water, electricity, and landline telephone networks," Kuwaiti writer **Dr. Sadiq Al-Bassam** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

"All of this work requires excavation to varying depths, followed by back-filling and leveling of the soil.

"Government agencies award tenders to contractors on the condition that maintenance and construction work does not negatively impact the environment or the safety of citizens and residents.



Dr. Sadiq Al-Bassam

"This work must be completed in accordance with the specifications and standards agreed upon in the contracts signed with these companies, institutions, or individuals.

"However, it is regrettable that some contractors do not complete the work, nor do they fill excavations, level the soil, or remove excavation debris. Some companies prefer to leave the soil to be leveled by vehicles. In this way, the contractor evades contractual accountability and reduces costs to increase profits, without regard for the damage caused to the environment, road safety, and public and private property.

"Furthermore, companies that behave in this manner fail to fulfill their contractual obligations to the state, neglect environmental and public safety, and cause environmental damage as well as harm to crops and livestock.

"How long will some contractors continue to disregard contract terms without fear of consequences?"

"I believe it is time for the state to implement social accountability standards in its contracts with contractors who fail to adhere to the work stipulated in the contract terms, thus protecting both the environment and human health.

"The era of chaos, favoritism, and bribery that hindered proper accountability for those who failed to fulfill their contractual obligations to the state is over.

"Strict oversight and punishment of violating contractors will send a strong message to all those wishing to participate in tenders that they bear social and financial responsibility if they attempt to harm the Kuwaiti environment. If the required work is not carried out according to the contract, the contractor should bear all costs of rehabilitating the area they failed to restore as stipulated in the contract.

"The state should also withhold a portion of the tender value equal to or exceeding the cost of rehabilitation until the contractor completes all work without violations."

Also:

"Journalism is one of the most important means of conveying news and shaping public opinion. It has witnessed significant development over time, transitioning from traditional newspapers to digital platforms and social media," Kuwaiti writer and lawyer **Abdullah Falah Al-Hajri** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

"This transformation has affected the way news is produced and disseminated, as well as the role and responsibilities of journalists.

"In the past, printed newspapers were the primary source of information, and readers eagerly awaited the daily paper to learn about the most important events.

"At that time, journalism relied on field reporters and specialized writers. The process of gathering and publishing news took longer. Despite the slower pace of news delivery, credibility was relatively high, as publications underwent careful stages of editing and fact-checking.

"Today, news spreads within seconds through the internet and smartphones, giving rise to online journalism that operates around the clock. Anyone can now publish news or images, expanding the circle of participation in content creation.

"This development has enabled the rapid dissemination of events and a wider diversity of opinions, but it has also contributed to the spread of fake news and rumors.

"In the past, journalists were the primary source of information. Today, however, their role has become more complex. They are no longer limited to reporting the news. Journalists are now required to verify and analyze information, while competing intensively with social media.

"The digital age has required journalists to acquire new skills, such as multimedia production and online editing. Despite the challenges facing modern journalism, including limited funding and pressure for speed, it has created significant opportunities to reach wider audiences and interact directly with readers.

"Technology has also contributed to the development of investigative journalism methods and the presentation of information in more engaging and accessible ways. Journalism has changed in both form and method between yesterday and today, yet it has remained true to its core mission of conveying the truth and serving society.

"The future of journalism depends on its ability to adapt to technological advancements while maintaining credibility and professionalism."

"In the context of the accelerating pace of development, a field tour was launched, encompassing several institutions and key players in the national landscape. The tour commenced with a distinguished meeting with Dr. Reem Ghazi Al-Fulaij, Minister of State for Sustainable Development," sustainability expert **Dr. Sami Al-Adwani** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

"Although the meeting was conducted within a formal and protocol-driven framework, the warm welcome extended by Her Excellency created an atmosphere of openness, dynamism, and productivity. The meeting began with our sincere congratulations to Dr. Al-Fulaij on receiving the confidence of the political leadership. We also expressed our pride in and appreciation of the historic significance of her appointment as the first minister to hold the portfolio of Sustainable Development in the Kuwaiti government.

"Our early morning meeting, held precisely at 8:00 am, was highly significant and reflected a remarkable level of seriousness and commitment to the responsibilities of the office. Dr. Al-Fulaij later informed us that she had already held a meeting with an academic institution.

"I noted that the counterparts of Dr. Al-Fulaij among ministers of Sustainable Development in the region generally focus their portfolios on either the economic, social, or environmental dimension. In contrast, the Kuwaiti model appears to adopt a more diverse and integrated approach, covering vital sectors linked to developmental security, including the Public Authority for Food and Nutrition (PAFN), the Environment Public Authority (EPA), and the Public Authority for Agricultural Affairs and Fish Resources (PAAAFR).

"We also shared Dr. Al-Fulaij's delight and satisfaction that this ministerial portfolio had been entrusted to a Kuwaiti woman, in line with a broader Arab development trend that has seen this vital portfolio assigned to a distinguished group of pioneering women who have left a clear mark in sister countries such as Bahrain, Qatar, Egypt, and the Kingdom of Morocco.

"The meeting was held in the environmentally friendly "green" building, the headquarters of PAAAFR, and included a frank discussion that highlighted the requirements of the next phase in implementing the Sustainable Development Goals.

"Only five years remain until the international commitment deadline. A review of international analyses, resolutions, and reports confirms that we are not on the right track, underscoring the need for transformative leaps rather than incremental steps.

"Dr. Al-Fulaij posed a strategic and thoughtful question that reflected both humility and confidence, asking about the value we could add and our potential contribution to advancing sustainable development. She asked, "What would you do if you were in my position?"

"I responded directly and concisely, stating that the sustainable development portfolio at this critical stage resembles a hot potato that many are reluctant to handle. Therefore, the more important question is how to keep this ball from remaining confined within the boundaries of the ministry.

"I explained that this could be achieved through the activation of the following mechanisms:

- Continuously reminding everyone of shared responsibilities and emphasizing the importance of obtaining accurate reports and data from relevant government entities.

- Developing unified guidelines and strategic plans.

- Training and building the capacities of human resources across various institutions to enhance institutional effectiveness.

- Encouraging different sectors to adopt development initiatives and strengthen effective partnerships within the golden triangle of development - the public sector, the private sector, and civil society organizations.

"The dialogue was marked by a high degree of transparency, with Dr. Al-Fulaij attentively recording observations and engaging with evident interest.

"I had a fundamental question that I did not raise publicly, yet it remained on my mind - To what extent will this specialized ministerial portfolio endure in future government formations? How can we ensure that Dr. Al-Fulaij is not the first and last Minister of Sustainable Development in Kuwait?"

"More importantly, how can we transform this significant challenge into a positive snowball effect that, with the support of the leadership and collective efforts, continues to grow in scale, reach, and impact on both the present and the future?"

"At the conclusion of this fruitful meeting, I had the honor of presenting the minister with a copy of my book, "Sustainability," my first comprehensive and systematic work on sustainable development, comprising 260 pages.

"I promised Dr. Al-Fulaij that I would read it over the weekend. We also pledged to maintain open communication and dialogue to strengthen and accelerate the implementation of development goals, culminating in the submission of Kuwait's third Voluntary National Review next year."

— Compiled by Simi K. Kutty

Governor eyes boost in security, services

KUWAIT CITY, June 1: Farwaniya Governor Sheikh Athbi Nasser Al-Athbi Al-Sabah on Monday met with Director of Security for Farwaniya Governorate Brigadier General Mohammad Eid Al-Ghasab, who was accompanied by acting Director of the Patrols and Operations Department Colonel Sultan Ammash Al-Mutairi.

This meeting is aimed at reinforcing coordination between the governorate and security agencies.

They talked about various issues of mutual concern, along with ways to strengthen cooperation on security and services to better serve the residents of the governorate and maintain its stability.

Both sides confirmed the significance of ongoing coordination among the concerned authorities in the interest of the public and raise the efficiency of joint operations.

At the end of the meeting, Al-Ghasab expressed his gratitude to the Governor for the warm reception and his commitment to strengthen communication and coordination with security agencies and support security efforts to serve the residents of Farwaniya Governorate and promote the public interest.



Farwaniya Governorate photo
Farwaniya Governor Sheikh Athbi Nasser Al-Athbi Al-Sabah meets senior security officials.

GTD announces road maintenance closures

KUWAIT CITY, June 1: The General Traffic Department announced the complete closure of Mohammad Bin Hamada Al-Ajmi Road (Road No. 207) to vehicles coming from King Abdulaziz Bin Abdulrahman Al-Saud Road (Fahaheel Road) toward King Fahad Bin Abdulaziz Road, reports **Al-Seyassah** daily.

The closure begins on Sunday, May 31, and will last for 15 days

to carry out necessary road maintenance work.

In another development, the General Traffic Department announced the closure of Sulabiya Road, which connects Andalous and Nahda areas, from the intersection with Street 101 to the Fifth Ring Road, reports **Al-Seyassah** daily. The closure began on Sunday, May 31, and will continue for 30 days to carry out necessary road maintenance work.

Reforms underway to battle ever-changing crime shapes

Kuwait to strengthen criminal justice systems, rule of law

GENEVA, June 1, (KUNA): Kuwait reaffirmed on Monday its commitment to strengthening criminal justice systems, combating crime in all its forms and supporting international cooperation to address emerging security challenges.

This came in a statement delivered by Kuwait's Ambassador to Austria and Permanent Representative to international organizations in Vienna, Talal Al-Fassam, before the 35th session of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, currently underway in Vienna.

Al-Fassam congratulated the commission's chairmanship on its election and expressed appreciation for the role played by the UN Office on Drugs and Crime in supporting member states and enhancing international cooperation to confront organized crime, cybercrime and other transnational threats.

He said Kuwait's criminal justice policy is based on the principle that security, the rule of law, development and human rights are interconnected and mutually reinforcing.

The ambassador highlighted Kuwait's continued efforts to modernize its legislative and institutional frameworks to keep pace with evolving forms of crime, particularly cybercrime, money laundering and human trafficking, while focusing on prevention, rehabilita-

tion and social reintegration.

He noted that, in line with its international commitments and sustainable development goals, Kuwait has adopted several national policies aimed at promoting transparency, integrity and the rule of law within the framework of Kuwait Vision 2035.

Al-Fassam pointed to recent legislative developments, including the enactment and updating of laws related to anti-corruption efforts, cybercrime prevention and child protection, reflecting Kuwait's commitment to aligning its legal system with international best practices.

He also reviewed institutional reforms aimed at enhancing judicial efficiency and transparency, developing court infrastructure, accelerating digital transformation in judicial services and expanding the use of innovation and modern technologies in criminal justice.

On combating human trafficking and migrant smuggling, Al-Fassam said Kuwait has made significant progress through strengthening the work of the national committee concerned with the issue, launching the National Strategy to Combat Human Trafficking and Migrant Smuggling (2025-2028), and updating relevant legislation, including Law No. 91 of 2013 and

Law No. 114 of 2024 on the residence of foreigners.

He stressed that Kuwait's achievements in crime prevention and criminal justice reflect its firm belief that human dignity, the rule of law and effective institutions are fundamental pillars for building secure and stable societies.

The ambassador reaffirmed Kuwait's commitment to supporting international efforts aimed at enhancing criminal justice systems, strengthening multilateral cooperation and building national capacities to effectively address common challenges and promote international peace and security.

He also underscored the importance of international cooperation, exchange of expertise, capacity-building and the responsible use of innovation and technology to improve the effectiveness of criminal justice policies and responses.

Al-Fassam renewed Kuwait's support for the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly Goal 16 on peace, justice and strong institutions, emphasizing that justice and the rule of law are essential foundations for sustainable development and societal prosperity.

He reaffirmed Kuwait's commitment to the objectives of the commission and expressed support for the hosting by the UAE of the 15th United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice scheduled for September 2026.

'Long hands of law'

Duo arrested in raid on illegal food warehouse

By Munif Naif

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 1: Officers from Salhiya Police Station raided an unlicensed warehouse used for preparing and storing food items for a snack restaurant inside the parking lot of a commercial building in Salhiya, resulting in the arrest of two Bangladeshis.

In an official statement, the Ministry of Interior disclosed that during a routine patrol aimed at maintaining security in the area, the officers spotted two Bangladeshis leaving the warehouse carrying food. When questioned about their presence and work at the location, they stated that the warehouse belonged to a snack restaurant and that they are employees in charge of preparing and storing food there.

The inspection of the warehouse revealed several violations, such as the illegal use of the space as an unauthorized and unlicensed food storage facility, food items without production or expiry dates, and failure to meet health and safety standards, rendering the warehouse unfit for use or for food storage and preparation.

In accordance with the law and to protect public health, the ministry immediately notified the Public Authority for Food and Nutrition (PAFN). A representative from the authority inspected the site and identified numerous serious health and regulatory violations.

Consequently, an official violation notice was issued, and the necessary legal measures were taken against the tenant, a citizen (the owner of the restaurant and the sponsor of the aforementioned employees).


Moreover, the ministry affirmed its commitment to continue its security patrols to apprehend violators and strictly enforce the law, in coordination with the concerned authorities to ensure compliance with the regulations and to protect public health.

Fire erupts in parked car in front of house


KUWAIT CITY, June 1: Fire broke out in a car that was parked in front of a house in Firdous, reports **Al-Anba** daily.

According to a source from Kuwait Fire Force (KFF), the Control Room of KFF received a report on Sunday night about a vehicle fire in front of a house in Firdous.

Firefighters rushed to the location, brought the blaze under control, and prevented it from spreading to the house and nearby vehicles. No injuries were reported.



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Council OKs KFAED expansion, green belt, truck parking plans

Accessibility codes and digital reforms approved

By Inaas Awadh

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 1: The Municipal Council, chaired by Abdullah Al-Mahri, held its session on Monday, leading to the approval of the following:

■ Request of Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development (KFAED) to allocate a new site near its current location in Murghab,

■ Request of the Public Authority for Housing Welfare (PAHW) to allocate land for afforestation –50-meter-wide green belt area – along the northern, eastern and western borders of South Sabah Al-Ahmad Residential City,

■ Proposal of council members Farah Al-Roumi and Sharifa Al-Shalfan regarding the regulations on easing the use of existing facilities and buildings by people with disabilities,

■ Recommendation to form a joint committee to monitor the implementation of accessibility requirements for people with disabilities and the Kuwait Accessibility Code,

■ Requests of the Ministry of Social Affairs to allot land measuring 34,985 square meters for the expansion of the Central Prison in Sulaihiya, allocation of land for two banks and the expansion of shops in the suburb center in Ishbiliya- Block Three, and allot a portion of agricultural lot no. 26 in Abdally-Block 6 for the construction of a mosque and parking area,

■ Recommendation of the Legal and Financial Affairs Committee about electronic advertising in the advertising regulations.

This includes establishing clear and practical guidelines for the brightness of all types and locations of electronic advertising screens, defining an applicable mechanism for monitoring their brightness and intensity, and providing links for government entities to license advertisements when necessary.

The council also discussed the regulations on awnings and public gardens adjacent to private residences, as well as the letter of Al-Ghanim Legal Group regarding the complaint of a citizen about a plot in Masayel.

It also talked about the questions of member



Photo by Samer Shaqir
The Municipal Council, chaired by Abdullah Al-Mahri, held its session on Monday.

Sharifa Al-Shalfan on the approved road and bridge design guide and role of the Kuwait Municipality in traffic planning and studies.

On the other hand, the council rejected the appeal of the English Education Group against its decision to remove schools from private residential areas.

The council adopted the suggestion of the Reform and Development Committee on the question of member Dr. Hassan Kamal about allocating truck parking areas, and that of Deputy Chairman Khaled Al-Mutairi about the parking of heavy vehicles and trucks in residential areas.

The committee recommended intensifying inspection campaigns to enforce the law and combat the phenomenon of paid parking services, which allows violators to exploit State-owned land for commercial purposes without justification.

The Municipality, ministries of Public Works

and Finance, and other relevant entities are currently coordinating their efforts to conduct a study on the designated sites and identify the government agency for which these sites will be reallocated for management and operation.

The aim is to transform these sites into integrated regulatory and investment facilities that enhance the economic utilization of government land and provide a sustainable financial resource for the State through operating fees and logistical services, thereby, eliminating haphazard parking.

The council also approved the recommendation to adopt technological and digital solutions, grant incentives to national staff, address delays in the issuance of building permits by the Engineering Licensing Department, and streamline the paperwork process at the Municipality regarding the issuance of property description certificates and several other procedures related to municipal work.

Kuwait, Saudi and Qatari FM's hold talks on regional security, stability

KUWAIT CITY, June 1, (KUNA): Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah held a phone call on Sunday with Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud, during which they discussed the latest developments in the region and ongoing efforts to enhance regional and international security and stability.



Sheikh Jarrah

The Kuwaiti Ministry of Foreign Af-

fairs said in a statement that the two ministers reviewed current regional developments and exchanged views on efforts being undertaken to address them.

Sheikh Jarrah also held a phone call on Sunday with Qatari Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani, during which they discussed the latest developments in the region and ongoing efforts to enhance regional and international security and stability.

The ministry added that both sides reviewed current regional developments and exchanged views on efforts being undertaken to address them.

Visit signals stronger cooperation

IAEA chief commends Kuwait leadership in nuclear security

KUWAIT CITY, June 1, (KUNA): Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency Rafael Grossi praised Kuwait's leading role and steadfast commitment to promoting nuclear security and safety in the region, saying this commitment was the reason he chose Kuwait as the starting point of his regional tour.

Speaking to KUNA during a visit to the GCC Emergency Management Center on the sidelines of his official visit to Kuwait, Grossi said the tour aims to strengthen international coordination to ensure the safety and security of nuclear facilities amid current regional tensions and their implications for countries in the region.



Grossi

He noted that recent attacks targeting nuclear power facilities have highlighted the fragility of the security situation and underscored the need for intensified international efforts to protect such sensitive installations from potential risks.

Grossi said he held constructive talks with Kuwait's Foreign Minister and discussed ways to enhance cooperation, adding that he was also briefed on the work of Kuwaiti scientific institutions, including the Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research, which maintains long-standing cooperation with the agency in several scientific and technical projects.

He stressed that his visit to Kuwait reflects appreciation for the country's consistent position on issues related to peace and nuclear security, adding that

he would continue engaging with other countries in the region during his tour to strengthen the regional nuclear security framework.

The IAEA chief also highlighted the strategic importance of the GCC Emergency Management Center in enhancing monitoring, preparedness and emergency response capabilities across the region, stressing that the agency attaches great importance to the center because of its vital role in safeguarding regional security.

In turn, head of the center, Rashed Al-Marri, said Grossi's visit reflects the growing regional and international importance of the center and the commitment of both sides to expanding cooperation and coordination in matters related to radiological and nuclear emergencies.

Al-Marri emphasized the importance of partnership with the IAEA as the leading international reference body in nuclear and radiological safety and security, expressing the center's aspiration to broaden cooperation to strengthen GCC preparedness and response capabilities in line with international standards and best practices.

During the visit, the two sides held extensive discussions on enhancing cooperation in areas including early warning systems, information and data sharing, capacity building, training and the development of joint response plans for radiological and nuclear incidents.

Grossi was also briefed on the center's operations room and received a detailed presentation on monitoring, analysis, incident reporting, early warning systems and coordination mechanisms among GCC member states in managing regional emergencies and crises.



Top & above: Allied Medical Sciences College honors winners of 19th Scientific Poster Day.

19th Scientific Poster Day winners honored

The College of Allied Medical Sciences recently hosted a ceremony to honor the champions in the 19th Scientific Poster Day.

The ceremony took place in a vibrant academic setting, highlighting scientific excellence and creativity.

Acting Dean of the college Dr. Mohammad Shaaban Nazar attended the event, along with the students, faculty, assistant deans and research enthusiasts.

A diverse collection of exceptional posters was on display, showcasing

various disciplines in the allied medical sciences. The participating posters reflected the innovative thinking and rigorous research of the students.

This annual event is in line with the mission of the college to foster academic growth and encourage scientific inquiry.

By helping students develop their research capabilities, the college aims to cultivate a generation of national talent with the ability to face contemporary medical and scientific challenges.

KU opens summer course registration

KUWAIT CITY, June 1: The Records Department at the Deanship of Admissions and Registration at Kuwait University announced the opening of applications for completing course schedules for students expected to graduate in the summer semester of 2025/2026 who have not yet finalized their schedules and wish to register for the summer semester, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

In an official statement, the department explained that applications will be accepted online via the designated form from Monday, June 1 at 12:00 midnight until Friday, June 5 at 11:59 pm.

Applications will be accepted online only, and no other method or in-person submission will be considered. Any applications submitted after the deadline will not be reviewed.



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Continued from Page 1

Kuwait repels

Bahrain denounced the missile and drone attacks as a dangerous escalation and a flagrant violation of Kuwait's sovereignty, international law, and UN resolutions. It praised the efficiency of Kuwait's armed forces and air defenses, reaffirming full support for all measures taken to safeguard the country's security.

Qatar also condemned the repeated attacks as a blatant violation of sovereignty and international law, calling for efforts to de-escalate tensions and restore stability, while expressing full solidarity with Kuwait.

The United Arab Emirates also condemned the attacks as a clear violation of Kuwait's sovereignty and expressed full solidarity with the country, backing all measures to safeguard its security.

Oman denounced the strikes, rejecting all provocative military actions that threaten state sovereignty and calling for intensified diplomatic efforts to end regional tensions and avoid further escalation.

Gulf Cooperation Council Secretary-General Jassem Al-Budaiwi described the attacks as a serious and irresponsible escalation and a breach of international norms, warning of their direct threat to regional security. He urged the United Nations Security Council to take a firm and deterrent stance, reaffirming that Kuwait's security is integral to that of all GCC member states.

Arab Parliament Speaker Mohammad Al-Yamahi similarly condemned the attacks as a grave violation of international law and a threat to collective Arab security, stressing full solidarity with Kuwait and support for measures to protect its sovereignty and citizens.

The Muslim World League denounced the attacks, with Secretary-General Dr. Mohammad Al-Issa stating they contravene both international law and humanitarian and religious principles, while reaffirming full support for Kuwait.

Jordan condemned the strikes as a flagrant breach of international law and a dangerous escalation, reiterating its solidarity with Kuwait and backing its efforts to safeguard national security.

Syria also rejected the attacks, describing them as an unacceptable violation of Kuwait's sovereignty and a destabilizing escalation, and affirmed its support for Kuwait in confronting any threat to its territorial integrity.

Iran's attacks on Kuwait and other countries in the region, in addition to the blockade of the Strait of Hormuz, constitute a direct threat to the global

economy and energy security, said Kuwait's Permanent Representative to UN and other international organizations in Geneva, Ambassador Nasser Al-Hayen.

Speaking to KUNA on the sidelines of the opening of the 114th session of the International Labour Conference in Geneva, Al-Hayen called on the UN Security Council to assume its responsibilities in addressing what he described as Iranian violations on all fronts.

He stressed that the sustainability and stability of labor markets and productive sectors in the region are closely linked to safeguarding national sovereignty and confronting security threats.

Al-Hayen said current geopolitical tensions require exceptional economic and labor strategies to address potential repercussions on employment systems and the resilience of vital facilities, particularly considering the recent attacks targeting Kuwait's security and sovereignty, which he said pose a direct threat to regional security and the business and investment climate.

He strongly condemned what he described as unjustified hostile acts, calling them a blatant violation of international law and the principles of good neighborliness.

The Kuwaiti envoy said the conference's convening, with the participation of governments, employers and workers, sends a clear message that development efforts will continue despite attempts to undermine stability and that protecting the business environment becomes even more critical during geopolitical crises.

He outlined priorities for the coming period, including developing flexible mechanisms to secure vital and productive facilities, ensuring uninterrupted supply chains and services, strengthening job security systems and establishing emergency plans to protect workers in areas affected by tensions.

Al-Hayen also emphasized the importance of enhancing cooperation and communication between governments, employers and labor unions to reinforce economic and social resilience.

He said the current situation requires moving beyond traditional frameworks and adopting exceptional and practical policies commensurate with existing risks, stressing that joint action and economic integration remain essential to preserving development gains and maintaining stable labor markets.

He called on the international community to shoulder its responsibilities in protecting regional stability, safeguarding international waterways and

ensuring freedom of navigation in the interest of all nations.

Al-Hayen warned that continuing crises and conflicts in the Middle East affect not only security conditions but also economic and social circumstances, employment opportunities and living standards.

Kuwait T1

He noted that the operational successes achieved at Terminal 4 (T4) are now being extended to T1 through coordination among the relevant authorities, helping improve operational efficiency at Kuwait International Airport and enhance services for travelers.

He added that Kuwait Airways' highly experienced ground and passenger handling teams receive ongoing training on the latest aviation technologies and equipment.

Al-Shatti emphasized that their qualified personnel manage diverse airline operational systems, which speeds up passenger check-in, streamlines travel procedures, and boosts overall efficiency.

He noted that check-in counters close one hour before departure for flights to GCC and Arab countries and 90 minutes before departure for all other destinations to ensure all procedures are completed on time.

Al-Shatti urged travelers to arrive well ahead of departure to complete travel procedures and avoid delays.

He reaffirmed Kuwait Airways' commitment to further developing its operational services and enhancing service quality in cooperation with relevant authorities to provide a safe and seamless travel experience.

Kuwait International Airport resumed operations Monday for Arab and foreign airlines under a gradual reopening plan following the completion of maintenance and upgrade works and the restoration of operational and technical readiness.

In related news, Kuwait's Public Authority for Civil Aviation (PACA) said on Monday that the successful transportation of pilgrims during the 1447 AH Hajj season and the gradual reopening of Terminal 1 (T1) reflected effective coordination among government authorities and airport partners.

In a statement for KUNA, Acting Director General Duaj Al-Otaibi said cooperation among relevant authorities, airlines and service providers ensured smooth pilgrim travel and helped restore Kuwait International Airport's operational readiness following rehabilitation works.

He pointed out to the strong support of Kuwait's political leadership for the civil aviation sector, saying that the

continued follow-up by His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah and Defense Minister Sheikh Abdullah Ali Al-Abdullah Al-Salem Al-Sabah helped accelerate rehabilitation works and restore Kuwait International Airport's operational readiness.

He noted that the initial reopening of T1 includes one flight per airline under a phased plan to assess performance before expanding operations, adding that the terminal underwent comprehensive upgrades to enhance safety, services and operational efficiency.

Al-Otaibi urged passengers to arrive at the airport at least three hours before departure and comply with check-in closing times.

Amir hails

His Highness the Crown Prince replied to His Highness the Amir's message, expressing deep gratitude and appreciation for his true sentiments, sincere prayers, deep amity and kindness.

He expressed identical rhetoric of kindness to His Highness the Amir, re-affirming the pledge to pursue the service for the dear homeland, generously, backed by the faithful citizens.

He prayed Almighty Allah to bless His Highness the Amir with continued health and well-being and to guide him toward all that serves the interests of the nation and its people.

His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Sabah also received on Monday letters of congratulations from several senior officials on the occasion of the second anniversary of his post assumption.

The messages were sent by His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, Chief of the Kuwait National Guard (KNG) Sheikh Mubarak Humoud Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness Sheikh Dr. Mohammad Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah, and His Highness Sheikh Ahmad Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.

Also, First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah and Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Hamad Jaber Al-Ali Al-Sabah sent their respective letters to His Highness the Crown Prince.

In return, His Highness the Crown Prince sent reply letters, in which he thanked the officials on their sincere congratulations, wishing them, the Kuwaiti people and the leadership led by His Highness the Amir Sheikh

Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah more progress and welfare.

Education staff

Employees covered by any decisions to reduce working hours of any kind will benefit from the reduction during the summer period.

The required number of working hours will be four hours per day.

Regarding the evening shift system, the circular explained that official working hours will begin at 5:00 pm, with a 30-minute grace period granted to employees at the start of the shift only, which may not be used at the end.

The existing 15-minute grace period for female employees at the end of the shift will remain in effect, along with all other regulations governing evening work.

The circular emphasized the necessity of adhering to all provisions and regulations stipulated in Civil Service Council Resolution No. 41/2006 concerning the rules, regulations, and controls of official work and its amendments.

These procedures will be in effect from June 1, 2026, until August 31, 2026.

Kuwaiti visitors

The conference was held under the patronage of Ambassador of Oman to Kuwait Dr. Saleh Al-Kharousi, with a number of officials from the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism, and representatives of Kuwaiti media outlets and institutions operating in the tourism and travel sector in attendance.

In his speech, Al-Kharousi affirmed that Dhofar Governorate continues to solidify its position as an exceptional tourist destination attracting visitors from around the world, thanks to its unique natural, cultural and heritage attractions. He said the autumn season is one of the vital tourism seasons in the region due to the diverse experiences it offers.

He added "organizing the conference in Kuwait aims to strengthen tourism relations between the two brotherly countries and highlight the latest developments in the tourism sector in the Sultanate of Oman, particularly in Dhofar Governorate, which is witnessing rapid development in infrastructure, tourism projects and sustainable services."

He pointed out that statistical indicators reflect this continuous growth, as the number of visitors during the Dhofar Khareef (monsoon) season increased from 962,196 in 2023 to 1,047,751 in 2024 – a growth of nine

percent. "Positive figures continued in 2025, reaching 1,070,738 visitors, which confirm the growing prominence of Dhofar Governorate as one of the preferred tourist destinations in the region during summer," he disclosed.

He expects that the growth of Dhofar autumn season will continue in 2026 due to the expansion of events, development projects, and new tourism initiatives in various districts of the governorate.

He also revealed a remarkable increase in the number of Kuwaiti visitors to Oman from 2024 to 2025, reaching 17.2 percent. "This reflects the growing appeal of the Sultanate as a preferred tourist destination for Kuwaiti travelers and underscores the important role of the Kuwaiti market in the tourism sector of Oman," he added.

He affirmed that Kuwait ranks third among the top investors in Oman, after the United Kingdom and the United States of America, with investments totaling \$4.5 billion. He added that the indicators for trade exchange are also high.

Meanwhile, Marwan Al-Ghasani, Director of Promotion at the Heritage and Tourism Department in Dhofar Governorate, revealed that the concerned authorities are implementing a number of projects to develop tourism sites and improve services.

He pointed out that over the past years, they focused on providing facilities and services in the city of Salalah, while efforts are now exerted to develop tourist sites and services outside the city, in order to diversify the tourist experience and distribute tourist traffic throughout Dhofar.

Kuwait orders

In an official statement, the Ministry of Interior revealed that the fugitives include Hassan Salem Al-Rashidi and Ali Manahi Al-Subaie – Kuwaitis, and Ahmed Mohammed Qate', a non-Kuwaiti. It affirmed that the minister ordered the immediate arrest of the fugitives.

The Criminal Investigation General Department and various security units have intensified their efforts to apprehend these fugitives, whose photographs, descriptions and details were distributed to all borders in order to block possible escape routes from the country, as well as the police patrols.

The ministry advised the public to remain alert and refrain from interacting with the fugitives. It urged anyone with relevant information to contact the emergency hotline 112, warning that individuals proven to be helping or hiding the fugitives will face the legal consequences.



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California contests for gov and LA mayor head toward primary election with no clear leaders

LOS ANGELES, June 1, (AP): California spiraled toward a primary election Tuesday with its two marquee races defined by uncertainty and with a pair of outsider candidates looking to crack open the state's durable Democratic hierarchy.

In the governor's race, former Fox News TV host and British political adviser Steve Hilton is urging Republicans to unite behind him as he fights for one of two spots in the November election alongside two Democrats, billionaire climate activist Tom Steyer and former state attorney general Xavier Becerra.

In the Los Angeles race for mayor, reality TV personality Spencer Pratt is hoping to turn his insurgent campaign into a surprise upset of Democratic Mayor Karen Bass. The two are tightly clustered with Nithya Raman, a progressive city council member running to Bass' political left.

"We can't give up on LA," Pratt told applauding supporters at a block party Sunday. "We've got to fight."

Democrats once feared that the party's large field of gubernatorial



Los Angeles mayoral candidate Spencer Pratt during a campaign event on May 31, in Los Angeles. (AP)

candidates could open a path for two Republicans to advance to November. But now, in the campaign's closing days, Hilton is warning the opposite could happen - what he called a "doomsday scenario" in which only Democrats advance.

Hilton is pleading with his chief Republican rival, county Sheriff Chad Bianco, to pull out of the contest, fearing an all-Democratic ticket would dampen GOP turnout across the state and reorder races for Congress and the Legislature.

Becerra and Steyer locking out a Republican from the November ballot would be "a disaster for California, it means no change. It's a disaster for everyone who's running as a Republican up and down the ballot," Hilton said on the social platform X.

Mail voting began in early May, but just 15% of voters had returned their ballots as of Sunday. That's left the candidates seeing room for a last-minute shake-up in the race's closing days.

In heavily Democratic Los Angeles, Bass' shaky first term has left her vulnerable. She points to a drop in homelessness, though encampments and rows of rusting RVs remain a common sight in many neighborhoods. Meanwhile, she's still trying to overcome lingering fallout from the 2025 Palisades Fire, the most destructive in Los Angeles history. Bass was in Ghana as part of a presidential delegation when the flames ignited. Pratt lost his home in the blaze and has made the fire and the city's recovery a foundation of his campaign.



Law enforcement officers detain protesters outside Delaney Hall detention center on May 31, in Newark, NJ. (AP)

Newark mayor imposes curfew

The mayor of Newark imposed a curfew early Sunday around an immigration detention center in New Jersey after a series of intense clashes between protesters and police.

The curfew around Delaney Hall will be in place between 9 pm and 6 am until further notice, Mayor Ras Baraka said in a statement.

The move came after another

night of standoffs between law enforcement and demonstrators at the facility, as protesters could be seen in photographs and videos fighting over barricades as police used riot shields to push them back. A video posted on social media showed police on horseback marching into crowds attempting to break up groups of protesters. (AP)

'Artificial intelligence should be reducing cognitive workload on mundane tasks'

As Pentagon pushes for battlefield AI, some military leaders urge caution

TAMPA, Fla., June 1, (AP): The Trump administration is pushing to unleash the power of artificial intelligence for the US military while facing calls to put up guardrails around the rapidly developing technology from some companies - and even notes of caution from top leaders in uniform.

Adm. Frank Bradley, head of US Special Operations Command, told attendees of a recent annual special forces conference in Tampa, Florida, that troops "have to be very careful about how we come to (AI's) employment and its inspiration into the delivery of lethality."

Bradley said he can see a future where AI determines what targets to hit but that "we, as humans, have to have the confidence that ... it's going to deliver violence only where we intend it to be delivered."

The remarks from Bradley, who oversees the units that handle the military's most difficult and dangerous operations, about the need to ensure safeguards come as his boss, Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth, is pushing to rapidly evolve the military through AI. It is a push that has led to clashes with some tech companies worried about safety measures.

Hegseth has insisted that the Pentagon be allowed to use the technol-

ogy any legal way it sees fit. He told an audience of SpaceX employees in January he would reject any AI models "that won't allow you to fight wars" and that his vision for the technology was systems that operate "without ideological constraints that limit lawful military applications."

AI's use in the Republican administration's larger push to grow the capability it sees as a unique American advantage even as it faces pressure to ensure responsible safeguards.

President Donald Trump abruptly called off plans to sign a new AI executive order hours before an expected White House ceremony over concerns the measure could dull America's edge on AI technology.

"We're leading China, we're leading everybody, and I don't want to do anything that's going to get in the way of that lead," Trump told reporters.

When asked about Bradley's remarks, a Pentagon official said efforts are focused on using AI to create "functional battlefield tools" that can help troops come up with and identify targets more quickly and, as a result, speed up strikes on those targets. The official spoke on condition of anonymity to offer more candid remarks.



US Navy Adm Frank Bradley testifies before the Senate Committee on Armed Services on Capitol Hill in Washington on April 28. (AP)

Officials at US Special Operations Command talked about AI not as something that will help eliminate targets but rather as a tool that can offer troops more time to focus on their mission.

Sgt Maj Andrew Krogman, the top enlisted official for US Special Operations Command, said at the conference that he sees AI handling administrative tasks to free up operators or helping modernize how the

command does business.

Melissa Johnson, the top acquisition official for the command, said AI should be "reducing the cognitive workload on mundane tasks."

"We're leveraging AI more and more, but it's not to replace operator judgment, it's to enhance it," she added.

Helen Toner, interim executive director at Georgetown University's Center for Security and Emerging

Technology, said those differing descriptions about AI in the military are both true.

"There are a huge number of potential uses for AI in these kinds of bureaucratic settings, which the US military is actively exploring," Toner said.

Lt Gen Michael Conley, head of Air Force Special Operations Command, told a congressional committee in May that his troops used AI "bots" to convert top secret intelligence down to a secret classification within seconds to make it easier to share with drone operators on the ground during the Iran war.

However, there is no doubt that AI also is helping the military find and strike targets.

The center that Toner oversees published a case study two years ago on how the Army's 18th Airborne Corps used AI to target artillery strikes "just as efficiently as the best unit in recent American history" and with 2,000 fewer service members.

"Human operators are still the ones making crucial decisions, but AI... is making it possible to operate with a new level of speed and scale," she said.

The clash over the integration of AI into the military, who ultimately controls the technology and the ethics behind its use has played out in

unusually public fashion during the Trump administration.

Hegseth and Anthropic are embroiled in a bitter contract dispute over the company's concerns about unchecked government use of its technology, including the dangers of fully autonomous armed drones and of AI-assisted mass surveillance that could track dissent.

After CEO Dario Amodei refused to back down over concerns about how the chatbot Claude is used in classified Pentagon networks, both Trump and Hegseth accused Anthropic of endangering national security.

The Pentagon formally labeled the San Francisco-based company a supply chain risk - ending its \$200 million defense contract and prohibited other government contractors from working with the company.

Anthropic sued, claiming the Pentagon is illegally retaliating by stigmatizing the company with a designation meant to protect against sabotage of national security systems by foreign adversaries. The Pentagon has since emphasized its turn to Anthropic rivals - including Google, OpenAI and SpaceX - to secure AI technology that can "augment warfighter decision-making in complex operational environments."



In this image made from video provided by Russian Defense Ministry Press Service on May 21, 2026, an Iskander missile is launched by a Belarusian crew from the Kapustin Yar firing range in Russia, during joint nuclear drills conducted by Russian and Belarusian militaries. (AP)

Concerns mount that Belarus could be launchpad for new Russian offensive in Ukraine

MOSCOW, June 1, (AP): Over four years ago, Belarus' authoritarian President Alexander Lukashenko allowed longtime ally Russia to use his territory to invade Ukraine. Now officials in Kyiv are warning that Lukashenko could again allow his land to serve as a launchpad for more attacks by the Kremlin's forces.

While Belarus has not contributed troops to battle, Lukashenko has backed President Vladimir Putin's war effort by hosting Russia's nuclear weapons and military infrastructure, as well as producing components for Moscow's military industries. Earlier this month, the countries held joint drills of nuclear forces involving Russian weapons deployed in Belarus.

Lukashenko, in power for over three decades, has ruled the nation of 9.5 million with an iron fist, relentlessly cracking down on dissent and relying on its close ties with Russia, as well as subsidies from the Kremlin's coffers, to counteract repeated Western sanctions.

Military cooperation between Moscow and Minsk is increasingly worrying Ukraine's allies.

When Putin began the full-scale invasion of Ukraine on Feb. 24, 2022, Russian troops that gathered in Belarus under the guise of drills dashed toward Kyiv, only about 90 kilometers (56 miles) south of the border.

Putin's hope of capturing Kyiv



Russian President Vladimir Putin, right, and Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko, attend a ceremony to lay flowers at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier by the Kremlin wall in Moscow on May 9, the 81st anniversary of the Soviet Union's victory over Nazi Germany during World War II. (AP)

quickly was shattered by staunch Ukrainian resistance, and convoys of Russian tanks stretching along narrow roads became easy prey.

A little over a month after the invasion, Russian troops that suffered heavy losses and struggled to maintain their supply lines pulled back from Kyiv and other areas they captured in northeastern Ukraine in what the Kremlin cast as a "goodwill gesture."

When Moscow tried to negotiate a quick end to the conflict weeks after

its start, Belarus hosted the first talks between Russian and Ukrainian delegations. The talks moved to Istanbul but failed to produce a deal.

As the conflict became a war of attrition, Belarus has played a key role in supporting Moscow's war effort. Belarusian plants have produced important components, including microchips and other electronics, optical guidance systems, artillery munitions and heavy trucks that carry Russian ballistic missiles.

Bad news keeps coming for British PM with new trove of Mandelson files

LONDON, June 1, (AP): His poll ratings are dismal and rivals are eyeing his job. Now British Prime Minister Keir Starmer faces more embarrassment on Monday with the publication of hundreds of pages of files about former UK ambassador to Washington Peter Mandelson, a friend of convicted offender Jeffrey Epstein.

The government is expected to comply with a demand by lawmakers to release documents related to Mandelson's appointment to, and conduct in, the UK's most important diplomatic post.

Mandelson was fired after nine months, and fallout from the misjudged appointment has left Starmer fighting for his job.

A first trove of files published in March revealed ministers had been warned that Mandelson's friendship with Epstein exposed the government to "reputational risk."

It later was disclosed that Mandelson had been approved for the ambassador's job despite failing security checks, a revelation that sparked bitter blame-trading between Starmer and senior civil servants who oversaw the security vetting.

The files being released Monday



Britain's Prime Minister Keir Starmer, (second right), meets apprentices during a visit to Acton Works, a training facility in west London, following the publication of the interim Milburn Report into Young People and Work on May 28. (AP)

could run to more than 1,000 pages and are expected to include emails and text messages between Mandelson and government ministers and advisers.

Police have asked for some documents to be withheld because they form part of a criminal investigation into Mandelson for alleged miscon-

duct in public office. Mandelson, 72, was briefly arrested in February by detectives investigating allegations he passed sensitive government information to Epstein when he was a minister in the British government a decade and a half ago.

He has been released without bail conditions as the police investigation continues.

Europe

'French Navy intercepts sanctioned tanker': The French Navy, with support from the United Kingdom, has intercepted an oil tanker under international sanctions that was traveling from Russia, the most recent effort by nations that support Ukraine to target Russian oil exports helping to finance President Vladimir Putin's war.

French President Emmanuel Macron announced the interception in a post Monday on X, saying the Tagor was boarded on Sunday in the Atlantic. The post included a video showing a person rappelling from a helicopter onto a ship. It is the latest in a series of French naval interceptions of tankers suspected of links to Russia.

"It is unacceptable that boats skirt international sanctions, violate the law of the sea and finance the war that Russia has been waging for more than 4 years against Ukraine," Macron wrote. "These ships, that don't respect the most elementary rules of maritime navigation, are also a threat to the environment and everyone's security." (AP)

Sturgeon rejects blame for ex-husband crimes: Scotland's former First Minister Nicola Sturgeon defiantly rejected any blame Sunday for her estranged



In this handout photo provided by the French Army, a French army NH90 helicopter flies over the oil tanker Tagor, which is under international sanctions and was traveling from Russia in the Atlantic Sea on May 31. (AP)

husband's embezzlement of Scottish National Party funds, saying she wouldn't apologize for his crimes.

Sturgeon told the BBC that she felt betrayed by the actions of her husband, Peter Murrell, who last week pleaded guilty to stealing more than 400,000 pounds (\$540,000) from the SNP to fund a lavish lifestyle when he was the party's chief executive. She consistently denied having any knowledge of his crimes. (AP)

'Latest crisis to hit country's Senate'

Philippine Senator Estrada arrested on plunder charge, with no right to bail

MANILA, Philippines, June 1, (AP): A Philippine senator was arrested Monday on a charge of plunder after he allegedly pocketed a huge kickback in a flood-control project. It is the latest crisis to hit the country's Senate, the upper chamber where a battle for control of the country's political future is playing out.

The special Sandiganbayan anti-graft court had initially issued a warrant for Sen Jinggyo Estrada's arrest Friday on a graft charge. He surrendered but was soon released on bail.

The new charge for which he was arrested Monday carries no right to bail. Estrada, 63, has strongly denied allegations mainly by a former government public works engineer, that he received more than 570 million pesos (\$9.3 million) in kickbacks from flood control projects.

Estrada had earlier told reporters at the Senate that he would surrender to authorities after receiving the warrant. Interior Secretary Jonvic Remulla and police forces took him into custody at the chamber.

"There will be no special privileges," Remulla said of Estrada and his other co-accused, including former Public Works Secretary Manuel Bonoan, who was separately placed under arrest.

Estrada suggested that the corruption cases he was facing and his arrest were a result of his being aligned with the camp of former President Rodrigo Duterte and his daughter, incumbent Vice President Sara Duterte, a former ally but now an arch political rival of President Ferdinand Marcos Jr.

"I will not yield to threats. I will not be intimidated," Estrada told reporters at the Senate. "I will not be pressured into surrendering my independence of judgment."

The senator was an actor like his father, former President Joseph Estrada. Both have been previously detained on other corruption-related charges.

Several other senators and members of the House of Representatives have



Philippines Sen Jinggyo Estrada, (center), walks through the hallway to announce his surrender at the Senate of the Philippines in Pasay City, Philippines on June 1 after the Sandiganbayan graft court issued a warrant of arrest in connection with the plunder and corruption case files against him. (AP)

been implicated in the flood control anomalies in a poverty-stricken Asian archipelago that is among the most vulnerable to deadly floods and typhoons.

With Jinggyo Estrada's arrest, two senators in the 24-member chamber

would now be effectively sidelined by legal troubles.

Another senator, Ronald dela Rosa, has gone into hiding after the International Criminal Court issued a warrant for his arrest for an alleged crime against humanity.

Dela Rosa was a former national police chief who enforced a brutal anti-drugs crackdown under then-President Rodrigo Duterte that left thousands of mostly low-level suspects dead. The unprecedentedly large numbers of killings alarmed Western governments.

Duterte, who stepped down in 2022 after his stormy six-year term, was arrested last year on orders of the ICC and flown to the Netherlands, where he was detained and will face trial for alleged crimes against humanity starting in November over some of the killings.

Duterte and dela Rosa have denied any wrongdoing but Duterte had repeatedly threatened drug suspects with death.

The absence of Estrada and dela Rosa is a setback to Sen. Alan Peter Cayetano, also an ally of the Dutertes, who recently captured the Senate presidency with a slim majority. With the two out of the Senate, the remaining 22 senators are evenly split between Cayetano's camp and his rivals.

The numbers are crucial because the Senate will start to put Vice President Sara Duterte on trial in July after she was impeached on May 11 by the House of Representatives, which is dominated by the president's allies.

Sara Duterte, who has announced her plans to seek the presidency in 2028, was impeached on criminal allegations, which include unexplained wealth and threatening to have the president, his wife and a former House speaker assassinated if she herself were killed due to their political disputes.

She has denied the allegations. If she is convicted by the Senate with the required two-thirds vote of the chamber's membership, she will be barred permanently from holding public office.

Rescuers dig for bodies

Myanmar mining explosives blast kills 38

BANGKOK, June 1, (AP): More than a dozen rescue and charity groups used excavation machinery on Monday to recover bodies following a massive blast from stored mining explosives in northeastern Myanmar.

The explosion occurred Sunday at noon in Kaungtup village, Namhkam township in Shan State near the Chinese border. Initial reports had suggested there were at least 45 deaths, but local rescue volunteers now put the number of dead at 38-40. Determining the exact death toll has been complicated because several bodies were blown apart by the force of the explosion.

Many of Myanmar's resource-rich areas, where most mining operations have been largely unregulated, are controlled by different armed militias engaged in sporadic fighting against the central government to seek greater autonomy. Accidents, such as deadly landslides, are fairly common.

The Ta'ang National Liberation Army, or TNLA, an ethnic armed group that controls the Namhkam area, said Sunday's blast involved gelignite used in local mining and



This handout photo provided by Palaung Land shows rescuers and local residents carrying out search operations in the aftermath of an explosion in Kaungtup village in Namhkam township in Shan state, Myanmar on May 31. (AP)

stone quarrying. Although gelignite is commonly used, it becomes highly unstable over time if stored poorly.

Residents of the 200-household village reported that they were never told explosives were being kept there.

An investigation into the specific cause of the explosion is underway, the TNLA said.

The incident has cast a spotlight on Myanmar's lucrative but largely unregulated mineral industry and Chinese investment in the country's extractive industries.

Asia

Blast, fire at defense firm in S.Korea kills 5: An explosion and fire occurred at a defense company in South Korea on Monday, killing five people and injuring two others, officials said.

The deadly incident happened at a worksite run by Hanwha Aerospace in the South Korean city of Daejeon.

Other details, including the cause of the explosion, were not immediately available.

Emergency official Yoon Seong-su said that the area is a government-designated security facility.

Local medical official Kim Ju-yeon said one of the two injured people was in a critical condition. She said authorities haven't yet identified the dead people.

The site is one of Hanwha Aerospace's key facilities where it develops large-sized propellants and surface-to-surface weapons systems, according to Yonhap news agency. (AP)

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Laos rescuers search for alternative route: Rescue workers in Laos searched Monday for an alternative passage into a flooded cave where two people are believed to have been trapped for nearly two weeks after heavy rainfall flooded the main entrance, making it impassable.

The two people remain unaccounted for since a search and rescue operation began last month in a rugged area of Xaisomboun province, about 120 kilometers (75 miles) north of the capital, Vientiane. Five of the seven people initially trapped inside the cave have been rescued.

Malaysian diver Lee Kian Lie, who is involved in the operation, said workers were pumping water out of the cave.



An entrance of a Hanwha Aerospace facility is controlled following an explosion in Daejeon, South Korea on June 1. (AP)

Another team of rescuers is also looking around the other side of the cave in hopes of finding a dry passage that could provide access to the area where the missing people are believed to be trapped, he said.

□ □ □

Illegal mining op collapse kills 5 in China: A collapse occurred in an illegal mining operation in China on Sunday, killing five people and injuring one other person, Chinese official news agency Xinhua reported.

The incident took place in Huize County in Yunnan province in southwest China at about 4:30 a.m., Xinhua reported. The news outlet did not specify what kind of mine it was.

Rescuers pulled out all six people trapped at the site in Baiwu village and sent them to the hospital, but five of them succumbed to their injuries. The survivor was in stable condition, the report said.

Authorities were investigating the cause of the collapse. (AP)

India says engagement will continue

Prime Minister Modi meets Myanmar's president

NEW DELHI, June 1, (AP): India said it will continue engaging with Myanmar after Prime Minister Narendra Modi held talks Monday with the leader of the country's military-backed government, despite Western sanctions imposed after the military seized power in 2021.

Indian Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri told reporters in New Delhi that India's policy is "not intended to be a commentary on the internal political arrangements" in Myanmar and that New Delhi believes engagement is the best way forward.

Western nations have sought to isolate Myanmar's military rulers since they ousted the elected government of Aung San Suu Kyi in a 2021 coup that triggered a crackdown on opponents and a nationwide conflict and humanitarian crisis. Some critics and human rights groups have said Min Aung Hlaing's visit to India risks lending legitimacy to the military-backed government.

"We have always proceeded on the principle that sustained dialogue is what is important," Misri



Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, (right), shakes hands with Myanmar President Min Aung Hlaing before their meeting in New Delhi, India on June 1. (AP)

said, adding that isolating Myanmar would be counterproductive.

"History has shown that disengagement doesn't give us any results that are better than engagement," he said.

The visit is Min Aung Hlaing's

first to India since he was sworn in as president in April following an election that critics say was designed to cement the military's hold on power. His last visit to India was in 2019, when he served as Myanmar's military chief.

India shares a 1,643-kilometer (1,020-mile) border with Myanmar and a maritime boundary in the Bay of Bengal. The neighboring country hosts thousands of refugees from Myanmar, many of whom fled fighting in northwestern Chin state and other conflict-affected areas.

Myanmar is also strategically important to India's security interests. The two countries have cooperated on border security and intelligence sharing to combat insurgent groups operating out of the border region.

Modi and Min Aung Hlaing did not address the media after their meeting, unlike most bilateral talks involving visiting heads of state or government in New Delhi.

But Misri said the two leaders discussed trade, defense and security cooperation, border management, and regional issues, with talks also focusing on expanding economic and technology ties. He said both sides agreed to deepen collaboration across sectors including trade, energy and critical minerals, and to accelerate major connectivity projects.

Pro-Trump candidate takes lead in Colombia's presidential race

BOGOTÁ, Colombia, June 1, (AP): Tough-on-crime outsider **Aberaldo de la Espriella** took the lead in Colombia's presidential race in the first round of voting Sunday night, setting up a runoff with Iván Cepeda, an ally of Colombia's outgoing President Gustavo Petro who questioned the results of the election.

With no candidate taking an outright majority of the vote, the election will head to a second round in June.

But Cepeda and Petro sowed doubt in the results of the first round, claiming without evidence that hundreds of thousands of votes were manipulated and that foreign actors manipulated the results of the election.

Cepeda said he was waiting for electoral authorities to scrutinize the results before accepting the

election.

"Only when the vote-counting commissions have fully clarified what happened will we comment on tonight's results," Cepeda said, though he acknowledged the vote was likely going to a second round.

Cepeda won 41% of the vote, while de la Espriella won 44% of the votes, with 99.98% of the results counted by electoral authorities.

Cepeda is a progressive senator who has promised to carry on a fraught plan to achieve "total peace" by negotiating peace pacts with guerrillas and criminal gangs. He was consistently leading polls in the run up to the Sunday vote, but in the weeks leading up to the election de la Espriella rapidly gained support with a promise that he would crack down on armed groups.

The neck-and-neck results likely spell trouble for Cepeda in the run-off election, as de la Espriella is expected to scoop up support from voters who threw their support behind another conservative candidate in the first round.



De la Espriella

Many buried in unmarked graves



Staff from Sudan's Forensic Medicine Corporation exhume the body of Mohammed Alsawi, 73, who was killed in 2023 by the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces, or RSF, in Omdurman, Sudan on April 20. (AP)

Sudan's war leaves thousands missing, says ICRC

KHARTOUM, Sudan, June 1, (AP): It was a classic husband's phone call. He was done for the day and would stop at the market before coming home. But he was returning from war, not work.

Fahmy al-Fateh never made it home. His wife, Azaher Abdallah, started calling friends and family, then turned to his colleagues in Sudan's army. Her husband was last seen leaving a military base in the capital, Khartoum, on a motorcycle. That was over a year ago.

Now the couple's 3-year-old son shouts at every passing motorcycle, thinking it's his father, Abdallah said.

"He was the most precious thing in my life," she said, sobbing and burying her face in her hands. "I would feel more at peace if I knew something. It's better than not knowing what happened to him, whether he's alive or dead."

Her husband is one of more than 8,000 people who have gone missing during Sudan's three years of war, according to the International Committee of the Red Cross. The conflict has torn families apart. People have been separated while fleeing, or gone missing during fighting. Others are quietly detained, leaving friends and relatives in agony trying to learn their fate.

Many of those missing in Khartoum state are thought to be in unmarked graves where tens of thousands of bodies have been found since Sudan's army retook the capital last year from paramilitary fighters.

It was often too dangerous to bury bodies in

cemeteries while fighting raged. People dug graves wherever they could.

Driving through the city last month, Associated Press reporters saw soccer fields and cemeteries overflowing with the dead. Mounds of dirt beside a defunct gas station had makeshift signs with names and dates, but many were unmarked.

A member of the military media accompanied the AP during the visit, including during interviews. The AP retains full editorial control of its content.

The ICRC said it had resolved over 1,000 cases of the missing but would not say how many were alive or dead.

Abdallah was sleeping when her husband left the house before sunrise last January. Al-Fateh, a 38-year-old farmer and merchant, had joined Sudan's army when the war began. That day, he was helping to retake Khartoum from the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces.

Since then, the 30-year-old Abdallah has combed the city, visited hospital morgues and asked the army for help. Her husband's unit said they'd try to find him. If she didn't hear anything, they said, consider him missing.

At home on the outskirts of Khartoum, she scrolls through photos of him in uniform, still believing that one day he'll return.

"That is what my heart tells me," she said.

Psychologists say the uncertainty surrounding missing loved ones can cause years of profound distress.

"Families of missing persons experience ad-

ditional layers of vulnerabilities due to hostilities, displacement and ambiguous loss," said Nathalie Nyamukeba, a psychologist with the ICRC.

Some families in Sudan say the only way to deal with it is to keep searching.

Sulafa Mustafa's son went missing two years ago. A shy boy, 18-year-old Suleiman Abdalsid went to a friend's house near Khartoum and never came home.

His mother tirelessly traveled through the streets, even as the sounds of shelling echoed, going door to door. She has visited hospitals and prisons, and showed countless strangers his photo.

She has even rented a microphone to shout his name.

"I haven't lost faith in finding you," she said, and covered her face with her hands.

Finding people alive or dead is challenging in Sudan, especially as the war continues. Labs that could have been used for DNA testing have been destroyed, and few forensic specialists remain.

In Khartoum state, authorities have moved nearly 30,000 bodies - of some 50,000 - that had been hastily buried near houses, in sports fields or by the road when the RSF controlled the area. Their work continues.

About 10% of bodies that have been reburied are unidentified.

Hisham Zienalabdeen, director general of the forensic medicine department for Khartoum state, said they are saving DNA from unidentified bodies in hopes of one day being able to match it with relatives.

US dollar settles at KD 0.306

KUWAIT CITY, June 1, (KUNA): The US dollar exchange rate against the Kuwaiti dinar settled at KD 0.306 on Monday, while the Euro rose by 0.09 percent to reach KD 0.357, compared to last Monday's prices, said Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK).

CBK added in its daily bulletin that the exchange rate of the pound sterling decreased by 0.16 percent to KD 0.412, while the Swiss franc decreased by 0.11 percent to reach KD 0.391, and the Japanese settled at KD 0.002.

Business

Delivering value to its workforce and the people behind its operations

NBK Wealth, A global wealth platform driven by professional excellence

Cross-border expertise combined with broad exposure to diverse market dynamics and investment approaches

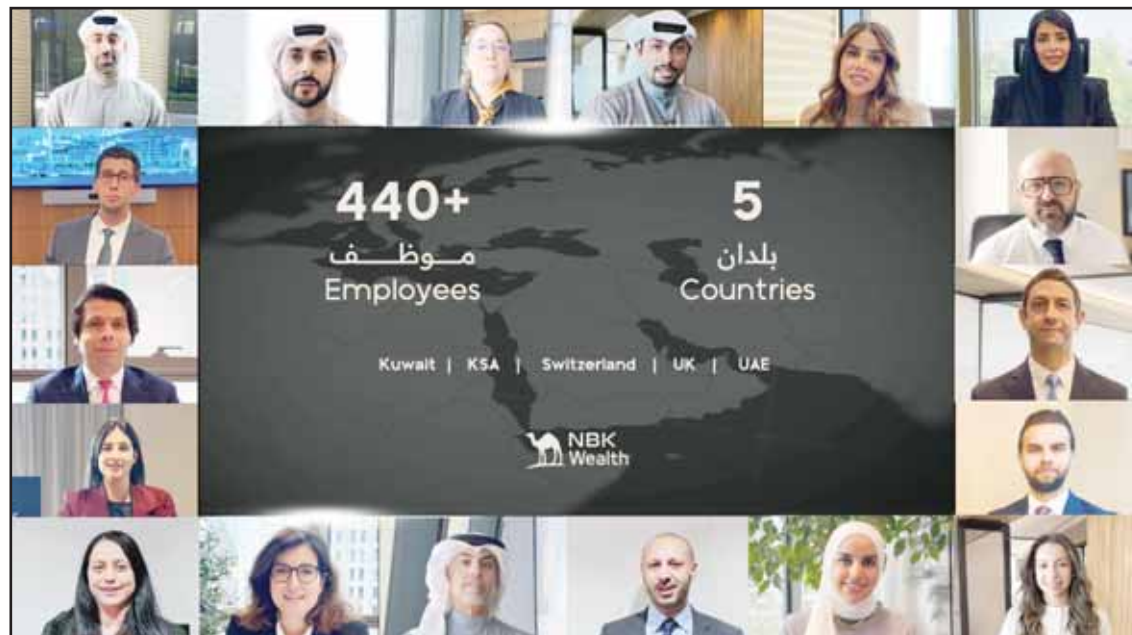
KUWAIT CITY, June 1: NBK Wealth, the wealth management and investment arm of National Bank of Kuwait (NBK), operates through an integrated institutional model built on a long-term vision for wealth management. This approach is guided by its "Beyond Wealth" philosophy, which serves as a comprehensive framework for its strategy in seeking to create value and achieving sustainability by viewing wealth as an integrated ecosystem that extends beyond financial performance.

Under the philosophy "We don't just manage wealth, We offer a wealth of career opportunities and advancements," NBK Wealth remains committed to seek to delivering value that goes beyond traditional asset management through building long-term client relationships founded on trust, knowledge sharing, and support for financial sustainability, while providing a comprehensive investment experience rooted in depth, professionalism, and a long-term strategic perspective.

NBK Wealth's vision is rooted in the belief that wealth is built through accumulated institutional expertise, continuous learning, and the cultivation of a professional environment founded on collaboration and knowledge exchange. This approach establishes a solid foundation for sustainable success in the wealth management industry while reinforcing the Group's ability to navigate rapidly evolving market dynamics.

The Group's extensive geographic footprint represents a cornerstone of its business model, with operations spanning five countries, nine cities, and 22 offices worldwide, including leading international financial centers such as Geneva and London alongside its strong presence in Kuwait and regional expansion across KSA and Dubai. This integrated network enables NBK Wealth to seamlessly connect local, regional, and international markets through a unified platform operating in accordance with the highest institutional standards.

This presence extends well beyond geographic reach and has played a pivotal role in shaping an institutional culture enriched by the diversity of the markets and operating environments in which the Group operates, including varying regulatory frameworks, investor profiles, and business cycles. This diversity represents a core strength of NBK Wealth, reinforcing its ability to operate effectively across multiple economic and investment ecosystems, transfer best practices, and leverage accumulated cross-market expertise to deliver more agile and tailored investment solutions within a unified global



- Combining global expertise with a deep understanding of local market dynamics within a professional culture equipped to navigate an evolving financial landscape
- The Group's operations extend across 5 countries, 9 cities, and 22 offices spanning major global financial centers, including Geneva, London, KSA and Dubai
- More than 440 professionals across NBK Wealth serve clients across wealth management, investment, and advisory disciplines
- NBK Wealth's presence across diversified markets provides a rich professional environment that enables employees across the Group to engage with diverse market experiences and investment approaches while gaining cross-border expertise
- The Group promotes innovative thinking, supports continuous professional development, and maintains a balanced approach between institutional discipline and operational agility

operating framework grounded in discipline and professionalism.

Furthermore, NBK Wealth's presence across diversified markets provides a rich professional environment that enables employees across the Group to engage with diverse market experiences and investment approaches while gaining cross-border expertise. This contributes to their professional development, strengthens their capabilities, and reinforces a culture of continuous learning and knowledge sharing across the organization.

NBK Wealth embodies this direction through an operating model centered on empowering

human capital, with more than 440 specialists across wealth management, investment, and advisory services operating within a professional environment that fosters strategic thinking, supports professional development, and balances institutional discipline with operational agility in line with the complexities of global markets.

This integrated approach has been reflected in the Group's strong performance and the confidence of its clients, with assets under management exceeding USD 47.6 billion, supported by a robust governance structure, a disciplined investment approach, and global operating stan-

dards that enable the Group to navigate rapidly evolving market conditions with efficiency and resilience.

NBK Wealth's role extends beyond delivering advanced financial solutions to building long-term professional relationships founded on a deep understanding of clients' aspirations and operating through an integrated platform capable of seeking to deliver added value across multiple markets and environments.

Diverse Operating Environments

NBK Wealth believes that success in the wealth management industry extends beyond financial performance to building an integrated institutional model capable of operating efficiently across diverse markets and environments, while combining global expertise with a deep understanding of local market dynamics within a professional culture that continuously evolves alongside industry transformation.

Operating across diverse markets and regulatory and investment environments represents a fundamental source of strength, not only in expanding the breadth and depth of the solutions NBK Wealth delivers to its clients, but also in enriching its institutional expertise, accelerating knowledge transfer, and reinforcing its ability to respond to the distinct dynamics and requirements of each market with efficiency, agility, and a high degree of adaptability.

NBK Wealth continues to strengthen its position as the largest wealth management platform locally and among the largest regionally through a well-established institutional approach that leverages the strength and extensive reach of NBK Group while operating in accordance with global best practices in governance and performance.

NBK Wealth is a brand registered under the name of National Bank of Kuwait S.A.K.P ("NBK"), and serves as the Group's specialized wealth management platform, encompassing its various asset management activities, including those of Watani Investment Company, the Group's leading investment arm, and its subsidiaries worldwide, alongside the private banking services provided by NBK Group, one of the region's largest and most established financial institutions.

Over the years, NBK Wealth has earned numerous prestigious regional and international awards in recognition of its institutional excellence and its ability to operate across diverse environments in accordance with the highest professional standards, reinforcing its position as a leading institution committed to excellence and seeking to create long-term value.

As part of Diraya campaign

KFH alerts customers to international call fraud

KUWAIT CITY, June 1: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) has warned about new and advanced fraudulent method involving international calls. Globally known as the Wangiri Scam, the attempt appears as a single missed phone ring from an international number. If receivers return the call, their voices will be recorded to be used in other deceptive means, including approving payments and fake financial transactions.

Fraudsters often rely on automated dialing systems to call thousands of phone numbers worldwide. Once the receiver answers or returns the call, he will be either directed to voice mail or to a chat with a scammer who will deliberately keep the receiver on the line, resulting in international charges accruing per minute without the receiver's awareness.

The Bank urged customers to ignore calls from unknown international numbers, avoid clicking on links received from them and block suspicious phone calls. KFH also explained that a normal phone call might be the start of an organized fraud attempt, targeting individuals to use their informa-



tion in unlawful means. These attempts lead to hacking personal banking accounts, illegal withdrawal of funds and stealing personal data.

KFH advised customers to remain alert and raise their awareness of financial fraud risks and the means of prevention. Given the noticeable increase of fraud worldwide in recent years, KFH warned society of any phishing method, impersonating official entities, or leveraging AI to mimic real individuals' voices. Additionally, the Bank encouraged customers to verify money transfer requests prior to approving or transferring funds.

It is worth noting that KFH remains committed to supporting Diraya awareness Campaign. Since its launch by the Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) and Kuwait Banking Association (KBA) in cooperation with local banks, KFH continues to implement purposeful initiatives aimed at raising awareness across all segments of society. The Bank posts financial awareness content on its social media platforms and digital channels, warning against evolving fraud methods, and providing tips on safeguarding against banking fraud.

HSBC sees strong potential in UK-GCC free trade agreement

KUWAIT CITY, June 1: Ahmed Al Murad, Chief Executive Officer, HSBC in Kuwait said: "As the first free trade agreement between a G7 country and the GCC, this reflects growing confidence in the region's long-term potential. With UK-Kuwait trade in goods and services reaching £5.2 billion in the four quarters to the end of 2025, it creates new opportunities for market access, investment, and deeper collaboration. At HSBC, we are committed to supporting our clients as they unlock these opportunities



Ahmed Al Murad

and drive growth across both markets."

General index drops

Boursa Kuwait ends lower as premier market weighs

KUWAIT CITY, June 1, (KUNA): Boursa Kuwait ended Monday's trading session on a negative note, with the general index declining by 54.55 points, or 0.62 percent, to close at 8,760.57 points. Trading activity saw 349.8 million shares exchanged through 30,056 cash transactions, with a total value of KD 91.7 million (approximately USD 280.6 million).

The premier market index led the losses, falling 72.81 points, or 0.78 percent, to settle at 9,231.48 points. A total of 136.9 million shares were traded across 17,010 transactions, valued at KD 60.3 mil-

lion (around USD 184.5 million).

In contrast, the main market index recorded modest gains, rising by 18 points, or 0.21 percent, to reach 8,684.04 points. Trading volume stood at 212.8 million shares through 13,046 transactions, with a total value of KD 31.4 million (approximately USD 96 million).

The Main 50 Index also posted a stronger performance, advancing 64.55 points, or 0.67 percent, to close at 9,697.24 points. The index saw 186.6 million shares traded in 10,516 cash transactions, valued at KD 27.4 million (around USD 83.8 million).

Asian markets hit records as oil prices jump

HONG KONG, June 1, (AP): Stock markets in Japan and South Korea hit fresh record highs Monday and world shares mostly advanced, as tensions between the U.S. and Iran grew again while investors await a decision on extending the Iran war ceasefire.

Oil prices gained more than 3% as U.S.-Iran negotiations continued, including on the reopening of the Strait of Hormuz, a key waterway for global oil and natural gas transit. The U.S. military said Monday the United States bombed Iranian military sites after Tehran shot down an American drone.

U.S. futures edged higher. In early European trading, Britain's FTSE 100 was down 0.1% to 10,396.16. France's CAC 40 edged up 0.2% to 8,202.53, while Germany's DAX gained 0.4% to 25,198.34.

Asian shares mostly gained and Japan's and South Korea's benchmarks hit records, led by technology-related stocks, as investors continued to see growth in AI and other advanced technologies.

Tokyo's Nikkei 225 ended 0.9% higher at an all-time record of 66,934.33. It also crossed the 67,000 mark for the first time during Monday's trading, reaching 67,231.28. Shares of SoftBank Group, the investment company that focuses heavily on AI, soared 14% and became Japan's most valuable listed company, surpassing Toyota.

In South Korea, the Kospi index jumped 3.7% to 8,788.38, also closing at a record high, after hitting an intraday record of 8,874.16. Samsung Electronics, its biggest company, was up 10.1%. Official data on Monday showed that South Korea's exports surged 53% year-on-year in May, buoyed by global demand for semiconductors.

The Nikkei 225 was up more than 12% over the past month, while the Kospi surged around 27% during the same period.

Hong Kong's Hang Seng traded 0.9% higher at 25,398.18. The Shanghai Composite index fell 0.3% to 4,057.74, after China reported over the weekend that factory activity in May softened with signs of slowing new exports demand.

Australia's S&P/ASX 200 edged down less than 0.1% to 8,729.40.

Taiwan's Taiex climbed 1.4%, while India's Sensex lost 0.7%.

Three months after the Iran war began, uncertainties over a permanent end to the war are still driving market movements and keeping oil prices swinging, even as optimism on robust AI demand and strong corporate earnings have fueled a stock market rally including on Wall Street.

On Friday, U.S. President Donald Trump met with advisers in high-level talks but had not decided yet on a tentative plan to extend the Iran war ceasefire by 60 days, while Iran had said a deal was not finalized. The reopening of the Strait of Hormuz was also still in limbo. The strait has been largely closed and the U.S. has imposed a sea blockade on Iranian ports.

The Israeli army was also advancing in Lebanon as Israel targets the Iran-backed Hezbollah militant group, further complicating developments of a deal on the Iran war.

Brent crude oil, the international standard, rose 3.3% early Monday to \$94.16 per barrel. It was approximately \$70 a barrel in late February, before the start of the war.

Benchmark U.S. crude was 3.9% higher at \$90.78 a barrel.

"In spite of another round of tit-for-tat attacks, market participants continue to operate on the assumption that, sooner rather than later, the Strait of Hormuz will re-open," wrote Jonas Goltermann, chief markets economist at Capital Economics.

On Friday, Wall Street stocks reached more records powered by big technology stocks, with the benchmark S&P 500 adding 0.2% in its seventh straight gain to 7,580.06.

The Dow Jones Industrial Average climbed 0.7% to 51,032.46, while the technology-heavy Nasdaq composite gained 0.2% to 26,972.62.

Dell Technologies surged 32.8% following strong-than-expected results and after it raised its outlook on strong AI-related demand. Microsoft rose over 5.4%, while Broadcom was up 4.7%.

In other dealings, the U.S. dollar rose to 159.47 Japanese yen from 159.25 yen. The euro was trading at \$1.1650, down from \$1.1667.

Geopolitical headwinds decouple GCC from AI-led global rally in May

By KAMCO Invest

Global equity markets continued to witness gains during May-2026 despite geopolitical issues in the Middle East and escalating tensions between Ukraine and Russia. The gains were mainly led by AI-infrastructure led stocks that pushed the MSCI World Index into gains for the second consecutive month. The index is up more than 15% over the last two months, one of the biggest bi-monthly gain on record, after a 5% gain in May-2026. Almost all global markets were in the green during the month, barring India, China, Hong Kong and Russia. South Korea's KOSPI witnessed a strong gain of 28.4% during the month and is up more than 100% since the start of the year led by concentrated gain in shares of Samsung and SK Hynix. In the US, Nasdaq was up by 8.4% while the S&P and DJI witnessed relatively smaller gains of 5.1% and 2.8%, respectively. Crude oil prices remained volatile, but declined towards the end of the month on positive cease fire talks.

GCC and Middle East markets were affected due the deadline in talks between the US and Iran and the continued closure of the Strait of Hormuz. The critical waterway remained closed as the war dragged on for the third consecutive month affecting crude oil volatility, although there were some positive statements made towards the end of last month. The MSCI GCC index declined by 1.3% during May-2026 after a marginal gain last month. The decline was led by fall in majority of the markets partially offset by marginal gain in Qatar and Bahrain. Oman witnessed the biggest monthly decline of 7.3% during the month on profit booking, followed by Saudi Arabia and Abu Dhabi with declines of 1.0% and 0.8%, respectively.

At the sector level, most sectors in the GCC declined during May-2026 while defensive sectors like F&B and Utilities witnessed gains. The Healthcare index was the biggest decliner with a fall of 5.4% followed by Materials and Pharma with declines of 4.4% and 3.1%, respectively.

Bursa Kuwait

The Bursa Kuwait All Share index closed May-2026 with a marginal monthly decline of 0.5% at 8,815.1 points. The decline was mainly led by large-cap stocks, including Banks, with the corresponding Premier Market Index witnessing a fall of 0.8% during May-2026 as the performance of most of the constituent stocks in the index declined. Contrastingly, the Main 50 Index and the Main Market Index reported monthly gains of 2.9% and 1.1%, respectively. In terms of YTD-2026 performance, the Premier Market Index recorded a decline of 2.0%, and the All-Share Index edged down by 1.0%. Conversely, the Main 50 Index and Main Market Index delivered gains of 10.9% and 4.4%, respectively.

The monthly sector performance chart remained mixed during the month. On the gainer's side, the Technology index topped during May-2026 with a double-digit gain of 67.8% followed by Basic Materials and Telecom indices with returns of 5.7% and 3.8%, respectively. On the other hand, The Consumer Staples index witnessed the steepest decline of 7.2% followed by Utilities and Banks sector with declines of 6.1% and 1.4%, respectively. The gains in the Technology index were led by an equivalent gain in the sole constituent stock in the index, Automated Systems Co. Within the Telecom sector, all the constituent stocks posted gains supported by solid earnings. The Banking Index declined by 1.4% during the month, as losses across seven of the nine constituent stocks were only partially offset by gains in shares of Gulf Bank and Commercial Bank of Kuwait. Gains in the Basic Materials sector were primarily driven by a 7.5% increase in shares of Boubyan Petrochemical Co. During the month, the company reported FY2025/26 net profit of approximately KWD 26.7 Mn, compared with KWD 30.1 Mn in the previous year, mainly due to lower dividend contributions from EQUATE.

Prominent gainers during May-2026 included Automated Systems Co., National Cleaning Co. and First Takaful Insurance Co. with gains of 67.8%, 27.2% and 23.9%, respectively. On the decliner's side, shares of Equipment Holding Co. were leading with a fall of 17.9% during the month followed by Gulf Franchising Co. and National International Holding Co. with declines of 17.8% and 15.3%, respectively. Trading activity declined during the month owing to the seasonal Eid Al Adha holidays. Total volume of shares traded during May -2026 fell 8.9% to 8.2 Bn shares compared to 9.0 Bn shares in April 2026 while value traded declined by 12.3% to reach KWD 1.9 Bn vs. KWD 2.1 Bn during the previous month. National Real Estate Co. topped the monthly volume chart with 899.6 Mn shares followed by GFH Bank B.S.C. and National Cleaning Co. with 614.7 Mn shares and 426.3 Mn shares traded, respectively. On the monthly value traded chart also, KFH topped with KWD 160.3 Mn worth of shares traded followed by GFH Bank B.S.C. and National Bank of Kuwait at KWD 119.0 Mn and KWD 118.1 Mn, respectively.

Saudi Arabia (Tadawul)

Saudi Arabia's TASI recorded a decline in May 2026 as investor sentiment was weighed down by continued geopolitical tensions in the region. The benchmark started the month on a positive note, climbing to a closing high of 11,192.84 points early on 3-May-2026 but declined in the subsequent session. The index subsequently traded in a volatile range during the remainder of the month, closing at 11,077.9 points, representing a 1.0% monthly decline. The slide towards the end of the month was due to market speculations surrounding the U.S.-Iran negotiations. Despite the decline, the index remained the second-best performing market in the GCC since the start of the year with a gain of 5.6%. The month saw a revival of IPO activity in the Kingdom with the listing of Dar Albalad for Business Solutions Co. listed in the Software & Services sector, bringing the total number of Main Market listings in 2026 to two by the end of May.

In terms of sectoral performance, the picture was skewed towards decliners after thirteen out of the twenty-one indices recorded declines during May-2026. The Capital Goods sector posted the steepest drop, falling by 7.8% during the month. The Health Care Equipment & Svc and Materials indices were next with declines of 6.6% and 4.6%, respectively. On the gainer's side, the Software & Services index topped during May-2026 with a double-digit gain of 11.1% followed by Food & Beverages and Utilities indices with returns of 8.0% and 7.9%, respectively. Large-cap sectors such as Banking recorded a decline of 1.2% during the month. Within the Banking sector, shares of most listed banks ended lower amid cautious investor sentiment and broader market volatility. Large-cap banks like Al Rajhi Bank declined by 1.9% while shares of Saudi National Bank gained by 0.6%. In the Energy sector, shares of Aramco declined by 0.8% during the month. Despite posting strong earnings in May 2026, Saudi Aramco shares showed slight weakness late in the month mainly due to softer oil prices and fluctuating global demand expectations. The Telecom Sector was dragged down by losses in most of the constituent stocks including Etihad Etisalat Co. (-3.1%), Zain KSA (-7.1%) and Etihad Atheeb Telecommunication Co. (-2.7%).

The monthly stock performance chart was topped by Kingdom Holding Co., with a gain of 23.5% followed by Saudi Enaya Cooperative Insurance Co. with a gain of 20.1% and Almunajem Foods Co. with a gain of 19.1%. On the monthly decliner's chart, Raydan Food Co. topped with a decline of 24.0% followed by Cenomi Retail and Retal Urban Development Co. with declines of 21.8% and 17.6%, respectively.

Trading activity on the exchange declined during the month. Monthly volume of shares traded declined by 37.7% to reach 4.1 Bn shares compared to 6.7 Bn in April-2026. Monthly value of shares traded also declined by 27.8% to reach SAR 90.3 Bn compared to 125.1 Bn in April-2026. Americana Restaurants International PLC topped the monthly volume chart with 453.4 Mn shares followed by Saudi Arabian Oil Co. and Saudi Kayan Petrochemical Co. with 244.3 Mn shares and 164.0 Mn shares traded, respectively. On the monthly value traded chart, Al Rajhi Bank topped with SAR 6.9 Bn worth of shares traded during the month followed by Saudi Arabian Oil Co. and Acwa power with trades worth SAR 6.8 Bn and SAR 4.8 Bn during the month, respectively.

Abu Dhabi Securities Exchange

The FTSE ADX declined by 0.8% in May-2026, falling back from the 2.7% increase in April-2026. Despite the holding ceasefire in the Middle East war, the persistent instability underpinned the overall fall of the general index. The FTSE ADX Index closed the month at 9,701.92 points. Sectoral performance during May-2026 was moderately skewed towards gainers, with six out of the ten sector indices on the exchange recording gains despite the overall decline of the general index. The main reason for this was the decline of the heavily weighted indices, such as the Financial Sector (-1.4%) and the Consumer Staples Sector (-3.7%), which dragged down the overall FTSE General Index during May-2026. On the other hand, the Energy Index witnessed a 3.9% gain during the month, the largest gain among the indices, after all four companies

GCC Equity Markets	Index Closing	MTD Chg%	YTD Chg%	M-Cap (USD Bn)	Val Traded - (USD Bn)	P/E (x) TTM	P/B (x) TTM	Div. Yield
Kuwait - Premier Market Index	9,304.3	(0.8%)	(2.0%)	173.0	6.0	16.1	1.3	2.4%
Kuwait - Main 50 Index	9,632.7	2.9%	10.9%					
Kuwait - Main Market Index	8,666.0	1.1%	4.4%					
Kuwait - All Share Index	8,815.1	(0.5%)	(1.0%)					
Saudi Arabia	11,077.9	(1.0%)	5.6%	2,630.7	24.1	17.1	2.2	3.4%
Abu Dhabi	9,701.9	(0.8%)	(2.9%)	754.8	5.7	19.2	2.3	2.6%
Dubai	5,757.5	(0.1%)	(4.8%)	251.3	3.5	9.1	1.7	5.5%
Qatar	10,555.0	0.6%	(1.9%)	173.5	2.2	12.1	1.4	4.7%
Bahrain	1,979.1	0.4%	(4.2%)	72.4	0.05	16.5	1.3	4.5%
Oman	7,757.2	(7.3%)	32.2%	53.4	2.9	15.0	1.7	4.0%
Total GCC				4,109.2	44.4	16.3	2.1	3.5%



Source: GCC Stock Exchanges, Kamco Invest Research

that comprise the index reported share price gains during the month, led by a 7.1% gain by ADNOC Distribution. Similarly, the Utilities Index witnessed a 2.6% increase in May-2026 to close the month at 9,416.0 points after Abu Dhabi National Energy Company's share price increased by a similar proportion of 2.6% during the month.

In terms of individual stock performance, Space42 PLC topped the monthly gainers chart, with its share price surging by 18.0%. It was followed by Abu Dhabi Ship Building and Eshraq Investments, which recorded gains of 16.5% and 14.7%, respectively. Space42 Plc recently reported a 1% y-o-y revenue increase in Q1-2026 which reached USD 116 Mn, driven by 15% growth in Space Services, contributing 95% of revenue. On the decliners' side, Al Buhaira National Insurance registered the largest drop, with its share price declining by 25.5%. It was followed by National Corp. For Tourism & Hotels and Phoenix Group, which posted decreases of 11.5% and 11.2%, respectively.

Trading activity on the exchange declined during May-2026, following a similar decline in the previous month. The total volume of shares fell by 19.2% to 4.9 Bn as compared to 6.1 Bn shares, in April-2026. Concurrently, the total value of shares traded decreased by 19.2% to AED 20.8 Bn, down from AED 25.8 Bn in the prior month. ADNOC Gas was the most active stock by volume, with 553.5 Mn shares traded, followed by Eshraq Investments P.J.S.C and Abu Dhabi National Hotels Co. which recorded 407.2 Mn and 339.5 Mn shares, respectively. In terms of value traded during the month, ADNOC Drilling led the market with AED 2.0 Bn worth of shares exchanged, followed closely by Abu Dhabi Islamic Bank and Abu Dhabi Commercial Bank with AED 1.9 Bn and USD 1.86 Bn, respectively.

The World Bank has revised its UAE economic projection for 2026 downward to 2.4%, compared to the 4.7% forecast issued in January-2026. This adjustment is attributed to the impact of the ongoing conflict in the GCC region and reduced projected energy revenues resulting from the disruption caused by the conflict and the closure of the Strait of Hormuz. Furthermore, the World Bank also highlighted additional shocks to the UAE and the broader GCC region, which are already facing challenges such as low productivity growth, limited private sector dynamism, and persistent labor market issues. This underscores the critical need for the UAE to strengthen governance and macroeconomic fundamentals, as well as to act and boost long-term job creation and resilience. For context, the UAE's real GDP (the inflation-adjusted value of all goods and services in a year) grew by 6.2% y-o-y to AED 1.9 trillion (USD 517 Bn) in 2025, according to official data.

Dubai Financial Market

The DFM General Index witnessed a small dip of 0.1% in May-2026, following a 6.1% growth in April-2026, as a result of continuing uncertainty in the region despite the ceasefire holding in the conflict. The DFM General Index closed the month at 5,757.5 points. Sectoral performance during May-2026 favored decliners, with five out of the eight sector indices on the exchange recording declines during the month. The Consumer Staples Index recorded the largest decline during May-2026. Five out of the six companies that comprise the Consumer Staples sector index reported share price declines during the month, led by United Kaipara Dairies, which reported a 17.3% share price drop during the month. Moreover, the Industrial Index experienced the second-largest fall, declining by 2.0% to close the month at 4,383.0 points, after the 4.4% share price drop of Salik dragged the whole index into the red during the month. On the other hand, the Consumer Discretionary Index witnessed the largest gain during the month, with a 15% gain to close the month at 1,157.9 points, after Talabat, one of the three constituent companies that comprise the sector index, witnessed its share price jump 23.6% during May-2026. The Materials Index followed with a 7.9% increase during the month after National Cement Company, the only company that comprises the sector, reported a share price improvement of 7.9% during the month.

In terms of monthly stock performance data from Bloomberg, National Industries Group topped the gainers' table in May-2026, with its share price rising by 30.0%. It was followed by Islamic Arab Insurance and Talabat Holding, which recorded gains of 28.9% and 23.6%, respectively. National Industries Group recently reported a procedure for distributing in-kind shares of National Industries Company (NICBM) to shareholders, detailing procedures for registering shareholders and opening trading accounts in Kuwait. On the decliners' side, Amlak Finance led with a share price decline of 28.7%, followed by United Kaipara Dairies and Dubai Investments, with share price declines of 17.3% and 9.9%, respectively.

Trading activity declined during the month. Total volume declined by 21.4% to 4.2 Bn shares in May-2026 vs. 5.4 Bn shares in April-2026. Similarly, the total value of shares traded declined at a relatively faster pace of 37.0%, reaching AED 12.9 Bn in May-2026 as compared to AED 20.4 Bn in April-2026. Talabat Holding topped the monthly volume chart with 1.2 Bn shares traded, followed by Emaar Properties and DSI, which recorded 418.6 Mn and 268.9 Mn shares changing hands, respectively. In terms of value traded, Emaar Properties led the market with AED 4.9 Bn worth of shares exchanged during the month, followed by Talabat and Emirates NBD at AED 1.1 Bn and AED 1.0 Bn, respectively.

In economic news, the government of Dubai has approved a new batch of measures to protect jobs and strengthen the economy. The new package, which comprises 33 initiatives and which is valued at USD 400 Mn (AED 1.5 Bn) is expected to be executed within the next three to twelve months. This initiative comes after the earlier AED 1 Bn package which was designed to support Dubai's economy and society at large.

Qatar Exchange

The Qatar Stock Exchange reported marginal gains for the second consecutive month during May-2026. The QE 20 index closed the month at 10,555.0 after registering a monthly gain of 0.6%. The Qatar All Share Index also witnessed a similar gain of 0.8% during the month. The market came under pressure during mid-month, with the index falling 1.1% to 10,372.10 points on 18-May-2026 amid broad-based sector selling. However, the index rebounded toward the end of the month, driven primarily by strong performance in the Banking and Industrial sectors. The performance between the two indices diverged in terms of YTD performance with the QE 20 index showing a decline of 1.9%, while the QE All Share index recorded a gain of 1.3%.

The monthly sector performance chart favored gainers during the month. Among the gainers, the Real Estate, Industrials and Transportation indices topped the table in May-2026, posting a notable gain of 5.0%, 1.8% and

1.0%, respectively. The Insurance sector posted the biggest decline among the sectoral indices at 3.7% to close the month at 2,775.03. The Telecoms and Consumer Goods & Services, indices were next with declines of 1.9% and 0.5%, respectively. The Industrial sector advanced during the month, primarily driven by strong performances from Estithmar Holding and Qatar Aluminum Manufacturing Co., whose share prices increased by 8.7% and 6.5%, respectively. In contrast, Aamal Co. recorded a decline of 1.2% over the same period. Similarly, gains in the Real Estate Sector were largely supported by Barwa Real Estate and Ezzan Holding, with their shares rising by 8.3% and 2.6%, respectively, during the month. Within the Transportation sector, most of the constituent stocks posted gains supported by increased buying interest and optimism surrounding economic activity. In the Banks & Financial Services sector, most of the listed Qatari banks witnessed gains during the month with Leshaa Bank reporting a gain of 4.7% followed by Ahli Bank and Qatar Islamic Bank with gains of 2.9% and 2.2%, respectively. The Insurance Sector was dragged down by a decline in the shares of Qatar General Insurance & Reinsurance and Qatar Insurance Co. which was down by 10.1% and 6.8% during the month. The Telecommunications Sector declined during the month, mainly due to an 8.9% decrease in Vodafone Qatar's share price, which weighed on overall sector performance.

The monthly stock performance chart was topped with Al Khaleej Takaful Group QSC with a gain of 22.4% followed by Qatar Oman Investment Co QSC and Qatar Cinema & Film Distribution with gains of 9.9% and 8.8%, respectively. On the decliners side, Qatar General Insurance & Reinsurance topped with a decline of 10.1% followed by Vodafone Qatar and Mosanada Facilities Management with declines of 8.9% and 7.5%, respectively. In terms of the trading activity, the total volume of shares traded during the month declined by 33.5% to 2.9 Bn shares compared to 4.3 Bn in April-2026. The value of shares traded

fell by 25.6% in May-2026, reaching QAR 7.9 Bn, compared to QAR 10.6 Bn in April-2026. Baladna topped the monthly volume traded chart with 445.6 Mn traded shares followed by Qatar Aluminum Manufacturing Co. and Meseaid Petrochemical Holding at 229.9 Mn shares and 207.4 Mn shares, respectively. On the value traded chart, Qatar National Bank topped with QAR 764.8 Mn worth of trades during the month followed by Estithmar Holding and Baladna at QAR 663.3 Mn and QAR 589.6 Mn, respectively.

Bahrain Bourse

The Bahrain Bourse All Share Index recorded a 0.4% gain in May-2026, its second consecutive monthly increase, closing the month at 1,979.1 points. The monthly gain continued the reversal of the sharp monthly decline of 7.8% during March-2026. In terms of monthly sectoral performance, the trend was predominantly negative, as four out of the seven sectors recorded declines during May-2026. However, a gain in heavy-weight indices such as the Materials and Financial sectors supported the overall gain of the bourse during the month. The Materials Sector recorded the largest gain among the sectors during the month at 1.1%, closing at 4,088.8 points, followed by the Financial Sector (+0.6%) and the Consumer Discretionary Sector (+0.4%). On the other hand, the Real Estate Sector posted the largest decline during May-2026, registering a 5.2% decline to close the month at 2,633.9 points.

In terms of share price performance, according to Bloomberg data, BBK topped the monthly gainers list with a 3.9% increase in its share price during the month, followed by National Hotels Co and Inovest BSC, which recorded share price gains of 3.7% and 1.1%, respectively. On the decliners' side, Bahrain National Holding led the list with a 10.7% share price decline during the month, followed by Seef Properties and APM Terminal Bahrain, which posted monthly share price declines of 7.6% and 3.9%, respectively.

Trading activity on the exchange witnessed sharp gains during April-2026. The total volume of shares traded during the month jumped by 224% to 61.7 Mn shares, compared to 19.0 Mn shares in March-2026. Total value traded on the exchange also experienced a sharp increase, rising 165.6% to reach BHD 18.4 Mn in April-2026, up from BHD 6.9 Mn during the previous month. Al Salam Bank-Bahrain topped the monthly volumes chart with 15.6 Mn shares traded, followed by GFH Bank and Seef Properties with 14.2 Mn and 10.3 Mn shares exchanged, respectively. On the monthly value traded chart, GFH Bank led with BHD 7.9 Mn worth of shares exchanged, followed by Kuwait Finance House - Bahrain and National Bank of Bahrain, which recorded BHD 4.3 Mn and BHD 3.9 Mn in value traded, respectively.

In economic news, S&P Global Ratings has affirmed its 'B/B' long and short-term foreign and local currency sovereign credit ratings in Bahrain with a Stable outlook on the rating. Moreover, the transfer and convertibility assessment on Bahrain remains 'B+'. The ratings agency stipulated that Bahrain is expected continue to benefit from support from other GCC countries, which are expected to offset potential effects of adverse regional developments that include disruption to oil production and exports. The agency underlined its expectations that the Middle East war would end soon (within few weeks) however, warned that a prolonged disruption to key infrastructure could add clear downside risks to our baseline case. Moreover, the ratings agency underscored the downward scenario of its rating that it could lower Bahrain's ratings if foreign currency reserves decline significantly or if GCC support failed to materialize in a timely manner, weakening the Bahrain government's ability to service its commercial debt obligations on time and in full.

Muscat Stock Exchange

The MSX 30 Index recorded a 7.3% decline in May-2026, its first fall after ten consecutive months of solid gains in the index, to close the month at 7,757.2 points. The decline reflected profit booking by investors during the month with sharp selloff during the third week followed by a partial recovery towards the end of the month. However, the overall year-to-date return remains in double-digits at 32.2% during the first five months of the year. In terms of sectoral performance, all three sector indices recorded declines during May-2026, led by the Industrial Index with a 4.3% decline to close the month at 9,756.6 points. The drop was underpinned by double-digit share price slides of heavy-weight companies in the sector, including OQ Base Industries (-16.8%) and OQ Gas Networks (-12.1%). Moreover, the Services Index recorded a 3.1% decline in May-2026, while the Financial Index registered a 2.9% decline during the same period.

In terms of company performance, Sohar Power topped the gainers list with a share price gain of 80.9%, although the liquidity in the stock remained very limited during the month. National Bank of Oman and Phoenix Power were next on the gainers chart with monthly gains of 13.9% and 13.6%, respectively. On the decliners' side, Al Hassan Engineering, which is currently under liquidation, led the chart with a 60% share price decline, followed by Oman Fisheries and OQ Base Industries, which witnessed share price drops of 20.7% and 17.7%, respectively.

Trading activity on the exchange declined during May-2026 as compared to the previous month. The total volume of shares traded declined by 32.6% to the lowest level in six months at 3.2 Bn shares in May-2026, compared to 4.8 Bn shares in April-2026. The total value traded on the exchange also declined by 27.7% to the lowest level in four months reaching to OMR 1.1 Bn, down from OMR 1.5 Bn in the previous month. Bank Muscat topped the monthly value traded chart with transactions totaling OMR 224.8 Mn, followed by OQ Base Industries and Sohar International Bank, with total values traded of OMR 205 Mn and OMR 164.1 Mn, respectively. In terms of monthly volume traded, Sohar International Bank again led the list with 743.9 Mn shares, followed by OQ Base Industries and Bank Muscat with volumes of 697.2 Mn shares and 516.9 Mn shares, respectively.

On the economic front, the World Bank penciled in 2.4% growth for Oman's economy, significantly lower than the 3.5% projection by the IMF earlier this year. However, the World Bank expects the Sultanate's economy to witness a recovery in growth in 2027, penciling it at 3%. The World Bank reasoned that its concern over prolonged maritime tensions in the Strait of Hormuz could create indirect pressure on the Sultanate's economy through higher shipping costs and longer transit times.

Furthermore, the World Bank also highlighted key downside risks for Oman's economy, including further escalation of the conflict in the Middle East, as heightened and renewed geopolitical tensions in the region could affect many aspects of the Sultanate's economy, such as supply chains, trade flows, and the attractiveness of the tourism industry. On the other hand, the bank featured its expectation of a modest surplus in the Sultanate's current account in 2026, supported by higher oil prices and sustained non-oil exports.

2025 established as the official emissions baseline year

Gulf Bank completes its first Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory

'Eng. Khalid Abdulwahab Al-Awadhi: We are committed to advancing the goals of Gulf Bank's ESG Sustainability Strategy for 2030.'

KUWAIT CITY, June 1: Gulf Bank has announced the successful completion of its first Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emissions Inventory, formally designating 2025 as its official emissions baseline year. This milestone forms a central component of the Bank's Sustainability Strategy 2030 and reflects its enduring commitment to responsible banking, environmental stewardship, and alignment with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 13: Climate Action.

Conducted in accordance with the internationally recognized GHG Protocol Corporate Standard, the inventory encompasses the Bank's headquarters, branch network, affiliated assets, and InvestGB, its dedicated investment arm. The results have been formally disclosed in Gulf Bank's Sixth Annual Sustainability Report for 2025, published as part of the Bank's ongoing commitment to transparency and accountability in sustainability reporting, directly supporting UN SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production.

Emissions Inventory Scope

The inventory covers three emissions scopes as de-



Group photo of the Facilities Management team, with Khalid Al-Awadhi in the center.

defined under the GHG Protocol:

- Scope 1: Direct emissions from sources owned or under the operational control of the Bank, including

generator fuel consumption and refrigerant gases.

- Scope 2: Indirect emissions attributable to the consumption of purchased electricity across all Bank

facilities.

- Scope 3: Material upstream and downstream emissions as defined by the Bank, encompassing leased vehicle records, utility invoices, and paper waste generated through operations.

Commenting on the announcement, Eng. Khalid Abdulwahab Al-Awadhi, Deputy General Manager – Facilities Management, stated: Establishing 2025 as our baseline year strengthens our capacity to drive meaningful, measurable progress in the years ahead. It reinforces our commitment to Gulf Bank's Sustainability Strategy 2030 and in particular its Fourth Strategic Pillar: Responsible Banking."

Al-Awadhi further noted that Gulf Bank is actively refining its measurement methodologies across all principal emissions sources. The Bank has committed to expanding the scope of the inventory as additional data becomes available and to conducting an annual independent third-party audit to verify reported figures and ensure the highest standards of credibility and transparency in alignment with UN SDG 17: Partnerships for the Goals.

In recognition of Excellence in Customer Service and Outstanding Performance

Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait honors Shuwaikh branch with 'The Rising Branch 2025' title

KUWAIT CITY, June 1: Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) announced its Shuwaikh branch as the winner of the 'The Rising Branch 2025' award after successfully meeting the evaluation criteria and demonstrating excellence in serving various customer segments and fulfilling their expectations. The recognition reflects the Bank's continued commitment to rewarding employees, elevating service standards, and encouraging staff to further develop their capabilities and potential.

The announcement was made during a visit to the Shuwaikh branch by **Johair Marafi**, General Manager of Retail Banking at ABK, accompanied by a group of Bank officials, in recognition of the branch's distinguished performance and exceptional customer service across multiple areas.

On this occasion, Marafi said, "The branch's achievement is a true reflection of the dedication of its employees and their success in meeting customer expectations while serving them in line with the highest standards in the banking sector." She added that the award highlights the importance of teamwork, collaboration, and a unified spirit in achieving success and overcoming challenges. Marafi further emphasized, "ABK remains committed to providing branch employees with all the necessary tools to achieve the highest levels of performance, while empowering them with the authority and resources required to deliver creative and exceptional customer service."

The Shuwaikh branch earned the "The Rising Branch" title after achieving the highest levels of positive customer feedback and building



ABK team from the Shuwaikh branch, in the presence of some bank officials.

sustainable relationships with clients. The branch also demonstrated a strong understanding of customer needs by providing suitable banking advice aligned with their financial situations. In addition, it excelled in product sales, customer acquisition, and maintaining efficiency in processing banking transactions while reducing waiting times, all of which positively enhanced the overall customer banking experience.

Marafi added, "Our branch network represents the primary touchpoint for serving our customers, and investing in the development of branch efficiency while strengthening both digital and traditional services remain a key driver of our continued success. The excellence of any branch serves as a strong contribution toward achieving the Bank's broader objectives and reinforces the value of continuously investing in the development of our workforce to strengthen our market share and competitive position within the local market."

She concluded, "This programme serves as a strong motivator for all



Honoring the branch.

our branches to continue their journey of excellence and innovation. I would like to extend my sincere appreciation to all branch employees for their passion, dedication, and

commitment to delivering a banking experience that exceeds expectations, further reinforcing ABK's position as a preferred banking choice in the local market."

Powell uses JFK award speech to warn against political pressure on Fed, courts and schools

BOSTON, June 1, (AP): Former Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell used one of his first major public appearances since leaving office to defend independent institutions while accepting an award Sunday honoring his efforts to preserve the central bank's independence.

Speaking at the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library overlooking Boston Harbor, Powell called universities, courts, Congress and the central bank "the foundation and the embodiment of our democracy" and argued that the Fed's independence was a "priceless asset" that must be protected.

It was one of his most direct defenses of Fed independence, warning that a single administration's decision to remove bank officials over policy differences would open the way for future elected officials to follow suit, ultimately undermining the credibility that the Fed has spent decades building.

Powell, who frequently clashed with Trump during his eight years as chair, stepped down as his term expired in May. He was succeeded by Kevin Warsh, whom Trump selected to lead the central bank.

After stepping down as chair, Powell took the unusual step of keeping his seat on the Fed's governing board, which he has until January 2028. By doing so, he has deprived the Trump administration of an opportunity to appoint another member of the board.

The Trump administration has also sought to fire Fed governor Lisa Cook, which would open an additional seat on the rate-setting committee the president could fill. Yet Cook sued and the courts have so far let her keep her seat.

While Powell never mentioned Trump by name Sunday, he repeatedly returned to the importance of protecting institutions from politi-

cal pressure and preserving public trust in their independence.

"Like many other institutions, the Fed has been undergoing a stress test," he said. "Congress wisely chose to insulate monetary policy decisions from political pressure. All other advanced economy nations have done the same."

Since 1989, the John F. Kennedy Profile in Courage Award has recognized public servants who make what the foundation describes as courageous decisions of conscience despite personal or professional consequences.

Previous recipients include former Presidents Barack Obama and George H. W. Bush, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy and former Vice President Mike Pence.

In March, the foundation said it was awarding Powell for protecting the independence of the Federal Reserve "despite years of personal attacks and threats from the highest levels of government."

Trump harshly criticized Powell throughout his tenure as chair, frequently attacking the Fed's interest-rate decisions and urging the central bank to cut borrowing costs more aggressively.

Beyond the Federal Reserve, Powell defended U.S. universities and research institutions, the Constitution, Congress and the court system.

"The United States has long been the leader of the world's freedom-seeking people - the indispensable nation. Other countries know us as a nation built on integrity, and that integrity must be maintained," he said.

In his remarks, Powell indirectly acknowledged mistakes as chair. The Fed is legally required to seek stable prices, but inflation

surged amid the pandemic's supply chain crunch. Many economists believe the central bank should have raised interest rates more quickly in response.

"At the Fed, we are, of course, human and thus imperfect," Powell said. "When we make mistakes, we acknowledge them and change course."

Powell was honored alongside residents of Minnesota's Twin Cities, who received the award for what the Kennedy Foundation described as acts of courage during a federal immigration crackdown that led to thousands of arrests and the deaths of Minneapolis mother Renée Good and nurse Alex Pretti, both of whom were killed while observing or documenting enforcement activity.

"It's wonderful just to be invited, honoring Renée," Good's father, Tim Granger, said as he entered the library with family members.

Kennedy's only surviving child, Caroline Kennedy, and her son, Jack Schlossberg, said in a statement that without people like Powell and those in Minnesota "willing to put their lives on the line to hold America to its promises, our democracy can't survive."

Attendee U.S. Sen. Amy Klobuchar, who is running for governor of Minnesota next year, reflected that the award was unusual because it recognized ordinary residents rather than elected officials.

"This didn't go to an elected leader for a reason," Klobuchar said. "It's because the people stood up. They stood up by marching 50,000 strong. They stood by bringing kids they didn't even know - strangers' kids - to school, by bringing them groceries and they didn't blink. And that's what this award is about. It's about courage."

Markets flag US debt risks

Growing debt burden raises economic risks

WASHINGTON, June 1, (AP): The world is getting more uptight about lending money to President Donald Trump's government - causing interest rates to climb in ways that are worsening affordability pressures, hampering economic growth and creating a new risk for Republicans in November's midterm elections.

The energy price spike triggered by the Iran war has seeped into the price of bonds that help fund the U.S. government. Interest rates on a 10-year U.S. Treasury note are topping 4.44%, up from 3.95% before the war started at the end of February. Average mortgage rates have climbed to their highest levels in nine months, while auto sales are slumping.

The challenge is global in scale, as interest rates have risen for multiple countries as the world has been adjusting to the prospect of higher inflation, mounting questions about the sustainability of government debt and a dramatic surge in investment in artificial intelligence.

Trump has tried to assure Americans that he has a plan to trim the roughly \$1.8 trillion annual budget deficit. In the past, he has pointed to revenue from tariffs, payments from foreigners for his "Gold Card" visa, spending cuts made by the Department of Government Efficiency, and faster economic growth. Last week, he said the fraud task force led by Vice President JD Vance would be the key to unlocking massive savings.

"If he does really great, we'll have a balanced budget without having to do anything," Trump said.

Economists say Trump's strategies to meaningfully curb the deficit are unlikely to deliver the promised results.

The cost of servicing the national debt has tripled since 2021 to more than \$1 trillion annually, said Jessica Riedl, a budget and tax fellow at the Brookings Institution.

"President Trump signed a tax cut bill that will likely add \$5 trillion to 10-year deficits - and tariffs are offsetting only a small fraction of those costs," she said. "Budget deficits are still projected to soar past \$4 trillion annually within a decade under current policies."

Deficits are expected to grow over the next decade as the costs of Social Security and Medicare outstrip tax revenues.

The 10-year U.S. Treasury rate climbed as high as 4.67% in the middle of May and has since eased as negotiations over the Iran ceasefire continued - just as rates initially climbed in 2025 because of Trump's "Liberation Day" tariffs and then began to decline once Trump backed off the most extreme increases.

When Kent Smetters, faculty director of the Penn Wharton Budget Model, broke down the math tied to rising 30-year Treasury yields, he estimated that 60% of the increase had come from the expectation that America will continue its outsized borrowing and the other 40% was tied to the inflation driven by the Iran war and Trump's tariffs.

Glenn Hubbard, a former chairman of the White House Council of Economic Advisers during the George W. Bush administration, worries that the U.S. may no longer have the same borrowing capacity as before to effectively combat an economic crisis, such as the 2008 crash or the coronavirus pandemic.

"I don't think we have the space that we had in 2008 or 2020 to deal with it," said Hubbard, now a professor at Columbia University's Business School. "Washington doesn't seem to be full of ideas - good or bad - to solve it."

Higher interest rates are giving Democratic candidates in the races to determine control of the House and Senate another line of attack at a time when voters are concerned about high costs for food and gasoline.

In Colorado's fifth congressional district, Democrat Jessica Killin is

leaning into the message that the persistent deficits and higher interest rates make it harder to buy or renovate a home, afford a new car or manage credit card debt.

"Things are already expensive," said Killin, an Army veteran who was a top aide to Doug Emhoff, the former second gentleman. "We can already talk about gas, but the cost of borrowing only makes that worse."

Joe Reagan, an Army veteran also seeking the Democratic nomination, said in an email that he is talking "a lot about fiscal stewardship" in his campaign. "Every dollar spent paying interest is a dollar that isn't being invested in infrastructure, education, veterans' services, or economic growth," he said.

They are challenging Republican Rep. Jeff Crank in a district that their party views as a potential pickup. Killin said the deficit is an example of how "Trump says one thing and does the opposite."

In his March 2025 address to Congress, Trump declared that "in the near future, I want to do what has not been done in 24 years: balance the federal budget. We're going to balance it."

Crank, the Republican incumbent, did not reply to requests for comment.

The administration maintains that it is going to steadily reduce budget deficits. As a share of the overall economy, the deficit last year was lower than it was in 2024, though that drop depended in part on tariff revenues that are subject to refunds after the Supreme Court ruled them to be illegal.

Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent last week cited a report showing that there was as much as \$500 billion annually in fraudulent government spending that could be eliminated, "so that would reduce the deficit substantially."

Bessent appeared to draw that conclusion from a 2024 report by the Government Accountability Office that estimated there had been between \$233 billion to \$521 billion each year in fraudulent spending. But those numbers were drawn in part from the pandemic era when the government borrowed heavily to stabilize the economy.

The White House and Treasury did not respond to questions about the source of Bessent's claims.

On deficits, Bessent told reporters at the White House that the administration was essentially dealt a bad hand from former President Joe Biden, a Democrat. "We inherited the worst budget deficit in history - in history - when we were not in a recession or not at war," Bessent said.

Bessent had previously announced that the administration would aim to reduce the annual deficit to 3% of overall U.S. gross domestic product. It's roughly double that percentage currently and Bessent did not directly answer a question about the timeline for hitting his target.

As of now, investors continue to buy shares in U.S. companies, causing the stock market to increase in value in a sign of confidence in America's economic potential. But the increase in interest rates also suggests that investors view the national debt as a vulnerability for the U.S.

The financial markets might be able to inflict enough pain with higher rates in order to compel political leaders to address the systemic imbalances. Multiple economists said they expected that markets would force the deficit issue before voters would.

Hubbard emphasized that the whole bond market system rests on the trust that the debt will be repaid. He noted that the word "credit" is linked to a Latin term that is also the root of the word creed about a system of beliefs.

"That is what debt is about: I believe you will pay me back," Hubbard said. "That works until it doesn't."

Films

YouTuber box office boom

'Backrooms' and 'Obsession' draw Gen Z to theaters

LOS ANGELES, June 1, (AP): Young audiences turned out in droves to movie theaters around the country this weekend. It wasn't for the big budget "Star Wars" movie, "The Mandalorian and Grogu," which fell sharply in its second weekend, however, but for a small budget horror from a 20-year-old first-time filmmaker that began on the internet.

"Backrooms," released by A24 in 3,442 locations in the U.S. and Canada, made an astonishing \$81.5 million in its first three days in theaters, according to studio estimates on Sunday. That's just a few hundred thousand dollars shy of what "The Mandalorian and Grogu" earned in its first three days last weekend; And "Backrooms," which was directed and co-written by YouTube creator Kane Parsons, cost only \$10 million to produce.

The wild success of "Backrooms" didn't even hurt "Obsession," which is also the directorial debut of a YouTuber, Curry Barker, who is only 26. Three weekends in, "Obsession," a movie that cost less than \$1 million to make, still hasn't dropped below its opening weekend earnings. This weekend, it was up 10% with another \$26.4 million for a second-place finish, leaving Star Wars, the legacy franchise movie from the veteran filmmaker and the Walt Disney Studios, in third with \$25 million.

YouTube might not be the death of movie theaters after all. If this weekend is any indication, it could be the industry's new great hope.

This is a weekend where theaters also hosted the debuts of "The Breadwinner," a PG-rated family comedy starring the popular comedian Nate Bargatze, and "Pressure," a solid World War II drama about the tense 72 hours before D-Day with Oscar-winner Brendan Fraser. But it was the 20-something YouTubers that drew the most crowds. And both "Backrooms" and "Obsession" were produced by Blumhouse-Atomic Monster.

Abhijay Prakash, the president of Blumhouse-Atomic Monster said that the weekend is both staggering and validation of their business, which has from the beginning championed original horror movies that appeal to younger audiences, and generated over \$10 billion in box office to date.

He noted that they've made a point of looking for up and com-



This image released by A24 shows Chiwetel Ejiofor in a scene from 'Backrooms.' (AP)

ing talent on YouTube and, knowing how Hollywood works, this weekend likely inspire a wave of copycats. But beyond that, he's encouraged by the fact that the young creators who've already had enormous success online still value the cultural currency of theatrical movies.

"It's a great sign of relevance for us," Prakash said. "With some distance, we'll probably look back at this as a real turning point."

"Backrooms" started as a creepypasta - an internet-generated urban legend - before Parsons turned the concept, about a never-ending expanse of dull, depressing rooms and hallways, into a viral web series, which he made with the help of the open-source 3D graphics software Blender. It caught the attention of James Wan and Shawn Levy's production companies who were inter-

ested in taking it to the next level; Soon a movie was in development with Chiwetel Ejiofor and Renate Reinsve starring.

It wasn't just a domestic hit either; Including international showings, "Backrooms" has already made \$118 million globally. A24 said Parsons is now the youngest director to have a No. 1 film globally. It's also a record opening for the studio, whose previous high-water mark was "Civil War," which opened to \$25.5 million in 2024.

The R-rated film was well-reviewed by critics and drew a young and diverse crowd to theaters. According to exit polls, 86% of the audience was under 35, more than half were under 25 and 44% were under 21. Many attended in groups and there were reports of sold-out shows, packed theaters and repeat viewings. Audiences gave it a less-

than-stellar B- CinemaScore, however.

But the buzz is still creating a frenzy of all ages, even teenagers, wanting to see "Backrooms." Some theaters have even posted employees outside of the screens to make sure that anyone under 21 is accompanied by an adult. The same is true for the R-rated "Obsession," which has now made \$104.7 million in North America, and is now Focus Features' highest grossing domestic release.

Luis Olloqui, the CEO of Cinépolis USA, which operates 26 theaters across the country - most of which are dine-in - said they've seen sell-outs at many of their locations for both movies.

"We were a little worried that they would be competing for the same audience. It's not the case," Olloqui said. "It shows that when

we have the right content, people from all ages are willing to go to the theater."

"The Mandalorian and Grogu," meanwhile, fell around 69% from its opening last weekend. The movie has now made \$246.6 million globally.

"Michael" landed in fourth place with \$11.7 million in its sixth weekend - the musical biopic has made \$339.9 million domestically to date. "The Breadwinner," released by Sony, rounded out the top five with an estimated \$7.5 million. "Pressure" opened in seventh place with \$5.8 million.

Outside of the top 10 was the heist-romance "Tuner," which expanded to 452 theaters in its second weekend, earning a solid \$1.7 million.

"Everyone's asking what's the next big thing in Hollywood for movies, and what can bring people

back to the movie theater? And this may be it," said Paul Dergarabedian, the head of marketplace trends for Comscore.

With final domestic figures being released Monday, this list factors in estimated ticket sales for Friday through Sunday at U.S. and Canadian theaters, according to Comscore:

1. "Backrooms," \$81.5 million.
2. "Obsession," \$26.4 million.
3. "Star Wars: The Mandalorian and Grogu," \$25 million.
4. "Michael," \$11.7 million.
5. "The Breadwinner," \$7.5 million.
6. "The Devil Wears Prada 2," \$5.9 million.
7. "Pressure," \$5.8 million.
8. "The Sheep Detectives," \$4.6 million.
9. "Passenger," \$2.6 million.
10. "Mortal Kombat II," \$2 million.

'Ragtime' acclaim builds toward Tony Awards

Joshua Henry recalls Met Gala jitters

NEW YORK, June 1, (AP): At a recent event celebrating this year's Tony nominees, Joshua Henry, star of "Ragtime," reflected on his Met Gala performance of "I Wanna Dance With Somebody." Henry says he was more nervous than he has ever been on a Broadway stage, largely because he was worried about tumbling down the staircase mid-song.

"Those steps," he said, laughing. "We didn't have much time to rehearse on them. I'm like, can you imagine? I want to dance, and it's just tap, tap, tap all the way down. I was just trying to keep my eyes up the whole time."

Fortunately for Henry, his footing onstage remains steady eight performances a week. That consistency has helped make him one of Broadway's standout performers this season, with acclaim continuing to build around his turn as Coalhouse Walker Jr. in Broadway's revival of

"Ragtime." An even bigger moment may lie ahead at the Tony Awards ceremony on June 7.

Henry did not hear his own nomination announced live. The morning after the May 4 Met Gala, Henry and his wife, Cathryn, were back at the hotel FaceTiming their children at home.

"Mommy and Daddy got to go," Henry told them, but the kids wanted to hear more about the night before.

"They wanted to talk about the gala opening number, and so we logged off from the FaceTime and then we missed my category, which was the first category for best leading actor in a musical."

That moment felt fitting for Henry, who says becoming a husband and father reshaped how he sees success, patience, and gratitude. The four-time Tony nominee credits his wife and three sons as his grounding force.

That perspective also informs his work in one of Broadway's most demanding roles. Playing Coalhouse Walker Jr., the Black pianist whose life is upended by a racist attack, remains a challenge.

Henry credits the late Terrence McNally for crafting a powerful book based on E. L. Doctorow's novel, along with the sweeping score by Lynn Ahrens and Stephen Flaherty.

"What they did so well is they showed people at their extremes. They show them when they're on the verge of making a huge choice, just like America was on the verge in 1908 of making a huge choice and asking itself more questions about its identity than ever, not unlike this moment," Henry said.

He believes that sense of emotional connection continues to bring audiences back to the show.

"They're seeing themselves as Americans and seeing their jour-

neys individually."

That journey becomes even more notable considering the musical opened during one of Broadway's more complicated seasons, where rising costs, tight competition for audiences, and pressure on weekly box office numbers have made sustainability difficult. Even critically acclaimed shows can struggle to maintain momentum.

"They really do. Especially if you open in the fall. And we were one of the first to open in the season. So, you know, we thankfully got extended a couple times."

That success stands in sharp contrast to Henry's first starring role on Broadway in "The Scottsboro Boys," a musical inspired by the real-life case. Henry played a young Black man falsely accused of a crime who becomes one of the story's emotional centers as he refuses to sign a confession in exchange for parole.

The 2010 production earned strong reviews and multiple award nominations but struggled commercially. Even so, the production became an important chapter in Henry's career, placing him alongside another rising performer, Colman Domingo.

The production earned both actors their first Tony nominations. Now, Henry finds himself leading the second Broadway revival of Ragtime. Starring opposite Michelle Lewis, Henry has stepped into a role originally made iconic by Brian Stokes Mitchell, while Lewis follows Audra McDonald in the role that earned McDonald the first of her record-breaking six Tony Awards for acting.

Having both legends attend opening night was especially meaningful for Henry. He recalled listening to the original cast recording as a young performer and hoping that he could someday move audiences the same way. Years later, after working alongside McDonald and Mitchell, Henry says their warmth and encouragement gave him a deeper sense of belonging within the Broadway community.



Frankie Valli attends a ceremony honoring Frankie Valli and The Four Seasons with a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame on May 3, 2024, in Los Angeles. (AP)

Citing health concerns

Frankie Valli cancels remainder of Four Seasons' farewell tour dates

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M., June 1, (AP): Frankie Valli, whose legendary falsetto defines the sound of the 1960s rock group the Four Seasons, has cancelled the remainder of the band's 2026 tour dates, citing health concerns.

"I'm so sorry to disappoint the folks who have purchased tickets to my shows, but I have decided to take the rest of the year off from touring to focus on my health," the 92-year-old singer wrote on social media Friday.

Valli, the frontman and only original member still performing with the Four Seasons, launched an extended farewell tour billed "The Last Encores" in October 2023. Shows scheduled for April of this year were rescheduled to dates in summer and fall. Now, all eight performances re-

maining for 2026 in cities from Scottsdale, Arizona, to Detroit have been called off entirely.

The Four Seasons found fame in the 1960s, but the band's hits -- from "Sherry" to "December 1963 (Oh What a Night)" -- span decades. The Four Seasons sold 100 million records worldwide and were inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 1990. Valli, who also established a successful solo career, received a Grammy Lifetime Achievement Award in 2026.

Known for keeping a rigorous touring schedule even as he has aged, Valli appeared to leave the door open for future performances.

"I'm looking forward to getting healthy and seeing you all again soon," Valli concluded his Friday message.

Foiled Swift concert plotter jailed

WIENER NEUSTADT, Austria, June 1, (AP): An Austrian court on Thursday convicted a man of planning to attack a Taylor Swift concert in Vienna nearly two years ago. He was sentenced to 15 years in prison.

The state court in Wiener Neustadt, south of the capital, found the 21-year-old defendant, an Austrian citizen known only as Beran A. in line with

Austrian privacy rules, guilty on multiple charges including those related to the concert.

The concert plot was thwarted, but Austrian authorities still canceled Swift's three performances in August 2024.

His defense attorney said Beran A. admitted to the charges related to the concert plot during the opening day of the trial last month.



Joshua Henry performs at The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Costume Institute benefit gala celebrating the opening of the 'Costume Art' exhibition on Monday, May 4, 2026, in New York. (AP)

Books

'Whistler' is a quiet story of friendship and human connection

Ann Patchett turns Nashville bookstore into cultural literary hub

NASHVILLE, Tenn., June 1, (AP): When she isn't working on a novel, Ann Patchett is often thinking of what she can do for others: maybe coming up with a blurb for Douglas Stuart, or recording a video birthday message for fellow author-bookseller Emma Straub, or beginning an interview with a plug for another admired peer.

"The new Liz Strout book is the best," she says of Elizabeth Strout's "The Things We Never Say." "You know, every single book she publishes, you just think, 'Oh, well, she can't possibly do that again.' And then she comes out with another book and it's even better."

At 62, Patchett is the rare and fortunate writer whose words resonate among friends and strangers alike. She owns one of the country's signature independent bookstores, Parnassus Books, with customers ranging from Nashville's book lovers to Tom Hanks. She's also a popular and prize-winning novelist whose new books are inevitably among the year's most anticipated, and whose older ones, including the acclaimed "Bel Canto," continue to sell. In 2021, she received a National Humanities Medal for "putting into words the beauty, pain, and complexity of human nature."

Her books have been translated into more than 20 languages, but her home is in Nashville, where she spent part of her childhood and now lives with her husband, physician Karl VanDevender. Patchett spoke at Parnassus with The Associated Press on a sunny weekday morning, shortly before opening time. She also met with staff members gathered at the center of the 4,800-square-foot store to discuss upcoming events, and indulged the occasional interruption by one of the employee-owned "shop dogs" who hurry about like bargain-seeking customers.

Patchett is here early to talk about "Whistler," which comes out Tuesday. Like "Bel Canto," "State of Wonder" and other Patchett novels, it's a story of improbable meetings and deepening bonds. In this case, 53-year-old Daphne Fuller and her husband encounter an elderly man, Eddie Triplett, at the Metropolitan Museum of Art and realize he was



Author Ann Patchett poses for a portrait at her bookstore in Nashville, Tenn., on April 22, 2026. Inset: This book cover image released by Harper shows 'Whistler' by Ann Patchett. (AP)

briefly her stepfather when she was a girl. Daphne and Eddie form a close friendship as they recall their times together, including a serious car accident followed by the breakup of Eddie's marriage to her mother.

Patchett doesn't write with any message in mind, but "Whistler" can be read as an ode to decency and benevolence. The title refers to a story-fable about a horse that runs away, only to turn up at a time of crisis. In the aftermath of the crash, as Daphne wonders if it's safe to leave and seek help, Eddie assures her, "I swear to you, it's mostly good people out there, with a few bad people around the edges."

"The people that I interact with every single day are good people," Patchett says. "It is vanishingly rare when I meet someone who's not nice. Now, if you watch the news and read the news, it seems like everyone's terrible and murderous. But it's the difference between primary and sec-

ondary sources. So if I'm just operating off primary sources, what I see is goodness. I completely understand that there is incredible horror and cruelty in the world, but I also feel like incredible horror and cruelty is very well represented (in art). And what I actually experience in my daily life is not as well represented in art."

"I don't set out to write books about nice people," she adds, "but I like people."

Patchett's sense of citizenship was recognized recently by PEN America, which at its annual May gala in Manhattan presented her with its Literary Service Award. In introducing her to a gathering of hundreds at the American Museum of Natural History, author Patrick Ryan cited her wide range of contributions, whether working "to get books into the hands of children in underserved communities," supporting emerging writers or inspiring readers "who recognize themselves in her novels."

Patchett has a well-lived appreciation of connections, and how they can be broken by discord or ended by death.

A native of Los Angeles, she was in early childhood when her parents divorced and she moved east with her mother, events drawn upon for her novel "Commonwealth." She has also written memorials for departed loved ones. In the memoir "Truth & Beauty," she remembered her close friend Lucy Grealy, a poet and memoir writer who suffered from a rare form of cancer and endured multiple surgeries before dying at 39. In the title essay from her 2004 collection "These Precious Days," Patchett honors the late Sooki Raphael, a Hanks assistant with whom the author became close while Raphael battled terminal cancer.

"Whistler" is dedicated to her friend Jim Fox, a former head legal counsel at HarperCollins who died in 2024 and is the inspiration for Eddie

(and the namesake for a character in "State of Wonder").

"He was brilliant, and a great reader," she says. "Jim isn't Eddie and I'm not Daphne, and certainly the circumstances aren't the same, but the huge love that Eddie and Daphne shared is the huge love Jim and I shared."

Patchett, a graduate of Sarah Lawrence College and the Iowa Writers' Workshop at the University of Iowa, remembers telling stories even before she could read, a gap she says only intensified her appreciation of the printed word. Raised before the rise of "young adult" books, she started out reading such children's favorites as "Charlotte's Web" and "The Little House on the Prairie" series, and ascended directly to the literary giants who became her formative influences: Saul Bellow, Philip Roth and John Updike.

By her early 20s, Patchett was accomplished enough to have a story published in The Paris Review. Patch-

ett's debut novel, "The Patron Saint of Liars," came out before she had turned 30. She has since published nine other works of fiction, including "Whistler," along with four nonfiction books and three picture books, illustrated by Robin Preiss Glasser.

"I was at my cousins' house a few months ago and they had boxes of old papers of mine," Patchett says. "And they were from grade school, middle school, high school - notebook after notebook, poetry and stories. I was shocked by the extent I was practicing my craft at age 10."

Patchett's life as a bookseller began around 2010, when the closing of two Nashville stores seemed to mirror a nationwide decline brought about in part by Amazon's rise. Patchett and business partner Karen Hayes came up with a seemingly wild plan: open a new store - a decision met with some skepticism at the time, but now a sign of the changing fortunes of independent sellers.

Centenary highlights conservation success

South Africa's Kruger National Park marks 100th anniversary

SKUKUZA, South Africa, June 11, (Xinhua): South Africa's Kruger National Park on Friday evening marked its 100th anniversary with a centenary celebration at Skukuza Rest Camp under the theme "Our Heritage, Our Future."

The event brought together more than 100 government officials, community representatives and conservation stakeholders to celebrate the legacy and future of one of Africa's most renowned protected areas.

Addressing the gathering, the country's Minister of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment Willie Aucamp said that Kruger's first century was built on conservation, scientific research and tourism, while its second century will also include the fourth leg -- community participation.

He also expressed hope that future generations would continue to experience the park's natural wonders, from watching elephants cross the Sabie River to hearing lions roar across the bush at night.

Ahead of the ceremony, Aucamp told Xinhua that international cooperation is important for strengthening conservation efforts in the years ahead.

He said South Africa welcomes support from partners around the world, including China, particularly in areas such as wildlife conservation and technological research.

Established in 1926 under South Africa's National Parks Act, Kruger is the country's first national park and one of Africa's largest protected areas.

Covering nearly 2 million hectares across the provinces of Limpopo and Mpumalanga, it is home to more than 300 tree species, and over 140 mammal species and 500 bird species, including the iconic "Big Five," namely lion, leopard, elephant, rhino and buffalo.



South Africa's Minister of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment Willie Aucamp speaks at the centenary launch of Kruger National Park in Mpumalanga Province, South Africa. (Xinhua)

Lifestyle & Culture

Hundreds of artists transform visitors into empresses daily

China-inspired costume tourism surges in Beijing

BEIJING, June 1, (AP): Chen Jiao has a curious job: transforming visitors to resemble empresses from ancient China as young people explore a revival of traditional culture.

She is one of hundreds of makeup artists working at studios in Beijing near the Forbidden City, once home to the emperors of China's last two dynasties, Ming and Qing.

Every day, visitors arrive to dress in robes richly embroidered with phoenixes and adorn themselves with jade and pearl pendants and gold fingernail guards like those worn in imperial China. Makeup is carefully applied, and their hair is styled and decorated with tassels and hairpins.

The average cost is 300 yuan (\$45), though prices can exceed 1,000 yuan (more than \$150).

Once dressed up, people go to the walls and moat surrounding the Forbidden City to pose for photos and videos to share on social media. Blending echoes of ancient times with modernity, some pair their historic costumes with sneakers and sunglasses and drink bubble tea.

"It can get very busy during peak seasons, especially public holidays and weekends," Chen said.

Recently, she began work at 6 a.m. and transformed around two dozen young women in a single day. There is no off-season for makeup artists, only a brief lull when the Forbidden City closes, she said.

Recent years have seen a trend among young people for immersive experiences in historical Chinese costume, which in Beijing is mainly inspired by the country's last two dynasties.

The Ming dynasty, which ruled for more than 270 years until 1644, built the Forbidden City and reinforced the Great Wall. The Qing dynasty, ruled by the Manchu people, itself collapsed in 1912, ending more than two millennia of imperial rule.

Chen Xiao is among the tourists who now come for the styling activities at Beijing's historical sites. A college student from the eastern province of Shandong, Chen traveled overnight to the capital during the recent Qingming holiday.

"I feel like if you're at a specific location, you should wear something that fits the setting," Chen said, wearing a pink outfit typically associated with a "Gege," or Qing dynasty princess.

The building where Chen Jiao's studio is located illustrates the rapid growth. Around 2020,



Chen Xiao takes a selfie with a friend while wearing historical Chinese costume outside the Forbidden City in Beijing. (AP)



Left: Tourists wear historical Chinese costumes at studios near the Forbidden City in Beijing on Saturday, April 4, 2026. Right: Men wear historical Chinese costumes near the Forbidden City in Beijing on Saturday, April 4, 2026. (AP)



only a handful of costume styling studios operated there. Now there are more than 100, according to local media.

"Young Chinese people have discovered the aesthetic appeal of traditional clothing while

learning about China's rich cultural heritage," said Cai Zehong, founder of Hanfu Beijing, one of the earliest ancient-costume associations created by enthusiasts to promote traditions and cultures by the majority Han ethnicity.

Bid to enhance service quality and operational efficiency

Saudi Arabia advances healthcare with innovative technologies

RIYADH, June 1, (KUNA): Saudi Arabia is advancing a modern health model centered on innovative technologies, particularly artificial intelligence and medical robotics, as part of a strategic transformation aligned with Saudi Vision 2030, aimed at enhancing service quality and operational efficiency.

The shift from traditional healthcare to a value-based health system integrates advanced infrastructure, qualified personnel, research, local manufacturing, and investment.

This responsive system prioritizes health maintenance and early prevention through digital health, AI-supported diagnostics, robotic surgeries, and virtual care.

The new model emphasizes home care and digital connectivity between patients and healthcare providers, facilitating unified systems, data integration, and improved access to subspecialties.

The Seha Virtual Hospital exemplifies this integration, linking 242 hospitals and serving over 597,000 beneficiaries, thereby bridging geographic gaps and enhancing follow-up care for chronic and complex conditions. This model increases operational efficiency and reduces pressure on high-density facilities.

The transformation is supported by a robust healthcare infrastructure committed to sustainability. Investment in human capital focuses on developing specialized programs to prepare leaders for a value-based care model that optimizes quality and efficiency.

The Ministry of Health's initiatives in AI align with the Health Sector Transformation Program and Vision 2030 objectives to enhance life expectancy, service quality, and innovation.

At the 2025 Global Health Exhibition, the ministry introduced the "AI Physician" virtual doctor experience for accurate diagnoses and improved clinical decision-making. Additionally, the "smart health coach" developed with Google via the Sehaty application, serves as a digital guide for beneficiaries, promoting preventive health behaviors and personalized recommendations.

Agreements and investments exceeding SAR133 billion were announced at the exhibition, showcasing the healthcare sector's rapid growth and the Kingdom's appeal to investors. This includes SAR31 billion for

hospital infrastructure, over SAR12 billion for venture capital, and SAR2.3 billion in life sciences.

Strategic partnerships in digital health were established with companies like HUMAIN, Lean Business Services, and Google Cloud, further advancing a world-class digital health system.

In June 2025, the ministry launched its Biotech Accelerator in partnership with BioLabs to foster innovation and global partnerships, enabling Saudi companies to enhance service quality.

These efforts aim to build a vibrant society and a thriving economy, solidifying the Kingdom's position in regional and global health innovation.

Hospitals across several regions of the Kingdom are rapidly expanding the use of advanced robotic systems, including Da Vinci, ROSA, and CORI, in a wide range of surgeries such as cardiac procedures, organ transplants, tumor removal, joint replacements, spinal surgeries, brain operations, knee replacements, and thyroidectomies without neck incisions.

These cutting-edge systems allow surgeons to perform precise procedures through incisions as small as one centimeter, significantly reducing pain and accelerating recovery.

On May 19, 2025, King Abdullah Medical City, part of the Makkah Health Cluster, launched its advanced robotic surgery service with the Da Vinci Xi device, reinforcing its position as a reference center for specialized care.

Equipped with a 3D camera and highly precise robotic arms, the system enables surgeons to access complex areas with accuracy through minimal incisions, compared to traditional surgical cuts that can exceed 10 centimeters.

This innovation has led to reduced pain, minimized bleeding, fewer blood transfusions, faster recovery, shorter hospital stays, and higher health facility capacity, ultimately enhancing system efficiency and improving the quality of clinical outcomes.

The Kingdom is committed to delivering high-quality healthcare to pilgrims, in line with the objectives of the Health Sector Transformation Program and the Pilgrim Experience Program.

As part of preparations for the 2025 Hajj season, the Ministry of Health worked to provide integrated health-



Saudi Arabia advances healthcare with innovative technologies. (FANA)

care services that meet the highest standards of quality and safety, ensuring a comprehensive health environment for pilgrims to perform their rituals with ease.

In May 2025, Minister of Health Fahad Al-Jalal inaugurated the surgical robot project at King Abdullah Medical City, and reviewed an advanced PET-CT imaging device that enables early detection of tumors, heart disease, and neurological disorders, enhancing diagnostic accuracy and speeding up treatment decisions.

The Makkah Health Cluster also showcased a model of smart field care for the Hajj season through a suite of technological initiatives employing artificial intelligence in high-density environments.

In June 2025, it officially launched the "i-Selfie" project, a cutting-edge system that measures vital signs and electrocardiograms without contact, using optical and biometric sensing supported by AI algorithms that analyze blood flow in the face within seconds. This innovation accelerated patient assessment by 70%, reducing the time to acquire vital signs from seven minutes to two minutes.

A clinical study conducted by the clinical research center of the Seha Virtual Hospital, involving over 1,000 participants, demonstrated that the platform's accuracy is comparable to traditional devices, reinforcing its reliability as a low-cost and rapid solution in emergency environments.

The city's projects also included the

interactive Hajji platform, available in over 200 languages via WhatsApp. Utilizing AI, it provides health consultations and awareness, offering reliable preventative content accessible to every pilgrim, anytime, anywhere.

Additionally, the Makkah Health Cluster deployed a mobile stroke unit equipped with instant CT scans and live virtual consultations with specialists. This unit represents one of the latest field medical technologies available in the holy sites, designed to save pilgrims' lives with the fastest possible response time.

The mobile cardiac catheterization service at East Arafat Hospital allowed for precise therapeutic interventions to be performed on-site, eliminating the need to transport patients.

Additionally, the Pharmini digital pharmacy assistant app, available in 11 languages, provides detailed explanations of medication uses, interactions, dosages, and prescription translations, along with live chat with specialized pharmacists.

Furthermore, the smart health assistant app was activated to provide pilgrims with preventative and educational content and direct them to the nearest healthcare facility when needed.

The King Abdullah Medical City also monitors the health of pilgrims with chronic illnesses using smartwatches connected to the Seha Virtual Hospital, enabling medical teams to follow up on pilgrims' conditions after their discharge.

King Faisal Specialist Hospital and Research Centre (KFSH) has transitioned from employing robotic surgery to pioneering its clinical expansion, notably performing the world's first fully robotic heart and liver transplants.

Its record of innovation includes the first fully robotic intracranial brain tumor resection and, in February 2026, the first documented case of seven successful cardiac interventions within a single robotic surgery for a patient with complex congenital defects.

These advancements provide superior control and 3D visualization, reducing patient pain, blood loss, and recovery time while enhancing healthcare efficiency and sustainability.

Consequently, KFSH ranked 12th globally among academic healthcare institutions and was featured in Newsweek's 2026 lists for the world's best, smart, and specialist hospitals.

Simultaneously, the Ministry of National Guard Health Affairs was recognized as Saudi Arabia's top smart hospital in 2026, marking its fifth consecutive year on Newsweek's list.

Its integrated digital infrastructure features a unified electronic medical record, virtual medicine models, and a smart application for patient management.

The system utilizes artificial intelligence to predict diseases like sepsis and cancer, while virtual reality allows inpatients to communicate safely with families. This digital integration extends to smart operating rooms and "digital twin" simulations that optimize patient flow and operational efficiency.

Furthermore, the integration of AI into robotic systems for general and urological surgery has significantly improved patient safety, reduced complications, and shortened hospital stays.

The King Khaled Eye Specialist Hospital and Research Centre continues to solidify its position as a leading national model in the application of AI within specialized care, seamlessly combining technological innovation with clinical excellence.

At the diagnostic level, the hospital utilizes AI-enhanced optical coherence tomography (OCT) imaging to reduce assessment discrepancies among physicians and expedite the interpretation of medical images.

These advanced algorithms enable

the precise segmentation of retinal layers, identification of lesions, and monitoring of treatment responses. This technology significantly increases early detection rates for retinal diseases, optimizes treatment durations through data-driven recommendations, and boosts overall physician productivity.

Underscoring this success, the hospital's EYENAI project, which uses AI for the early detection of diabetic retinopathy, won gold at the 2025 Saudi Customer Experience Awards, reflecting the maturity and impact of locally developed digital health solutions.

Building on this approach, the hospital recently organized the second Eye Hackathon 2025 in collaboration with national technology entities.

The event explored using the eye as a window for the early detection of systemic diseases, resulting in innovative solutions that analyze retinal images to detect early indicators of heart disease, neurodegenerative disorders, and Alzheimer's.

As part of its comprehensive digital transformation, the hospital also launched an AI-driven revenue cycle automation project, which shifted insurance operations from a traditional, human-driven model to an intelligent, automated system, significantly reducing claims processing time and operating costs while maximizing revenue and ensuring operational sustainability.

Alongside these technological advancements, the hospital successfully performed the Middle East's first Boston Type II Keratoprosthesis (B-KPro II) corneal transplant.

This globally rare procedure, typically reserved for advanced referral centers, underscores the hospital's ability to localize highly complex medical practices and solidifies its standing among the world's elite ophthalmology centers.

These advanced models of AI and medical innovation reflect a new phase in the Kingdom's healthcare sector.

Driven by continued infrastructure investments, the cultivation of national talent, and the goals of Saudi Vision 2030, the Kingdom is rapidly establishing itself as a premier regional hub for digital medicine, building a sustainable healthcare system rooted in prevention, technology, and enhanced quality of life.

Stool tests and blood tests join colonoscopy as options for colorectal cancer screening

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

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By Andrea Dwyer

University of Colorado Anschutz

It's increasingly common to see headlines and social media conversations about the rise in colorectal cancer among younger adults. In fact, the growing incidence of colorectal cancer in people under age 50 helped drive the American Cancer Society's 2018 decision to recommend lowering the recommended age for average-risk screening from 50 to 45.

Riding on the momentum of increasing public awareness of colorectal cancer, the society has now released updated screening guidelines in May 2026 to include new tests that reflect the latest science and could improve access to care.

I am a public health researcher who has spent nearly 20 years developing colorectal cancer prevention programs and studying ways to improve screening guidelines. Offering more options for screening can help detect cancer earlier or prevent it altogether.

The updated guidelines have added two additional screening options.

The first option is an at-home screening test that checks stool samples for hidden blood and other molecular markers that may indicate the presence of colorectal cancer. The guidelines recommend taking these tests every three years.

The other option is a blood-based screening test that can be done at a

doctor's office. Patients who refuse a colonoscopy or a stool-based screening test can choose this test.

Notably, the updated guidelines still offer patients a choice between a stool test and a direct visual exam - such as a colonoscopy - as the primary screening methods.

It is also still recommended that adults with an average risk of colorectal cancer should start screening at age 45, and keep getting screened until age 75 or, if recommended by a doctor, beyond that.

For people with a family history of colorectal cancer or genetic or hereditary syndromes - or signs and symptoms of colorectal cancer, such as blood in the stool - a colonoscopy is the only recommended test.

If you are age 45 and at average risk, your doctor may recommend the stool tests and blood tests. Because these are new options, however, many doctor's offices may not be immediately offering the tests.

Ultimately, the best test is the one that gets done.

Colonoscopy remains the preferred screening test for colorectal cancer. It's the only option for those experiencing signs and symptoms of colorectal cancer, and it's the recommended test for those who are at increased risk. Those with an average risk may still be recommended to receive a colonoscopy.

Stool tests do not require the same amount of preparation as a colonoscopy and are widely used. The new stool tests have evolved in their ability to detect polyps and abnormal cells in samples.

The new blood tests are recom-

mended only if a patient refuses a colonoscopy or a stool test. It is important to note the new blood tests are not as sensitive as the other tests for preventing cancer, though science is advancing to provide more options.

Bottom line (pun intended): A colonoscopy will also be required if a stool or blood test results in a positive or abnormal finding.

There are often no early signs or symptoms of colorectal cancer, so starting screening at age 45 is a must, especially if you have a family history or genetic risk of developing colorectal cancer.

Common symptoms of colorectal cancer include blood in the stool, change in bowel habits or stool, pain, or unexplained weight loss of 10 or more pounds.

If you notice these symptoms, regardless of your age, talk to your doctor and consider requesting a colonoscopy.

To reduce your risk of colorectal cancer, people who are at average risk of the disease should begin screening at age 45.

Pay attention to your body. Note any concerning changes or symptoms, and have open conversations with your healthcare provider.

Healthy lifestyle choices can also help reduce your risk of colorectal cancer. This includes at least 30 minutes of physical activity each day, eating a balanced diet rich in fruits and vegetables and limiting processed foods. Reducing your alcohol intake and avoiding smoking and vaping can also lower your risk of colorectal and other cancers. (AP)



Anti-riot police officers stand by as demonstrators protest against a proposed Ebola quarantine center to be established by the United States at Laikipia Air Base in Nanyuki, Kenya on June 1. (AP)

Confirmed Ebola cases in Congo reach 282 as survivors describe recoveries

BUNIA, Congo, June 1, (AP): At least 282 confirmed cases of Ebola have now been reported in Congo's ongoing outbreak, the central African nation said late Sunday, as patients who recovered from the disease spoke of their indescribable joy in interviews with The Associated Press.

The outbreak remains focused in Congo's eastern Ituri province, where 264 of the cases have been reported, Congo's Ministry of Health said. Congo has reported over 1,000 suspected cases with the Bundibugyo virus, the current species of Ebola, which has no approved treatment or vaccine.

According to the health ministry, the main challenges in containing the outbreak include early detection and rapid isolation of cases, rigorous contact tracing, safe and dignified burials and strengthening infection

prevention and control in health facilities.

The contact tracing coverage rate so far is 45% with 220 suspected cases under investigation, the ministry said.

Meanwhile, some of the five people who have so far recovered from the disease spoke of their relief in interviews with The Associated Press.

Baraka Bulambulubulu, a nurse, said he was overjoyed after the last two Ebola tests on him returned negative.

Bulambulubulu was among those presented certificates of recovery by the World Health Organization Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus as he opened a new Ebola treatment center in Bunia, the capital of Ituri province, on Sunday.

"The first one came back positive, but the second and third were negative for me," Bulambulubulu said with a

wide grin. "Coming out of this illness alive is an indescribable joy."

Ezo Etienne, another nurse who recovered from the disease, said he first started feeling dizzy during ward rounds at the hospital as he checked on patients.

Also:

NAIROBI, Kenya: Hundreds of youths in Kenya's central town of Nanyuki on Monday demonstrated against the establishment at the Laikipia Air Base of an Ebola quarantine center for American citizens exposed to the virus.

The protests came two days after Kenya's High Court suspended the establishment of the facility and the arrival of any foreign patients pending the hearing of a case filed by the Law Society of Kenya and a constitutional watchdog.

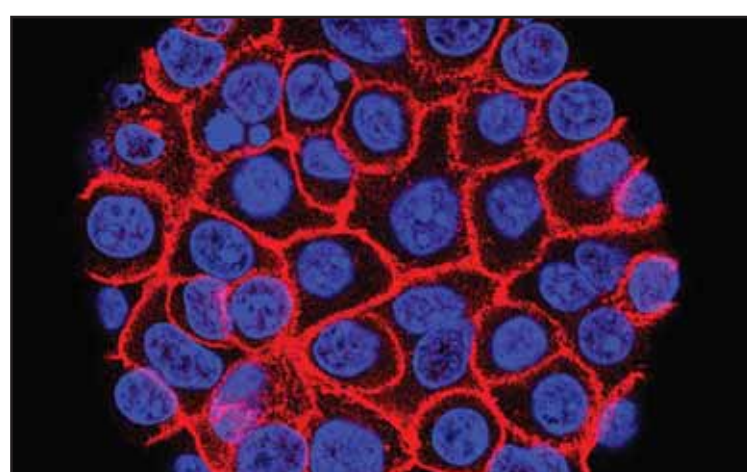
Experimental pill promises new hope for deadly pancreatic cancer: researchers

WASHINGTON, June 1, (AP): A novel pill helped people with advanced pancreatic cancer live longer, researchers reported Sunday, raising hopes of long-needed better treatments for one of the deadliest types of cancer.

"While not curing the cancer, it is a very large step forward," said Dr. Zev Wainberg, of the University of California, Los Angeles, who helped lead the study.

The drug is called daraxonrasib and it blocks a mutated protein that fuels tumor growth in more than 90% of pancreatic cancer cases - a target that had eluded treatment for decades.

The daily pills nearly doubled survival time, with fewer severe side effects, in a study that randomly assigned the experimental drug or more chemotherapy to 500 patients whose metastatic, or spreading, cancer had quit responding to prior treatment. The findings were pub-



This undated microscope image from USC via the NIH shows pancreatic cancer cells, nuclei in blue, growing as a sphere encased in membranes, red. (AP)

lished in the New England Journal of Medicine and presented Sunday at the American Society for Clinical Oncology meeting in Chicago.

Those taking daraxonrasib lived for a median of 13.2 months compared with 6.7 months for chemotherapy recipients.

8 crested ibises freed in Japanese town

TOKYO, June 1, (AP): Eight crested ibises were released into the wild in a north-central Japanese town, decades after the birds went extinct in the country.

The endangered birds took off from each of their wooden cages at a ceremony Sunday in Hakui city in the Noto region, where they were last seen in the wild.

Residents cheered when the birds soared into the sky the moment Crown Prince Akishino, his wife Kiko and other officials cut a ribbon around the cages.

The eight birds have been raised at a conservation center on Sado Island in the neighboring prefecture of Niigata following a successful captive-breeding program. Ten more birds are waiting to be released.



Japan's Crown Prince Akishino, (second right), Crown Princess Kiko, (right), and other officials watch a crested ibis marked with painted wings released into wild during an event in Hakui, Japan on May 31. (AP)

Back-to-back runner-up finishes leave Bell searching for win

Hamlin overcomes pole penalty to claim Nashville victory

LEBANON, Tenn., June 1, (AP): Denny Hamlin looked in his mirror wondering why nobody else went with him when the green flag dropped at the start of the Cracker Barrel 400 on Sunday night.

He said nothing on his radio, instead paying the penalty by going to the back of the field. Then he drove his way back to the front where he outraced Christopher Bell over the last four thrilling laps off a final restart to win at the Nashville Super-Speedway.

"Man, what an unbelievable day," Hamlin said. "Starting first, going to last and back to first."

This was Hamlin's second win this year and 62nd of his career, and he wound up leading a race-high 57 laps including the one that mattered most.

The 45-year-old Hamlin wound up racing side-by-side with his Joe Gibbs Racing teammates Bell and Chase Briscoe making it three-wide before Hamlin took the lead down

the backstretch to win by 0.115 seconds in his No. 11 Toyota.

"Well, that's why on the last lap, I committed to just run the bottom," Hamlin said.

Team co-owner Heather Gibbs said watching the teammates race so hard was like kids on a family vacation swatting at each other in the backseat. But she said they raced cleanly.

"We want them to race for the win," Heather Gibbs said. "That's what they do, and it makes us proud."

Hamlin, who won at Las Vegas and also the All-Star race at Dover, pulled within 97 points of Tyler Reddick in the season standings. Reddick finished sixth.

The race started 80 minutes late after rain delayed NASCAR's Cup Series for a second straight week.

The wait was worth it with a record 31 lead changes among a record 15 leaders. The race also featured 12 cautions at the 1.33-mile, D-shaped oval that is NASCAR's largest con-



Denny Hamlin celebrates after winning a NASCAR Cup Series auto race, Sunday in Lebanon, Tenn. (AP)

crete track.

Bell finished second for a second straight race ahead of Briscoe. Ricky Stenhouse Jr. was fourth, and Shane Van Gisbergen rounded out the top

five.

"I had the best car on the race track ... and we had the lead on the restart," Bell said. "I got a great push from Denny on the restart, and I

didn't win the race."

Hamlin now is one Cup victory away from matching his one-time teammate Kyle Busch, who died May 22 at 41. Busch is ninth all-time with his 63 Cup victories, and Hamlin said he certainly aspires to get there.

"It just shows how good he was for so long," Hamlin said. "I saw the stats online where we ran together 500 and some races, and he finished ahead of me 10 more times than I beat him in the same equipment."

Ryan Blaney, trying to repeat as champ at this track, led the restart trying to hold off AJ Allmendinger on a one-lap shootout for the first stage. Allmendinger took the lead on the backstretch, then held off Kyle Larson to take stage one for his first stage victory since 2024.

Suarez took the second stage after staying out during a caution and took the lead on the restart on lap 182. Then Corey Heim drove his No. 67 Toyota into the back of Todd

Gilliland's No. 34 Ford, sending him backward into the Turn 1 wall. That brought out the seventh caution with Cole Custer spinning out in the crash.

Rookie Connor Zilisch had the right rotor explode on his No. 88 Chevrolet sending him into the wall and smashing the right side on Turn 1 of lap 72. Zilisch got the Trackhouse Racing car into the garage with some flames coming out from under the right tire, which was stuck and nearly sideways.

He had been running 24th after starting 38th on the last row.

Trackhouse teammate Ross Chastain had his own rotor issue on lap 82 sending him into the wall between Turns 1 and 2. Michael McDowell spun trying to avoid Chastain's No. 1 Chevrolet. Zilisch called the rotor problems a surprise when both he and Chastain had been moving up.

"Just unfortunate circumstances," Zilisch said. "Yeah, we'll learn from it."

Henley clinches Colonial title with clutch birdies

Boutier rallies to win on LPGA

FORT WORTH, Texas, June 1, (AP): Russell Henley birdied the final three holes to force a playoff with Eric Cole, then made it four in a row with a 5-footer on the first extra hole Sunday at Colonial to win the Charles Schwab Classic.

Henley's late surge denied fellow 37-year-old Cole his first PGA Tour win on a day when Ben Griffin came up just short of becoming the only player other than Ben Hogan to win consecutive tournaments at Colonial.

Henley earned \$1.78 million for his sixth PGA Tour title and also got the plaid jacket and a customized 1982 Jeep Scrambler vehicle. He closed with a 3-under 67.

After making 15-foot putts at the par-3 16th hole and the par-4 17th, Henley was the first to post at 12-under 268 when he hit wedge to 17 feet on the 18th and made his third straight birdie. Cole shot an even-par 70. He parred the final seven holes - eight counting the playoff.

Celine Boutier rallied from a four-shot deficit, making three birdies around the turn on her way to a 5-under 66 for a one-shot victory over Arpichaya Yubol in the ShopRite LPGA.

Soo Bin Joo, the 22-year-old South Korean going for her first LPGA Tour title, lost her four-shot lead at the turn and then fell behind for good on the 13th hole with a double bogey, the same hole where earlier Boutier had taken the lead with a 30-foot birdie putt.

Boutier finished at 9-under 204 for her seventh career LPGA title.

Yubol, who was penalized one shot in the second round Saturday for going over her maximum time, birdied the last two holes for a 66. It was her second runner-up finish of the year, having finished four shots behind Nelly Korda in Mexico.

Joaquin Niemann closed with a 3-under 67 and made birdie on the first playoff hole against Talor Gooch to win LIV Golf Korea, the first title of the year for Niemann and his league-leading eighth career victory.

Gooch also shot 67 in a bid for his first LIV victory since Spain



Celine Boutier kneels with the trophy after winning the ShopRite LPGA Classic golf tournament in Galloway, N.J. (AP)

a year ago. Gooch and Niemann finished at 12-under 268 at Asiad Country Club in Busan, South Korea.

Bryson DeChambeau, who already has two wins this year, shot 65 and missed the playoff by one shot. Dustin Johnson (66) was another shot behind.

Jon Rahm, a runner-up at the PGA Championship two weeks ago, tied for 16th. It was his first finish outside the top 10 at LIV Golf in nearly a year.

Kota Kaneko chipped in for birdie on the par-3 17th hole and closed with a 3-under 67 for a two-shot victory in the Austrian Alpine Open, making him the ninth Japanese player to win on the European tour.

Kaneko, who won the Order of Merit on the Japan Golf Tour last year to earn a European tour card, finished two ahead of Ricard Gouveia (69) and Davis Bryant (65). He finished at 18-under 262.

Bryant, who played at Colorado State, was tied for the lead when Kaneko holed his chip on the 17th.

Bryant took bogey on the final hole.

Kaneko was a runner-up last week in the Soudal Open. The victory moved him to No. 11 in the Race to Dubai.

Alvaro Ortiz lost the lead with a pair of double bogeys, and then birdied his last two holes to force a playoff that he won with a birdie on the first extra hole in the UNC Health Championship.

Ortiz rallied late for a 2-over 72 - he was 5 over in his final round at one point - to catch Ross Steelman, who closed with a 66 and was the first to post at 10-under 270.

Ortiz, the younger brother of Carlos Ortiz, won for the first time on the Korn Ferry Tour.

Blades Brown, the 19-year-old who has special temporary membership on the PGA Tour, tied for 13th and moved to No. 11 in the points standing.

Shaun Norris of South Africa closed out his victory in the Mizuno Open with a 7-under 65 for a five-shot victory, earning a return

to the British Open this summer. The Japan Golf Tour event offered British Open spots to the leading three players. Ryutaro Nagano (66) and Ren Yonezawa (65) tied for second to earn their places at Royal Birkdale.

Helen Briem of Germany closed with a 4-under 67 for a seven-shot victory in the Jabra Ladies Open de France at Evian Golf Resort. It was the of victory this year on the Ladies European Tour.

Ryan Van Velzen closed with a 2-under 69 for a two-shot victory in the Spanish Challenge on the Challenge Tour.

Yui Kawamoto shot 4-under 68 and defeated Yuzuki Toshizawa in a playoff to win the Resort Trust Ladies Championship on the Japan LPGA.

Minji Park rallied from a four-shot deficit with an 8-under 64 to win the Suhyp Bank MBN Ladies Open on the Korea LPGA.

American accepts wild card entry

Serena returning to pro tennis at 44 after nearly 4 years away

PARIS, June 1, (AP): Serena Williams is returning to professional tennis at age 44 after nearly four years away from the sport.

The 23-time Grand Slam singles champion has accepted a wild card invitation to play doubles at the upcoming Queen's Club grass-court tournament, the WTA Tour announced Monday.

The Queen's Club tournament starts next Monday and the WTA said Williams will play "with a partner to be announced in due course." Williams has not competed since bidding farewell at the 2022 U.S. Open. At the time, Williams said she didn't want to use the word "retiring" and instead declared that she was "evolving" away from tennis.

"Serena brought the game to another level and it is incredible for the sport that she's pushing the boundaries and coming back," said Martina Navratilova, the previous oldest former No. 1 to launch a comeback after retirement, at 43 years, 10 months.

"To many of the younger players, they never had the opportunity to play her; some may have never watched her on television so this will be a new and exciting experience," Navratilova said.

Williams, who has also won 14 Grand Slam doubles titles, became eligible to compete in February after re-registering with tennis' mandatory anti-doping program six months earlier - which is the first step toward a comeback.

Four-time major winner Naomi Osaka, who beat Williams in the 2018 U.S. Open final for her first major title, was excited at the prospect.

"It will bring people to watch tennis," Osaka said Thursday. "I'm going to be tuned into the first match, for sure. I think a lot of people are. Everyone knows Serena and Venus



In this file photo, Serena Williams motions a heart to fans during the third round of the U.S. Open tennis championships, Sept. 2, 2022, in New York. (AP)

were my role models growing up, so it's going to be cool to see her on the grounds again."

A return on grass will raise speculation that Williams also plans to compete at Wimbledon, which starts June 28. She's won seven singles titles at the All England Club.

Williams recently posted a video on Instagram showing herself training on a hard court with her daughter: "Rumor has it...I got a new trainer," Williams said in the post.

Williams' second daughter was born in 2023.

When it was revealed last year that Williams had signed up to return to the drug-testing pool, she wrote on social media: "Omg yall I'm NOT coming back. This wildfire is crazy." "One of my biggest regrets was not being able to play her," defending French Open champion Coco Gauff said in Paris. "It would be cool for this sport to have a legend back playing."

American player, Iva Jovic, 18, also sounded thrilled.

"I think it's amazing. It's really cool," she said. "I have never seen Serena in real life. Obviously I grew up watching her. In my entire childhood she was dominating tennis, so it's going to be incredible."

Aiming to end 53-year title drought

Knicks lift NBA Cup over Spurs, but real crown still up for grabs

GREENBURGH, N.Y., June 1, (AP): When the New York Knicks declined to hang a banner after beating the San Antonio Spurs to win the NBA Cup, they did so because they were waiting to celebrate something bigger.

That wait is at 53 years and it can only end now by beating the Spurs again.

Nearly a week after clinching their first NBA Finals berth since 1999, the Knicks were at last able to practice Sunday while knowing who they were practicing for, after Victor Wembanyama and the Spurs knocked off Oklahoma City on Saturday night in Game 7 of the Western Conference finals.

"I mean, they're a special team," Knicks guard Deuce McBride said. "Obviously they have the Defensive Player of the Year, obviously a great organization and they've got a lot of great young guys, so we're just excited for this matchup."

It's the same one as the last time the Knicks were in the NBA Finals, when the Spurs beat them 27 years ago to leave New York without a title since 1973.

The Knicks believed they were going to have a good shot at ending the drought this year and got a test run at chasing a championship back in December, when they beat San Antonio in Las Vegas to win the NBA Cup.

The Knicks then passed on joining the Lakers and Milwaukee, the previous winners of the in-season tournament, in raising a banner at Madison Square Garden to acknowledge it. They aren't putting much stock in that victory six months later, knowing how different both teams are.

"Obviously there was good energy around that, but I don't think that's really going to be any equivalent to

what the atmosphere or the energy is going to be like at their place, or obviously at the Garden," Knicks forward Josh Hart said.

"So technically that game didn't happen, so I don't think there's anything that we can learn from," Hart added, poking fun at the fact that the Cup final, an 83rd game for the two teams, doesn't count in the standings or statistics.

The teams split the two games that did matter, with San Antonio's victory on New Year's Eve starting a mid-season spiral for a Knicks club that arrived with a 23-9 record. Then, after the Spurs went undefeated in February, New York snapped their 11-game winning streak with a 114-89 home victory on March 1.

Game 1 is Wednesday at San Antonio. More than Wembanyama and the Spurs, the Knicks' biggest problem might be their lack of playing rhythm.

Because they are rolling through the postseason with an 11-game winning streak, that will be just the 10th game in a 35-day span for the Knicks, starting with the April 30 clincher against Atlanta in Game 6 of the first round.



San Antonio Spurs forward Victor Wembanyama walks over to Spurs fans as he holds his MVP trophy as he celebrates after Game 7 of the Western Conference finals of the NBA basketball playoffs series win against the Oklahoma City Thunder in Oklahoma City. (AP)

Coach reaches 150 wins, second-fastest ever

Aces top Valkyries as Wilson scores 28

SAN FRANCISCO, June 1, (AP): A'ja Wilson had 28 points, 15 rebounds and four blocks, Jackie Young added 23 points and nine assists, and the Las Vegas Aces beat the Golden State Valkyries 91-81.

The victory was the 150th of Becky Hammon's coaching career, and it made her the second-fastest coach to reach the milestone. Hammon did it in 205 games - seven behind Van Chancellor's record set when he coached the Houston Comets.

Young made 9 of 17 from the field, 5 of 9 from 3-point range, and grabbed seven rebounds. Nalysa Smith had 15 points and nine rebounds for the Aces (5-3), the defending WNBA champions.

Gabby Williams led the Valkyries (5-3) with 20 points, Janelle Salaun added 16 and Kayla Thornton 12.

Las Vegas led 43-41 at halftime before Wilson had 13 points and Young 11 in the third quarter as the Aces outscored Golden State 29-13 to take an



Golden State Valkyries' Veronica Burton (22) drives to the basket defended by Las Vegas Aces' Stephanie Talbot (7) in the first half of a WNBA basketball game in San Francisco. (AP)

18-point lead into the fourth. The Valkyries made just 3 of 17 (18%) from the field and committed

five turnovers in the period.

Williams hit a 3-pointer that capped an 11-0 run and trimmed Golden State's deficit to 85-74 with 1:52 left in the game. Salaun made two free throws and then hit a 3 that made it an eight-point game about a minute later, but the Valkyries never got closer.

The Valkyries, who went into the game allowing a WNBA-low 78 points per game, gave up a season-high 91 points.

Golden State's Veronica Burton went to the bench with about 3 1/2 minutes remaining and was in obvious discomfort as she grabbed at her left thigh. The team's leading scorer at 15.9 per game, Burton had seven points and five assists. There was no immediate word on the extent of her injury.

Chennedy Carter took a couple of hard falls in the first half, walked slowly to locker room at halftime and played just one minute in the third quarter before leaving the game. Carter finished with six points in nine minutes.

Finland breaks Swiss hearts to win world title

Norway stuns Canada in OT for bronze

ZURICH, June 1, (AP): Finland won the ice hockey world championship for the fifth time, beating Switzerland 1-0 in overtime.

The Buffalo Sabres' Konsta Helenius scored the gold-winning goal 10:42 into overtime. The 20-year-old Helenius netted from the right circle, beating Switzerland goaltender Leonardo Genoni with his team's 28th shot on goal.

Finland netminder Justus Ananen shut out Switzerland with 22 saves.

"We have a strong culture, you leave your ego outside the locker room, and that's why it's so awesome to come and play for Finland," defenseman Olli Maatta said.

Finland also won in 1995, 2011, 2019 and 2022.

Switzerland wasted a two-minute, 5-on-3 advantage that started six seconds before the end of the opening period.

The final was a rematch of the two teams from their last group stage game, which the Swiss won 4-2.

That was the only loss for the Finns, who finished second in their preliminary group behind the Swiss. They went on to eliminate the Czechs 4-1 in the quarterfinals and upset tournament favorite Canada 4-2 in the semifinals.

Finland was led by captain Aleksander Barkov, who missed



Finland players celebrate with the trophy after winning the 2026 IIHF Men's Ice Hockey World Championship final match against Switzerland, in Zurich, Switzerland. (AP)

the entirety of the Florida Panthers' season because of a major knee injury suffered 20 minutes into his first practice of training camp. The tournament was his first action in competitive games since the Panthers won their second consecutive Stanley Cup last June.

Barkov powered the Finns with three goals and eight assists from 10 games at the worlds.

After finishing runner-up in the previous two years, host Switzerland hoped for more this time in front of its home crowd in Zurich.

Home fans clapped, chanted and

cheered tirelessly throughout the tournament.

"It's a huge disappointment, but, it's hockey," Switzerland forward Denis Malgin said. "It was a 0-0 game. We had our chances, and in OT it can go either way."

Switzerland failed to score a single goal in the three finals.

The Swiss lost to the Czechs 2-0 in 2024, and were defeated by the U.S. 1-0 in overtime last year.

They also finished second in 2018 and 2013 when they were defeated by rival Sweden.

Switzerland also finished second

back in 1935.

Norway stunned Canada 3-2 in overtime of the bronze medal game to capture its first ice hockey world championship medal.

Noah Steen scored the winner 3:32 into overtime. The previous best result for Norway was a fourth-place finish in 1951.

In a wild ending, Canada was 2-0 down when it pulled netminder Jet Greaves. Robert Thomas then scored from the slot to reduce the deficit with 1:16 remaining in the final period with an unassisted goal.

With eight seconds to go, captain Macklin Celebrini and Ryan

O'Reilly set up Thomas for his second to tie it at 2-2, forcing overtime.

Earlier, Emilio Pettersen gave Norway a 1-0 lead in the opening period and Stian Solberg added another with a deflected shot in the second. Goaltender Henrik Haukeland stopped 44 shots.

Greaves made 21 saves for Canada.

The Canadians have come up short at the worlds since they won their last and record 28th title in 2023.

They finished fourth in 2024 and were stunned 2-1 by Denmark in

the quarterfinals last year.

The worlds ended in disappointment for Canada again this year despite a lineup that included teenage sensation Celebrini as captain and NHL great Sidney Crosby in addition to several established NHL stars, including O'Reilly, John Tavares and Mark Scheifele.

Canada managed to win all of its group games, including a 6-5 victory over Norway in overtime, and eliminated defending champion U.S. in the quarterfinals.

But Finland, led by Barkov, proved too good in the semifinals.

Ochoa among the veterans returning

Aguirre puts faith in new generation, Mexico seeks World Cup redemption

MEXICO CITY, June 1, (AP): Mexico coach Javier Aguirre opted Sunday for a new generation of players to use home ground advantage at the World Cup in a bid to seek redemption after one of the worst failures for El Tri in modern times at Qatar 2022.

"El Vasco" Aguirre, guiding the Mexican team into a World Cup for the third time, overhauled a squad that floundered in Qatar and failed to advance from the first round for the first time since 1978.

He picked 13 players who weren't part of the squad four years ago. The most intriguing of them all is 17-year-old midfielder Gilberto Mora, who could become the youngest Mexican man to appear in a World Cup.

Mexico's youngest World Cup player is Manuel "Chaquetas" Rosas, who was 18 years, 88 days when he played in the inaugural 1930 World Cup.

Brazil great Pele is among the seven players who have contested a World Cup at age 17 - the youngest of them all was North-



Mexico's goalkeeper Guillermo Ochoa gestures during the second half of an international friendly soccer match against Australia in Pasadena, Calif. (AP)

ern Ireland's Norman Whiteside in 1982 in Spain.

Depending on when Mora makes his World Cup debut - Mexico opens against South Africa on June 11 - he would become the sixth or seventh on the international all-time list for youngest players at the tournament.

Among the veterans returning after the disappointment of Qatar 2022 is goalkeeper Guillermo Ochoa, who has been picked in a World Cup squad for the sixth time.

Although Ochoa, who made his World Cup debut in 2006,

has only played in three World Cups and is currently considered the backup to starter Raúl Rangel.

After taking on South Africa at the Azteca stadium, Mexico will face South Korea in Guadalajara and close out the first round against Czechia on June 24.

Mexico, on a seven-match unbeaten streak, has one more World Cup warmup match against Serbia.

Goalkeepers: Raúl Rangel, Guillermo Ochoa, Carlos Acevedo.

Defenders: Jesús Gallardo, Johan Vázquez, Israel Reyes, César Montes, Jorge Sánchez, Mateo Chávez.

Midfielders: Edson Álvarez, Erik Lira, Alvaro Fidalgo, Gilberto Mora, Brian Gutiérrez, Luis Romo, Orbelín Pineda, Alexis Vega, Obed Vargas, Luis Chávez.

Forwards: Roberto Alvarado, Santiago Giménez, Raúl Jiménez, Julián Quiñones, Armando González, Guillermo Martínez, Cesar Huerta.

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Pulisic ends drought as US edges Senegal

CHARLOTTE, N.C., June 1 (AP): Relief could be seen on Christian Pulisic's face as he sidestepped goalkeeper Mory Diaw and buried a shot into the net for a first-half goal.

"Now maybe we can stop talking about it," Pulisic said later.

The drought, that is.

Pulisic had a goal and an assist as he ended a five-month scoreless streak for club and country in a confidence-building 3-2 U.S. win over Senegal on Sunday, the Americans' next-to-last World Cup warmup before their June 12 opener.

America's top player finished his AC Milan season scoreless in a career-high 19 club games since Dec. 28 and was without a goal eight straight U.S. matches since November 2024.

"I felt this confidence, like I have played really well in recent months, but all everyone seems to want to worry about is goals, so hopefully we can stop talking about it," Pulisic said. "We have games ahead and I have to be ready."

Pulisic's goal seemed like an emotional relief, as if weight had been lifted off the shoulders of the 27-year-old.

"We are all happy for him and we didn't doubt him for a second," said midfielder Weston McKennie, who has known Pulisic since he was 13. "People that don't know him may not know his abilities or what he is capable of."

Alex Freeman side-footed a pass ahead of a streaking Ricardo Pepi down the right flank. Pepi ran onto the ball and took a touch, then perfectly weighted a pass into the penalty area ahead of a streaking Pulisic.

Pulisic took a touch, rounded Diaw and slotted into an open net with his right foot



Senegal forward Nicolas Jackson, left, battles with United States defender Tim Ream (13) during the first half of an international friendly soccer match in Charlotte, N.C. (AP)

from a tight angle for his 33rd goal in 85 international appearances.

He pumped his fists downward as he ran toward the corner flag. He first threw a fist in the air. Then he slid to both knees and repeatedly pumped tightly-closed fists in raw emotion.

Was it a relief? "Yeah," said Pulisic, who played just the first half. "I think you could see it my reaction."

U.S. coach Mauricio Pochettino had predicted last week that the drought would come to an end in the World Cup.

Difficult decisions made: Coach

Volpato selected in Australia's World Cup squad just days after switch of allegiance

BRISBANE, Australia, June 1, (AP): Cristian Volpato has been vaulted into Australia's World Cup squad just days after confirming a switch of national eligibility from Italy, and four years after he declined an invitation to join the Socceroos ahead of the 2022 tournament.

Coach Tony Popovic included the 22-year-old Volpato in the 26-man squad announced Monday, Australian time. He and striker Tete Yengi were among 17 players selected in a World Cup squad for the first time.

Skipper Mat Ryan, with 104 international caps, and veteran Mathew Leckie were picked for a fourth World Cup, equaling the Australian record held by Tim Cahill and Mark Milligan.

"A range of factors has gone into selecting this final World Cup squad," Popovic said in a statement. "Some difficult decisions had to be made ... but it's also a credit to all the players involved who worked extremely hard during an extended and

challenging pre-camp.

"I'd like to acknowledge the players who contributed to our direct World Cup qualification but are not part of this squad."

The Sydney-born Volpato played for Italy's Under-21 team but was eligible to make the

switch to Australia under FIFA rules because he never played a competitive game for the senior Italy team. Italy failed to qualify for the World Cup being co-hosted by the U.S., Mexico and Canada.

Volpato only joined the Soc-

ceros camp in Los Angeles over the weekend, too late to participate in the 1-0 World Cup warmup loss to Mexico at Pasadena.

Australia will play another warmup game against Switzerland at San Diego to finetune for Group D games against Turkey at Vancouver on June 13, the U.S. at Seattle six days later and Paraguay at Santa Clara on June 25.

Australia squad: **Goalkeepers:** Mat Ryan, Patrick Beach, Paul Izzo.

Defenders: Aziz Behich, Jordan Bos, Cameron Burgess, Alessandro Circati, Milos Degenek, Jason Geria, Lucas Herrington, Jacob Italiano, Harry Souttar, Kai Trewhin.

Midfielders: Cameron Devlin, Jackson Irvine, Connor Metcalfe, Mathew Leckie, Paul Okon-Engstler, Aiden O'Neill.

Forwards: Ajdin Hrustic, Nestory Irankunda, Awer Mabil, Mohamed Toure, Nishan Velupillay, Cristian Volpato, Tete Yengi.



In this file photo, Australia's goalkeeper Matthew Ryan makes a save during their international soccer friendly against Curacao in Melbourne, Australia. (AP)

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Goalkeeper Manuel Neuer attends a training session of the German national soccer team in Frankfurt, Germany. (AP)

Sports

Kuwait volleyball, basketball bodies approve budgets and action plans



Dari Burjas



Al-Merri and Al-Nimsh take part in Kuwait Volleyball Federation meeting.

By Khaled Al-Enezi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 1: The general assemblies of the Kuwait Volleyball Association and Kuwait Basketball Association approved their financial and administrative reports and endorsed their plans for the 2026-2027 season during meetings held at the Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Sports Complex.

The Volleyball Association's assembly chaired by President Dr. Jaber Al-Merri and attended by Secretary-General Talal Al-Nimsh and representatives of member clubs, ratified the reports for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2026, and approved the federation's roadmap for the upcoming season.

Members reviewed the federation's activities, achievements and financial performance before giving their approval. The assembly also authorized the Board of Directors to

appoint an auditor for the new fiscal year in line with governing regulations.

Attendees stressed the importance of further developing local competitions and enhancing national team programs to support the continued growth of Kuwaiti volleyball.

Dr. Al-Merri commended the clubs for their cooperation and constructive participation, expressing confidence that the coming season would witness greater achievements.

Meanwhile, the Basketball Association's ordinary general assembly approved its financial and administrative reports, as well as the proposed budget and action plan for the 2026-2027 fiscal year.

The meeting was attended by club delegates and members of the Board of Directors headed by President Dhari Burjas, who thanked the clubs for their support and for endorsing the federation's budget and strategic plans for the next season.

Mubarak Al-Fanaini set to return

Ashour extends stay at Salmiya to 2028

By Hassan Mosa

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 1: Salmiya has secured the future of head coach Ali Ashour after announcing a contract extension that will keep the Bahraini tactician at the club until 2028.

Ashour took charge of the team in January, succeeding Kuwaiti coach Mohammed Dhahiles, and has since overseen a noticeable improvement in performances and results.

The club said the decision to renew the 41-year-old's contract reflects its confidence in his technical vision and leadership, as well as its desire to maintain stability as Salmiya pursues further success in the coming seasons.

The signing ceremony was attended by club chairman Sheikh Turki Al-Yousef, first-team manager Ali Nader, and former Salmiya stars Ali Marwi and Jassim Al-Huwaidi.

Salmiya wished Ashour and his coaching staff continued success as they look to build on the



Salmiya head coach Ali Ashour

progress achieved with the "Sky Blues."

Ashour previously coached Kuwait Club during the 2022-23 campaign before leaving by mutual consent prior to the end of the season.

Salmiya currently occupies fourth place in the Zain Premier League standings with 29 points, level with third-placed Arabi on points and two behind second-placed Qadsia.

As part of preparations for next season, Ashour has reportedly recommended retaining Brazilian midfielder Alex Lima and renewing the contracts of Syrian forward Mahmoud Al-Aswad and Bahraini player Sayed Diaa.

The coach is also said to have advised against extending the stay of Syrian defender Amro Midani, while discussions are expected regarding the future of Tunisian midfielder Imad Louati, whose long-term injury has limited his involvement and could require an extended recovery period.

Meanwhile, Mubarak Al-Fanaini is set to return to Salmiya after completing a three-season spell with Qadsia, while striker Muhammad Al-Mahamid appears headed for a new challenge after attracting interest from a leading domestic club.

The situation of defender Bader Jamal remains unresolved amid reports linking him with a potential move to Qadsia ahead of the new season.

Kohli brilliance seals IPL title for Bengaluru

Royal Challengers replicate CSK and MI streak

AHMEDABAD, India, June 1, (AP): Cricket great Virat Kohli hit the winning six as defending champions Royal Challengers Bengaluru retained its Indian Premier League title with a five-wicket victory over Gujarat Titans.

Bengaluru reached 161-5 in 18 overs after winning the toss and restricting Gujarat to 155-8 in its 20 overs.

Kohli smashed nine fours and three sixes in his 42-ball 75 not out. It was his sixth 50-plus score of the season and, along with Venkatesh Iyer's 32 runs off 16 balls, helped Bengaluru make quick work of an under-par target.

"It is the stuff you dream of. I have thought of this moment many times, to win the IPL and stand here (unbeaten in the chase)," Kohli said. "The kind of team we have, it gives you confidence to face any situation. There is enough depth in our side. We had clarity - Venkatesh (Iyer) and I wanted to finish off the chase in the powerplay itself."

With its first title in 2025, Bengaluru became only the third side to win successive IPL titles. Chennai Super Kings (2010 and 2011) and Mumbai Indians (2019 and 2020) previously achieved this feat.

Kohli finished with 675 runs in 16 matches, while Bhuvneshwar Kumar picked up 28 wickets this season.

Kumar took 2-29, sharing four wickets with Josh Hazlewood (2-37), and restricted Gujarat at the Narendra Modi Stadium in Ahmedabad.

Washington Sundar finished on 50 not out, hitting five fours in his 37-ball innings. No other Gujarat batter topped 20. Medium pacer Rishabh Salam Dar took 3-27 in his four overs.

Gujarat's Kagiso Rabada was the season's highest wicket-taker - 29 in 17 matches.

Rajasthan Royals' 15-year-old Vaibhav Sooryanishi was the highest run-getter with 776 runs in 16 innings at a strike rate of 237.

Gujarat never really gained any batting momentum and was down to 99-5 at the start of the 15th over. Openers Sai Sudharsan (12) and Shubman Gill (10) were out cheaply.

Krunal Pandya had Jos Buttler (19) stumped and, despite Sundar's knock, the Titans didn't look comfortable.

Iyer hit two sixes and four fours in his rapid 32 for Bengaluru. Kohli and Iyer contributed 62 off 27 balls for the opening wicket.



Royal Challengers Bengaluru players celebrate with winners trophy after their win in the Indian Premier League final cricket match against Gujarat Titans in Ahmedabad, India. (AP)

Kohli got his half-century off 25 balls, his quickest in the IPL, and he finished the match in style with a six against Arshad Khan - a year after Bengaluru had won the title at the same venue.

The final was a rematch of the first playoff on Tuesday when Bengaluru beat Gujarat by 92 runs in Dharamsala. Gujarat won the IPL in 2022.

Milner announces retirement after record-breaking career

BRIGHTON, England, June 1, (AP): Premier League icon James Milner announced his retirement from soccer on Monday, bringing an end to a record-breaking career that saw him make 658 appearances in England's top division and win a full set of trophies at club level.

The 40-year-old midfielder played for top teams including Liverpool, Manchester City, Aston Villa, Newcastle and Leeds over 24 seasons. He finished his career at Brighton after setting a new record for the most Premier League appearances and said it felt "like the right time" to walk away.

"I could never have dreamed of the journey I've been on," he said on social media. "I've been fortunate enough to experience some unforgettable moments, from fighting for survival to winning trophies, playing in Europe, and representing my country, England, at two European Championships and two World Cups."

Milner began his career aged 16 at his boyhood club Leeds and became the Premier League's youngest goalscorer at the time.

He went on to win three Premier League titles, the Champions



In this file photo, Brighton's James Milner runs during the English Premier League soccer match between Brighton and Hove Albion and Nottingham Forest, at The American Express Stadium in Brighton, England. (AP)

League, two FA Cups, two English League Cups and the Club World Cup.

At international level Milner won 61 caps for England.

"To those who supported me every step of the way, your encouragement meant more than you'll ever know. And to those who gave me grief along the way, thank you too - you all played your part in making the journey memorable and helping shape me as a player and person," he said.

Cobolli advances to second Grand Slam last eight

Kalinskaya beats Potapova in super tiebreak to reach maiden French Open quarterfinal

PARIS, June 1, (AP): Anna Kalinskaya surprised herself after defeating Anastasia Potapova 6-4, 2-6, 7-6 (10-7) to reach her first French Open quarterfinal on Monday.

The Russian had not expected to get this far. "Thinking two weeks ago that I will be here, I wouldn't believe it," she said. "I would probably laugh with my team."

Perhaps setting a low bar has helped her play more freely in the opening rounds.

"I just take this clay season very easy mentally. I don't put too much pressure to do well. I guess it helps," the No. 22 seed said. "I didn't have any expectations on clay for myself."

Their contest on Court Suzanne-Lenglen stretched to almost three hours after Potapova failed to serve out the match twice in the decider and Kalinskaya overturned a 4-1 deficit in the super tiebreak.

"I'm super proud, and I can't believe it," Kalinskaya said. "The match was so long, so I'm still processing what's going on."

It will be Kalinskaya's second quarterfinal at a major beside the 2024 Australian Open. Despite pre-tournament men's favorite Jannik Sinner losing in the second round, Italian fans will have at least one player in the quarterfinals.

Tenth-seeded Flavio Cobolli advanced to his second Grand Slam quarterfinal - and his first here - after beating American Zachary Svajda 6-2, 6-3, 6-7 (3),

7-6 (5).

"It's for sure my favorite Grand Slam to play," Cobolli said after winning on Court Philippe-Chatrier. "We have the best feeling with the surface as Italians."

A little while after his win, Cobolli - a former youth soccer player at Italian club Roma - joined players from the Paris Saint-Germain team as they paraded the Champions League trophy on Chatrier. PSG beat Arsenal in the final on Saturday.

But French hopes are over following Diane Parry's



Italy's Flavio Cobolli returns to Zachary Svajda of the United States during the fourth-round tennis match at the French Open in Paris. (AP)

6-3, 6-2 loss to Maja Chwalinska of Poland. There are also no more Americans in the women's draw after Madison Keys lost to Diana Shnaider 6-3, 3-6, 6-0.

Meanwhile, French Open director Amelie Mauresmo said on Monday that electronic line-calling is not 100% reliable on clay courts and has no immediate plans to introduce the technology at Roland Garros despite a controversial call during Casper Ruud's loss against Joao Fonseca.

Ruud, a two-time runner-up in Paris, ultimately lost the fourth-round match 7-5, 7-6 (8), 5-7, 6-2 on Sunday evening. During the second-set tiebreaker, with Ruud up 8-7, a spectator in the crowd shouted that a forehand down the line hit by Fonseca had landed out. The chair umpire came down to check the mark and ruled that the Brazilian's shot was in, handing him the point.

An electronic line-calling on television showed the ball was out.

Mauresmo, however, remains old school and said on Monday she still picks humans over technology, because it can't be trusted entirely.

"What we observed at the clay-court tournaments leading up to Roland Garros is that the reliability of this system is not absolute," she told journalists. "As of today, the machine is not 100 percent reliable, so we continue to place our confidence in human officials."