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## Opinion

# Iran has destroyed its neighbors... and it must pay the price

### Ahmed Al-Jarallah

Editor-in-Chief, the Arab Times

IRAN's terrorist aggression against Kuwait, Bahrain, and other Gulf states confirms once again that Tehran has no intention of abandoning its expansionist agenda.

If international sanctions are deemed necessary, then the recent step taken by the United States regarding the Arab Gulf states means moving forward in

limiting Iran's ability to attack neighboring countries.

The US Secretary of Treasury, Scott Bessent, said, "Work has begun to assess the situation in the Gulf states and to request estimates of the cost of repairing the damage inflicted by Iran since the beginning of the war, in order to use Iranian assets to rebuild what was destroyed by the Iranian attacks on those countries. This should go hand in hand with assessing the damage caused by Iran in other Arab countries, particularly Lebanon, Iraq, Yemen, and Syria."

It is true that the Iranian regime has poisoned the political and sectarian environment in those countries, and that some segments of their populations have responded to its sectarian rhetoric. The real reason is the repression, incentives, and intimidation practices of the Iranian regime to fuel sectarian divisions within Arab societies and increased militarization in support of social groups that had not experienced such deep divisions prior to 1979.

These countries, particularly Lebanon, Iraq, and Yemen, are experiencing internal divisions that require urgent attention and resolution.

While Syria has rid itself of this sectarian virus, thanks to its popular revolution against Bashar al-Assad's regime, Iraq today, under the leadership of the new Prime Minister Ali Abdullah Saleh, is on the right track for eradicating this scourge.

Although resolving these issues will take time, there are early indications of progress, as some Iranian-backed factions have begun handing over weapons to the Baghdad government.

Since 2003, Tehran has controlled Iraqi decision-

making and caused numerous massacres and much harm to the Iraqi people. Therefore, Iran must pay the price for this intervention and the losses it has inflicted. The Iraqi government must begin assessing the damage and demanding compensation from Iran.

Syria must also demand compensation for the damages caused by Iranian intervention, which, according to some international reports, amount to roughly \$40 billion.

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# KUWAIT RENEWS I.C.A.O. COMPLAINT OVER IRAN STRIKE ON T1

# Billion-dollar reckoning for Iran

US moves to make Tehran regime pay for Gulf damage

WASHINGTON, June 7, (Agencies): The US Treasury Department will use Iranian assets to help US Gulf allies recover from damage caused by Tehran's regime during the Iran war, a Department insider told CBS News on Saturday.

The source said the Treasury intends to utilize all available authorities to make Iranian assets accessible for rebuilding and repair efforts related to any future damage inflicted by Iran.

Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent has also directed the Treasury to seek comprehensive estimates from Gulf allies of the costs associated with repairing damage caused by Iran since the conflict began, the source said.

The Treasury will also further evaluate whether Iranian assets could be used to help finance repairs for damage already sustained by Gulf allies during the

conflict, according to the CBS News report.

It is unclear which assets would be used to finance rebuilding - for example, Iranian cash in frozen bank accounts or hard assets such as oil tankers.

Amid the ongoing indirect peace talks between the US and Iran, Tehran has insisted that any deal would require the lifting of sanctions to allow the release of billions of dollars in Iranian frozen assets abroad.

Since the war broke out in late February, Iran has launched intermittent missile and drone strikes on all the Gulf states, including Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar and Oman.

The diplomatic efforts to end the war entered a blind alley after Iran insisted on US unfreezing billions of dollars in overseas assets and lifting the sanctions on Tehran.

Meanwhile, Kuwait's Public Authority of Civil Aviation submitted a second official protest letter to the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO)

regarding what it described as Iran's repeated attacks and violations of Kuwait's airspace sovereignty and Kuwait International Airport facilities.

In a statement to KUNA, the authority said the protest letter stressed that the attacks constituted a serious and flagrant violation of international treaties and conventions governing civil aviation and posed a direct threat to the safety and security of passengers, airlines, airport personnel and vital airport facilities.

The authority noted that the latest attack, which targeted Terminal 1 last Wednesday, resulted in fatalities, serious injuries and extensive material damage.

It also caused the suspension of air traffic operations and the temporary halt of flights to and from Kuwait International Airport, directly affecting air transport services and passenger movement.

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Public Works photo

Public Works Minister Dr. Noura Al-Mashaan leads discussions on accelerating road maintenance projects and improving infrastructure across the country's six governorates.

Better roads key to improved services: Al-Mashaan

## Kuwait targets timely completion of road upgrades

By Mohammad Ghanem  
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 7: Minister of Public Works Dr. Noura Al-Mashaan on Sunday chaired an expanded meeting with the assistant undersecretaries, district directors and project managers to follow up on the progress of road maintenance projects throughout the country.

They discussed the latest developments in the implementation plan, completion rates, technical and administrative challenges in the ongoing projects, status of maintenance projects in the six governorates, work completed over the past period, and next phases and mechanisms for expediting implementation to achieve the goals of the ministry to develop the infrastructure, improve the road network, and raise its operational efficiency.

During the meeting, Al-Mashaan emphasized that the ministry remains committed to continue the close monitoring of projects and ensure that the implementing com-

panies adhere to the approved technical specifications and quality and safety standards. She stressed the need to address observations or obstacles immediately in order to guarantee the work is carried out as per the established timelines.

She underscored the importance of strengthening technical oversight and direct supervision of work sites, as well as intensifying field visits to monitor the quality of implementation and ensure compliance with the approved specifications.

She affirmed that improving infrastructure and developing the road network are among the top priorities of the ministry due to their impact on traffic safety and the quality of services provided to citizens and residents.

The meeting also tackled the implementation plans for major and periodic maintenance works, level of coordination among the relevant technical and administrative sectors, performance reports and achievement indicators for each project, challenges that the field teams are facing, and mechanisms for overcoming these challenges.

paid for additional service periods.

It requires that the refunds be made in a single payment upon application submitted according to the form approved by the Public Institution for Social Security, after deducting any outstanding debts owed to PIFSS.

The decision does not include the refund of contributions paid by employers for their shares in the insurance funds of insured persons or beneficiaries whose citizenship has been revoked.

The new provisions will come into effect one month after their publication in the official gazette. PIFSS is responsible for taking the necessary measures to implement the decision.

## PIFSS issues rules on refunds for revoked citizenship cases

KUWAIT CITY, June 7: The Public Institution for Social Security (PIFSS) issued Decision No. 3/2026 on Sunday in the official gazette "Kuwait Al-Yaum," concerning the cases, rules, and conditions for refunding certain amounts to individuals whose citizenship has been revoked and who no longer meet the eligibility requirements for a retirement pension, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The decision stipulates the refund of contributions paid for the insured person's or beneficiary's share in the Basic Insurance Fund, the Supplementary Insurance Fund, the Pension Increase Fund, and the Financial Reward Fund, in addition to amounts

## Cutting-edge platform launched for people with disabilities

## MEWRE sets new standard in digital accessibility

KUWAIT CITY, June 7, (KUNA): The Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy on Sunday announced the introduction of a comprehensive and cutting-edge digital services system for individuals with disabilities.

This system, which is available on the website of the ministry, simplifies transaction completion for those with disabilities, guaranteeing their full integration into the digital society.

During the launching ceremony, Undersecretary Dr. Adel Al-Zamel pointed out that the efforts of State institutions to remove obstacles for people with disabilities are not limited to the provision of services, as these institutions also aim to empower them to efficiently play their role and participate in various fields of development.

Al-Zamel revealed the ministry developed a system combining specialized digital services with modern accessibility tools. "Sign language video calls enable people with hearing impairments to speak with ministry personnel. The system enhances the independence of individuals with mobility impairments by offering accessible services and Braille support for the blind," he added.



Photo by Rezk Tawfiq

Ministry officials and guests pose together after the launch of a new accessibility-focused digital platform.

He said the website features a sophisticated set of digital accessibility tools, such as voice input, sign language translation and screen reader technology. He disclosed that the website includes text, color and contrast controls customized for different user groups to ensure a more flexible and user-friendly digital experience.

He pointed out that the system's

design reflects the dedication of the ministry to uphold the values of justice and equality, while complying with the strictest international standards for digital accessibility. He emphasized that technology should empower individuals and remove obstacles on their path.

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## Kuwait warns on 'war' posts

KUWAIT CITY, June 7: The Cybercrime Department has warned all residents and citizens against publishing or sharing any online content related to wars, military operations, or missiles, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The department also warned against sharing or publishing any video clips or images that incite sectarianism.

It emphasized that such actions constitute a clear violation of Kuwaiti law and may subject perpetrators to legal accountability.

The department called on all residents and citizens to maintain complete neutrality and avoid any provocative content in order to preserve national security and social cohesion.

## Interior Ministry nabs three Kuwaitis in major drug bust

KUWAIT CITY, June 7, (KUNA): The Ministry of Interior arrested on Sunday three Kuwaiti citizens in possession of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances intended for trafficking and abuse as part of ongoing efforts to combat drug-related crimes.

In a press statement, the ministry said the arrests followed intensive investigations and field surveillance operations that led to the apprehension of the suspects.

Authorities seized 1.5 kilograms of cocaine, 700 grams of hashish, 5,000 psychotropic capsules and a precision scale in the suspects' possession, the statement added.

The ministry noted that the suspects and the confiscated items were referred to the competent authorities for the necessary legal procedures.



Mol photo  
Three in custody after being arrested for possession of narcotics intended for trafficking.

It reaffirmed its commitment to continuing intensive security campaigns targeting drug dealers and traffickers, stressing that it would not tolerate any attempts to undermine the country's security or endanger the safety of its citizens and residents.

## Addresses cancellations put 319 on notice

By Mohammad Ghanem  
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 7: The Public Authority for Civil Information (PACI) on Sunday announced in the official gazette, 'Kuwait Today', that

it cancelled the residential addresses of 319 people, based on the declaration of the homeowners or due to building demolition.

It urged these individuals to register the new address with the supporting documents by visiting its headquar-

ters or through the Sahel application within 30 days from the date of the announcement. Otherwise, they will be subject to the penalty stipulated in Article 33 of Law No. 32/1982 -- fine not exceeding KD100 multiplied by the number of people.



8 NBK advances Sustainable Finance with a new framework

9 CINET signs Memorandum of Understanding with the Kuwait Institute of Banking Studies



### Prayer Timings

Fajr ..... 03:13 Asr ..... 15:21  
 Sunrise .. 04:48 Maghrib .. 18:46  
 Zohr ..... 11:47 Isha ..... 20:18



HH the Amir



HH the Crown Prince



HH the Prime Minister



Minister of Interior

## Kuwait Amir receives Crown Prince, ministers

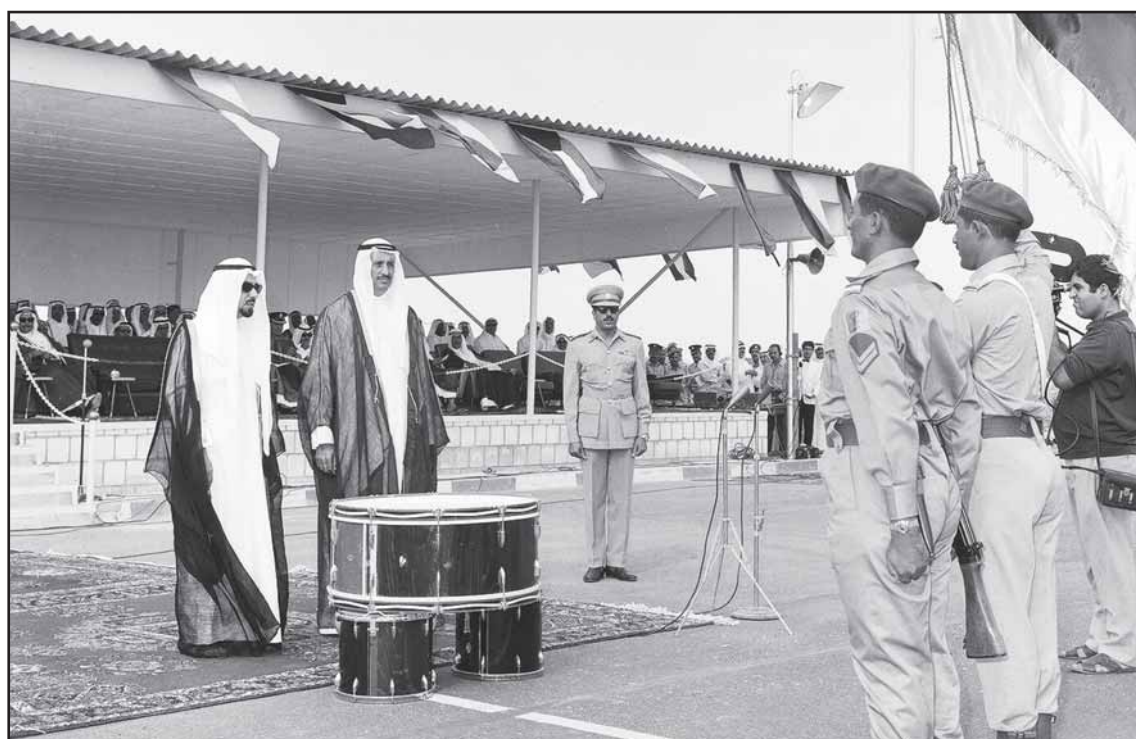
KUWAIT CITY, June 7, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received on Sunday His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah.

His Highness the Amir also received the Acting Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yusuf Al-Sabah, Minister of Defense Sheikh Abdullah Ali Abdullah Al-Salem Al-Sabah, and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.

### Crown Prince audiences

His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah received on Sunday Acting Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yusuf Al-Sabah.

His Highness the Crown Prince also received Minister of Defense Sheikh Abdullah Ali Abdullah Al-Salem Al-Sabah, and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.



KUNA photos  
 HH the Late Amir Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah and head of the Kuwait National Guard then, Late Sheikh Salem Al-Ali Al-Sabah receiving the Guard of Honor.

# Kuwait bolsters co-ops oversight, eyes clarity

Judicial teams empowered in field scrutiny

By Fares Ghaleb

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

**KUWAIT CITY, June 7: The Ministry of Social Affairs continues to intensify its oversight and field presence in the cooperative sector through the judicial enforcement teams affiliated with the Financial, Administrative and Cooperative Affairs sector.**

Sources revealed that this initiative aims to monitor compliance with laws, regulations and decisions governing cooperative work.

According to the sources, the ministry appointed 12 employees with judicial enforcement authority to carry out oversight and inspection duties at cooperative societies and central markets. They said the enforcement teams regularly conduct field visits, follow up reports and complaints, and uncover violations or transgressions.

Sources clarified that the work of the judicial enforcement teams is not limited to uncovering violations, as it

extends to monitoring the organizational, administrative and financial aspects of the cooperatives in order to guarantee the integrity of procedures and identify the extent of compliance with ministerial decisions and instructions on regulating cooperative work, thus, raising the level of discipline and transparency within the sector.

Sources pointed out that the ministry is focusing on the cooperative sector due to its direct link with the citizens and shareholders. Sources indicated that the judicial enforcement teams are coordinating with other concerned sectors and departments at the ministry to ensure swift action regarding violations and issues.

They confirmed that inspection campaigns in various governorates are ongoing, covering several files related to administrative, financial and investment performance in cooperative societies.

Sources stressed that the ministry is keen on developing its oversight tools and raising the efficiency of field monitoring to guarantee transparency, protect the rights of shareholders, and maintain the stability of the cooperative sector, which is vital because it provides essential services to citizens.

# Jail, heavy fines as new law for maritime companies enforced

KUWAIT CITY, June 7: Decree Law No. 61/2026 on maritime establishments and floating units, which regulates the maritime sector and repeals Decree Law No. 36/1960 on small vessels, was published in the official gazette, 'Kuwait Al-Youm', on Sunday, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The law grants maritime establishments and floating units a grace period not exceeding six months to comply with regulations.

It assigns the responsibility for registration, licensing, inspection, oversight and investigation of maritime accidents to the Maritime Transport Department at the Ministry of Interior.

Owners must provide valid insurance documents before registration, licensing or renewal. The law introduces two new license categories -- Marine Captain A and Marine Captain B, and specifies the conditions for obtaining these licenses.

It permits foreigners to use foreign maritime licenses within Kuwaiti territorial waters for a period not exceeding 90 days.

It stipulates new safety requirements for sea voyages and diving trips, obligating owners to provide rescue and safety equipment and operate the Automatic Identification System (AIS) according to the regulations.

It regulates the operation of marine clubs and maritime commercial activities, as well as the responsibilities of shipping agents, which includes requiring certain foreign vessels to have insurance and provide a bank guarantee of KD100,000.

It granted judicial police powers to employees designated by the minister of the interior and stipulates settlement in a number of violations before referral to investigative authorities.

It stipulates penalties like fines ranging from KD100 to KD20,000, and imprisonment for certain violations. Anyone operating a marine facility or floating unit under the influence of alcohol or drugs will be imprisoned for one to two years and fined up to KD3,000. The penalty increases to imprisonment for seven to 10 years and a fine of KD15,000 to KD20,000 if the violation results in injury or death.

## Other Voices

# Europe, Americas ... African slavery

By Ahmad alsarraf

ACCORDING to historical estimates, approximately 12.5 million Africans were captured and transported through the transatlantic slave trade over four centuries (from the mid-15th century to the 19th century) to the Americas. About 12.5 percent of them died aboard ships during the journey, roughly 1.5 million people.

The transatlantic slave trade reached its peak in the 18th century, during which approximately 6 million Africans were kidnapped, enslaved, and transported. The English slave trade had already reached its height before the American Revolutionary War in 1776.

Some countries were particularly active in the buying and selling of enslaved people, such as Portugal, which was then colonizing Brazil and relied heavily on forced labor for agriculture and mining across its vast territories.

Portugal accounted for about 40 percent of the total number, or roughly 4.5 million people. Britain accounted for approximately 2.5 million enslaved people, in addition to France, Spain, Denmark, and the Netherlands, which maintained around 15 trading posts along the West African coast.

African tribal chiefs were the most active in kidnapping and selling of enslaved people, as Europeans were often reluctant to venture into dense and difficult terrain to carry out such operations. Transactions were frequently conducted in exchange for various goods, particularly weapons, which were used to strengthen tribal power against rival groups.

The African tribes most affected included the Ashanti (present-day Ghana), the Yoruba (present-day Nigeria), the Imbangala (present-day Angola), and the Nyamwezi (present-day Tanzania).

The United States acquired between 300,000 and



alsarraf

500,000 enslaved people, as it had no further need compared to other colonies. The Brazilian economy, by contrast, was heavily dependent on slavery for sugarcane cultivation as well as gold and diamond mining.

The surge in demand for coffee in the 1830s led to a corresponding increase in the demand for enslaved labor. In North America, slavery was primarily concentrated in cotton and tobacco plantations in the southern states. The United States did not prohibit the importation of enslaved people until 1808, more than 200 years after the transatlantic slave trade began.

Denmark was the first country to abolish the transatlantic slave trade in 1792. However, Britain played a major role in enforcing its end. In 1807, its Parliament passed a complete ban on the slave trade throughout the empire.

The United States followed a year later, and Canada followed in 1833. Britain used its navy to combat the slave trade, deploying its massive fleet to monitor, inspect, and seize ships, freeing enslaved people on board, who at one point numbered over 50,000.

Britain also pressured other nations to sign treaties banning the slave trade, which eventually extended to most European countries.

Religious motivations played a role in Britain's decision, driven by pressure from the evangelical movement and prominent abolitionists. Changing economic conditions and the declining importance of some colonies also played a role.

**Note:** The repeated heinous attacks on Kuwait by the Iranian regime are condemned and rejected, and must not weaken our resolve.

Any concession will be the beginning of continued blackmail, and this is unacceptable.

We must continue to be flexible and constructive, repair the damage, and restore operations as quickly as possible.



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# KNG marks almost 6 decades of distinguished service for Kuwait

KUWAIT CITY, June 7, (KUNA): The Kuwait National Guard (KNG) marks its 59th anniversary on June 7, commemorating nearly six decades of distinguished service in safeguarding the homeland, protecting vital installations and providing support to state institutions as part of Kuwait's national security and defense system.

The KNG was established under Decree-Law No. 2 of 1967, issued by the late Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah Al-Ali Al-Salem Al-Sabah, on June 7, 1967. The decree created the National Guard as an independent body separate from the Armed Forces and public security agencies, operating under the Supreme Defense Council.

On the same day, another Amiri decree appointed the late Sheikh Salem Al-Ali Al-Salem Al-Sabah as Chief of the National Guard. He undertook the responsibility of building the institution and laid the foundations for a national force dedicated to serving and protecting Kuwait.

Throughout his leadership, Sheikh Salem Al-Ali guided the National Guard through decades of development, helping establish its standing among Kuwait's defense and security institutions.

His efforts were supported by successive national leaders, including the late Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Amir and Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, KNG Chief Sheikh Mubarak Al-Humoud Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, former Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah and Sheikh Faisal Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah when they assumed the position of Deputy Chief of the KNG, contributing to advancing the Guard's capabilities and operational readiness.

### Pride

Members of the National Guard recall with pride the sacrifices made by their predecessors, particularly during the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in 1990. Many personnel gave their lives in defense of the nation, embodying the values of loyalty, courage and dedication to Kuwait and its leadership.

On October 9, 1994, the late Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah was appointed Deputy Chief of the National Guard with ministerial rank. During nearly nine years in office, he worked to develop KNG by acquiring advanced weapons systems and equipment to strengthen operational efficiency.

Sheikh Nawaf Al-Sabah also attached great importance to training and education, believing that qualified commanders and officers are

essential to enhancing combat readiness. His tenure witnessed continued efforts to improve professional development and raise the standards of military preparedness across the National Guard.

On January 13, 2004, His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, then serving as KNG Deputy Chief, began a new phase of institutional development. Under his leadership, the National Guard adopted modern administrative and organizational practices and expanded professional training programs.

The National Guard further strengthened cooperation with state institutions through joint protocols, exchange of expertise and support during emergencies and crises. These partnerships enhanced their role as a key national support force capable of assisting various government agencies when required.

On November 13, 2024, His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah issued an Amiri decree appointing Sheikh Mubarak Humoud Al-Jaber Al-Sabah as Chief of the National Guard.

The decree establishing the National Guard assigned it the responsibility of assisting the Armed Forces and public security agencies whenever requested, contributing to national defense objectives and carrying out duties entrusted to it by the Supreme Defense Council.

In implementation of the decree, the National Guard undertakes a wide range of missions, including securing strategic facilities, protecting selected diplomatic premises, supporting public security efforts and participating in the protection of military convoys and friendly forces operating in Kuwait.

The National Guard also works alongside the Ministries of Defense and Interior in securing major regional and international events hosted by Kuwait, including Arab, Gulf and international summits. It contributes to protecting delegations and ensuring the smooth conduct of such gatherings.

The National Guard carries out the tasks required of it efficiently



Kuwait National Guard troops in military exercises.

and professionally, which it proved during the recent aggressive Iranian attacks on Kuwait, as they showed readiness and performed their tasks efficiently and competently.

Furthermore, strategic planning has been a cornerstone of the National Guard's development efforts. In 2010, it launched its first strategic plan under the slogan "Security is the Foundation of Development," followed by subsequent plans aimed at strengthening institutional performance, operational readiness and inter-agency cooperation, leading to the strategic plan (2030 - Protecting the Homeland).

### Plans

These plans focused on developing skills, enhancing technical capabilities and expanding cooperation with military and security institutions in friendly and neighboring countries. They also sought to promote innovation and modern management practices across all sectors of the organization.

Among the achievements resulting from this strategic vision was the introduction of rotary-wing aviation capabilities to support rescue, evacuation and operational missions. The National Guard also implemented integrated security systems and digital transformation projects that enhanced administrative efficiency and electronic communications.

The National Guard has further expanded its role as a national support force by establishing specialized units dedicated to assisting state agencies during emergencies. Through training, planning and cooperation agreements, it has strengthened Kuwait's preparedness to confront crises and ensure continuity of essential services.

Large numbers of National Guard personnel have been also enrolled in academic and professional programs inside and outside Kuwait, while specialized training centers have been established to enhance technical skills, language proficiency and the use of modern technologies.

KNG's leadership has also invested in upgrading infrastructure and training facilities, including advanced shooting ranges and modern military training complexes, as well as medical centers, support facilities and service projects for personnel, all in line with international standards.

Kuwait National Guard continues to strengthen its capabilities and reinforce its role as a pillar of national security, committed to protecting the homeland and supporting state institutions in accordance with its founding mission and strategic vision for the future.

## Orders to transfer topmost officials

# MEWRE announces major reshuffle

By Mohammad Ghanem

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 7: Minister of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy Dr. Subaih Al-Mukhaizeem issued 17 administrative decisions on the transfer of officials in various sectors -- four department directors, nine supervisors and four section heads.

### Department Director Transfers

• Eng. Wael Al-Khamis: from Director of Doha East Power Station to Director of Doha West Power Station in the Power and Water Distillation Sector

• Huda Al-Mutairi: from Director of Groundwater Studies and Research (Water Projects Sector) to Director of Electrical Works (Power Stations Sector)

• Abdullah Al-Khashm: from Director of Administrative Development and Training (Planning and Training Sector) to Director of the Computer Center (Financial Affairs Sector)

• Haya Al-Mutairi: from Director of the Legal Department (Undersecretary's Sector) to Director of the Planning and Follow-up Department (Financial Affairs Sector)

### Supervisor Transfers and Appointments

• Eng. Raja Al-Saeed: from Instrumentation Supervisor at West Doha Power Station to Planning Supervisor at Shuwaikh Power Station

• Eng. Jaber Al-Saeedi: from Services and Training Supervisor at Subiya Power Station to the same role at Shuwaikh Power Station

• Eng. Abdullah Al-Saqabi: from Electrical Maintenance Supervisor at Shuwaikh Power Station to Planning Supervisor at South Zour Power Station

• Eng. Abdullah Al-Enezi: from Planning Supervisor at Shuwaikh Power Station to Engineering and Environmental Programs Supervisor in the same station

• Eng. Faisal Al-Mukaimi: appointed as Operations Supervisor for water facilities operation and

maintenance

• Eng. Yasser Al-Haddad: appointed as Maintenance Supervisor

• Eng. Mohammad Al-Shammari: from Mechanical Maintenance Supervisor at West Doha Power Station to the same role at East Doha Power Station

• Eng. Essam Al-Zaid: appointed as Mechanical Maintenance Supervisor at West Doha Power Station

• Noor Al-Enezi: appointed as Follow-up Supervisor in the Planning and Follow-up Department

### Section Head Transfers:

• Jamal Al-Sawagh: from Head of the Movement Office to Head of Maintenance in the Water Operation and Maintenance Sector

• Eng. Aayed Al-Shammari: from Subiya Power Station to Head of Security and Safety at Shuwaikh Power Station

• Eng. Fatima Al-Musbihi: from East Doha Power Station to Head of Security and Safety at Subiya Power Station.

## Kuwait, Gulf too large for regime to swallow

"I WILL not reiterate Iran's intentions toward the Gulf states in general, and Kuwait in particular, as this is now common knowledge. I will not speak of good neighborliness, since one does not make the same mistake twice. The conflict with the Iranians is ancient," columnist Eng. Adel Al-Jarallah Al-Kharafi wrote for Al-Seyassah daily.

"Because the imperial idea still governs the Iranian mindset, Iran constantly seeks expansion and domination over others.

"Whoever is familiar with the nature of the relationship between the Gulf states and Iran is aware of this reality. Despite good popular relations, they remain governed by the idea of expansion.

"A reader of Kuwait's history understands that it is resilient against its enemies despite its small geographical size and population. I am not repeating slogans, nor am I speaking anything but the truth.

"Kuwait, a peaceful nation, pains its enemies because it is part of the Arabs who defeated the Persian Empire at the Battle of Kazma in 633 AD, followed by a series of Arab victories. These victories were not achieved by Iraq alone, but by all the Arabs of the Arabian Peninsula.

"The grandchildren of those ancient Arab warriors continue to resist invaders whose ambitions far exceed their capabilities.

"The greatest victories are those in which a small force defeats a large army. This reaffirms that Kuwait is impervious to Iranian aggression, which repeatedly resorts to ineffective tactics.

"It also confirms that the security of the Gulf is indivisible. Iran attempts to conceal its failures in confronting American attacks by targeting Gulf states to increase the cost of war. These attempts will not benefit Iran; rather, they will increase its losses and deepen its isolation.

"It is assumed that the closest neighbor is the one most concerned with supporting its neighbor. This applies even at the individual level.

"When a person quarrels with most of their neighbors, they lose their sense of security and find no one willing to help them. It takes decades to rebuild trust between neighbors.

"Today, trust between Iran and its neighbors is nonexistent. The erosion of trust began in 1979, when the Revolutionary Guard threatened the security of the Hajj pilgrimage year after year. Since 1980, Iranian-backed groups and their cells have carried out attacks against Gulf states. Kuwait has been among the states most affected by these attacks. In this latest aggression, Iran once again demonstrates its disregard for relations with its neighbors, compelling the Gulf states, especially Kuwait, to act decisively to repel this aggression.

"The Gulf states will remain too large for Iran to swallow, and Kuwait will remain resilient in the face of aggression."

### Also:

"Kuwait briefly closed its main airport following Iranian attacks that caused significant damage to a passenger terminal early on Wednesday morning, June 3, resulting in one death and dozens of injuries. This is not the first time Iran has attacked Kuwait," columnist Ahmad Al-Dawas wrote for Al-Seyassah daily.

"Iran sent members of the Revolutionary Guard to infiltrate Kuwait through Boubyan Island to carry out acts of sabotage, but they were apprehended by security forces. From time to time, Iranian drug-smuggling boats enter Kuwaiti territory.

"What a terrible neighbor! Iran is filled with hatred and resentment toward Arabs. Despite this, Iranians speak Arabic and are compelled to use the Arabic script. Fire-worshipping Persia is gone. Iran must forget its dream of restoring its glorious past.

"Were it not for the Arabs, Persia would not have developed advanced medicine or a civilized culture.

"Iran has no role in the international community. It does not benefit the world; rather, it harms it, while the Arabs contribute to the world through charitable funds and humanitarian organizations.

"The Arab world is peaceful by nature, yet it has long been troubled by a difficult neighbor, Iran, which has boasted of its revolution since 1979.

"This revolution was not led solely by Islamists. Rather, it brought together diverse segments of Iranian society, including Marxists, liberals, and Islamists, all united in opposition to the Shah's regime.

"The situation quickly descended into civil war after the Shah's overthrow. Each faction turned its weapons against the others.

"Ultimately, Ayatollah Khomeini's forces seized power. Those who participated in the revolution chanted, 'Death to the Shah, long live free-

dom,' not, 'Death to the Shah; we accept that Iran be ruled by the clergy and the military establishment."

"Iran has pursued policies aimed at expanding its political influence throughout the region. One of the contradictions of Iranian foreign policy is that Tehran declares its commitment to a peaceful course while simultaneously proclaiming support for the oppressed peoples of Bahrain and Yemen, and asserting its right to 'militarily invade Kuwait to protect the House of the Prophet (PBUH)'"

"On June 28, 2015, Mohammad Karim Abadi, a member of the Iranian Parliament's National Security and Foreign Policy Committee, declared Iran's ability to overthrow the regimes of the Gulf states.

"Iran is a backward country ruled by a dictatorial regime that closely resembles North Korea's, which neglects the welfare of its citizens in favor of armament.

"The West's previous agreement with Iran and the suspension of its nuclear program for 15 years were part of expectations that a coup might occur against the Iranian sectarian regime.

"Iran is consumed by political arrogance, a medieval mindset, and adventurism in other countries. It has interfered in the internal affairs of four Arab countries, an act condemned internationally and contrary to international law. Iran has exerted significant influence over Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, and Yemen, contributing to their destruction, the loss of many lives, and widespread damage to property.

"We have stated that Iran is a backward country that neglects its internal situation and resorts to displays of power against its neighbors. Therefore, Iranians protest in the streets from time to time because they suffer from difficult living conditions such as high prices, drought and water crises, the collapse of the Iranian currency, unemployment, and poverty. These circumstances have led some Iranians to convert to other religions, according to The New York Times on March 25, 2018.

"In an article in The Economist on January 23, 2021, nostalgia for the Shah's era, when life was better, was expressed. Others felt their youth had been wasted as they heard about the nuclear program. Iranians yearn for the downfall of the current regime in their country because it has deprived them of dignity, freedom, and the most basic necessities for a decent life. Will the Iranian regime fall as other despotic regimes have?"

"Rental disputes have recently increased significantly, particularly those involving eviction, unpaid rent, and demands for rent increases. This highlights the importance of both landlords and tenants understanding the legal rights and obligations that govern the rental relationship, especially the provisions applicable to residential and investment properties," Kuwaiti lawyer Sarah Al-Jassem wrote for Al-Seyassah daily.

"The legislature has established laws designed to ensure a fair balance between the rights of both parties. A landlord cannot evict a tenant arbitrarily and may do so only under specific circumstances, such as the tenant's failure to pay rent within the legally prescribed period or subletting the property without the landlord's consent. Other grounds for eviction include causing substantial damage to the property, using it for activities that violate public order or morals, or using it for purposes other than those for which it was intended.

"Tenants, in turn, have the right to challenge an eviction if it is based on invalid grounds or if the landlord fails to comply with the procedures stipulated by law.

"Rent increases are among the most common disputes between parties in a rental relationship, particularly in investment properties. The nature of these disputes varies depending on the terms of the lease agreement and the degree of contractual freedom afforded to the parties, compared to residential properties, which in some cases are subject to legal protections and special regulations that take into account social and housing considerations.

"The difference between residential and investment properties lies in the nature of their use and the legal implications associated with each. Residential property is connected to the basic human need for housing and stability, whereas investment property is primarily intended as a real estate asset for generating profit. This distinction is reflected in the regulation of the contractual relationship and the level of flexibility granted in determining rent, renewing leases, or terminating contracts."

— Compiled by Simi K. Kutty



Farwaniya Governorate photo  
Farwaniya Governor Sheikh Athbi Nasser Al-Athbi Al-Sabah and officials of various departments.

## Parties deliberate on crossroads alteration

KUWAIT CITY, June 7: Farwaniya Governor Sheikh Athbi Nasser Al-Athbi Al-Sabah on Sunday held a meeting with Chairman of the Complaints and Petitions Committee at the Farwaniya Governorate Council Dr. Al-Mundhir Al-Hasawi, and committee members retired Lieutenant General Ali Al-Shanfa, Sa'ad Al-Hadba and Hessa Al-Mutawa.

Also present at the meeting were Ministry of Public Works representative Eng. Mohammad Boursli, representative of the General Traffic Department-Roads Engineering Eng. Khaled Al-Ghanim Department, and Public Authority for Agriculture Affairs and Fish Resources (PAAAFR) representative Eng. Raed Al-Failakawi.

They deliberated on the development of the intersection in front of Farwaniya Hospital, reviewed the technical aspects of the project and the views presented by the relevant authorities, and discussed the measures taken and technical observations on the site.

The Governor underscored the importance of the project in ensuring smooth traffic flow and road

safety, and better serving visitors to Farwaniya Hospital and the surrounding areas. He called for continuous coordination among the concerned parties to complete the procedures as per the approved technical frameworks.

After the meeting, the chairman and members of the committee, and the representatives of the relevant government agencies, visited the project site to assess the location, review technical observations, and explore ways to expedite the completion of the project.

Meanwhile, Al-Hasawi confirmed that the committee is following up the project in coordination with the concerned authorities as per the directives of the Governor. He said the project is vital in improving traffic flow and in serving the residents of the governorate.

He added the visit was aimed at determining the needs of the site and address the technical aspects in preparation for completing the necessary procedures.

# 'Over 47% completion rate in familial cases'

Court rejects accreditation of private university

By Jaber Al-Hamoud

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

**KUWAIT CITY, June 7: Statistics released by the Statistics and Research Department at the Ministry of Justice revealed that the overall completion rate in the family courts under the Court of First Instance reached 47.4 percent in April 2026, when 2,346 out of 4,949 pending cases were resolved, while the total number of new cases received within the same month reached 1,616.**

The Capital Court recorded the highest number of new cases at 19.9 percent of the total and the highest percentage of pending

cases at 21.5 percent. Mubarak Al-Kabeer Court ranked last in terms of new cases received at 11.7 percent, and in terms of pending cases at 9.7 percent.

On resolved cases, the Hawally Court recorded the highest at 22.4 percent, while Mubarak Al-Kabeer Court recorded the lowest at 10.4 percent.

The Hawally Court also achieved the highest completion rate among the family courts at 52.2 percent, while the Jahra Court recorded the lowest at 42.3 percent.

Regarding electronic notices, the statistics showed that the family court notice departments received 3,286 electronic notices in April and 3,224 of which were processed -- a completion rate of 98.1 percent. Hawally Court topped the list with 100 percent completion rate, followed by Mubarak Al-Kabeer Court with 99.7 percent, Ahmadi

Court with 98.6 percent, Jahra Court with 98.5 percent, Capital Court with 97.1 percent and Farwaniya Court with 95.8 percent.

**No to accreditation:** The Administrative Court of Cassation upheld the actions of the Ministry of Higher Education and the Council of Private Universities in refusing to accredit a private medical university due to irregularities in its academic procedures, reports Al-Jarida daily.

The court rejected the university's appeal for accreditation, confirming that it had operated in violation of the procedures of the Council of Private Universities. The ruling also resulted in the suspension of the university's activities, the invalidation of its programs, and the annulment of its student registration process.



Farwaniya Governorate photo  
Farwaniya Governor Sheikh Athbi Nasser Al-Athbi Al-Sabah meets Director of the Farwaniya Governorate Criminal Investigation Department Colonel Ahmed Al-Yassin.

## Call to tighten grip on security and stability

KUWAIT CITY, June 7: Farwaniya Governor Sheikh Athbi Nasser Al-Athbi Al-Sabah met with acting Director of the Farwaniya Governorate Criminal Investigation Department Colonel Ahmed Al-Yassin in his office on Sunday, as part of efforts to strengthen coordination between the governorate and security agencies.

During the meeting, they discussed many topics of mutual interest and ways to support security efforts and solidify coordination in maintaining security and stability and to better serve the residents of the governorate. They also followed up security issues within the governorate.

## Mol launches paperless service at Ardiya center

By Munif Naif

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 7: The Ministry of Interior launched its 'paperless' service at the Citizen Service Center in Ardiya on Sunday.

In an explanatory video uploaded on the official account of the ministry on the X platform, it revealed that the service allows the paperless completion of all transactions through authentication on the Kuwait Mobile ID application, thereby, eliminating the need for paper documents or printing.

This service is included in the plan of the ministry to develop its digital services and to save the time and effort of the public.

## Kuwaiti father and his son escape death

KUWAIT CITY, June 7: A Kuwaiti citizen and his son narrowly escaped death after their vehicle caught fire while driving on Abdali Road. They managed to exit the car in the initial moments before the flames engulfed the entire vehicle, reports Al-Anba daily.

According to a security source, the Ministry of Interior's Control room received a report of the vehicle fire on Saturday afternoon, after which security personnel and firefighters immediately rushed to the scene. Upon arrival, they found that the fire had consumed a large portion of the vehicle. Firefighters extinguished the blaze, and no casualties were recorded.

An investigation was launched to determine the cause of the fire. Initial reports suggest the incident may have been caused by a mechanical malfunction or an electrical short circuit inside the vehicle.

**Sleeping under car:** An individual, who was found asleep under a vehicle in a state suspected to be the result of alcohol consumption, has been referred to Salmiya Police Station, reports Al-Anba daily.

According to security sources, when the Control Room of the Ministry of Interior received a report about a man lying under a car in Salmiya, a patrol was immediately dispatched to the location to assess his condition.

When the officers found the man, he appeared to be heavily intoxicated. He was taken into custody for necessary legal action.

## Many chalets erupt in blaze

By Munif Naif

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff


KUWAIT CITY, June 7: Firefighters extinguished the fire that broke out Saturday morning at a lumber warehouse in Dajeej.

No injuries were reported and the damage was limited to material losses.


According to the Kuwait Fire Force (KFF), the firefighting teams from Sumoud and Istiqlal fire stations controlled the warehouse fire.

In another incident, fire broke out in several prefabricated chalets in Amghara on Saturday afternoon.

KFF stated in a press release that firefighters from the Al-Tahrir, Al-Jahra, Al-Qairawan, and Support centers rushed to the location after receiving information about the fire incident, and extinguished the fire. No injuries were reported.



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# Kuwait's Kholoud Al-Ajmi honored in Youth Creativity Award for Data



Honorees of the Gulf Youth Creativity Award.

KUNA photo

DOHA, June 7, (KUNA): Kuwait's Kholoud Al-Ajmi has been honored for winning the second position in the "Youth Creativity Award in the World of Data", during a ceremony held in Qatar's capital, Doha, late Saturday.

The event, which featured a galaxy of Gulf youth interested in data, statistics and digital innovation areas, took place on the Gulf Youth Day and targeted Gulf youth aged 18-34.

It aims to discover promising talents in data, backs young minds and encourages innovation in using data and analyze it to prepare a generation able to turn data into knowledge, and knowledge to a positive impact.

Qatar's Ministry of Sports and Youth, in collaboration with the National Plan-

ning Council's National Statistics Center (NSC) and GCC-Stat, organized the award, as part of continued efforts to boost Gulf efforts in investment.

Secretary-General of the National Planning Council Dr. Abdulaziz Al Khalifa said that the most important appearance of power in today's world is how to be able to get knowledge and make sense of data, converting it into tools that create a more powerful and successful future for nations and communities.

Meanwhile, Director General of GCC-Stat Intisar Al Wuhaibiyah expressed her happiness for the success of the award's first edition, describing it one of the region's top initiatives in engaging youth in statistics, data, and AI.

# 'Guide Me' drive meets goals

MoHE extends scholarship support services

**KUWAIT CITY, June 7: Undersecretary of the Ministry of Higher Education, Dr. Bader Al-Basiri, affirmed the success of the national scholarship campaign "Guide Me" in achieving its awareness and guidance objectives for students and their parents, reports Al-Seyassah daily.**

This came during the closing ceremony of the five-day campaign held at The Avenues Mall, which witnessed the participation of several governmental and academic entities.

Al-Basiri explained that the campaign witnessed a notable turnout from students and parents, receiving 1,119 visitors on the first day, 1,121 on the second, 936 on the third, 1,167 on the fourth, and 979 on the

fifth, bringing the total number of beneficiaries to 5,275.

These numbers reflect the keen interest of students and their parents in learning about scholarship plans, specializations, accredited and distinguished universities, and the various application procedures.

He stressed that the campaign does not end with the conclusion of its field activities, as the Ministry of Higher Education continues to provide guidance and awareness services through its official social media accounts, by publishing information and instructions related to scholarship plans and answering frequently asked questions.

Al-Basiri explained that the "Guide Me" campaign will continue even after the ac-

ceptance phase. A technical support center will be located in Sanabel Tower from July 1 to 7 to assist students during the application period, in addition to maintaining direct communication with them via the "Skip Line" service to answer inquiries and provide necessary guidance.

The ministry will organize an orientation meeting for students accepted into scholarship programs, with the aim of familiarizing them with the academic and administrative procedures and requirements, and providing them with the necessary information and guidance to prepare them for the scholarship phase and their studies abroad.

Al-Basiri expressed his gratitude and appreciation to the campaign's strategic partner, Kuwait Finance House, the Civil Service Commission, the National Bureau for Academic Accreditation and Education Quality Assurance, and all participating governmental and private entities.



Dr. Al-Basiri



Farwaniya Governorate photo  
Farwaniya Governor Sheikh Athbi Nasser Al-Athbi Al-Sabah receives Indian Ambassador Paramita Tripathi during a courtesy visit, as they exchange views and a commemorative gift.

Governorate's public role hailed

## Farwaniya Governor, Indian envoy vow to boost strategic cooperation

**KUWAIT CITY, June 7:** Governor of Farwaniya Sheikh Athbi Nasser Al-Athbi Al-Sabah had a meeting with Ambassador of the Republic of India to the State of Kuwait Paramita Tripathi at his office on Sunday.

They talked about ways to strengthen bilateral relations and exchanged views on several topics of mutual interest.

Sheikh Athbi Nasser welcomed Ambassador Tripathi, while confirming the deep-rooted and distinguished historical ties between Kuwait and India and the continuous development of such ties in various fields.

He said the Farwaniya Governorate remains committed to enhancing communication and solidifying cooperation with all diplomatic missions to serve shared interests and strengthen the friendship between the two nations.

On the other hand, Ambassador Tripathi expressed her sincere gratitude to the Governor for the warm reception.

She commended the governorate for its role in serving the community and affirmed that India is keen on bolstering cooperation and friendship with the State of Kuwait, wishing more progress and prosperity for Kuwait.

Registration runs June 10 to 24

## PAM opens 70 co-op leadership positions for Kuwaiti graduates

By Fares Ghaleb

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

**KUWAIT CITY, June 7:** The Public Authority for Manpower (PAM) announced the availability of 70 supervisory and leadership positions in cooperative societies for Kuwaiti university graduates and experienced professionals, indicating that registration is through the 'Fakhruna' platform on June 10-24.

The authority revealed that the available positions include 17 general managers, 15 deputy general managers for commercial and marketing affairs, 12 deputy general managers for financial and administrative affairs, five legal affairs heads, six procurement heads, four investment branches heads, one Information Technology Department head, two administrative affairs heads, three accounting department heads, and three public relations and media heads.

It clarified that the experience requirement varies depending on the position, ranging from five to 15 years. It added that the required documents are bachelor's degree certificate, experience certificate and resume, stressing that a job seeker can apply only for one position and the deadline for application is at 12:00 noon on June 24.

PAM revealed that the available positions are in a large number of cooperative societies in various parts of the country, as well as the Consumer Cooperative Societies Union, thereby, providing diverse career opportunities for qualified Kuwaitis who are looking for supervisory and leadership positions in the cooperative sector.

The participating entities included the following:

Keifan Cooperative Society, Jabriya Cooperative Society, Sulaibikhat Cooperative Society, Doha Cooperative Society, Shaab Cooperative Society, Jaber Al-Ahmad Cooperative Society, Andalous Cooperative Society, Riggae Cooperative Society, Mubarak Al-Kabeer Coopera-

tive Society, Qurain Cooperative Society, Siddiq Cooperative Society, Abdullah Al-Mubarak Cooperative Society, Khaitan Cooperative Society, Wafra Residential Cooperative Society, Shuhada Cooperative Society, Salam Cooperative Society, Surra Cooperative Society, Egaila Cooperative Society, Salmiya Cooperative Society, Naem Cooperative Society, Masayel Cooperative Society, Sharq Cooperative Society, Abdullah Al-Salem Suburb Cooperative Society, Mansouriya Cooperative Society, Jahra Cooperative Society, Ardiya Cooperative Society, Faiha Cooperative Society, Khaldiya Cooperative Society, Mishref Cooperative Society, Yarmouk Cooperative Society, Fahaheel Cooperative Society, Naseem Cooperative Society, Sabah Al-Nasser Suburb Cooperative Society, Livestock Cooperative Society, Sabahiya Cooperative Society, Ali Sabah Al-Salem Suburb Cooperative Society, Rumaihiya Cooperative Society, Qurtuba Cooperative Society, Abdali Agricultural Cooperative Society, Adan and Al-Qousour Cooperative Society, Al-Riqqa Cooperative Society, Al-Rawda and Hawally Cooperative Society, Al-Rabia Cooperative Society, Ishbiliya Cooperative Society, Al-Manqaf Cooperative Society, Jaber Al-Ali Cooperative Society, Al-Adailiya Cooperative Society, Abu Futaira Cooperative Society, Qadisiya Cooperative Society, Hattin Cooperative Society, Abu Halifa Cooperative Society, Nuzha Cooperative Society, Northwest Sulaibikhat Cooperative Society, Hadiya Cooperative Society, Shamiya and Shuwaikh Cooperative Society, Sulaibiya Cooperative Society, Sabah Al-Salem Suburb Cooperative Society, West Abdullah Al-Mubarak Cooperative Society, Al-Wafra Agricultural Cooperative Society, Al-Zahraa Cooperative Society, Mangaf Cooperative Society, Al-Qairawan Cooperative Society, Al-Fintas Cooperative Society and the Union of Consumer Cooperative Societies.

## MEWRE approves 3,718 promotions

**KUWAIT CITY, June 7:** The Undersecretary of the Ministry of Electricity, Water, and Renewable Energy, Dr. Adel Al-Zamel, approved the lists of promotions for ministry employees (career progression), based on the job grade each employee deserves and the corresponding financial value, reports Al-Jarida daily.

The decision indicated that the list includes approximately 3,718 engineers, administrators, legal and financial personnel, technicians, computer staff, secretaries, and others.

The decision aims to motivate national

talent, enhance the work environment in accordance with civil service regulations, clearly define career paths, and ensure fairness and transparency in promotions.

It is worth noting that promoting a junior engineer to engineer entails a salary increase of KD 110, promoting an engineer to senior engineer entails a KD 165 increase, promoting a senior engineer to specialist engineer entails a KD 70 increase, promoting a specialist engineer to senior specialist engineer entails a KD 75 increase, and promoting a senior specialist engineer to chief engineer entails a KD 85 increase.

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Authority promotes healthy food practices and consumer protection

PAFN launches food safety awareness campaign at Capital Mall

**By Marwa Al-Bahrawi**  
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff  
KUWAIT CITY, June 7: The Public Authority for Food and Nutrition (PAFN) inaugurated its awareness pavilion at the Capital Mall, on the occasion of World Food Safety Day

2026, which is part of its ongoing efforts to raise public awareness on the importance of food safety and its vital role in protecting consumers and public health.  
In a press statement, the authority confirmed that the pavilion aims

to promote a healthy food culture and introduce best practices related to food safety through interactive displays and educational materials, providing visitors with simplified information and guidance on safe food handling methods and ways to

prevent risks associated with food contamination.  
The pavilion highlights the regulatory and awareness roles of PAFN in monitoring food products and ensuring their compliance with health requirements to

strengthen the food security system and protect consumers.  
The authority affirmed that its participation in this global event is in line with its commitment to reinforce the concept that food safety is a shared responsibility requiring

cooperation between regulatory bodies, the food sector and consumers.  
It also underscored the importance of raising awareness about safe food practices to reduce food-related health risks.

Continued from Page 1

Iran has

The situation in Yemen is different, because even today it continues to pose a significant threat to the Bab al-Mandab Strait and the Gulf states as long as the Houthis group remains in power in Sana'a.  
Therefore, any change in Iran must be followed by an end to the abnormal situation in Sana'a.  
This does not mean that the Yemeni government in Aden is demanding compensation for the damages caused by Iranian intervention. This is a right of the Yemeni people, a large percentage of whom have been driven below the poverty line and are suffering from hunger due to Iran.

Regarding Lebanon, President Joseph Aoun and Prime Minister Nawaf Salam addressed the matter in their interview on CNN. They called for Iran to cease interfering in Lebanese affairs and held it responsible for the recent war, which caused direct losses of approximately \$29 billion.

According to these estimates, Iran owes the Gulf states and the four Arab countries over \$120 billion.

Therefore, the US administration's smart move to utilize frozen Iranian assets for reconstruction is a step in the right direction. However, it would require a binding international resolution. This UN resolution should be under Chapter VII of the UN Charter to allocate a portion of Iranian revenues towards compensation payments in the future, similar to what was done in the case of Saddam Hussein's regime.

The region, which has suffered under the terrorist regime of the mullahs, deserves to regain growth and stability, free from the headache of terrorism, the concept of "exporting revolutions," and other factors that have led Gulf states to spend significant time and money in confronting Iranian terrorism.

Billion-dollar

Furthermore, it stressed that the seriousness of the incident was compounded by the fact that it occurred only 48 hours after the reopening of Terminal 1 and the resumption of operations by Arab and foreign airlines following repairs and rehabilitation works carried out after an earlier attack on the airport on February 28.  
Kuwait had made significant efforts to restore the vital facility and resume air navigation operations in a safe and normal manner before the latest incident occurred, it added.

In its letter, the authority called on ICAO to take urgent and decisive measures to ensure the protection of civil airspace and aviation facilities, prevent the recurrence of such violations and hold those responsible accountable in accordance with international law and globally recognized aviation safety and security standards.

The authority reaffirmed that Kuwait reserves all its rights under international law to take appropriate measures to safeguard its sovereignty, security, airspace and civil facilities and to ensure the safety of passengers, employees and infrastructure affiliated with Kuwait International Airport.

Against this backdrop, Arab Parliament Speaker Mohammad Al-Yamahi strongly condemned the repeated Iranian attacks on Kuwait and Bahrain, describing them as flagrant violations of international law and infringements on sovereignty. He warned that continued escalation risks undermining regional stability and broadening the conflict, urging the international community to take decisive action.

Al-Yamahi reaffirmed the Arab Parliament's solidarity with Kuwait and Bahrain, voicing full support for measures to safeguard national security, protect civilians and secure critical infrastructure. He stressed that Gulf security is integral to broader Arab national security and called on the UN Security Council to fulfill its responsibilities in halting the violations and preventing

further escalation.

Echoing these concerns, Yemen's government condemned the Iranian strikes on Bahrain as a dangerous escalation and a clear violation of sovereignty and territorial integrity. In a statement, the Foreign Ministry accused Iran of pursuing destabilizing policies through direct attacks and proxy groups, reaffirming full support for Bahrain's right to defend its security.

Similarly, the Palestinian Ministry of Foreign Affairs denounced the missile attacks on Kuwait and Bahrain as a breach of international law and the UN Charter, warning they pose a serious threat to Gulf stability. It expressed full solidarity with both countries and support for all measures taken to safeguard their sovereignty, security and the safety of their populations.

In latest development, Pakistan's interior minister was in Tehran on Sunday in a fresh bid to restart negotiations between Iran and the U.S., as the American military said it shot down two more Iranian drones over the Strait of Hormuz that threatened international maritime traffic.

The latest action came as the U.S. administration presses Iran to make a deal to end the war in the Middle East, which has strained the global economy and threatened a hunger crisis in some of the world's most vulnerable countries.

The heaviest fighting ended with a preliminary ceasefire on April 8, but the sides have not been able to agree on a long-term end to the war.

Fighting between Israel and the Lebanese militant group Hezbollah continued, meanwhile, despite last week's announcement that a U.S.-brokered ceasefire had been extended.

Israel struck southern Beirut suburbs on Sunday. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said the strikes were in retaliation for the Hezbollah militant group firing towards northern Israel earlier. Hezbollah did not immediately claim responsibility for those strikes.

Pakistani Interior Minister Mohsin

Naqvi is in Tehran to deliver a message to Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Mojtaba Khamenei from Pakistan's army chief Field Marshal Asim Munir, according to Iranian state-run IRNA news agency.

Khamenei has not been seen in public since he was named the Islamic Republic's ruler after his father was killed on the first day of the war on Feb. 28 when the U.S. and Israel launched a bombardment campaign against Iran.

Naqvi met with Iranian Interior Minister Eskandar Momeni late Saturday, and held talks Sunday morning with Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi, according to official Iranian media.

There were no details on the contents of the message. Pakistani authorities have said Islamabad, with support from regional countries including Qatar, Turkey and Egypt, has been working to help bridge differences between the United States and Iran and encourage efforts aimed at reducing tensions and ensuring the reopening of the Strait of Hormuz.

Meanwhile, the new ceasefire in Lebanon, which was announced during U.S.-brokered talks between Israel and Lebanon in Washington last week, did not appear to be holding.

The Iranian-backed Hezbollah has rejected the U.S.-brokered deal and instead endorsed Iran's demand that ending the war in Lebanon be part of the negotiations with the U.S.

Israel struck what it said were over 150 Hezbollah military sites over the weekend, including rocket launchers and command centers, across southern Lebanon.

Early Sunday, Israel identified at least five projectiles launched from Lebanon toward northern Israel, which were intercepted or fell in open areas. Hezbollah did not immediately claim to have fired projectiles at Israel. However, the militant group acknowledged it attacked Israeli troops in southern Lebanon.

Meanwhile, The Lebanese Ministry of Public Health announced Sunday, that the death toll from Israeli occupa-

tion attacks on Lebanon has risen to 3,613 people.

According to the daily report issued by the ministry's Health Emergency Operations Center, the total number of people killed as a result of Israeli occupation's attacks on Lebanon from March 2 to June 7 has increased to 3,613, with 11,072 others wounded.

In a related development on the ground, Israeli forces targeted the outskirts of Al-Rayhan in the Jezzine area of southern Lebanon with cluster bombs. Israeli warplanes also carried out airstrikes on villages in the Nabatieh district, causing deaths and injuries.

Lebanon has witnessed a major military escalation since March 2, with intense airstrikes carried out by Israeli aircraft across various Lebanese regions.

The attacks have resulted in thousands of deaths and injuries, caused widespread destruction of residential buildings and infrastructure, and led to the displacement of hundreds of thousands of people

MEWRE sets

He asserted that this is a major turning point in the intensified efforts of the ministry to expand its services and improve performance quality in line with the New Kuwait 2035 vision, and to create a more effective, sustainable and inclusive digital government system.

He expressed heartfelt appreciation to the national institutions, government agencies and partners that helped complete the project and provided assistance to reach this milestone.

He reaffirmed the commitment of the ministry to develop its digital services to fulfill the goals of all recipients and raise societal living standards.

He prayed to Almighty Allah to keep the State of Kuwait safe and sustain its blessings of prosperity, security and stability under its astute political leadership.

On the other hand, Fahad Al-Enezi,

Head of the Public Relations Committee at the Kuwaiti Association for the Blind, expressed his deep gratitude to the ministry for this innovative digital initiative, which serves a huge segment of the visually impaired community.

Al-Enezi stressed that adding screen reader technology to the website and offering transactions and documents in Braille are innovative ways to empower the blind and ease their integration into society.

He praised the dedication of the ministry to implement the best international standards for digital accessibility.

Khaled Al-Mutairi, President of Kuwait Sports Club for the Deaf, commended the cutting-edge initiative, calling it a remarkable advancement in making processes and transactions easier for the hearing-impaired population. He praised the availability of digital translations of the website's content, as well as the live sign language video calls with ministry staff.

He affirmed that these tools help break down communication barriers, increase the independence of the deaf and hard-of-hearing community, and provide them with more opportunities for direct communication and independent service access, while preserving their dignity and fostering their integration into society.

Fawaz Al-Hasban, Ambassador of the International Alliance of the Deaf and Blind, expressed happiness over the ministry's dedication to implement cutting-edge technological solutions that help people with hearing and visual impairments, as well as other groups, overcome obstacles while respecting human diversity in society.

Ahmed Al-Muqallad, a member of the website team at the ministry, assessed the main features of the new digital system, as well as how it operates to cover the needs of individuals with disabilities.

In addition, the ministry received the ISO/IEC 40500 certification for online digital accessibility for individuals with disabilities on the sidelines of the event.



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Female Navy officers fear career cap after Hegseth cuts women from promotions list

## US president calls for military to accelerate use of AI while protecting Americans

WASHINGTON, June 7, (AP) — US President Donald Trump issued a memo Friday that calls for the US military and national security agencies to accelerate their use of artificial intelligence, while acknowledging the need to protect civil liberties and maintain oversight over autonomous weapon systems.

The memo comes at a time of growing anxiety over AI in American society, from replacing people's jobs to helping to identify targets on the battlefield. The Trump administration has been pushing to unleash the power of AI for the US military, while some military leaders and companies that contract with the Pentagon have been noting caution and calling for guardrails.

Trump's memo addressed much of his Cabinet, including the secretaries of defense and homeland security as well as the attorney general and director of national intelligence.

Trump is requiring an updated directive on autonomous weapon systems to account for AI's rapidly evolving capabilities. It directs the Department of Defense "to ensure the deliberate adoption of AI systems that respect the chain of command and operational authorities."

The current directive, issued in 2023 under the Biden administration, states that such weapons systems will be designed "to allow commanders and operators to exercise appropriate levels of human judgment over the use of force," according to the Congressional Research Service.

Trump's memo also restricts the use of AI to "ensure free speech, embed ideological bias, or conduct unlawful surveillance against the American people."

"The use of AI by the national security enterprise must always be consistent with United States civil liberties and protections afforded by the Constitution and laws and regulations safeguarding the privacy of American citizens," the memo states.

The Defense Department has already been accelerating its use of AI in recent years. The technology can help reduce the time it takes to identify and strike a target, while aiding in the mundane tasks of organizing equipment maintenance, supply lines and other logistics.

But concerns about protecting civil liberties and human oversight of autonomous weapon systems have drawn increasing attention. They're at the center of a dispute that erupted this year as the Pentagon seeks to leverage the power of American tech companies to boost the military's AI capabilities.

The company Anthropic said it wanted assurances in its contract that the military would not use its technology in fully autonomous weapons and the surveillance of Americans. Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth said the company must allow for any uses



The Pentagon is seen from Air Force One as it flies over Washington on March 2, 2022. (AP)

the Pentagon deemed lawful.

Anthropic sued after Trump tried to stop all federal agencies from using the company's chatbot Claude and Hegseth sought to label the company a supply chain risk, a designation meant to protect against sabotage of national security systems by foreign adversaries.

Concerns about military use of AI arose during Israel's war against militants in Gaza and Lebanon, with US tech giants quietly empowering Israel to track targets. But the number of civilians killed also soared, fueling fears that these tools contributed to the deaths of

innocent people.

US military leaders who attended an annual special forces conference in Tampa, Florida, spoke about the benefits of AI as well as the need for human safeguards.

Adm. Frank Bradley, head of US Special Operations Command, told attendees 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."

Also:

**WASHINGTON:** After US Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth cut nine Navy officers, including all the women, from a promotion list, several female officers say they see the unusual intervention as a sign that their careers now have a ceiling and worry for the future generation of female military leaders.

The Navy had selected 31 sailors to promote from the rank of captain to one-star admiral, but Hegseth recently intervened to strike nine people from the list, including three women and two Black men, according to a defense official who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss information not permitted to be released publicly.

As a result, the Navy is not promoting a single woman to the one-star admiral rank this year even though women make up about one-quarter of all Navy officers and nearly one-third of the sea service's midgrade ranks, according to military data from 2024.

The Associated Press spoke with eight female Navy officers of varying ranks and time in service after Hegseth's cuts, which were reported earlier by The New York Times, became public. They spoke on condition of anonymity out of fear of retribution from their superiors.

The more junior officers said they

saw the development as a sign that their careers would become politicized if they rose too far in the ranks, and some said they felt they now had a limit on how far they could be promoted. Some said it made them feel less valued within the military and wondered whether that wasn't part of the intent.

The Pentagon has not offered any rationale on why the women, or any of the other six people, were removed from the promotion list.

Sean Parnell, the Pentagon's top spokesman, said on social media this week that "military promotions are given to those who have earned them" and that the Pentagon "will never consider the color of a service member's skin or their gender as a factor in promotions." The Pentagon did not immediately respond to a request seeking further comment.

The Navy's process for choosing which officers to promote to the one-star rank has been relatively constant and transparent over the years. The service convenes a group of officers, called a promotion board, that examines the records of eligible officers and chooses the most qualified.

The board that selected the initial slate of 31 officers for promotion was directed by then-Navy Secretary John Phelan, an appointee of President Donald Trump, to "recommend for promotion the best qualified officers within their respective competitive category."



Police investigate where multiple people were shot at a community festival at Agnes Reynolds Jackson Arboretum on June 6, in Toledo, Ohio. (AP)

### Ohio street festival shooting injures 12

Gunfire erupted Saturday near a busy street festival in Ohio, wounding at least 12 people and sending some eventgoers scrambling for cover while others rushed to help the victims.

No suspects were in custody hours afterward, Toledo Deputy Police Chief Joe Heffernan said, and officials urged people who were at the festival to come forward

with any photos or videos on their phones for possible leads.

The shooting happened near the Old West End Festival, an annual gathering of live music and home tours.

Heffernan said it appeared that at least two people fired weapons and they were "probably shooting at each other." Two of the victims were in criti-

cal condition, Heffernan added. The ages of the victims ranged from 14 to 61, with most of them in their early 20s.

"I am deeply concerned about the situation in Toledo tonight," Ohio Gov. Mike DeWine said in a statement. "Summer festivals should be safe spaces for families to spend time together without fear of violence." (AP)

## Trump looms large over upcoming primary elections in Washington, DC

WASHINGTON, June 7, (AP) — The last time Washington, DC, residents chose a new delegate to Congress and a new mayor in the same election, gas was \$1.33 a gallon and George H.W. Bush was president.

This fall they will do it again — under starkly different circumstances.

As the city heads toward pivotal primaries this month to pick candidates for those roles, President Donald Trump's influence on the nation's capital is shaping up as a major campaign issue. The fresh slate of candidates is weighing how best to approach Trump's Republican administration and congressional control over the heavily Democratic city's affairs.

"It's going to be a big sea change in city politics, no matter how the elections shake out," said Amanda Huron, a professor at the University of the District of Columbia who teaches courses on DC history and politics. But Washington's lack of full autonomy brings "all sorts of peculiarities around the city's governance."

Since Trump returned to office last year, the National Guard is on an open-ended deployment as part of what he calls a crime-fighting mis-



District of Columbia Mayor Muriel Bowser attends a news conference following a shooting at the White House Correspondents' Association Dinner in Washington, on April 25. (AP)

sion. He is putting his personal imprint on the city's storied landmarks. And major cuts to the federal workforce have compounded economic pressures on the capital, which has one of the country's highest unemployment rates.

The city has long had a unique, if fraught, relationship with the federal

government: While residents can vote for their local leaders, they are limited by Washington's status as a federal district in how much influence they can actually have on the city's affairs. That limited autonomy has been further squeezed under Trump and his federal law enforcement takeover, launched last year.

## Starmmer hosts Zelenskyy, Macron as Russian strikes kill three in Ukraine

LONDON, June 7, (AP) — A Russian drone strike killed three people waiting at a bus stop in southeastern Ukraine on Sunday, an official said, as British Prime Minister Keir Starmer hosts the leaders of Ukraine, France and Germany for talks on on-going support for Kyiv.

Another person was wounded in the drone attack in Balabyne in Ukraine's southern Zaporizhzhia region, the head of the regional military administration, Ivan Fedorov, wrote on his Telegram channel.

A separate drone strike damaged a storage center for spent nuclear fuel in the Kyiv region, just 15 kilometers (9 miles) from the Chernobyl nuclear power plant, Ukraine's General Staff said. The attack sparked a fire that was extinguished within an hour. Radiation remains within safe levels, officials said.

The International Atomic Energy Agency chief Rafael Grossi said the incident was "deeply concerning" due to the large amounts of nuclear



Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy speaks to journalists during a joint press conference with NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte in Kyiv, Ukraine, on June 3. (AP)

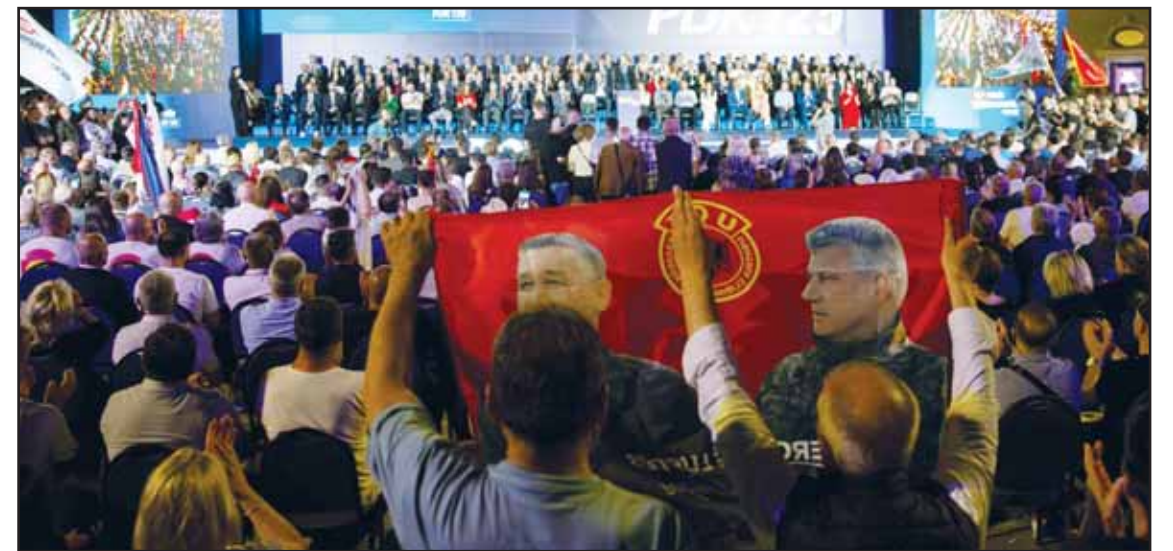
material held at the facility. He said in a statement that the agency would

visit the site of the attack soon.

Elsewhere, a Ukrainian attack killed one man and injured a woman in Russia's Kursk region, local Gov Alexander Khinshtein said.

The meeting on Sunday evening of Starmer, French President Emmanuel Macron and German Chancellor Friedrich Merz comes in the wake of a large-scale Ukrainian drone attack that targeted Saint Petersburg, Russia's second-largest city, underscoring Kyiv's growing ability to hit deep inside Russia. Gov. Alexander Beglov said three people sustained minor injuries in Saturday's attack, during which residents were advised to stay indoors.

The UK, France and Germany, the so-called E3 group of European nations, have been prominent backers of Ukraine following Russia's full-scale invasion in February 2022. The U.K. and France lead the "coalition of the willing" initiative to provide security guarantees for Ukraine as part of a peace process.



Supporters wave flags at the closing political rally of the Democratic Party of Kosovo (DPK), in the capital, Pristina, Kosovo, on June 6. (AP)

### Kosovo voters return to polls for parliamentary election

Voters in Kosovo headed to the polls Sunday for an early parliamentary election, the third in 18 months, in an attempt to unlock a political impasse in the small Balkan nation that is striving to join the European Union and NATO.

Sunday's ballot was scheduled after the main political parties failed

to agree by a March deadline on who should replace former President Vjosa Osmani. The first inconclusive election in February 2025 left the country without a functioning government for much of last year, forcing a second election in December.

The prolonged crisis has nega-

tively affected Kosovo's economy, already hit hard by the global energy crisis and rising fuel prices. One of the youngest and poorest countries in Europe declared independence from Serbia in 2008 after a 1998-99 war that ended in a NATO bombing that forced Serbia to withdraw. (AP)

## 1 million flood Madrid streets to see Pope Leo's procession

MADRID, June 7, (AP) — Pope Leo XIV honored Spain's centuries-old tradition of religious devotion on Sunday as a "school of faith" for today, as he presided over a Mass before a million people and highlighted one of the most iconic expressions of Spanish popular piety with a procession over flower-petal carpets.

The crowd cheered and shouted "This is the youth of the pope!" as Leo arrived for the Mass at a central Madrid plaza. He looped around the plaza and surrounding streets in his popemobile to a crowd packed several rows deep of people eager to witness the first papal visit in 15 years.

Sunday's Mass fell on the Catholic Corpus Domini feast day, which often features processions of faithful through towns and cities led by a priest carrying the Eucharist. In Spain as in other predominantly Catholic countries, the processions often feature elaborate floral carpets arranged along the route. According to Spanish organizers, the 16 flower carpets decorating the half-kilometer (mile) procession route off Plaza Cibeles were prepared by a Spanish florists association from Galicia.



People attend a prayer vigil with Pope Leo XIV and young people at Plaza de Lima in Madrid on June 6, on the first day of Leo's seven-day apostolic journey to mainland Spain and the Canary Islands. (AP)

## Norway Crown Princess Mette-Marit placed on a lung transplant list

OSLO, Norway, June 7, (AP) — Norway's Crown Princess Mette-Marit has been placed on a lung transplant list, Norway's Royal Court said in a statement. Mette-Marit, 52, was diagnosed in 2018 with pulmonary fibrosis, a progressive disease that damages and scars lung tissue. It can cause serious breathing problems, and there is no known cure.

She will suspend her official duties and a new medical update will only be provided after the lung transplant has taken place, the statement said Friday. After discharge from the hospital, "there will be a longer period of rehabilitation and training" during which "there will initially be no updates."

The Crown Princess has had a significant worsening of her pulmonary fibrosis over the past six



Norway's Crown Princess Mette-Marit smiles during a reception for Norwegian athletes who competed in the Milan Cortina Paralympics, in Oslo on April 10. (AP)

months. We see in the pictures that much more scar tissue has developed over the past year," lung specialist Are Holm at Oslo's University Hospital is quoted by Norway's public broadcaster NRK as saying.

"The rule of thumb for who should be put on the list for lung transplantation is that the patient should be so sick with lung disease that we have reason to believe that the patient only has one year left to live," he added.

Holm explained that the hospital has guidelines for prioritizing people on the waiting list and said it wasn't possible to predict when she would be able to undergo the transplant, depending on when a "suitable organ becomes available." He also said there were currently short waiting times and that they "follow protocol exactly in this case."

## North Korea calls US push for its denuclearization 'anachronistic dream'

SEOUL, South Korea, June 7, (AP): The powerful sister of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un called a U.S. push for the denuclearization of North Korea an "anachronistic dream," saying Sunday the North will steadily expand its nuclear arsenal in the face of US-led threats.

The statement came a day before Chinese President Xi Jinping visits North Korea for talks with Kim Jong Un, in his first visit to the country in seven years.

"The US assertion to backbite the status of the DPRK as a nuclear weapons state has no legally binding force and no one will be bound by the US unilateral rhetoric," said Kim's sister and senior official, Kim Yo Jong, using the abbreviation for North Korea's official name.

She dismissed as "false information" a US announcement that President Donald Trump and Xi confirmed their shared goal to denuclearize North Korea in their summit in Beijing last month.

"Some officials in the United States have failed to wake from their escapist and anachronistic dream," Kim Yo Jong said.

North Korea has been focusing on enlarging its nuclear arsenal since Kim Jong Un's high-stakes diplomacy with Trump collapsed in 2019. Experts say the North Korean leader wants an international recognition as a nuclear

state so that he could demand lifting of international economic sanctions on North Korea.

During a visit to a new nuclear materials production plant last week, Kim Jong Un said North Korea would bolster the country's nuclear forces "at an exponential rate." On Sunday, North Korea's state media reported Kim Jong Un visited a weapons factory the previous day and called for increasing the country's missile production capacity 2.5 times under a five-year plan period.

In her statement, Kim Yo Jong accused the US and South Korea of pushing for "ceaseless arms build-ups," saying her brother's push for "steadily beefing up the nuclear war deterrent for self-defense" is "an irreversible final conclusion to be carried out unconditionally."

Analysts say Xi's visit to North Korea is largely meant to reassert China's influence over North Korea, whose foreign policy priority has shifted to Russia in recent years. They say Xi will likely refrain from directly raising the denuclearization issue and offer economic assistance programs during his meeting with Kim Jong Un.

North Korea has sent troops and conventional weapons to Russia to back its war efforts against Ukraine. South Korean and US officials say North Korea has received economic and other assistance from Russia in return.



This photo provided by the North Korean government shows its destroyer Kang Kon during the sea trials at an undisclosed location in North Korea on June 4. (AP)

### Garbage crisis engulfs Havana

## Cuba ex-prez Castro makes first appearance since US charges to celebrate b-day

HAVANA, June 7, (AP): Raúl Castro, Cuba's low-profile former president and revolutionary guerrilla, appeared in public for the first time since being indicted by the United States for his alleged role in the 1996 downing of two civilian aircraft, official video released Saturday showed.

Castro's celebration of his 95th birthday with top officials and military leaders at the Ministry of Interior in Havana on late Friday offered Cuba's socialist government an opportunity to close ranks and project defiance as the Trump administration escalates its pressure campaign on the fuel-starved island.

State TV broadcast footage of Castro, clad in his olive-green military uniform, entering a packed theater to a standing ovation, followed by his grandson and bodyguard, Raúl Guillermo Rodríguez, and Cuban President Miguel Díaz-Canel.

Díaz-Canel delivered an effusive tribute to the "heroism and dignity" displayed by Castro and his late brother, the central figure of the Cuban revolution, Fidel Castro. He praised Raúl Castro, who served as

defense minister of Cuba for nearly 50 years, for his "courage and loyalty (that) made him a target from a very early age for the intelligence services of our enemies."

In a more direct response to provocations by the Trump administration, Díaz-Canel warned that "there will be a decisive and resolute battle" if the U.S. acts on its threats to invade the island.

"Raúl is Raúl," he said, echoing the slogan that has appeared in billboards across Havana and in a flood of social media posts since the May 20 U.S. indictment of Raúl Castro on murder charges - an apparent attempt to mobilize national unity to counter the government's image of isolation. "Raúl is Cuba, and Cuba is untouchable."

Friday's late-night celebration, two days after Castro turned 95, marked a rare public appearance for the low-profile but influential Cuban army general. Although he formally retired from politics in April 2021, Castro is believed to wield considerable political power.

The Justice Department's indict-



Raúl Castro waves a Cuban national flag during a May Day parade at Revolution Square in Havana on May 1, 2025. (AP)

ment unsealed last month accuses Castro of ordering the 1996 shoot-down of civilian planes flown by Miami-based exiles. It was the steepest in a series of escalations since the Trump administration all but cut off Cuba's oil supplies in January, exacerbating the island's long-running problems like blackouts and a public health crisis.

The Trump administration de-

mands that Cuba's socialist government release political prisoners, implement major economic reforms and change its way of governance to avoid becoming a national security threat. Cuba has said it poses no threat to the US.

**Also:**

**HAVANA:** On a recent afternoon in Cuba, the temperature climbed and

anxiety grew among the residents of a Havana street.

Their focus was an improvised dump site on the sidewalk with rotting food scraps, torn bags, cardboard and rubble. Swarms of flies and stray cats gathered around the trash whose stench wafted on the breeze from the nearby sea.

"What you're looking at is depressing," lamented María Odalys Ramírez, a 63-year-old who lives across the street from the capital's iconic Hermanos Ameijeiras hospital. "The trash in this area, the flies, the rats, the filth - it's completely unsanitary."

For months, residents of Havana - home to 2 million of Cuba's almost 10 million residents - have lived with piles of garbage accumulating on almost every street corner. The situation deteriorated after a U.S. energy blockade triggered power outages, water shortages and a fuel crisis that brought state-run garbage trucks to a standstill.

Without garbage collection, residents have begun burning waste in the streets, raising alarm among

health officials over potentially toxic smoke.

Residents fear the coming months will bring worse conditions as summer heat intensifies and hurricane season begins.

A citywide tour by The Associated Press revealed identical scenes across Havana neighborhoods where locals said garbage trucks pass only irregularly.

In the city center and on the outskirts, cars, bicycles and pedestrians weave around the trash piles. Others pick through it, hoping to salvage something useful.

Havana as of last July was producing the equivalent of about 12 Olympic-sized swimming pools of solid waste every day, according to the latest municipal figures available. Even then, municipal services collected just 57%.

The "improper management of urban solid waste" has been identified as a primary environmental challenge in Cuba's national strategy, said Odalys Goicochea, an official at the ministry of science, technology and the environment.



Supporters of Russian-Armenian tycoon Samvel Karapetyan, wave a Armenian national flag during a rally against incumbent Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan at Republic Square in Yerevan, Armenia on June 3, as Karapetyan, who heads the Strong Armenia party, has faced criminal charges that he rejected as politically driven and campaigned from under house arrest. (AP)

## Armenians vote under Russian pressure aimed at preventing drift toward West

YEREVAN, Armenia, June 7, (AP): Armenians vote Sunday in parliamentary elections as the incumbent government, under mounting Russian pressure, seeks to loosen ties with Moscow and deepen cooperation with the West.

Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan and his ruling Civil Contract party are looking for a strong mandate for a new geopolitical course. The opposition they face includes some parties that are vocally pro-Russian.

Casting his vote on Sunday, Pashinyan said that Armenia would continue strengthening its independence, statehood, democracy and rule of law. "The European Union is our main partner in democratic reform implementation and we will continue that path," he said.

However, he also stressed that there were no tensions between Armenia and Moscow, saying, "our relations with Russia are institutional and based on mutual respect," the Armenian news agency reported.

Russian officials have hit Armenian exports with a barrage of restrictions in recent weeks, while high-ranking officials, including President Vladimir Putin, have made thinly veiled threats comparing Armenia's path to that already taken by Ukraine.

Meanwhile, Armenian investigators said they issued six arrest warrants for members of the opposition Strong Armenia party the day before the vote, accusing them of buying votes. The nation's Central Election

Committee confirmed Saturday that the party could run after a member of another opposition party, Republic, appealed for Strong Armenia to be barred over corruption allegations.

Armenia's Parliament, the National Assembly, must consist of at least 101 members who are elected for five-year terms. Parties must win at least 4% of the vote to take a seat, while blocs made up of three or more parties must hit 8%.

Two political blocs and 17 parties are taking part in Sunday's election. Most pollsters and experts have predicted Pashinyan, who came to power in 2018 following sweeping street protests, will come out ahead.

"I think Armenians expect, first of all, a peaceful, independent and prosperous Armenia from this election, as we have today," said Hripsime Grigoryan, a Civil Contract member of the outgoing Parliament.

Pashinyan has spoken on several occasions about the need for a balanced foreign policy ensuring Armenia maintains good relations with the United States, Europe and Russia, as well as regional powers such as Turkey and Iran.

Despite this, Pashinyan has attracted far more enthusiasm in the West than in Moscow. He has been endorsed by several European leaders, as well as U.S. President Donald Trump.

"Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan, of Armenia, a great friend and Leader, is making his Country strong, wealthy, and very secure," Trump

wrote on social media, urging Armenians to "Make (Armenia) Great Again."

This has displeased the Kremlin. Speaking to journalists after Russia's Victory Day parade on May 9, Putin said if the Armenian people saw benefits in joining the European Union then "we will certainly have nothing to say against it."

Yet he also reminded reporters, "We are currently living through everything that is happening in respect of Ukraine. And how did it start? It started with Ukraine's joining or attempting to join the EU."

Unlike the Civil Contract party, most of Armenia's opposition supports building stronger relations with Moscow.

The Strong Armenia party seeks to develop business ties with Russia and has accused Pashinyan of attempting to start a war with Moscow. Party leader Samvel Karapetyan is on trial for allegedly advocating for the government's overthrow, which the Armenian-Russian billionaire has rejected as a politically motivated case. He has coordinated the party's campaign while under house arrest, aided by his nephew Narek Karapetyan.

Other potential contenders include former President Robert Kocharyan, who leads the Hayastan bloc and has accused Pashinyan of "seriously undermining" relations with Russia, and the Prosperous Armenia Party led by pro-Russian business owner Gagik Tsarukyan.

## With rising crime on their minds, Peruvians vote for president yet again

LIMA, Peru, June 7, (AP): Peruvians choose between two presidential hopefuls with starkly different views Sunday, as they elect their ninth head of state in 10 years amid growing concerns about crime.

Keiko Fujimori, a conservative and daughter of a disgraced former president, and Roberto Sánchez, a nationalist congressman, are on the ballot after beating 33 other candidates in the first round in April, but neither earned even 20% of support. Pollsters estimate that roughly 30% of voters remain undecided.

Sunday's results are expected to be tight, and if the earlier vote was any indication, the outcome may not be known for days. Electoral authorities took more than a month to officially declare Fujimori and Sánchez the winners of that vote.

Voting is mandatory for Peruvians from the ages of 18 to 70. More than 27 million people are registered, and of those, about 1.2 million are expected to cast ballots from abroad, mainly in the United States and Argentina.

Official results from April's election showed Fujimori obtained 17% of the vote, while Sánchez garnered 12%. More than six weeks later, a nationwide poll conducted by the firm



Members of the military stand in formation before their departure to protect polling places in Lima, Peru on June 5, ahead of their presidential runoff election. (AP)

Ipsos found that similar shares of voters were supporting Fujimori and Sánchez, with about 3 in 10 saying they were undecided.

Fujimori is linked to the authoritarian and corrupt legacy of the government of her late father, Alberto Fujimori, in the 1990s. She became Peru's first lady in 1994 after her parents' separation.

Sánchez is one of the closest allies of jailed former President Pedro Cas-

tillo, whom many perceive as corrupt and chaotic. Castillo's 16-month term saw more than 70 Cabinet changes.

Surging crime, particularly extortion, remains the overarching concern. A 2025 national survey carried out by the state's National Institute of Statistics and Informatics found that 84% of respondents in urban areas feared becoming victims of a crime in the following 12 months.

## Jamaica scrambles to restore power after rare blackout

PORT OF SPAIN, Trinidad, June 7, (AP): Jamaica's national electricity provider said it was racing to restore service early Saturday, after an outage left the entire island without power overnight.

The sole energy supplier in the country, Jamaica Public Service Company, confirmed the outage that began just after 9 p.m. on Friday affected all utility customers across the tiny Caribbean nation of 2.8 million people.

The company president, Hugh Grant, said authorities were still investigating the causes of the blackout, but that it was likely related to lightning that struck near major substations and other grid infrastructure.

Jamaican Energy Minister Daryl Vaz said power had been restored to roughly 500,000 out of 700,000 customers by Saturday morning and expected a full restoration within hours.

**Also:**

**SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico:** Authorities in Jamaica have taken the rare step of charging a police officer with murder after he was accused of fatally shooting a 45-year-old woman in a case that has prompted violent protests.

The officer appeared in court on Wednesday and was denied bail. Another hearing is scheduled for mid-June.

Security forces in Jamaica have long been accused of unlawful killings and using excessive force, with the island's Independent Commission of Investigations reporting 140 fatal shootings so far this year on the island of 2.8 million people.

### Asia

**S.Korean prez nominates Han as next PM:** South Korean President Lee Jae Myung on Sunday nominated Han Seong-sook as prime minister, the presidential office announced.

Han, a former chief executive of South Korean internet giant Naver, has served as Minister of SMEs and Startups since the launch of Lee's administration. She is widely known for her experience in the technology sector and digital innovation. If approved by the parliament, Han would become South Korea's first female prime minister in about two decades, after former Prime Minister Han Myeong-sook, who served from 2006 to 2007. (Xinhua)

**Indonesia detains deputy minister:** Indonesia's Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK) detained Deputy Minister of Immigration and Corrections Silmy Karim as part of an investigation into alleged corruption linked to the issuance of residency permits for foreign nationals.

KPK spokesperson Budi Prasetyo said seven other suspects had also been named in the case, including current and former officials of the Directorate General of Immigration.

The anti-graft agency said it had seized a number of assets as evidence, including vehicles and precious metals, and was continuing to investigate the case. The probe expands an operation launched earlier this week that resulted in additional suspects being identified.

Authorities suspect the alleged corruption involved the processing of limited-stay permits and permanent-stay permits for foreign nationals. (Xinhua)

With an 'Excellent' SPO rating from Sustainable Fitch

## NBK advances Sustainable Finance with a new framework

KUWAIT CITY, June 7: National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) announced the official launch of its new Sustainable Financing Framework, marking a significant milestone in the Bank's environmental, social, and governance (ESG) journey and reinforcing its long-standing commitment to responsible finance, sustainable development, and long-term value creation across Kuwait and the international markets in which it operates.

The new framework enables the Bank to channel capital through a comprehensive suite of sustainable financing instruments, including green, social, blue, and sustainability financing, in alignment with internationally recognized standards and global best practices. This further strengthens NBK's ability to support sustainable and impact-driven financing and projects that deliver positive, measurable environmental and social impact.

Further underscoring the strength and robustness of the framework, NBK received an "Excellent" rating from Sustainable Fitch as part of its independent Second-Party Opinion (SPO), reflecting the framework's strong alignment with the Green Bond Principles (GBP), Social Bond Principles (SBP), and Sustainability Bond Guidelines (SBG) issued by the International Capital Market Association (ICMA), in addition to the Green Loan Principles (GLP) and Social Loan Principles (SLP) issued by the Loan Market Association (LMA), the Loan Syndications and Trading Association (LSTA), as well as Asia Pacific Loan Market Association (APLMA).

Through this framework, the Bank commits to financing projects that generate measurable environmental and social impact, including climate change mitigation and adaptation, renewable energy, sustainable and resilient infrastructure development, financial inclusion, and expanded access to essential services and inclusive infrastructure.

The framework also supports the achievement of Kuwait Vision 2035 objectives by directing capital toward projects that contribute to economic diversification, strengthen climate resilience, and support long-term sustainable economic growth.

This milestone further underscores NBK's growing role as one of the region's leading sustainable finance institutions through the integration of ESG considerations into the core of its corporate strategy, credit decision-making processes, and risk management frameworks.

In this context, the Bank's obtaining of an independent Second-Party Opinion from Sustainable Fitch represents a key pillar in rein-



NBK tower



'Excellent' SPO rating from Sustainable Fitch



In June 2024, NBK successfully issued its inaugural USD 500 million green bond, the first of its kind in Kuwait, to support the financing of low-carbon projects. In May 2025, the Bank published its inaugural Green Bond Allocation and Impact Report, confirming the full allocation of the green bond's net proceeds to eligible green projects.

In 2026, NBK further enhanced its Sustainable Financing Framework by expanding the scope of eligible use-of-proceeds categories in line with the evolving international stan-

- A key milestone that reflects NBK's ambition to position itself among the leading financial institutions driving sustainable finance efforts regionally and globally
- The new framework marks an important step toward further embedding sustainability at the core of NBK's business model
- Stronger alignment of NBK's sustainable finance activities with evolving market practices to support the transition toward a low-carbon economy and inclusive economic development
- A significant expansion in eligible asset categories broadens coverage to advanced sectors and technologies, including biofuels, green hydrogen, and blue finance
- A continued long-term commitment to sustainable value creation supports the interests of NBK's customers, shareholders, and the communities it serves

forcing investor confidence, validating the strength, credibility, and transparency of the Sustainable Financing Framework, as well as the robust governance standards underpinning it.

This credible assessment further reflects the strength of the governance framework, the clarity and robustness of the project eligibility criteria, the adoption of comprehensive environmental and social safeguards, and the Bank's strong commitment to transparency and regular disclosure, reinforcing NBK's position as a leading financial institution in sustainable finance, both regionally and globally.

The new framework builds on NBK's established sustainable finance journey. In 2022, the Bank launched its first Sustainable Financing Framework.

dards and market practices.

The update aims to further deepen ESG integration across the Bank's business activities, corporate culture, and operations, accelerate the transition toward a low-carbon economy, and contribute to Kuwait's commitment to achieving carbon neutrality by 2060, and support the objectives of Kuwait Vision 2035. The new framework will apply to any Sustainable Financing Instruments issued by NBK and / or its subsidiaries following the publication of the Framework.

Key enhancements introduced under the updated framework include strengthening the Bank's governance approach to provide a higher level of transparency, alongside a broadened scope of eligible asset categories to include advanced sectors and technologies such as biofuels, green hydrogen, carbon capture, utilization and storage (CCUS) technologies, sustainable data centers, and circular economy practices to capitalize on evolving market developments. The updated framework also introduces blue finance as a dedicated, innovative sub-category within green finance to support the protection and sustainable management of marine and water resources.

NBK has made significant progress in advancing its ESG agenda, marked by a comprehensive Group-level strategy that places sustainability at the core of its operations and culture. Guided by its four foundational pillars, Governance for Resilience, Responsible Banking, Capitalizing on Capabilities, and Investing in Communities, the Bank continues to support economic development while positioning itself as a regional role model in sustainable finance. Recognizing its responsibility for driving positive change across the financial sector, NBK remains committed to supporting its clients in the transition toward a low-carbon, more sustainable, and inclusive future across all business segments.

### Reaffirming the financial sector's role in advancing sustainability

## Boursa Kuwait renews its commitment to climate action

KUWAIT CITY, June 7: Boursa Kuwait renewed its commitment to supporting climate action and strengthening sustainability practices on World Environment Day 2026, affirming that the Kuwaiti capital market plays a pivotal role in driving the transition toward a more responsible economy. The exchange's participation in this event comes in line with its global message for the year, #ClimateActionToday, which calls for moving beyond environmental awareness and delivering tangible, on-the-ground impact.

This year's World Environment Day underscores that climate change is no longer a distant possibility but a present reality, with its dangerous effects reflected in rising temperatures, intensifying heatwaves, wildfires, rising sea levels and the retreat of ice cover.

This increases the role and responsibility of the private and financial sectors, as they become leaders and active participants in the response to climate change, as capital markets possess the tools needed to enhance transparency, embed environmental, social and governance (ESG) and support the initiatives to accelerate the transition toward a low-carbon economy.

**Commenting on the occasion, Senior Director of Marketing and Corporate Communications at Boursa Kuwait Mr. Naser Mishari Al-Sanousi said:**

"Every day, nature sends us clear signals that no sector can afford to ignore. At Boursa Kuwait, we believe that the financial sector has an important role in advancing climate action, which is why we work to translate our environmental commitments into tangible initiatives. Our institutional excellence is not solely measured by financial performance, but also by the sustainability of our business and our responsibility to protect natural resources for future generations. We continue to demonstrate how the private sector can contribute to meaningful and lasting environmental impact.

#### Protecting the marine environment of Kuwait Bay

Boursa Kuwait translates its environmental commitment through a strategic and sustainable partnership with the Environmental Voluntary Foundation's Kuwait Dive Team, in cooperation with the United Nations Environment Programme and under the Clean Seas initiative, which is aligned with Goal 14 of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) – Life Below Water, which focuses on preventing marine pollution of all kinds and the sustainable management and protection of marine and coastal ecosystems.

Since 2020, Boursa Kuwait has supported the team's field operations, including the launch of the Boursa Boat and the subsequent launch of the second Boat in 2026. Since its establishment, the team has been committed to removing plastic waste, shipwreck debris and sunken boats, retrieve abandoned illegal fishing nets, clean beaches and islands as well as monitor violations that could threaten the marine environment. This continued support has resulted in the removal of more than 671 tons of marine waste, making the partnership between the two entities an effective institutional model that combines social responsibility with measurable environmental impact.

**2 - Logistical support through Boursa Boat**  
**+6 - Years of continued support**

**671 - Tons of hazardous waste removed**  
**Head of the Environmental Voluntary Foundation's Kuwait Dive Team Mr. Waleed AlFadhel said:**

Boursa Kuwait's institutional support is an effective enabler of our efforts in the field and a practical model to advance the targets of UN SDG 14. This collaboration has enabled us to carry out broader and more efficient operations to remove marine waste and protect Kuwait



Naser Al-Sanousi



Waleed Al-Fadhel



Sana Al-Ghemlas

- **Al-Sanousi:** Capital markets and the financial sector are active partners in advancing climate action, and environmental preservation is only complete when translated into measurable, on-the-ground initiatives
- **Al-Fadhel:** Removing 671 tons of marine waste to protect the environment of Kuwait Bay reflects the success of the integration between the Kuwait Dive Team's expertise in the field and Boursa Kuwait's support
- **Al-Ghemlas:** Boursa Kuwait presents a model for the private sector in enabling the circular economy, with ongoing collaboration that goes beyond theoretical commitment to practical solutions to embed a culture of recycling

Bay, an irreplaceable environmental resource and a strategic economic asset. This integration of field expertise and institutional support is an optimal manifestation of the most urgent models to achieve sustainable environmental action in the region.

The Clean Seas initiative gains added significance given its connection to Kuwait Bay, considered one of the most prominent coastal and marine ecosystems in the region and the world. The bay is home to several strategic facilities, including both the Shuwaik and Doha ports as well as power and water desalination plants. Regarded as one of the largest fish nurseries in the world and distinguished by its exceptional environmental value, it hosts many reserves and is a major stopover destination for migratory birds.

#### Promoting Plastic Recycling and the Circular Economy

Boursa Kuwait continues its strategic partnership with Omniya Plastic Collection Company, supporting its non-profit mission to promote the recycling of plastic waste and embed responsible plastic waste management initiatives throughout the State of Kuwait.

Aligned with UN SDG 12 – Responsible Consumption and Production, this partnership aims to reduce waste generation through recycling, encouraging financial institutions and listed companies to adopt sustainability practices and embrace the concept of a circular economy.

Since the establishment of the partnership in March 2019, Boursa Kuwait has contributed to the achievement of tangible environmental impact, as it has collected 1241 tons of plastic waste, saved 3723 cubic metres of landfill and reduced its carbon footprint by 3102.45 tons of carbon dioxide emissions. The exchange was also the first private sector institution to receive the Blue Bottle certification in recognition of its role in supporting plastic recycling and advancing a circular economy in Kuwait.

**3102 - Tons of carbon dioxide emissions**

**3723 - Cubic meters of landfill**  
**1241- Tons of plastic waste**

**Commenting on the partnership between Boursa Kuwait and Omniya, company CEO Eng. Sana Al-Ghemlas said:**

Our partnership with Boursa Kuwait represents an inspirational model of how private and financial sector institutions can contribute to SDG 12 and the principles of a circular economy, as the exchange demonstrates that sustainability goes beyond theoretical commitments and supports practical, on-the-ground solutions that reduce plastic waste effectively and promote a culture of waste segregation within the community. The partnership also serves as an incentive for other private sector companies to contribute to building a sustainable environmental future for Kuwait.

Omniya Plastic Collection Company is a non-profit organization based in Kuwait dedicated to raising environmental awareness and combating plastic pollution. It encourages the segregation of plastic waste at its source and works to prevent its disposal in landfills or the marine environment, in addition to promoting sustainable waste management practices.

#### Operational initiatives to enhance efficient use of resources and reduce environmental impact

As part of its ongoing efforts to embed responsible environmental practices across its operations, Boursa Kuwait has implemented a plethora of initiatives to enhance resource use and efficiency and reduce the impact of its operations on the environment, including upgrading its facilities to conserve energy and water consumption and reduce its carbon footprint.

Aligned with UN SDG 11 – Sustainable Cities and Communities, these initiatives aim to reduce the adverse impact on cities and communities, promoting sustainable waste management practices and responsible water and energy consumption.

Boursa Kuwait's efforts of responsible resource management have resulted in its building receiving

the prestigious LEED Gold certification in 2023, reflecting the company's commitment to applying green building standards and enhancing the efficacy of its workplace.

Since 2021, the company has partnered with specialized entities to recycle electronic devices, contributing approximately 55 metric tons of monitors, computers and unused equipment, as part of its efforts to reduce e-waste and promote safe and responsible disposal practices.

Boursa Kuwait has also recycled 1972 kilograms of operational waste, including 472 kilograms of plastic waste and 1500 kilograms of paper waste, supporting circular economy practices and more efficient resource management.

**1972 - Kilograms of operational waste recycled**

**55 - Metric tons of recycled electronic devices**

**LEED - Gold certification for the efficiency of the building**

**International recognition for its performance in sustainability**

Boursa Kuwait received a number of prestigious awards in 2025, winning five awards that reflect its excellence in sustainability, governance, market development, corporate governance and supporting sustainable communities.

The awards include:

■ Best for Sustaining Communities – Middle East from Global Finance

■ Best Sustainable Corporate Governance from The European

■ Women's Empowerment Champions from The European

In addition, Boursa Kuwait has received many awards over the years that have established it on both the regional and international stage. Collectively, these awards represent the independent validation of Boursa Kuwait's performance standards and practices, enhancing the credibility of its ESG disclosures to investors and shareholders locally and internationally.

Commenting on this recognition, Mr. Al-Sanousi said:

Institutional investors are cognizant today that a financial institution with integrated frameworks supported by reliable data and long-term partnerships is better positioned to manage risk and deliver consistent value over the long-term, which is why we at Boursa Kuwait believe that sustainability and institutional value creation are two sides of the same coin.

#### International commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals

World Environment Day is a reflection of the growing international importance of climate cooperation and the role of governments and private sector institutions to accelerate meaningful solutions.

Boursa Kuwait's participation is a natural extension of its institutional approach to embedding sustainability within the financial sector ecosystem and aligns with its support of the UN SDGs, specifically Goal 13 on Climate Action, strengthening the role of the financial sector in adopting sustainable practices and leading the transition toward a low carbon economy. In addition, the company's participation is aligned with Goal 17 – Partnership for the Goals, establishing long-term partnerships with civil society and the relevant stakeholders.

Through its sustainability programs, projects and initiatives, Boursa Kuwait continues to strengthen the role of capital markets and the financial sector in taking the lead on climate action, contributing to the development of a resilient and sustainable economy that supports the objectives of Kuwait Vision 2035.

Rolling out smart queue service to cut branch wait times

# ABK launches digital queue ticketing across all branches

KUWAIT CITY, June 7: Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) has launched a new service that enables customers to obtain queue tickets digitally via their mobile phones when visiting branches. With this launch, ABK becomes the first bank in Kuwait to offer this advanced service across all its branches, reinforcing its ongoing digital transformation journey and leadership in adopting sustainable solutions to enhance service quality and elevate the overall banking experience by reducing waiting times.

The new service allows customers to complete their banking transactions more efficiently, ensuring faster and better-organised service within branches. Customers can track their queue status in real time, identify the employee assigned to assist them, and easily provide feedback on the service received.

On this occasion, Johair Marafi, General Manager of Retail Banking at ABK, stated, "We place our customers' time at the forefront of our priorities. The launch of the digital queue ticketing service is a direct response to their needs, offering a seamless and convenient banking experience that ensures privacy and professionalism in line with



Johair Marafi, General Manager - Retail Banking

man resources more efficiently, while also allowing us to gather instant customer feedback to continuously enhance the speed and accuracy of our services. It also supports

the highest industry standards."

She added, "The introduction of a fully integrated digital system for queue management represents a key milestone in our digital transformation journey. It reflects our belief that customer satisfaction begins at the very first point of contact. This service will enable us to optimise our human resources more efficiently, while also allowing us to gather instant customer feedback to continuously enhance the speed and accuracy of our services. It also supports

our vision of transforming our branches into smart environments where technology is the key driver of customer comfort and experience."

Marafi explained that ABK's digital transformation strategy encompasses the full digitisation of the customer journey, including in-branch visits, by offering the latest banking solutions in line with global technological standards. This ensures faster response times, improved operational efficiency, and a banking experience characterised by speed and simplicity.

She continued, "With the introduction of this service, we are redefining excellence to strengthen our competitive position. It represents a step towards transforming our branches into smart interaction points operating at full capacity to serve customers and meet their evolving expectations."

Marafi concluded, "In a highly competitive banking sector, excellence is no longer optional but a necessity. This service is a practical demonstration of our technological readiness to reinvent even the simplest details for the comfort and satisfaction of our customers."



e-Ticket

## OECD, IMF cut growth outlook

### Middle East conflict reaches 100 days, global economy feels strain

BEIJING, June 7, (Xinhua): The Middle East conflict is approaching its 100-day mark, with U.S.-Iran talks still seesawing and the outlook for shipping through the Strait of Hormuz remaining uncertain.

Since fighting broke out in late February, the war has spilled far beyond the region, disrupting energy supplies, reigniting inflationary pressures and unsettling financial markets. International institutions are now warning that the conflict is becoming a growing drag on the global economy.

The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and other bodies have recently lowered their forecasts for global growth, citing the prolonged conflict as a major source of uncertainty. What began as market concern over a short-term spike in oil prices has evolved into broader anxiety over weaker growth, higher inflation and longer-lasting damage to supply chains.

#### Energy supply shock

The most immediate impact has come through energy supplies. The blockage of the Strait of Hormuz has triggered what the International Energy Agency (IEA) has described as the largest supply disruption in the history of the global oil market, pushing up oil and gas prices as well as shipping costs.

According to a recent IEA report, global oil supply losses since February have reached 12.8 million barrels per day. Gulf producers affected by the closure of the strait are producing 14.4 million barrels per day less than before the war. Based on the daily shortfall of 12.8 million barrels, more than 1.2 billion barrels of supply have been affected since the conflict began, underscoring the strain on global energy inventories and transport capacity.

The IEA expects global oil supply in 2026 to remain, on average, 3.9 million barrels per day lower, even if shipping through the strait gradually resumes.

In a joint statement, the IEA and other bodies warned that if shipping fails to return to normal and global oil inventories continue to fall rapidly, global economic resilience could face serious risks.

The shock is not limited to oil. The World Bank expects global energy prices to rise 24 percent in 2026 because of the conflict. Overall commodity prices are projected to increase 16 percent, driven mainly by energy, fertilizer and some metals.

John Roper, chief executive for the Middle East at German energy company Uniper, said the strait's closure and damage to facilities took most of the gas supply growth between 2025 and 2026 off the market, warning that the pain from the supply shortfall could last at least until 2030.

#### Inflation pressures return

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) said in a recent re-

port that even under a scenario involving a short-lived conflict and moderate increases in energy and commodity prices, global inflation would reach 4.4 percent in 2026, significantly deviating from the recent disinflation trend.

Signs of renewed inflationary pressure have already appeared in Europe and the United States. U.S. gasoline prices in April were more than 50 percent higher than before the war, while real disposable personal income fell for a third consecutive month. In the eurozone, inflation in France, Italy, Spain and Germany has stayed above the European Central Bank's 2 percent target for three months in a row, with higher energy costs spreading into food and services prices.

"The longer the disruptions last, the larger the economic and social costs become," OECD Secretary-General Mathias Cormann said.

Developing economies face a heavier burden. The World Bank expects inflation in developing economies to average 5.1 percent in 2026, 1 percentage point higher than prewar forecasts.

"The poorest people, who spend the highest share of their income on food and fuels, will be hit the hardest, as will developing economies already struggling under heavy debt burdens," World Bank chief economist Indermit Gill said. "All of this is a reminder of a stark truth: war is development in reverse."

#### Growth outlook darkens

The conflict is also clouding the growth outlook.

The OECD expects global growth to slow from 3.4 percent in 2025 to 2.8 percent in 2026, down 0.1 percentage point from its March forecast. If disruptions to Gulf energy production and exports persist into 2027, global growth in 2026 could fall further to 2.1 percent.

The IMF has listed the Middle East conflict as a major test for the global economy, projecting growth to slow to 3.1 percent in 2026, down from its January forecast of 3.3 percent. The United Nations expects global growth of 2.5 percent, 0.2 percentage point lower than its January projection.

The war is weighing on growth through inflation, consumption and investment. Higher energy and raw material costs squeeze corporate profits and dampen investment appetite. Rising prices erode real incomes and curb consumer spending. Higher financing costs add pressure on companies and governments already carrying heavy debt burdens.

That leaves major economies facing a sharper policy dilemma. Slower growth, weaker consumption and higher business costs call for policy support, but rising energy prices and renewed inflation limit the scope for monetary easing. After the pandemic and years of high interest rates, many governments have less capacity to offset the energy shock through subsidies or tax cuts.

Aiming to enhance credit awareness &amp; advancing professional standards

## CINET signs Memorandum of Understanding with the Kuwait Institute of Banking Studies

KUWAIT CITY, June 7: Kuwait Credit Information Network Company (CINET), the leading and sole provider of credit information and credit ratings in the State of Kuwait, has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Kuwait Institute of Banking Studies (KIBS) to launch a specialized training program focused on enhancing credit awareness within the banking and financial sectors, particularly in relation to credit reports and ratings.

Under the MoU, CINET will develop and prepare the program content in collaboration with KIBS, ensuring the delivery of specialized material aligned with leading professional practices and regulatory standards adopted within the credit sector. Simultaneously, the Institute will qualify professionals working in Kuwait's financial and banking sector, thereby expanding the program's reach and enhancing the professional competencies of sector affiliates and all beneficiary entities.

The program aims to elevate professional practices among credit report users by strengthening the accurate understanding, interpretation, and responsible use of credit data, ultimately contributing to greater transparency and credit literacy.

Commenting on the partnership, Mrs. Alia Bader Al-Humaidhi, CINET Chairperson, said: "This partnership marks an important step toward enhancing credit awareness and strengthening credit culture within the financial sector. Through this collaboration, we aim to support the responsible use of credit information and further promote transparency across the Kuwaiti market through joint programs and cooperation with specialized institutions."

From her side, Mrs. Rana Abdullah Al-Naibari, The general Manager of Kuwait Institute of Banking Studies added: "At KIBS, we are committed to developing capabilities in line with the evolving needs of the banking sector. This program reflects our dedication to



CINET signs MoU with KIBS for Credit Training Program.

delivering specialized initiatives with tangible impact, as our team will work closely to equip professionals across the financial sector with the knowledge required to support compliance and strengthen the sector's efficiency and sustainability."

The program will cover several key areas, including compliance with regulatory procedures, particularly the importance of obtaining customer consent prior to conducting credit inquiries. It will also provide detailed insights into credit report components and credit score

interpretation, in addition to standardizing professional terminology, especially when handling negative data, complaints, or objections. These efforts aim to enhance transparency and improve clients' understanding of credit reports and credit ratings when applying for loans and credit facilities.

This partnership reflects the commitment of both parties to fostering an advanced credit culture in Kuwait through structured learning, increased awareness, and alignment with best practices in credit reporting and governance.

## Refinery recovery fuels expansion of chemical projects

### Nghi Son Refinery returns to profit after KPC rescue

By Najeh Bilal

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 7: Nghi Son, the Kuwaiti-Vietnamese refinery, fully recovered from its losses after being rescued by Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) from bankruptcy caused by the difficulties it experienced several years ago due to rising loan interest rates and repeated shutdowns of refinery units over extended periods, and through strict compliance with the directives and advice of KPC leaders.

Sources told the newspaper that the refinery is now standing on solid ground and it generated substantial revenues in 2025. Sources said the refinery has been operating continuously despite the Strait of Hormuz crisis, because it relies on Kuwaiti and non-Kuwaiti crude oil.

Sources confirmed that the refinery has had remarkable success in the last two years, gaining international leadership and reputation as a result of taking advantage of the global expertise of KPC in oil refining operations.

They cited the recent offering of investment opportunities to potential partners within the refinery complex to develop new production facilities, as well as benefiting from direct access to raw materials, facilities, logistics and existing infrastructure.

KPC holds 35.1 percent stake in the refinery, recorded revenues of 188 trillion Vietnamese dong (around \$7.13 billion) in 2025, and processed 12 million tons of crude oil.

Sources confirmed that the refinery presented an investment opportunity in shared sites, including the sulfuric acid production plant with a capacity of 350,000 tons per year of sulfuric acid. Sources said this plant will meet the needs of the refinery and then supply any surplus to the domestic market.

Sources revealed that an ammonia extraction plant was proposed to produce 49,000 metric tons per year of 25 percent aqueous ammonia solution from the sour water stream of the sour water separation unit (SWS). Sources explained that the output of this ammonia plant will be used in flue gas treatment processes at Nghi Son and adjacent facilities.

Sources pointed out that the partnership with Nghi Son has many advantages, such as providing a highly attractive site-sharing platform, access to reliable raw materials and fully integrated facilities, and strong integration between operations, technology and safety. Sources confirmed this will strengthen the industrial infrastructure of the refinery and ensure long-term demand, indicating that the refinery will provide raw materials, facilities, land, infrastructure and operational support. Sources said investors wishing to partner with them must provide capital, technology and market access. Sources affirmed that revenues and benefits will be shared based on agreed business principles designed to support effective implementation while ensuring transpar-

ent governance and aligned interests.

Regarding the specifications of the partner, sources said they must prove strong commitment through long-term collaboration with the National Strategic Research Support Program, as well as proven financial capacity, funding potential and experience in the chemical industry. Sources added that this experience should cover chemical production technologies and market development, along with the commitment to governance, regulatory compliance, and ESG (Environmental, Social and Governance) standards.

Also, to support of the marine environment protection initiative, Nghi Son launched an environmental campaign on May 31 at Hai Binh Beach in Thanh Hoa Province. The campaign is part of the Nghi Son Green 2026 program, with the participation of around 1,000 people who joined forces to protect the marine environment and contribute to building a green, clean and sustainable Nghi Son Economic Zone.

The refinery launched the Nghi Son Green initiative in 2025 and it quickly gained momentum and widespread support from local authorities, businesses and the community. This success is attributed to the proactive approach and vital role of the refinery in connecting stakeholders, coordinating efforts, and working together to develop the program into a long-term annual environmental sustainability initiative.

Reaffirming commitment to market balance

## OPEC+ members agree on 188,000 bpd output increase for July

KUWAIT CITY, June 7, (KUNA): The OPEC+ alliance agreed on Sunday to implement a production increase of 188,000 barrels per day (bpd) in July as part of their collective commitment to maintaining stability in the global oil market.

The Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) said in a statement that the decision was reached during a virtual meeting attended by Saudi Arabia, Russia, Kuwait, Iraq, Kazakhstan, Algeria and Oman to review developments in the global oil market.

OPEC stated that the seven countries agreed to produce an additional 188,000 bpd from the voluntary production adjustments announced in April

2023, in line with their joint commitment to supporting market stability.

The organization noted that the adjustment will be implemented in July, noting that the additional voluntary production cuts introduced in April 2023 could be reversed partially or fully depending on market conditions and in a gradual manner.

The statement added that the participating countries would continue to closely monitor and assess market developments as part of their ongoing efforts to support stability, stressing the importance of maintaining a cautious approach and full flexibility to increase, pause or reverse voluntary production adjustments when necessary.

OPEC noted that the measure provides the participating countries with an opportunity to accelerate compensation for previous overproduction, reaffirming their commitment to full conformity with the Declaration of Cooperation, including the additional voluntary production adjustments monitored by the Joint Ministerial Monitoring Committee (JMMC).

The seven countries also reiterated their determination to fully compensate for any production above agreed levels since January 2024.

The statement added that the participating OPEC+ countries will continue holding monthly meetings to review market conditions, compliance and compensation plans, with the next meeting scheduled for July 5.

Banking solutions driven by innovation & advanced technology

# KFH leads digital transformation via KFHOnline

KUWAIT CITY, June 7: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) continues to consolidate its leading position in digital banking through KFHOnline, available via mobile and the website. The platform provides integrated, secure, and user-friendly services tailored to customers' daily needs. These include advanced electronic payment and settlement solutions, online account opening, the buying and selling of gold, and a wide range of essential banking transactions.

KFHOnline offers over 200 digital banking services, featuring a modern design and smart solutions. The bank has completely upgraded the application, reinforcing its leadership in digital innovation and its commitment to providing advanced financial solutions for a seamless banking experience. This milestone also highlights KFH's excellence in executing its digital transformation strategy.

The mobile application provides a wide range of local and international money transfer services such as WAMD money transfer service and co-branded inter-

national money transfer services in cooperation with Western Union. This service enables customers to conduct fast and secure transfers, whether in cash, directly to bank accounts, or to digital wallets worldwide, with access to Western Union's extensive global network.

Meanwhile, KFHPay also provides a flexible and fast mechanism for fund transfers and requests, allowing customers to send payment links or use phone numbers to request funds from individuals or groups. Customers can create custom groups for these requests and easily track everyone's payment status through KFHPay's "Transactions History" list, enhancing transparency and monitoring.

Applying for a financing online through KFHOnline app has become more convenient. Customer can submit their financing request through the Finance Services menu in the app and select Finance Request option, without the need to visit a branch.

KFH also provides a fully integrated ecosystem of digital banking card services, allowing customers to in-

stantly issue virtual prepaid cards temporarily suspend and reactivate cards, view KFH Rewards points, and access full card details through the application.

The Bank has also made progress in allowing customers to update their Civil IDs and authenticate their identities without using a physical card. Customers can easily transfer funds from their prepaid cards to their personal bank accounts. In addition, KFHPay customers with supplementary family cards can now manage limits for both those additional cards and their primary debit cards.

As part of enhancing added value, the bank added KFHOffer section, integrated into KFHOnline app, where customers can explore a diverse array of exclusive benefits.

This comprehensive suite of digital services reflects KFH's commitment to providing an integrated, technology-driven banking experience. This approach aligns with a strategic vision that anticipates industry trends, ensures sustainable excellence, and reinforces KFH's digital leadership.



KFHOnline

## Costco, Sam's and BJ's see fuel traffic surge

# Fuel spike pushes shoppers toward discount chains

NEW YORK, June 7, (AP): U.S. consumers haven't stopped spending money since the Iran war drove up fuel prices, but many shoppers are reassessing what they buy and where, according to company executives and retail analysts.

The behavior changes observed so far are subtle, such as altered routines for buying gasoline and fewer visits to clothing and furniture stores. They also are uneven across the population. During recent earnings calls with analysts, executives from American mainstays like Walmart, McDonald's and Dollar General cited overall shopper resilience as well as noticeable cutbacks by lower-income customers.

But the new signs of strain cited by major retailers as generous income tax refunds helped shore up their sales make some economists and analysts think they will see a wider retrenchment when the refunds are gone and consumers face the cumulative impact of more expensive gas and higher prices for food, clothing, insurance and other goods and services.

Trevor Chapman, a communications executive in West Hills, California, said that instead of going to a local independent gas station, he and his wife now plan their fuel stops around Costco stores with filling stations. The couple also is doing more online food shopping to avoid impulse buys, he said.

"Gas is a kind of catalyst," Chapman said. "It trickles down into the entire budget. We're trying to keep everything as normal as possible. But it's starting to feel like it's adding up more and more."

Well before the U.S. and Israel launched the war, many consumers already were being more choosy with their discretionary purchases, fatigued by several years of stubborn inflation and tariffs on imported goods imposed last year.

The U.S. Commerce Department reported last week that higher prices, not more purchases, accounted for most of the growth in Americans' spending in April, when a key inflation gauge reached the highest level since October 2023.

Members-only warehouse stores like Costco, Walmart's Sam's Club and BJ's Wholesale Club have seen more traffic at their fuel pumps since the war began in late February, according to the companies. Fuel typically costs less at the wholesale clubs.

But many drivers are not filling their tanks up. Walmart Chief Financial Officer John David Rainey told analysts late last month. For the first time since 2022, Walmart customers

and Sam's Club members are buying an average of less than 10 gallons per trip, he said.

"That's an indication of stress," Rainey said.

Costco members also are making changes. They are visiting store gas stations more frequently to "top up in between what would have normally been a gap between getting the tank to empty because of the concern about what might the gas price be tomorrow," Chief Financial Officer Gary Millerchip said in late May.

Meanwhile, the gas price surge has hurt convenience stores, where 80% of all fuel is sold in the U.S., according to Jeff Lenard, a vice president at the National Association of Convenience Stores.

A sales analysis by the trade group found that the number of pump transactions at the properties of 130 convenience store companies fell by nearly 10% across March and April compared to the same two months last year. The number of sales inside the companies' stores dropped by 10.4%, according to the analysis.

"When you lose gallons to the big box, you also lose in-store sales," Lenard said.

Higher gas prices did not stop many Americans from dining out in the first two months of the war with Iran. Tax refunds helped, the National Restaurant Association said. Customer traffic at U.S. restaurants in April was unchanged from the same month last year, although a 2.6% increase in restaurant spending resulted largely from higher menu prices, according to market research firm Circana.

But cracks are starting to form as budget-conscious U.S. residents shoulder the combined weight of paying more for gas and other consumer goods on top of increasing costs in other areas from inflation past and present.

The price of gas won't help bring customers with household incomes of \$45,000 or less back to U.S. fast-food restaurants, McDonald's Chairman and CEO Chris Kempczinski said last month. People in that income group began scaling back their fast-food purchases after the period of inflation that accompanied the end of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the trend picked up speed last year.

U.S.-based restaurant consulting firm Revenue Management Solutions analyzed 14.6 billion restaurant transactions from the last four years and found that as gasoline gets more expensive, restaurant visits gradually decline, according to Chief Research Officer Sebastian Fernandez. The analysis indicated the impact doubles when gas hits the \$4 mark, which it did as a nationwide average on March 31.

Consumers also are making concessions

when they shop for groceries, according to Stew Leonard, president of an eight-store supermarket chain his father founded, Stew Leonard's. He's noticed customers buying meat in bulk to freeze and being less tempted to buy the products showcased during live food demonstrations or offered for sampling.

"It's telling me that people are sticking more to their shopping list," Leonard said.

Dollar General CEO Todd Vasos also cited \$4 a gallon gas as a tipping point that had more consumers with household incomes above \$100,000 frequenting the discount chain. Vasos told analysts Tuesday that many of Dollar General's core shoppers, who have mid-to-low incomes and live in rural areas, were paring back their food spending.

Sophie Tolsdorf, 29, of La Grange, Kentucky, said she is one of the consumers stocking up on meat when the price is reasonable. She also switched to buying whole fruit instead pre-cut fruit in containers and cut back on the rawhide bones for her dog that cost \$40 a pack.

"He might have noticed," Tolsdorf said. "He's definitely a little bit bored during the weekday now."

Before the war, retailers had spent multiple earnings seasons highlighting consumer caution and selectivity as factors that could weigh on sales of nonessential products. Shoppers appear to have curbed their discretionary spending even more as the cost of buying gas went up, said Marshal Cohen, chief retail advisor at Circana.

Between April 25 and May 23, U.S. retailers sold 6% fewer non-grocery products than they did during the comparable four-week period of 2025, Cohen said. Housewares, clothing, footwear and sports equipment had the biggest declines, anywhere from 5% to 7%. Circana reported that toys and beauty items remained bright spots, registering at least an 8% increase in the number of units sold.

Location intelligence company Placer.ai, which tracks people's movements based on cellphone usage, saw visits to the gas stations of BJ's, Costco and Sam's Club stores start to accelerate in early March, aligning with a sharp rise in fuel prices, according to R.J. Hottovy, the company's head of analytical research.

By early May, Placer.ai's data showed four consecutive weeks of reduced foot traffic at clothing, electronics and home furnishing stores, and more trips to grocery stores and dollar stores.

"Consumers are prioritizing value-oriented retailers like warehouse clubs, superstores, and off-price chains," Hottovy said.

# Mortgage rates stay high despite Fed cuts

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

By Michael J. Highfield  
Mississippi College

U.S. homebuyers can't get a break.

The 30-year mortgage rate has been stuck at recent highs well above 6% and now averages 6.48%, according to the data released on June 4, 2026, by Freddie Mac, which bundles and sells home loans. That marks another blow for Americans hoping to buy a home or refinance their current mortgage that had been locked in at similarly steep rates. It's also a sharp jump since February 2026, when the financing cost of a 30-year mortgage had dropped as low as 6%.

Pricy mortgages have been weighing on the housing market more broadly, which has not escaped President Donald Trump. He has waged an aggressive campaign to pressure the Federal Reserve, which sets the short-term benchmark rate, to make deeper cuts to the cost of borrowing. The new Fed chief, Kevin Warsh, has also been touting rate cuts since he was nominated by Trump, a reversal from his earlier anti-inflation stance.

As a professor of finance, I have been asked why mortgage rates are rising even though the Fed has been keeping rates steady after a series of cuts in 2024 and 2025. The central bank actually has little control over the cost of home loans - and Americans may be stuck with high rates for a long time.

The Fed directly influences the federal funds rate, a short-term interest rate that banks charge one another for overnight loans. Many people assume that mortgage rates move in lockstep with the Fed's decisions, but, in fact, they're driven primarily by financial markets.

Thirty-year mortgages are long-term assets. Investors purchasing those loans, either directly or through mortgage-backed securities, are making decisions based on what they believe inflation, economic growth, government borrowing and interest rates will look like years into the future.

Inflation is one of the biggest factors. Although inflation has declined substantially from the peaks experienced in 2022 and 2023, investors remain uncertain about when it will return to the Fed's official long-term target of 2%, especially with elevated oil prices and the ongoing conflict with Iran.

This uncertainty matters because when lenders originate a 30-year, fixed-rate mortgage, they're committing capital for decades. If inflation turns out to be higher than expected, the future payments that lenders receive will be worth less in real purchasing-power terms. To compensate for that risk, investors demand higher yields for the higher cost of borrowing. The greater the risk, the higher the yield.

Federal government borrowing is another important factor. The long-term budget outlook by the independent scorekeeper Congressional Budget Office projects continuing large federal deficits and rising debt levels in the years ahead. It estimated that Trump's massive tax and immigration bill, passed by the Republican-controlled Congress in 2025, will add \$US3.4 trillion to federal deficits through 2034.

Financing the deficit requires the U.S. Treasury to issue large

amounts of debt by selling Treasury bonds and other securities. When the supply of government bonds increases, investors may require higher yields to absorb that additional supply. And because Treasury yields serve as a benchmark for many different types of borrowing costs throughout the economy, mortgage rates often move with them. In particular, mortgage rates tend to track the yield on the 10-year U.S. Treasury note much more closely than they track the federal funds rate.

Adding another layer of complexity are mortgage-backed securities, which are made up of bundled loans that are sold to investors rather than remaining on a lender's balance sheet. Investors who own these securities face risks that Treasury bond investors do not. Chief among them is the right to refinance: Homeowners can refinance when rates fall, pay the loan down more quickly than required by the mortgage contract, or move unexpectedly and completely repay loans early.

So investors generally demand a premium above Treasury yields when buying mortgage-backed securities to compensate for this prepayment risk. Otherwise, they would be stuck with a return lower than they initially expected when they bought that loan.

Since mortgage rates are high, the general expectation is that many homeowners will refinance at lower rates once they can. That means the refinance risk is greater than usual - and it has kept the difference, or spread, between 10-year Treasuries and mortgage rates elevated compared to historical norms, according to the Urban Institute's Housing Finance Policy Center.

In short, even if Treasury yields remain stable, a larger mortgage spread could keep mortgage rates higher than borrowers might expect. This helps explain why mortgage rates don't always move in the same direction as Fed policy, and why mortgage rates have stayed high even after the Fed started lowering short-term interest rates in 2024.

Last, there's an important historical perspective that's often missing from discussions about today's mortgage market.

Many Americans compare current mortgage rates with the extraordinarily low rates available during 2020 and 2021, when some borrowers secured 30-year mortgages at rates that were below 3%. Those were among the lowest mortgage rates ever recorded in the United States - the exception rather than the rule - and a result of the Fed's emergency measures to steer the economy out of recession.

In fact, throughout much of the 1990s and early 2000s, mortgage rates frequently ranged between 6% and 8%. Viewed through that lens, today's rates are far less unusual than many Americans would think.

Mortgages have been around more than two millennia, surviving empires, kingdoms, depressions, wars, financial crises and technological revolutions. The details have changed dramatically, but the underlying economics have not: Lenders have always demanded compensation for inflation risk, uncertainty and the time value of money.

That's why mortgage rates aren't determined solely by the Fed but by millions of investors making judgments about the future. And at the moment, those investors remain cautious. (AP)

# Is inflation red state vs blue state issue? It's increasing no matter how you cut it

WASHINGTON, June 7, (AP): After cooling slowly in 2024 and 2025, inflation is rising again, squeezing most Americans' budgets and making it harder to afford gas, groceries, and other necessities. Inflation reached 3.8% in April from a year earlier, the highest in three years.

So, how bad is it really? Larry Kudlow, a financial news commentator on Fox Business, posed that question Wednesday to Kevin Hassett, director of the National Economic Council, which advises the president on the economy. Hassett had good news: inflation is actually "on a deep downward dive," particularly if you take blue states out of the equation.

The numbers, however, tell a different story. Here's a look at the facts.

**HASSETT:** "Inflation is really out of control in the blue states. If you take out New York and California the story is radically different. So these really high costs, high regulatory states are driving inflation as well."

**THE FACTS:** This is false and appears to be based on outdated data. Inflation is high in all nine of the Census Bureau's national regions and is driven by rising gas prices stemming from the Middle Eastern conflict, which have also pushed up air fares. More expensive fuel has also raised shipping costs, which has lifted grocery prices. Clothing costs have also shot higher, which may reflect the delayed impact of President Trump's tariffs.

"It's not a blue state story," said Omair Sharif, chief economist at Inflation Insights. "Gas is going up in every state."

Hassett cited a report from the White House Council of Economic Advisers that had found modestly higher inflation in blue states. Yet the report used data from last November, long before the Iran war, which began Feb. 28. Since then soaring gas prices - up more than 40% nationwide, according to AAA - have erased those discrepancies.

In short, taking blue states out of the equa-

tion makes little difference, as plenty of red states are seeing higher inflation, too. The Labor Department compiles the most widely-followed inflation gauge, the consumer price index, and releases the data by region. So, for example, the Pacific region is made up of mostly so-called blue states, or those governed by Democrats: California, Washington, Oregon, Hawaii, and Alaska, and its yearly inflation rate was 3.5% in April - below the national rate of 3.8%.

The East South Central region is made up of all so-called red states - governed by Republicans - and its annual inflation rate in April was 4.5%, above the national average. The East South Central is Mississippi, Alabama, Kentucky, and Tennessee.

Some red states are seeing lower inflation than the national average. The West South Central region, which is made up of Texas, Oklahoma, Arkansas, and Louisiana, saw consumer prices rise 3.2% in April from a year earlier. But before the pandemic that region was seeing inflation closer to 1% annually, so inflation has gotten worse even there.

It's true that blue states such as California or New York often do have higher prices overall than red states. For example, gas prices in Texas averaged \$3.72 a gallon Thursday, according to AAA, while they were \$5.98 a gallon in California.

But inflation measures price increases, not levels. And gas prices have jumped in Texas since the Iran war, just as they have in California. In fact, compared with a year ago, gas prices have risen nearly 36% in Texas, while they are up 26% in California.

**HASSETT:** "It's on a deep downward dive if you look at the trimmed mean or the core, it's headed right towards the Fed's target."

**THE FACTS:** This is misleading. Core inflation, according to the consumer price index, has risen this year from an annual rate of 2.5% in January to 2.8% in April, the latest data avail-

able. It is lower than the headline number of 3.8% because the core figure excludes volatile food and energy prices in an effort to get a picture of underlying inflation trends. Over time, the headline figure tends to move to the core, which is why the Federal Reserve and economists often put more weight on the core.

Using the Federal Reserve's preferred inflation gauge - the personal consumption expenditures price index, or PCE, which puts less weight on rental and housing costs and also accounts for substitutions consumers make in their purchases - annual core inflation also rose to 3.3% in April, up from 3.1% in January.

"There's no deep dive happening in core inflation anywhere," Sharif said.

A White House official, speaking on condition of anonymity, pointed out that core inflation as measured by the CPI is still lower than it was in January 2025.

The trimmed mean that Hassett mentioned is one of many obscure, alternative measures, and it has gotten more attention recently because it has been cited by Kevin Warsh, the new chair of the Federal Reserve appointed by President Trump. The trimmed mean is calculated essentially by throwing out many of the largest price changes, both increases and decreases, in an effort to gauge whether price increases are spreading more broadly into a wide range of categories.

Hassett is right that the trimmed mean for the PCE index, as calculated by the Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas, has declined slightly since the start of the year, from 2.5% to 2.3%, and is close to the Fed's 2% target. Yet the president of the Dallas Fed, Lorie Logan, warned Wednesday that the measure may be misleading when inflation is surging because of some quirks in the way it is calculated. It stayed low well into the inflation surge of 2021, for example.

The Cleveland Fed calculates a separate trimmed mean from the CPI data, and it recently ticked up to 2.8% from 2.6%.



The cast appears during a performance of "Ragtime" in New York on Oct. 8, 2025. (AP)

Tony-nominated musical draws audiences with themes of identity, immigration and hope

## 'Ragtime' revival hits home on Broadway

NEW YORK, June 7, (AP): It's been nearly 30 years since Stephen Flaherty and Lynn Ahrens wrote the music and lyrics for the musical "Ragtime," an American epic tracking the intertwining lives of three families in New York at the turn of the 20th century.

Staged at Lincoln Center's Vivian Beaumont Theater, the musical is in its third run on Broadway - and earned 11 Tony nominations, including for best revival. It's resonating the most with audiences this time, they said. "Three is the charm," Ahrens said.

"When we originally did it on Broadway, which was 1998, I think a lot of people, if not most people, were thinking about this piece as a period piece," Flaherty said. "I think now, people are responding to it as a contemporary story."

Adapted from the 1975 novel by E.L. Doctorow, the show's book is by the late playwright Terrence McNally. It depicts a wide swath of the American experience in New York at the turn of the 20th century, from Black Americans in Harlem to Jewish immigrants on the Lower East Side to the white upper-class residents of the suburbs of Westchester County.

The story that unfolds is fiction, but features historical figures like activist Emma Goldman, educator and leader Booker T. Washington, banker J.P. Morgan, auto founder Henry Ford and illusionist Harry Houdini. The show's breadth - encompassing immense tragedy as well as great optimism - and the depth of the actors' performances has been bringing Broadway audiences to their feet, often mid-act.

It also has people returning. "They're like, 'I'm coming back with my parents,' 'I'm coming back with my grandchildren,' 'I'm coming back with my grandparents,' and it's not even like they have to see it. They want to experience it with them," said Brandon Uranowitz, who had his own return to the show, decades after he acted as a child in the pre-Broadway production.

Now, he's nominated for best lead actor in a musical for playing the role of Tateh, a Jewish immigrant from Latvia. "I think it's sort of speaking to this generational reckoning that we're having with America and our national identity."

The original production lost the best new musical Tony Award to "The Lion King," but Ahrens and Flaherty took home the prize for best original score, McNally best book and William David Brohn best orchestrations in a competitive year. It also won Audra McDonald, the Tonys' most decorated performer, her first award. A 2009 revival received six nominations, but lost best revival to "La Cage aux Folles."

This could be the year it finally wins a best show award: "Ragtime" is a front-runner for best musical

revival, against strong competition from "Cats: The Jellie Ball" and "The Rocky Horror Show." Among its other nods are nominations for all three leads, and for featured performers Nichelle Lewis and Ben Levi Ross.

Joshua Henry, nominated alongside his costar for best lead actor, plays Coalhouse Walker Jr., a celebrated Black pianist at the center of his community in Harlem. Caissie Levy, nominated for her role of Mother, is the matriarch of a wealthy

white family in a suburb outside New York City.

A cast of supporting characters, and a large ensemble, flesh out the lead trio's lives, relationships and eventual connections: Lewis plays Sarah, Coalhouse's beloved; Ross is Mother's Younger Brother and Colin Donnell her husband, Father; Shaina Taub is Goldman, the real-life activist.

Emotions in the first act peak during "Wheels of a Dream," Lewis' iconic duet with Henry, which draws

standing ovations, mid-song, nearly every night.

"She is a person who represents women - especially women of color - who don't have a voice, women of color who are fighting to have a voice, women of color who find strength in other ways because we weren't allowed to have it," Lewis said of Sarah. But above all, she said, the character represents the power of trust, love and hope as a buoying force.

That hope is also what propels

Uranowitz's Tateh. "Despite everything he goes through, despite the rejection, despite the oppression, despite the othering, despite antisemitism," it's what persists.

In the song "Journey On," his character arrives in New York with his young daughter just as Mother's husband, Father, leaves on an expedition to the North Pole.

"You depart on a ship from a country like this," Tateh sings, watching Father leave. "Why on Earth would you want to be leaving?" The two

men are perched on separate, moving staircases on a sparsely furnished stage, but sing from the same height, emphasizing the valley between their experiences.

Like many of the characters, Father and Tateh (also "father," in Yiddish) are nameless. The intention, Uranowitz said, is for aspects of Tateh's journey - from immigrant artist to successful movie-maker - to reflect the experience of Jewish Americans, and to resonate with people from other backgrounds as well. "If you pan out, which 'Ragtime' does so beautifully, it also holds just a capital 'I' immigration experience. And I think that's really important for people to see right now."

The musical feels so relevant to 2026 that audience members have asked director Lear deBessonet, also Tony-nominated, if the creative team rewrote the script for this production. Lyrics by Ahrens and dialogue by McNally about the discrimination and brutality that Black Americans and immigrants face can seem straight out of the current moment. There are also references to keeping the country "great," and commentary on celebrity culture and the power of industry leaders.

But the text hasn't changed. "We, in the audience, are hearing it differently," deBessonet said. "There's something that actually, I think is very unifying about coming together with a community of our time to look at this other time, and to look at the promise and the wound of America right next to each other."

A 2027 tour, with deBessonet and the Broadway run's creative team at the helm, will bring the show to a wider audience around the country.

"It does not feel like we're looking back. It feels like we're looking in a mirror at ourselves," Flaherty said.

There is one small change, however. When "Wheels of a Dream" is reprised in the final number, the ensemble sings "Our son will ride on the wheels of a," and then takes a long pause before a final, resonant, "dream." The goal is not to prescribe a particular emotional response, but to allow viewers - and the actors themselves - space for their own interpretations.

"In that moment, every single actor, every artist on that stage is invited to fill that moment with whatever feels honest to them that night," deBessonet said. "Sometimes you can really feel that there is exuberant hope in the air. And sometimes there is grief or rage or confusion," she added.

Ahrens said it's been a "revelation" to see how audiences have responded to the production, before and after the 2024 presidential election - and throughout this Broadway run, which concludes on Aug. 2. "It's such a visceral thing," she said. "I don't think we've ever experienced anything like it."



Nichelle Lewis, left, and Joshua Henry appear during a performance of "Ragtime" in New York on Oct. 8, 2025. (AP)



Brandon Uranowitz appears during a performance of "Ragtime" in New York on Oct. 8, 2025. (AP)



Joshua Henry, foreground from left, Caissie Levy, and Brandon Uranowitz appear during a performance of "Ragtime" in New York on Oct. 8, 2025. (AP)

## Obituary



In this file photo, Anthony Head arrives for the European premiere of 'The Iron Lady' on Wednesday, Jan. 4, 2012, in London. (AP)

## Fans mourn actor

## Anthony Head star of Buffy, dies at 72

LONDON, June 7, (AP): Anthony Head, the suave, smooth-voiced British actor known for roles in "Buffy the Vampire Slayer" and "Ted Lasso," has died, his family said Friday. He was 72.

Head's daughters, actors Emily and Daisy Head, told the Press Association news agency that the actor passed away due to complications from pneumonia.

The stage and TV performer became well known to British audiences in the 1980s as one half of a will-they, won't-they romantic couple in a series of ads for Nescafé Gold Blend instant coffee. The ads were later re-shot for a U.S. audience for Taster's Choice.

Head achieved wider fame as librarian Rupert Giles, mentor to the title character in the cult-favorite supernatural series "Buffy the Vampire Slayer," which ran from 1997 to 2003.

He most recently played Rupert Mannion, the villainous ex-husband of Hannah Waddingham's character Rebecca, in "Ted Lasso."

"Our grief is far greater than the hole he has left behind, but we know his legacy will live on, in the shows he was a part of, and in the audiences that love them," his daughters said. "How lucky we are to know we are able to watch him doing what he loved, even when he is no longer with us."

Head was born in London on Feb. 20, 1954 to Seafiel Head, a documentary filmmaker, and Helen Shingler, an actor. His older brother, Murray, is also an actor.

Other notable roles included playing Geoffrey Howe, the deputy to Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, played by Meryl Streep, in the Oscar-winning "The Iron Lady."

## Film

A Jeff Ament documentary highlights Montana skateparks shaping Indigenous youth

## 'Paving the Way' shows skateboarding as art, not just sport

NEW YORK, June 7, (AP): Raised in the rural Montana community of Big Sandy, Jeff Ament got hooked as a teenager on skateboarding at a time when not much more than only a handful of ramps were available in the state.

Ament's first love was a "terrible" clay wheel skateboard and his passion blossomed on a family trip to California, where he skateboarded and felt the g-forces on urethane wheels on paved asphalt streets and then poured through the pages of Skateboarder magazine on the 20-hour drive home to Montana.

Ament found pictures of decks and ramps that he used as inspiration for designs that his dad, George, would help him build - like how to craft a kick tail and create the perfect tail radius - and took his skateboard to compete in larger contests around the state.

"I think the idea that he was helping me build something was the most important thing to him," Ament said. "He gave me a life skill."

Ament's other major life skill, as bassist for the Pearl Jam band he co-founded, also has served him well and provided him with the means to help fund the creation of world-class skateboard parks in Montana. Many are in small, isolated communities, including at least one on every state Native American reservation by the end of the year. Construction starts in two weeks for one on the last reservation on the list, Northern Cheyenne.

"I think a lot of people don't understand artists," Ament said on a Zoom with The Associated Press. "I think skateboarding is probably even more of an art than it is a sport."

Ament has found the parks can help kids survive and thrive outside of daily isolation, a message spread in the short documentary "Paving the Way." Ament created original music for the film - which captures skateboarding's power to foster creativity, challenge stereotypes and build community, spotlighting Indigenous youth on the Flathead Reservation - that premieres Sunday at the Tribeca Festival in New York.

The film tells the story through skater and artist Alishon Kelly, who perseveres with her love of skateboarding even with a broken foot. "Paving the Way" is directed by Keelan Williams and was nominated for the Big Sky Award at the Big Sky Documentary Film Festival.

"I think what he captures really well is just, when you have that thing inside of you, you just feel the need to be created," Ament said. "I think it explains it really well, how cathartic it can be, how it



This film still provided by Full Glow on Saturday, June 6, 2026, shows a scene from a short documentary called 'Paving the Way' filmed on the Flathead Indian Reservation in northwestern Montana. (AP)

helps you understand other aspects of your life."

At the film's backbone is a partnership between Jeff's Montana Pool Service - a nod to the large bowl at the center of a skate park - and the Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes, as five new skateparks rise across the Flathead Reservation.

"We're reminding people of our first peoples," Ament said. "I think most people in this country have no idea that they even exist. I think there's even been certain people in our government that are trying to kind of rewrite history, erase history. You even hear young people, say, younger people than me, talk about the Native people as if they're immigrants."

The 63-year-old Ament delivered the commencement speech at MSU-Northern in Montana last month and touched on the importance for the graduates to be being open to getting out and seeing the world, even if they come from areas that can seem disconnected from their rural hometowns. He met with some of the students after the ceremony and found the experience "gave me hope. I think sometimes I don't always see the best of the younger generation. They're al-

most to a person, so gung-ho about getting out, getting after it."

There also are plans in the works to get "Paving the Way" out in the world - Ament hoped for distribution beyond Tribeca, where Pearl Jam singer Eddie Vedder was the focus of a film in the festival last

year - now available on YouTube or PBS - but wanted to make sure the film is somehow available to those in Indigenous communities and to show them the hope, resilience and joy that can be found at the skateboarding parks.

"These parks are where we come

together and where we look out for each other," said Terrence Lozeau, a skater featured in the film. "You see little kids watching the older ones and learning."

As for Ament's day job, Pearl Jam returns in September to headline the Ohana festival in Dana Point, California, in its first performance since drummer Matt Cameron left the band in May after 27 years. The band has kept the identity of his replacement under wraps and will make it official at the Sept. 27 festival.

"I think the big question is, if it's going to work out that this is our future drummer," Ament told the AP. "It'll be the first show, so there's a little bit of a trial happening. It's exciting. It's taken a little bit longer than we thought it would take. We're not in any massive rush either."

Ament said the band has started writing new songs but would like to play a few dates with the new drummer before Pearl Jam hits the studio again next year.

"I think we need to get out and play like 10, 15 shows with whoever our drummer is and just kind of get that part going before we make a record," Ament said.



In this file photo, Jeff Ament of Pearl Jam performs during Bottle Rock Napa Valley on May 25, 2024, in Napa, Calif. (AP)

## Music

The album's heart is in its closing song

## Niall Horan throws a 'Dinner Party' for those in love

NEW YORK, June 7, (AP): He met her at a "Dinner Party." It's not enough to call it a concept album, but former One Direction boy bander and Irish singer Niall Horan's fourth studio album, "Dinner Party," grounds itself in love songs about his longtime partner, who he met at the get-together. If the title track is the crux of the release, the message is clear: This is a breezy 12-track collection that makes settling into a long-term relationship sound effortless. It's why the chorus repeats and repeats, and verses are cut short to get to the good stuff. "Crashing lights when you first saw me," he sings. "Yeah, I met you at a dinner party." The rest is history.

And it continues throughout the album's polish, from the dreamy guitar pop of "Monochromatic" and slow-burn "She Gets It from Her Mother" to the yacht rock silliness of "Boys Are Fun" and romantic bass of "Flowers." (The story behind the later? The line "No, you don't know your powers/Swear your eyes could grow flowers" was lifted from a fan who tweeted a similar line at Horan. Talk about fan service.) The hooks are prevalent, if not earwormy.

But only gloss would slip in and out of a listener's memory. To counteract any weightlessness, Horan suffuses doubt. Like on the acoustic ballad "Better Man," where stacked self-harmonies offer tense vulnerability: "I would understand," he sings. "If there was a better man."

Or he opts for a newfound edge - the profanity of "Pretty," with its gorgeous guitar riff - or sonically, like on opener "Tastes So Good," which draws subtle influence from pop-punk. There, it's palm-muted power chords and drums loud in the mix, channeling Blink-182 member Travis Barker's idiosyncratic style.

Though romance seems to be his primary focus, the emotional crux of "Dinner Party" for Horan's dedicated fanbase will be its closer. Co-written with longtime One Direction song-



This album cover image released by Capitol Records shows 'Dinner Party' by Niall Horan. (AP)

writers John Ryan and Julian Bunetta, "End of an Era" was stopped and started many times throughout the years and serves as a thoughtful punctuation mark. It was completed following the death of Horan's boy bandmate Liam Payne, who died in 2024 after falling from a hotel balcony in Buenos Aires. He was 31.

Sonically, the song recalls 1D's joviality, aided by Horan's aged wisdom. "Time passes so fast that I couldn't tell you goodbye," he sings. "Careless times, yeah, we sure had some/Naive eyes, yeah, we sure looked young / Tears fall down like the future comes/Slowly, and then all

at once."

It is imbued with the same animating affection that carries throughout "Dinner Party," but one where adoration is displayed another way: In grief, where unexpressed love continues to preserve. It shows promise that Horan's songwriting may continue to evolve as he grows.

"Dinner Party" by Niall Horan  
Three stars out of five.

On repeat: "Pretty," "Dinner Party"

Skip it: "She Gets It from Her Mother"

For fans of: Effortless pop-rock, turning 30, cream in your coffee.

## Books

## 'The Men Who Saved the World' shows war's impact on elites

## Edith Wharton's lost WWI story resurfaces

NEW YORK, June 7, (AP): When World War I broke out in 1914, Edith Wharton's initial response was less as a storyteller in search of material than as a citizen and intrepid witness.

The Pulitzer Prize-winning author of "The House of Mirth," "The Custom of the Country" and other probing stories of New York society was living in Paris at the time and soon set out to help those imperiled by the clash between Allied and German forces. She set up a workroom for seamstresses and others who had lost their jobs, established hostels that aided thousands of refugees and even reported from the trenches for a series of dispatches that ran in the American periodical Scribner's Magazine.

But Wharton eventually - and inevitably - channeled her observations and experiences into fiction. She worked on a novel published after the war, "A Son at the Front," and attempted a story about an affluent couple in the French countryside who decide that the war is going well enough that they can resume the social gatherings of the past. "The Men Who Saved the World" - unfinished and never before published - appears Friday in the new issue of The Strand Magazine, which has released rare works by Mark Twain, Ernest Hemingway and many others.

"The boom of guns can be heard in the distance. A few young soldiers sit among the guests. And the hostess wants to know whether they might have dancing," Strand Managing Editor Andrew Gulli writes in a brief introduction. "Wharton asks a question that is as relevant today as it was over a century ago: what is the cost of refusing to see the horrors beyond the softly curtained windows - and who pays it?"

Wharton had long scrutinized



In this file photo, American author Edith Wharton poses with her dogs in France, 1923. (AP)

the rich from the inside. Born into a wealthy New York City family in 1862, she knew firsthand the manners and codes and traditions that she picked apart in her best known work. In "The Men Who Saved the World," believed to be written in 1918, she shifts the narrative from the New York drawing rooms of her early fiction to a French chateau within miles of a battlefield.

The author had a deep affinity for France and French culture, which she regarded as "one of the greatest cultures in the world, perhaps the greatest culture," Wharton scholar Julie Olin-Ammentorp wrote in an email, adding that she was unsure why the author never finished "The Men Who Saved the World." The German attack stirred Wharton's conscience, and her imagination. "The Men Who Saved the

World" dramatizes the separation between civilian and military life, and what happens when they merge. It's told through the perspective of a young American nurse, Milly Arden, a guest at the home of Fred and Madge Upshall, who are preparing a dinner party in the same setting where they had once permitted an army surgeon to perform amputations. Arden finds herself seated next to a war hero, Capt. Sherman Wake, regarded by Mrs. Upshall as one of the "real people." Capt. Wake proves eager to discuss the "catastrophic horror and waste" he has seen nearby.

"You hear the guns pretty distinctly here," Wake tells Arden. "They must make the windows rattle when everything's quiet, don't they?"

"Yes, they do," she responded, looking out on an orchid "which the cannonade had displaced just before dinner."

## Disease had a big head start: WHO chief

# Health workers at epicenter of Congo's Ebola outbreak labor with little pay or rest

MONGBWALU, Congo, June 7, (AP) — Dr. Richard Lokudu, the medical director of Mongbwalu General Referral Hospital, has received barely any compensation for his work on the front line of one of Congo's deadliest Ebola virus outbreaks.

Lokudu and several of his colleagues work all day at the hospital treating an influx of patients. Notifications of suspected cases come even late at night. "I have not received my allowance (and) what happened to others could happen to me as well," Lokudu told The Associated Press. "Despite all the infection prevention and control measures we are implementing, we do not know what may happen."

Health authorities believe the outbreak, which took the eastern region of Congo by surprise after spreading silently for weeks without detection, started in the bustling mining area of Mongbwalu in Ituri province.

Mongbwalu has emerged as the epicenter of the rare Bundibugyo type. The town attracts large numbers of laborers who work in large gold mines with muddy pools of gold deposits, narrow pits and caves. They live in low-income areas including crowded camps and have little access to proper health protocols.

The conditions increase the possibility of transmitting the disease, which spreads through close contact with bodily fluids of the sick and deceased such as sweat, blood, feces and vomit.

There also has been widespread skepticism regarding the disease, making the job of medical treatment more difficult for Lokudu and his colleagues, while some of the health workers and first responders have died from the disease.

"It is one thing to be far away and hear statistics being reported, but what is happening on the ground is enormous," Lokudu said. "People are sacrificing their rest and comfort for this cause. There should be recognition that they deserve compensation. These workers should receive their salaries regularly."

The Congolese government did not respond to a request for comment from the AP.

Congolese authorities have confirmed 452 cases including 82 deaths. On



Richard Lokudu, (center), the medical director of Mongbwalu General Hospital, speaks with UN peacekeepers in Mongbwalu, Congo on June 5. (AP)

Thursday, the Central African nation recorded 71 new cases in a day, which authorities said is a sign of "active community transmission."

The rare Bundibugyo type has no approved vaccines or treatment, so health workers have been targeting symptoms. The government said at least five people have recovered from Ebola since the outbreak was officially confirmed by Congo's Ministry of Health on May 15.

The disease "had a big head start," according to World Health Organization Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus. Hospitals in the region could not test for the right type of Ebola that had begun spreading several

weeks before confirmation.

Health workers are handling the disease with minimal resources as agencies have been scrambling to bring aid into the region. Masks, gloves, boots and medications were initially all in short supply.

"There has been an erosion of the health system," said Heather Kerr, country director for the International Rescue Committee in Congo. "There has not been investment in the health system, and this has been going on for years."

"During the first week, we did not even have time to go home and eat. The second week was the same. We only eat once a day, what amounts to breakfast in the evening," said Alice Bamuhinga, a nurse at the Mongbwalu hospital.

Even with widespread skepticism and disregard for health protocols, many in the town are becoming aware of the outbreak's grave reality.

Asero Jeanne had five children. Two died from the disease within two weeks. When her daughter became ill, the family thought it was malaria and neighbors advised them to avoid the hospital, saying "anyone who went there would die immediately," according to Jeanne, 52.

The daughter died after three weeks of moving between hospitals and home, followed by a son who died days after. Then Jeanne became sick.

"I saw about 20 people die," Jeanne said. "I watched them being taken to the morgue, yet God is allowing me to leave here alive. I thank the doctors."

Tedros, the WHO director-general, on Friday launched a \$518 million plan to combat the outbreak, saying "containing Ebola depends on political commitment, sustained financing, and the trust and engagement of communities."

Efforts to contain the disease also have been hindered by the conflict between the government and Rwanda-backed M23 rebel group, in addition to attacks by Islamist militants.

For health workers on the front line of Congo's Ebola outbreak, the work has become harder as the disease spreads faster than their current treatment capacity.

"Despite the alerts we receive and the teams we have on site, we lack the means to travel into the field," Lokudu said. "As a result, there are alerts we are unable to investigate."

## Scientists lose critical climate record as ocean observatory to go dark under Trump funding cuts

SEATTLE, June 7, (AP) — A portion of one of the most ambitious ocean monitoring networks ever built will go dark this month when scientists board a research vessel and motor off the Oregon coast to pull a research buoy from deep out of the Pacific.

The buoy 80 meters (260 feet) below the water's surface will be removed June 16 from the Ocean Observatories Initiative — a network of more than 900 ocean sensors built at a cost of \$386 million that has continuously collected real-time data for more than a decade. But last month, the National Science Foundation announced it would dismantle most of the system, pulling instruments from waters off Oregon, Washington, Alaska, North Carolina and Greenland by 2027.

Funded by the foundation, the observatories have tracked everything from ocean circulation and marine ecosystems to climate change and extreme weather. Its data has been freely available and has informed more than 500 scientific publications. The project was slated to run for another 15 to 20 years.

In an emailed statement, the foundation said the decision is not a cancellation, but a "descoping" aligned with a "wider strategy of a nimbler approach to prioritize support for evolving scientific priorities and emerging technologies, as well as smart lifecycle management within its research infrastructure portfolio." The foundation added that its decision drew in part on a 2025 National Academies report on the future of ocean science.

But for the scientists who built and operated the system — and the researchers, educators and students who rely on its data — the timing feels particularly punishing.

An El Nino event, which disrupts weather patterns and supercharges marine heat waves, is predicted to arrive along the Pacific coast this summer. One marine heat wave is already pushing unusually warm water off California.

Without the Oregon and Washington moorings and the network of underwater gliders the Ocean Observatories Initiative operated in the region, researchers say they'll lose much of their ability to measure what's happening below the surface, which is precisely where the most significant oceanographic signals are.

"It's a crippling loss of information," Ed Dever, a professor at Oregon State University who helped lead the initiative's Pacific Northwest operations, told The Associated Press Tuesday. Scientists can get some data from the surface, such as temperature and the distribution of chlorophyll, which drives photosynthesis in plants, but information below cannot be gathered from satellites alone, including low oxygen zones.

The initiative launched in 2015 after more than a decade of community planning and construction. It was designed as a 25 to 30-year project, built in part around the oceanographic consensus that detecting meaningful climate signals requires at least three decades of continuous

data. "We've just got to the 10 year record," Dever said, "which will give you some hints, but it won't continue on."

One significant piece will remain: a seafloor cable network managed by the University of Washington off the Pacific Northwest coast, which will continue providing data on volcanic and seismic activity in the region.

Scientists had seen warning signs as the administration's proposed 2026 budget included a 55% cut to the science foundation. Official word to begin shutting down arrived in early May.

The initiative was coordinated by the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution in collaboration with the University of Washington and Oregon State University, as well as past partners including Rutgers University and Scripps Institution of Oceanography.

The initiative operated on roughly \$48 million a year, not including the cost of research vessels, which adds substantially to the overall price. Prior to budget cuts, which began in 2025, around 60 to 70 people worked directly on the project across its partner institutions, Dever said.

"What's happening with the Ocean Observatories Initiative is not unique," he said. "This is just one of a number of science facilities that is being dismantled at the present time. It seems to really mark the end of a federal commitment to basic scientific research — a commitment that has served this nation very well for the last 70 years."



In this 2018 image provided by Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution, a buoy used to gather data floats in the Pioneer Mid-Atlantic Bight off the coast of North Carolina. (AP)

## Melinda French Gates donates \$215m to improve women's health worldwide

WASHINGTON, June 7, (AP) — Philanthropist Melinda French Gates will expand her giving to improve women's health globally, pledging another \$215 million to support contraceptive access and maternal care, as well as initiatives aimed at middle-aged women, including further study of menopause.

The new funding announced Thursday pushes French Gates' donations for women's health over \$600 million in the past two years.

French Gates told The Associated Press in an interview that women's health is the cornerstone of the work she does through Pivotal, the group of organizations she founded to handle her philanthropy and investments. "It's just blaringly obvious that women's health is fundamental — she has to be well to do well in life," French Gates said.

Since 2024, when she stepped away from The Gates Foundation, which she founded with her now ex-husband Bill Gates and built into one of the world's largest private funders of health care, French Gates has honed her approach to supporting women.

This latest round of funding reflects an increasingly strategic approach to areas she feels are underfunded. It includes a \$40 million donation to Co-Impact for an initiative that embeds mental health support into maternal and primary care, especially in Africa. And French Gates hopes her \$10 million donation to the Menopause Society to improve menopause care in the United



Melinda Gates, co-chair of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, poses for photographers as she arrives for a meeting after a meeting at the Elysee Palace in Paris, July 1, 2021. (AP)

States, by educating healthcare practitioners and expanding outreach in areas where care is limited, will encourage other funders to begin working on the issue.

According to the World Economic Forum, even though women make up half the population, the health issues that specifically affect them only get 2% of private healthcare funds. The lack of funding has resulted in a lack of products and services dedicated to treating them.

"The role of philanthropy, in my opinion, is to look at some of these societal problems that have been left behind, and shine light on them, show ways of making progress so you can then crowd in other donors

and ultimately crowd in government funding," she said. "Part of what I'm doing here, I hope, is sending a signal to say, 'This is really important. Let's do something about it.' And my hope is that I'll be able to get others who will join me."

Dr. Stephanie Faubion, medical director of The Menopause Society and director of The Mayo Clinic's Center for Women's Health, said the United States currently has about 6,000 counties where patients have critically low access to menopause-competent clinicians. She said the donation will allow The Menopause Society to offer its educational resources to more areas of the country that need them.

"Menopause remains one of the most overlooked and underserved areas in medicine, and The Menopause Society believes women deserve better," Faubion said. "We're ready to make those changes with the support of donors like Pivotal."

Research into menopause treatments was already underfunded, even before recent medical research cuts made by President Donald Trump's administration went into effect.

"I think philanthropy is going to fill a greater role than it ever has in the past because we are just not going to have the same type of government funding that we've had before," she said. "Funding is hard to come by these days — much, much harder than it was before. And the need hasn't gone away. We still have to do the research somehow."



Meta's Stanton Springs Data Center is visible on Jan 13, in Newton County, Ga. (AP)

## Energy, water use and pollution of AI, data centers rival most countries, says report

WASHINGTON, June 7, (AP) — The environmental footprint of data centers already rivals some of the world's largest countries, according to a United Nations University report, which also predicts their water and energy use and pollution will double in just four years as use of artificial intelligence grows.

Last year, global data centers used 448 trillion watt-hours of electricity, more than all but 10 countries of the world, said the report issued Wednesday. That electricity use produced about 208 million tons (189 million metric tons) of carbon dioxide, about the same amount as Argentina, and producing that much energy consumed about 1.2 trillion gallons (4.5 trillion liters) of water, according to the report on the environmental consequences of AI's energy use.

By 2030, data centers will account for nearly 3% of the world's projected electricity use, with 935 trillion watt-hours. If data centers were a country, the country would be projected to rank sixth-highest in power use in 2030. That would produce nearly 440 million tons (399 million metric tons) of carbon dioxide, the report said. The study focused on energy use and didn't examine the massive amount of water used to cool data centers.

"If you look at these numbers, we're seeing scales comparable to nations," said study co-author Kaveh Madani, a water scientist and director of the United Nations University

Institute for Water, Environment and Health in Canada. "The demand is enormous."

Much of the growth of data centers is being driven by AI. About 20% of data centers' energy is currently due to AI, but that should grow to 40% by 2030, the report said.

The report is significant because of the credibility and authority of the U.N., not just because of any one set of eye-popping numbers, said Fengqi You, a Cornell University engineering professor who directs the college's AI sustainability issues. "Its value is that a UN institution is putting carbon, water, land, lifecycle impacts and environmental justice into one frame" for an issue that is often shrouded in secrecy and partial disclosures, said You, who was not part of the report.

"The general public should be concerned, but not panicked," he added.

Jean Su, director of the Energy Justice Program at the Center for Biological Diversity, said the report is important because it is the first UN, or even global, report "that shines a light on the environmental harms of AI."

National Artificial Intelligence Association President Caleb Max emphasized how his industry is becoming more efficient and how it benefits the public: "AI is rapidly becoming part of our everyday lives and adding benefits that improve safety, live longer, work more efficiently, enhance food production,

and reduce poverty. The evidence is growing daily that the energy return on investment of AI development is transformative for our world and therefore more than worth it."

Josh Levi, president the Data Center Coalition, said the industry takes its environmental impact seriously.

"We remain committed to working with policymakers, local communities, and industry partners to ensure that as data centers grow, they do so responsibly, transparently, and in ways that reflect the best available practices," he said in a statement.

Madani, also the winner of the most recent of the Stockholm Water Prize, said the numbers show the environmental cost of AI, which may seem cleaner at first glance than other mechanical devices, such as cars and furnaces, that have visible pollution.

"AI is not just a virtual thing. We're talking about something that has physics, something that has real impacts. There is infrastructure there. There is energy that is being used," Madani said. "A lot of hardware is behind all these operations that to us seem very, very clean because we don't see smoke out of our devices. On our cellphone, there is no visible smoke or out of our computer or something. But somewhere else someone is suffering."

People can reduce AI's massive energy appetite by being less polite and more concise in their queries, Madani said.

## Joy at Ljubljana zoo after birth of tiger cubs

LJUBLJANA, Slovenia, June 7, (AP) — A zoo in Slovenia's capital Ljubljana has presented its newest residents: three Siberian tiger cubs who were born there under two weeks ago.

The Siberian tiger is one of the world's most endangered big cat species, with experts estimating that about 500 remain in the wild. Their survival is threatened primarily by habitat loss and poaching.

Zoo workers said the cubs were born to mother Arisa and father Ussuri, which arrived in Ljubljana in 2004, after careful planning and much hoping.

"We were not really expecting, but hoping, working on it because we have a good breeding pair," she said. Though the couple were introduced to each other at the right time "we weren't completely sure," she added.



A visitor watches newborn Siberian tiger cubs with their mother on a screen at the zoo in Ljubljana, Slovenia on June 5. (AP)

DeVaux first woman to win multiple Triple Crown races

## Belmont Stakes goes to Golden Tempo in closing stretch thriller

SARATOGA SPRINGS, N.Y., June 7. (AP) Golden Tempo showed exactly why he is a great closer, and his stretch run at the Belmont Stakes on Saturday delivered more history for trainer Cherie DeVaux.

Ridden by jockey Jose Ortiz from 12 lengths off the lead, Golden Tempo surged from the back of the pack to win the 158th rendition of the race. The victory came five weeks after his last-to-first charge to win the Kentucky Derby.

"Golden Tempo is amazing. Jose is amazing," said DeVaux. "I think he needed to do this to kind of show that he was meant to win the Derby and that he is a horse that belongs in that conversation of being one of the top 3-year-olds."

Golden Tempo held off Commandment to win by a length and a quarter at odds of 6-1. Commandment was second and favorite Renegade placed third.

"I followed them closely in the second turn," Ortiz said. "They started to pick it up, so I did as well. I was

just waiting for the right time to go all in. When I asked him to go, my horse responded."

DeVaux, after becoming the first woman to train a Kentucky Derby winner, is the second in four years to do so at the Belmont. Jena Antonucci won it with Arcangelo in 2023. DeVaux is the first woman to win multiple Triple Crown races.

"It's overwhelming," DeVaux said. "All the credit goes to Golden Tempo, who won the race, and Jose did a wonderful job of making it happen. But I'm just so fortunate to be in this position. It's history-making, and I've kind of shied away from it, but I'm really grateful that I am that person."

DeVaux was born in Saratoga Springs and began her training career there, but she doesn't call herself a Saratoga native. She spends most of her time in Kentucky now and said she grew up in southern Florida. But after all the support she's received from the town, she has started to embrace it.

"Everyone is kind of calling me

the hometown girl," DeVaux said. "So that's kind of fun. I'm going to miss our appetizer (at) Saratoga, as we call it, the 'Bellatoga.'"

Golden Tempo was the third choice in the race. There were concerns about whether he could pull off another big comeback win in a field that included Renegade. The Todd Pletcher-trained horse finished second to Golden Tempo by a neck in the Derby.

The pace was not nearly as fast as it was at Churchill Downs, yet Golden Tempo still was able to close in time to win the 1 1/4-mile race in 2:03.49. It didn't matter, as he was the best in the field of nine horses.

"He wasn't going to get that setup as he did in the Derby," Ortiz said. "We all knew that, and I was a little worried about it. He needed some kind of setup. But today, there wasn't one and he showed up today and won."

Golden Tempo won two-thirds of the Triple Crown after DeVaux and owners decided to bypass the Preakness. He is the second horse in as many years to win the Kentucky

Derby and the Belmont after not running in the middle jewel.

"We made our decision, and we won today and we're going to be happy about that," DeVaux said.

This was the third and final time for the Belmont at Saratoga in upstate New York, while its traditional home on the border of Queens and Long Island is getting demolished and rebuilt. Run at 1 1/4 miles because of the track at Saratoga, the race is set to return to Belmont Park next year when it will return to its traditional 1 1/2-mile distance.

"It's so meaningful," DeVaux said. "A lot of family here. Saratoga, it's been wonderful to have such a historic race here. ... It's so meaningful because the town gets to have this and celebrate it along with us."

Golden Tempo paid \$14 to win, \$7.32 to place and \$3.88 to show. Commandment paid \$7.02 to show and \$4.08 to place, while Renegade paid \$2.52 to place.

Ortiz followed Renegade, ridden by older brother Irad, just as he did



Trainer Cherie DeVaux, center, with Jockey Jose Ortiz, left, holds the trophy after Golden Tempo won the 158th running of the Belmont Stakes horse race in Saratoga Springs, N.Y. (AP)

in the Derby. It worked out just the same in the first Saturday in June as the first Saturday in May.

"He was bouncing a bit today, which made me very happy because

I wanted him to be a little bit sharper today," Jose Ortiz said. "You can see him, he's very relaxed. He does what I ask him to do. That's the main thing."

## Bazball reboot starts strong as England wraps up victory

New Zealand collapses to 138 at Lord's



New Zealand's Devon Conway plays a shot during the third day of the Test match between England and New Zealand at Lord's cricket ground in London. (AP)

**LONDON, June 7, (AP):** England wrapped up a 115-run victory over New Zealand before lunch on Day 4 of the first cricket test at Lord's on Sunday, marking a positive start to its "Bazball" reset after the Ashes humiliation Down Under.

Resuming on 55-5 and requiring 254 for an unlikely win, New Zealand lost its remaining five wickets inside the first two hours of play and was dismissed for 138.

England pacer Gus Atkinson finished with team-best figures of 5-30 on a challenging, bowler-friendly surface at the home of cricket that saw 24 batters out bowled or lbw. It was fitting that the match ended with the middle stump flattened after Atkinson clean-bowled Kiwi tail-ender Matt Henry. That left Glenn Phillips stranded at the other end on 44 not out, making him New Zealand's top scorer of a disappointing test for the tourists.

"You've got to play what's in front of you, you've got to identify the conditions as a team and understand what you think is the best way for you to go out there and win," England captain Ben Stokes said of the

conditions in a match that lasted just 166 overs.

"And we did that better than New Zealand this week."

This first test series of the summer has been regarded as a fresh start for England and its under-pressure leadership after a 4-1 loss to Australia during an Ashes tour featuring reports of excessive drinking and when England was accused of slack preparation and a wrong tactical approach.

The headline selections early in this second iteration of "Bazball" under coach Brendon McCullum and Stokes were opener Emilio Gay and seam bowler Ollie Robinson - and both delivered.

With a second-innings 57, Gay had the highest individual score from either team on his test debut.

Robinson, recalled for the first time since 2024 when he was dropped over misgivings about his fitness and attitude, took seven wickets in total (5-39 and 2-38) - three of them coming in his magical first over - and was named man of the match.

"He said before he bowled in that first innings that he was more nervous than he was on his debut," McCullum said of Robinson. "His natural length was going to be successful on this surface ... he needed relentlessness and accuracy and be-



England's Gus Atkinson bowls a delivery during the third day of the Test match between England and New Zealand at Lord's cricket ground in London. (AP)

ing able to get the ball to seam. With his height and skills, he was always going to be a handful."

What was already a tough position for New Zealand got even harder when Tom Blundell was trapped lbw by Josh Tongue in the seventh over of the day.

That left the tourists on 58-6 but a 53-run partnership between opener Devon Conway and Phillips gave

them a fighting chance of a remarkable comeback.

Then Conway, surprised by the bounce of a delivery from Stokes, sent a leading edge to gully for the first of four dismissals in seven overs, ensuring New Zealand didn't even make it to lunch.

Given the state of the pitch, perhaps little should be gleaned from the second shortest completed test of the record 150 to take place at Lord's. That was New Zealand captain Tom Latham's thought process, anyway.

"It's a surface that we weren't expecting," Latham said. "I don't think anybody expected a surface like that."

"I think it's important we don't delve too much into this game. We understand we'll go to The Oval and conditions will be a lot better than they have been here."

The second test of the three-match series is across London at The Oval, starting June 17.

Atkinson continued his love affair with the home of cricket, where he made his test debut two years ago and took 12 wickets in a win over West Indies to get on the Lord's storied honors boards.

Later that summer, he struck his maiden test century - against Sri Lanka - at Lord's, as well as getting another five-fer.

### Reese leads Dream rout of Mystics

Wilson & Young deliver clutch plays as Aces defeat Valkyries

LAS VEGAS, June 7, (AP): A'ja Wilson had 28 points and 14 rebounds, Jackie Young hit 6 of 8 from 3-point range and finished with a season-high 27 points, and the Las Vegas Aces beat the Golden State Valkyries 84-79 on Saturday for their first home victory of the season.

Chelsea Gray added 12 points, six rebounds and six assists for Las Vegas. Gray has 1,134 assists and moved past current Aces coach Becky Hammon (1,133) into first place on the franchise's career assist list.

Wilson had her third consecutive double-double and her fifth this season.

The Aces (7-3), the defending WNBA champions, have won three straight following back-to-back losses.

Gabby Williams scored a career-high 27 points on 10-of-17 shooting for the Valkyries (6-5). Veronica Burton added 15 points, Janelle Salaun scored 11 and Kayla Thornton had 10.

Wilson hit a jumper from the left with 52.9 seconds left, Burton answered with a layup and Young made a pull-up 3-pointer with 24.2 seconds left to give the Aces a two-point lead. Young and Wilson each made two free throws to seal it.

Williams made a layup to open the scoring, Golden State's only lead until Tiffany Hayes hit a 3-pointer that made it 61-58 with 8:48 left in the game.

Golden State scored 14 of the final 19 first-half points and trailed 38-35 at halftime. Wilson outscored the Valkyries 14-13 in the first quarter as the Aces took a seven-point lead. Thornton and Salaun each made two of Golden State's five second-quarter 3s.

Chennedy Carter (leg) missed her second consecutive game for the Aces.

The Aces beat Golden State 91-81 on Sunday in San Francisco.

### Dream 109, Mystics 77

In College Park, Ga., Angel Reese had 18 points and a season-high 17 rebounds and the Atlanta Dream beat Washington in a game during which Mystics coach Sydney Johnson was ejected and escorted off the court by police.

Johnson was called for two quick technical fouls and ejected with 3:52 left in the third quarter after Washington's Alicia Florez Getino was called for a foul while guarding Reese on a drive to a basket. Johnson, in his second season in charge of the Mystics, angrily argued with officials as a few of his assistant coaches and power forward Kiki Iriafen tried to restrain him.

Johnson eventually calmed down and was walked off the court by three police officers and he went into the tunnel to the locker room with one of his assistants. Assistant coach Emre Vatansever took over in his place.

"I lost my cool," Johnson said after the game. "There's nothing more than that. That's it. Officials did what was appropriate, and that's all I can say."

Reese, who had four of the Dream's season-high-tying 16 steals, had her fourth consecutive double-double and seventh this season. Rhyne Howard added 19 points and six steals in the Dream's highest-scoring game this season.

Iriafen scored 24 points and Sonia Citron, who returned from a one-game absence due to a foot injury, added 18 points and six assists for the Mystics (4-5).

Howard made a 3-pointer that gave Atlanta the lead for good with 3:44 left in the first quarter and the Dream led by double figures for the final 26-plus minutes.

The Dream set season highs for free throws attempted (41) and free throws made (32) while hitting 13 3s and rebounding Washington 42-26.

Atlanta has won four straight against the Mystics, who lead the series 34-33.



Breanna Stewart

Allisha Gray had 15 points for the Dream (6-3) and Jordyn Canada and Madina Okot scored 11 apiece. Sika Kone and rookie Isobel Borlase, who went into the game with 20 points this season, each added nine points.

### Liberty 83, Fever 75

In New York, Breanna Stewart made 18 of 21 free throws and scored 30 points to help the New York Liberty rally to beat the Indiana Fever.

The Liberty (7-4), who have won four straight games, trailed by double-digits in the second half.

New York was down 66-62 midway through the fourth quarter before going on a 19-4 run to take the lead. Stewart made 11 of 12 free throws during that game-changing burst. Her two free throws with 3:36 left put the Liberty up 70-68.

Paulina Astier then made two layups to seal the win over the next few minutes. The Liberty finished 33 for 40 from the foul line for the game.

New York was once again playing without star guard Sabrina Ionescu, who was sidelined again by back soreness. She's only played in one game this season, but went through practice Friday. It bothered her a little bit after according to coach Chris DeMarco. That practice was the first time that the Liberty had their entire team together all season.

Caitlin Clark had 10 points, nine assists and seven rebounds for Indiana (5-5). Kelsey Mitchell scored 21 points to lead the way for Indiana.

Indiana turned a three-point halftime lead into a 57-45 advantage with 3:27 left in the third quarter. New York then mounted a comeback behind Sabally, scoring the final 10 points of the period. The last came on a free throw by Stewart before the start of the fourth quarter as Aliyah Boston had been given a technical foul just as the third quarter ended.

Clark got off to a slow start missing her first five shots. She finally hit a floater in the lane a minute before Indiana went on a 12-4 run that was started by a deep 3-pointer by her. The Fever were up 40-31 with 1:47 left in the half before New York scored the final six points of the period.

### Lynx 88, Storm 68

In Minneapolis, Natasha Howard had a season-high 27 points on 12-of-16 shooting. Olivia Miles added 19 points, six assists and six rebounds, and the Minnesota Lynx beat the Seattle Storm for their seventh win in a row - the last six by double figures.

Courtney Williams and Kayla McBride scored 11 points apiece for the Lynx (9-2). Howard and Nia Coffey each had three of Minnesota's season-high-tying 13 steals.

The Storm (3-9), who have lost five in a row, committed a season-high 21 turnovers and shot just 35% (22 of 63) from the field.

Coffey hit a 3-pointer with 3:09 remaining in the second quarter that gave Minnesota the lead for good at 39-38. Howard made two layups while Coffey and Maya Caldwell each hit a 3 in a 10-0 run that made it 55-43 less than three minutes into the third, and it was at least a nine-point game the rest of the way.

Natasha Hiedeman and Jade Melbourne led Seattle with 14 points apiece. Flau'jae Johnson added 10 points.

Dominique Malonga (concussion protocol) returned from an eight-game absence and finished with seven points in 14 minutes off the bench for the Storm.

## Aussie teams out again in Super Rugby playoffs

WELLINGTON, New Zealand, June 7, (AP): Another Australian washout in the first round of Super Rugby playoffs has thrown up two all-New Zealand semifinals next weekend.

Washout literally. The ACT Brumbies were flushed out of the playoffs when they lost 66-12 to the Hurricanes in a downpour in Wellington, prompting Brumbies head coach Stephen Larkham to apologize to fans for his team's performance.

The Queensland Reds lost 46-24

to the Chiefs in a tighter match but in similar torrential rain conditions in Hamilton. No Australian team has ever won a playoff match in New Zealand.

The Crusaders beat the Auckland-based Blues 52-31 in a Kiwi derby to stretch their unbeaten record in home playoffs in Christchurch to 33 matches.

As a result, the Chiefs will play the Crusaders in Hamilton on Friday and the Hurricanes will play the Blues in Wellington on Saturday, as the Blues received a second chance

as the highest-ranked quarterfinal loser.

It began Friday on a rainy, wind-swept night in Wellington where the Hurricanes, in marginal conditions, ran in nine tries against a team which has beaten them in their last three playoffs meetings.

The warning was signaled early. The Brumbies caught Hurricanes fullback Callum Harkin in defense and forced him back over his own goal line, anticipating a scoring opportunity from a five meter scrum.

Instead, the Hurricanes promoted

the ball back into the field of play and, seconds later, scored the first try of the match. Another followed quickly and by halftime the Hurricanes led 38-7, the most points the Brumbies have conceded in the first half of any match.

The Brumbies' defense was wafer-thin and, with scrumhalf Cam Roigard darting around the fringe and flyhalf Ruben Love, running the ball at the line and distributing, the Hurricanes were able to puncture it again and again, for its biggest-ever win over the Brumbies.

'The time has finally come'

## Teen Yamal carries responsibility of leading Spain at World Cup

MADRID, June 7, (AP): Despite being only 18 years old, Lamine Yamal will be carrying the responsibility of a seasoned veteran when Spain enters the World Cup seeking its second world title.

The prodigy has been La Roja's top star for the past few years, attracting the spotlight on and off the field.

He's earned accolades helping Spain and Barcelona thrive. He has made headlines by waving a Palestinian flag during a title celebration. He's been criticized after hiring people with dwarfism as entertainers for his lavish 18th birthday party.

And he's prompted nationwide concern by getting injured just weeks before soccer's showcase event, putting his participation in the tournament in doubt.

Yamal will make it to the World Cup after all - the first for the teenager considered by many the heir apparent to the one-and-only Lionel Messi at Barcelona. Many expect him to break through once and for all at the international soccer scene by thriving in the tournament in North America.

"The time has finally come," Yamal said in an interview with the Spanish soccer federation after Spain's World Cup squad was announced on May 25.

Spanish coach Luis de la Fuente showed no hesitation adding Yamal to the squad even though it wasn't guaranteed that the forward would be 100% fit early on after injuring his left hamstring with Barcelona in April. Yamal himself said he was scared of missing the World Cup.

De la Fuente last week said Yamal is likely to be ready to play from the start, but he also called for "prudence" about the expectations surrounding the young star.

"He's still 18 years old," the coach told Movistar after announcing the squad. "He's already very mature as a player, and we can't even fathom his full potential right now, but we have to give him the necessary time. Especially now that he is coming off an injury."

"We simply hope he'll be up to the task, but without putting any added pressure on him. We know the media focus is on him, that soccer fans around the world are watching him,



From left to right, Spain's Lamine Yamal, Nico Williams and Pedri sit in the stands during an international friendly soccer match against Iraq in A Coruña, Spain. (AP)

and obviously in Spain he's already a reference," de la Fuente said. "We're going to give him everything he

needs to develop and perform with confidence."

Yamal, who said he is already used to the pressure that has been put on him, has been around for a while in the Spanish soccer scene, showing his uncanny talent with the ball and brilliance as a playmaker. He made his debut with Barcelona as a 15-year-old, becoming the youngest player to feature in the Spanish league for the Catalan club.

He has made appearances in four Spanish league seasons since then, and this year led the club in goals - 16 along with Ferran Torres - and led the league in assists and dribbles. He was chosen the league's best player.

"In my mind, it's like I've been playing for 10 years, but actually it's only been three years, and four years ago I was playing in the neighborhood's sports center," Yamal said in an interview with the Spanish soccer federation after the squad announcement. "To think about that, a kid like that is now going to play in a World Cup is something crazy."

It didn't take long for Yamal's brilliance to make it to the national

team as well. He was 16 when he debuted with the senior squad in 2023, becoming the youngest ever to play - and score - for Spain. A year later, he became the youngest to feature at a European Championship, helping lead Spain to the title while being named the tournament's best young player.

Yamal's jersey is the biggest seller in Spain and is believed to be one of the most sought-after worldwide as well.

But his fame has not come without controversy.

Yamal, who is a Muslim and whose father is Moroccan, attracted headlines worldwide when he waved the Palestinian flag during Barcelona's title celebrations after it won the Spanish league in May.

Last year, Yamal faced backlash after people with dwarfism were hired for his birthday party, prompting Spain's Ministry of Social Rights to ask prosecutors to open an investigation into the hiring and exposition of the entertainers. Yamal denied wrongdoing, and later said he has the right to enjoy life while he's not playing for Bar-

celona.

All eyes will be on Yamal again at the World Cup, when he will lead a Spain team that rebounded from a round-of-16 elimination by Morocco at the 2022 World Cup by winning Euro 2024 in Germany. La Roja also won the 2023 Nations League and was runner-up to Portugal in the 2025 edition.

Spain hasn't gone past the last 16 in the World Cup since its lone title in 2010.

It will open its Group H campaign this year against Cape Verde on June 15 in Atlanta. It then faces Saudi Arabia on June 21 in Atlanta and Uruguay on June 26 in Guadalajara, Mexico.

Yamal, who said he has dreamed about lifting the World Cup trophy "1,000 times in my bedroom," can't wait to get started on Spain's quest for glory.

"I think that ever since the European Championship ended, we've all been thinking about this day, and we are all very excited. We will enter the tournament as the European champions, and we are going to give it everything we have."

## Saudi Arabia seeks another World Cup shock after transforming global soccer



Saudi Arabia's Abdullah Alhamdhan (19) and Nasser Aldawsari (6) jump for the ball against Puerto Rico's Gerald Diaz (13) during the second half of an international friendly soccer match in Austin, Texas. (AP)

### Donis under pressure

RİYADH, June 7, (AP): Saudi Arabia pulled off one of the biggest upsets in World Cup history by beating mighty Argentina in Qatar four years ago.

That stunning victory against Lionel Messi and the eventual champion turned out to be just the start of its campaign to disrupt soccer. Perhaps no nation has done more to shake up the world's most popular sport.

Within weeks Cristiano Ronaldo became the first of slew of superstars to swap swap Europe for the Saudi league with the five-time Ballon d'Or winner declaring: "In Europe my work is done. This is a new challenge."

Karim Benzema was lured away from Real Madrid. Brazilian icon Neymar also made the move to the oil-rich kingdom. While attempts to land Messi and Kylian Mbappe were unsuccessful, Saudi Arabia did secure its biggest win of all: The right to host the 2034 World Cup.

It was all part of the country's attempt to pivot away from its heavy reliance on oil and explore other revenue-generating sectors.

Billions of dollars have been spent to secure world championship boxing, Formula One racing and tennis. The Saudi-backed LIV Golf enticed major winners to defect from the PGA. It recently announced it would be pulling funding from that venture, but its commitment to soccer remains



Saudi Arabia fans cheer in the closing minutes of an international friendly soccer match against Puerto Rico in Austin, Texas. (AP)

strong. A number of its top teams are owned by the country's sovereign wealth fund.

This year's tournament will be a test of how far the Saudi national team has come against the backdrop of such spectacular spending.

"We cannot promise miracles, but we promise you that we will give our all to achieve our goals," the newly appointed coach Georgios Donis said.

An influx of top overseas talent does not necessarily translate to improved performance of homegrown players on the international stage.

There was the disappointingly early elimination from the Asian Cup in 2024 in the round of 16. Saudi Arabia's most memorable contribution to that tournament - a little over 12 months after the

landmark win against Argentina -- was Italian coach Roberto Mancini walking off during his team's losing penalty shootout against South Korea. Months later, Mancini was out of a job.

In came Frenchman Herve Renard, who had led the team in Qatar in 2022, and the team promptly secured qualification for this year's tournament. But in April, less than two months before Saudi Arabia kicks off its World Cup campaign, Renard was replaced by Greek coach Donis.

Donis has coached several teams in the Saudi league and has also worked with a number of the players who will be going to the World Cup. Among them is striker Feras Al Buraikan, a back-to-back Asian Champions League winner with Al-Ahli.

His appointment at such short notice appears to have been based on his specific knowledge and experience of Saudi soccer, with the Saudi Football Federation saying he was "expected to support a seamless transition."

"The advantage for us is that I have spent many years in Saudi Arabia and I know the culture of the country and the players. Therefore, we want to be very competitive and fight hard," Donis said when announcing his squad last month.

While star signings from overseas have slowed, with big names also departing - including Neymar - the governing body of Saudi soccer has made moves to develop its own players. In May, Matt Crocker was lured away from his role as U.S. Soccer's sporting director to head up talent development in Saudi Arabia.

Youth investment has doubled over the past three years to \$26.7 million, with an expansion of regional training centers all with a view to the 2034 World Cup on home soil.

Before all that is this year's tournament and the chance to shock the world again.

"I believe all the players have the ability and passion required to commit to our plan, which will enable us step-by-step to build a strong and united team," Donis said. "I believe in their abilities, so my priority now is for them to believe in their abilities, to be convinced of the plan, and to know what is required of them."

### 'Many positives to take'

## US feeling confident going into WC off tight defeat against Germany

CHICAGO, June 7, (AP): Antonee Robinson struck the ball perfectly with his left foot, and it rocketed into the corner of the goal. Surrounded by a delirious sellout crowd at Soldier Field, the defender celebrated with a cartwheel and a backflip.

Not a bad way to go into the World Cup.

Robinson's spectacular goal was the biggest highlight for the United States in a 2-1 loss to Germany. It was the ninth consecutive loss for the U.S. against European opponents dating to 2022, but the Americans were encouraged by their performance in their final World Cup tuneup.

"I mean against a really good team, I thought we were dangerous at times," forward Christian Pulisic said. "We had good stretches of possession, defended well for good portions of it. And, yeah, I mean honestly, I think, we're feeling good."

Members of the 1994 U.S. team were recognized on the field before the game.

Coach Mauricio Pochettino started what figures to be close to his World Cup lineup, with Matt Freese in goal, Sergiño Dest at right back, Alex Freeman, Miles Robinson and Tim Ream in central defense, Antonee Robinson at left back, Tyler Adams and Malik Tillman in defensive midfield, Pulisic and Weston McKennie in advanced midfield and Folarin Balogun up front.

The U.S. played without top defender Chris Richards, sidelined since tearing a pair of left ankle ligaments on May 17. Richards, Mark McKenzie or Auston Trusty could replace Miles Robinson in the World Cup opener on Friday against Paraguay.

In its final test before the tournament, the U.S. generated a handful of promising scoring opportunities, led by Pulisic and Balogun. The 16th-ranked Americans controlled the last part of the first half and finished with 10 corner kicks, compared to two for the 10th-ranked Germans.

But the U.S. also made a couple of costly mistakes that Pochettino will look to clean up in his final preparations for the World Cup.

The U.S. has 14 wins, 10 losses and two draws since Pochettino took over as coach in October 2024.

"We compete. Unlucky. I think was an even game," Pochettino said. "If you see the stats, similar stats in some stats for us. I am so happy with the commitment and how the team was."



United States forward Christian Pulisic, right, is tackled by Germany forward Leroy Sané during the first half of an international friendly soccer match in Chicago. (AP)

The Americans got off to a tough start when Adams was called for tripping Felix Nmecha with the German's shot to the goal just 43 seconds into the game. Ream was picked by Nico Schlotterback on the resulting free kick, and a wide-open Kai Havertz broke past Miles Robinson and converted an easy header in the second minute.

On Germany's final goal, Miles Robinson was late in stepping up as Leroy Sané got a short pass from Havertz and beat Freese to the far post in the 57th minute.

"Disappointed that we lost, but many positives to take," Antonee Robinson said. "I feel like conceding that early, we could have easily crumbled, and it could have been a very, very bad day to be going into the tournament with. But we fought back and at times played some really good football and looked good, looked competitive."

Nothing on the U.S. side looked better than Antonee Robinson's fifth international goal in the 37th minute. Jonathan Tah's headed clearance attempt on Pulisic's corner kick went just outside the area, and Robinson had perfect form on his valley past Germany goalkeeper Oliver Baumann.

"Sick. I mean, it's a sick goal," a smiling Pulisic said.

The 28-year-old Robinson, who gave himself the nickname of "Jedi" when he was just a kid, said he had never scored a goal like that in a competitive game.

## Iran arrives in Mexico for training ahead of World Cup

TIJUANA, México, June 7, (AP): Iran's soccer team arrived in Mexico on Sunday morning for training ahead of the World Cup, before three group matches in the United States later this month.

Ehsan Hajsafi was the first player to exit the plane with markings for German charter airline USC, which arrived at about 5:05 a.m. He led the team, dressed in blue blazers over white T-shirts, through a brief security check with Mexican officials and dogs before boarding a bus.

The bus stopped briefly at the entrance to the Tijuana airport, where around 20 or so Iran fans waved flags.

The team's participation in the World Cup, jointly hosted by the United States, Mexico and Canada, has been complicated by the Iran war. Problems with processing visas earlier led Iran to move its training base from Tucson, Arizona, to Tijuana, Mexico, which is on the border with California.

The team has been training in the Turkish city of Antalya. It flew directly to Mexico on a private jet from the Mediterranean city's airport.

Some members of their entourage were reportedly still without U.S. visas, according to Iranian state television on Saturday. Those include the Iranian Football Federation's secretary-general, Hedayat Mombeini, and

its vice president, Mehdi Mohammad Nahi.

Iran plays its first two games in Inglewood, California, against New Zealand on June 15, and Belgium six days later, then heads to Seattle to face Egypt on June 26. Iran and the U.S. could meet in the round of 32 on July 3 in Arlington, Texas, if both teams come second in their groups.

In March, U.S. President Donald Trump had discouraged Iran from participating in the tournament, saying he didn't think it was "appropriate" and raising concerns over players' "life and safety." A day later, Iran's national team pushed back, saying "no one can exclude" it from playing.

Iran finalized its team on Monday, including 17 home-based players whose clubs haven't played since February because of the war. Star forward Sardar Azmoun was dropped in March, reportedly because of a social media post that angered Iranian authorities during the war.

Iran's sports minister said in March that it would "not be possible" for the team to participate in the World Cup, but the republic's soccer federation said in May that it was moving ahead with a team. The federation had insisted that all players and staff be granted visas, including those who had military service in the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps.



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Egypt's Mohamad Lasheen (17) attempts to head the ball beside Brazil's Raphinha (11) during an international friendly soccer match in Cleveland. Brazil won 2-1. (AP)

# Sports

Kuwait Club, Al-Khaleej set for blockbuster clash

## Al-Deyab hails Kuwait's successful hosting of Asian Club Handball Championship

By Khaled Al-Enezi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 7: President of the Asian Handball Federation Badr Al-Deyab hailed the successful opening of the Asian Men's Club Handball Championship, currently being hosted by Kuwait Club at the Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Sports Complex.

Al-Deyab said the opening day reflected the extensive organizational efforts made by the hosts, noting that the tournament began with highly competitive matches that highlighted the quality of the participating teams and the significance of the continental event.

He stressed that staging the championship amid the challenges facing the region demonstrates the leadership's commitment to supporting sports and athletes. He also praised Kuwaiti youth for their ability to organize major sporting events efficiently and expressed confidence in their capability to host even larger tournaments in the future.

Al-Deyab added that the determination of the participating clubs to attend despite travel difficulties underscores Kuwait's standing within the sporting community. He noted that all delegations received the necessary support and facilities from the moment they arrived.

The Asian Handball Federation chief said the positive feedback re-



Marzouq Al-Ghanim and Badr Al-Deyab during the opening ceremony of the championship.

ceived from participating teams regarding the organization reflects the confidence placed in Kuwait as a host of continental championships. He reaffirmed the federation's trust in Kuwaiti sports administrators to successfully deliver major sporting events.

He concluded by wishing the Kuwait Club, the organizing committee, and all participating teams success throughout the competition, hoping the tournament continues to enjoy both technical and organizational excellence until its conclusion.

The championship continues today with three matches at the Sheikh

Saad Al-Abdullah Sports Complex.

Bahrain's Al-Najma will face Qatar's Al-Duhail at 4:00 p.m., followed by a highly anticipated encounter between Kuwait Club and Saudi Arabia's Al-Khaleej at 6:00 p.m. The day's action will conclude with Qatar's Al-Arabi taking on Borgan at 8:00 p.m.

The spotlight will be on the Kuwait Club-Al-Khaleej clash, with both sides seeking a second consecutive victory that would strengthen their chances of reaching the semifinals. Kuwait Club will look to make the most of home support, while Al-



Kuwait Club goes for a shot as an opponent defends during the opening match.

Khaleej aims to continue its impressive run in the tournament.

Borgan, which also opened its campaign with a win, will target another positive result to boost its qualification hopes. The team will rely

on its strong collective display, as well as the contributions of professionals Mohsen Ramadan and Nabil Sharif, and goalkeeper Abdulrahman Humaid.

In the opening round, Kuwait Club

defeated Al-Arabi 27-22; Borgan edged Al-Duhail 29-28, while Al-Khaleej overcame Sharjah 32-30. As a result, Kuwait Club, Al-Khaleej, and Borgan share the top spot with two points each.

## Antonelli extends streak and lead



Mercedes driver Andrea Kimi Antonelli, of Italy, celebrates on the podium after winning the Formula One Monaco Grand Prix race at the Monaco racetrack. (AP)

### Italian wins delayed Monaco Grand Prix

**MONACO, June 7, (AP): Kimi Antonelli is writing his place in Formula 1 history at record speed.**

"You're catching me up," Lewis Hamilton, who has the most wins in history with 105, told Antonelli after the 19-year-old Italian beat him in a bizarre and much-delayed Monaco Grand Prix on Sunday.

Antonelli replaced Hamilton at Mercedes last year, and only won his first race in March. He now has five wins in a row and a vast lead of 66 points over Hamilton.

Antonelli said he needed to find his focus again but stayed cool when the race was stopped and briefly seemed set to be abandoned before a restart.

All that on a tight, twisty circuit threaded between metal barriers where any slip brings a crash.

Antonelli was on course for victory with 10 laps remaining when the race was red-flagged after parts of the asphalt broke away and two cars crashed in quick succession, one of them Charles Leclerc in third place.

After a long delay, officials said the race

would be resumed from a standing start.

When that happened, Antonelli took control again to become the youngest F1 winner in Monaco, and was never in real danger of being overtaken.

"Thank you so much guys, the car was a beast today," he told the Mercedes team.

Hamilton was second as a raft of penalties and investigations meant other positions weren't immediately clear. Isack Hadjar was on the podium in third for Red Bull after battling engine problems but was one of those under investigation.

Antonelli's Mercedes teammate George Russell missed the points for the second race running, dropping out of the top 10 with a penalty.

That followed an engine failure while battling Antonelli for the lead of last month's Canadian Grand Prix.

Russell said Thursday the title was Antonelli's "to lose." Now it certainly seems that way.

Max Verstappen started second for Red Bull but lost power at the start and dropped to the back before retiring the car at the end of the first lap. Like many F1 drivers, the four-time champion lives in Monaco and suggested he'd watch the rest of the race

from home.

The track damage put a decidedly unglamorous twist on one of F1's most prestigious races as drivers waited in the pit lane, officials gazed at the damaged asphalt and a road-sweeping machine inched along the circuit clearing away loose stones. Antonelli admitted he'd been hoping the race wouldn't be restarted at all.

There was more confusion as numerous drivers received time penalties or were under investigation, meaning the final standings remained uncertain.

Hadjar was facing an investigation after the race for a potential breach of red-flag rules. That raised the possibility that McLaren's Oscar Piastri could be promoted from fifth on track to third Sunday evening, ahead of Hadjar and Gasly.

Russell had been second in the standings before the race - the position is Hamilton's now. Russell ended the day in 13th after a hefty penalty for failing to serve an earlier penalty properly.

He said he didn't understand what happened. Sergio Perez crossed the line 10th, which would earn new team Cadillac its first F1 point, but he too was facing an investigation over a possible false start at the restart.

## Sheikh Al-Yousef heads to Mexico for World Cup opening ceremony



Kuwait Football Association Chairman Sheikh Ahmad Al-Yousef receives the Ambassador of Mexico to Kuwait, Eduardo Patricio Haller, at the federation headquarters.

KUWAIT CITY, June 7: Kuwait Football Association Chairman Sheikh Ahmad Al-Yousef received the Ambassador of Mexico to Kuwait, Eduardo Patricio Peña Haller, at the federation headquarters on Tuesday, in the presence of Secretary-General Dr. Saleh Al-Mujrab.

The meeting saw an exchange of commemorative gifts, reflecting

the strong friendly relations between Kuwait and Mexico, along with discussions on several topics of mutual interest.

Sheikh Al-Yousef is set to travel to Mexico today after receiving an invitation from FIFA President Gianni Infantino to attend the FIFA World Cup opening ceremony and the tournament's opening match in New Mexico.

## Al-Arabi trial Malian striker Haji 'impresses' with winning goal

By Hassan Mosa

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 7: Al-Arabi's friendly against Al-Fahaheel featured two foreign players on trial with the "Green Team," as the club continues to evaluate potential reinforcements ahead of the new season.

Malian striker Haji Dramieh stood out for the technical staff, particularly after scoring the winning goal in the 2-1 victory.

The 21-year-old forward plays in attack and impressed with his performance, while the other African defender on trial failed to convince the coaching staff.

Al-Arabi's foreign player situation is currently under review, with most of the overseas professionals - except Nigerian Anaba Eiwala - expected to leave before the start of the 2026-2027 season due to inconsistent displays and limited impact.

Despite lifting the Crown Prince Cup, Al-Arabi failed to win the AFC Challenge League title and currently sits third in the Kuwait Zain Premier League with 29 points, 14 points behind leader Kuwait Club and two behind second-placed Qadsia, with six rounds remaining.

Several local players are also likely to depart at the end of the season, as the club prepares for squad restructuring, including new signings and the promotion of youth players.

Kazma secured a 1-0 win over Al-Tadamon in a friendly match held at the Friendship and Peace Stadium the day before yesterday, as both sides continue their preparations for the resumption of the Kuwait Zain Premier League.

Kazma, fifth in the standings with 27 points, will face Al-Nasr in Round 18 next Friday, while Al-Tadamon, eighth with 15 points, will take on Al-Fahaheel on Saturday.



A moment from the friendly encounter between Al-Arabi and Al-Fahaheel.