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FOREIGN MINISTRY REJECTS SYSTEMIC ATTACKS ON NATIONAL SOVEREIGNTY

Kuwait maintains high alert amid 24 drone interceptions

Trump says he has called off latest threats to strike Iran

By Munif Naif

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff and Agencies

KUWAIT CITY, June 11: The Ministry of Defense revealed that military forces detected and dealt with 24 hostile drones, which entered the airspace of the country over the past 48 hours, in accordance with established operational procedures.

Speaking during a media briefing, official spokesperson of the ministry Colonel Saud Al-Atwan pointed out that although the attacks attributed to Iran resulted in material damage, no casualties or loss of life were recorded.

Al-Atwan affirmed that the Kuwait Armed Forces remain fully committed to carrying out their duties and continue to maintain a high level of readiness to ensure national security and stability, as well as the safety of everyone in the country.

At the same time, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs issued a strong condemnation of the continuous Iranian violations, indicating that the latest attack happened on Thursday.

In its official statement, the ministry stressed that the repeated and deliberate attacks reflect a systematic approach that Kuwait strongly rejects and will not tolerate.

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Security of member states is 'indivisible': Gulf Council

MANAMA, June 11, (KUNA): The Ministerial Council of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) vehemently condemned the cross-border drone and ballistic missile attacks launched against the State of Kuwait, the Kingdom of Bahrain, and the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan on Wednesday.

In a robust communique issued at the conclusion of its 167th session in Manama, the Council declared that the collective security of the GCC member states remains entirely indivisible, warning that any aggression directed at one sovereign nation constitutes an existential threat to all members.

The Council categorized the assaults as blatant violations of national sovereignty, territorial integrity, international law, the UN Charter, and the core tenets of good neighborliness.

Expressing unyielding solidarity with Kuwait, Bahrain, and Jordan, the GCC ministers emphasized that such provocative actions completely undermine regional diplomatic rapprochement, erode mutual trust, and effectively close the door to constructive dialogue.

The statement further reassured citizens and residents across the region, confirming that unified GCC air defense networks and joint military capabilities successfully intercepted the hostile threats with maximum operational readiness.

Invoking Article 51 of the United Nations Charter, the Council asserted the inherent right of member states to individual and collective self-defense to counter ongoing regional threats.

Holding the targeting entities entirely accountable for the destabilizing repercussions on global energy corridors and international maritime navigation, the Council demanded an immediate cessation of all hostile attacks.

The GCC called upon the United Nations Security Council and the wider international community to intervene decisively, condemn the attacks, and enforce international accountability to preserve global peace and security.

Secretary General of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Jassem Al-Budaiwi on Wednesday praised the high level of coordination among GCC member states in dealing with the repercussions of Iranian attacks.

He noted that more than 150 ministerial and technical emergency meetings had been held across all levels to ensure continuous communication, information exchange, and facilitation of procedures.

This came during his speech in the 167th meeting of the GCC Ministerial Council, chaired by Bahraini Foreign Minister Abdullah bin Rashid Al-Zayani with the participation of GCC foreign ministers.

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New Sahel service sets sponsorship limits for drivers, domestic workers

KUWAIT CITY, June 11: The Ministry of Interior launched a service on Thursday for transferring the sponsorship of domestic workers and drivers through the unified government e-services application "Sahel", reports Al-Seyassah daily.

In a press release, the ministry explained that the ser-

vice allows single, divorced, or widowed women with children to sponsor one driver and one domestic worker. Married, divorced, or widowed men can sponsor one driver and up to three domestic workers.

The new service also allows single men to sponsor only one driver.

30 warnings issued as Kuwait tightens final exams oversight

KUWAIT CITY, June 11: The Ministry of Education affirmed its continued implementation of field and electronic monitoring plans to oversee final exams and ensure their integrity, in line with the directives of Minister of Education Engineer Sayed Jalal Al-Tabtabaei, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The ministry explained that national observers conducted surprise inspection tours of private schools to audit the organizational procedures for grade 10 and grade 11 final exams, as well as review the grading process.

The Inspection and Audit Office, under the Minister's Office, issued 30 warnings to several exam committees based on reports from national observers, aiming to address issues and strengthen compliance within the committees.

The ministry announced the detec-

tion of accounts and groups on social media platforms that were promoting the provision or distribution of exam answers in exchange for money.

It said these accounts have been documented and an official report has been submitted to the relevant authorities for legal action against those responsible.

The ministry emphasized that such practices constitute a violation of the rights of diligent students and the principle of equal opportunity, in addition to being criminal offenses under Decree Law No. 77/2025 that amends certain provisions of the Penal Code.

The ministry explained that it has taken immediate action against four additional examination committees after detecting irregularities in exam

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Al-Tabtabaei



Photo by Rezk Tawfiq

The Liberation Tower looms over a heat-shimmered capital as Kuwait endures a searing Thursday.

Searing weekend ahead

Kuwait grid holds firm in blistering 49°C heat

By Mohammad Ghanem

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff and Agencies

KUWAIT CITY, June 11: The Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy confirmed passing its second major test this summer – maintaining stability of the electrical grid despite the high temperatures on Thursday, which ranged from 48 to 49 degrees Celsius and caused the load index to reach above 15,000 megawatts, say sources from the ministry.

Sources attributed this to the full readiness of the production system after the completion of routine maintenance works in most power generation units and the implementation of precautionary measures ahead of the summer season.

According to the sources, the ministry officials now have more flexibility in managing rising electricity demand, as majority of the generating units are operating and available to support the grid. They added that the reduction of official working hours from seven to six hours during the summer season has contributed to lowering electricity consumption during peak demand periods.

Sources pointed out that energy conservation efforts, along with some factories reducing their operating capacity during peak hours, helped ease pressure on the electrical network. They also emphasized that despite electricity loads exceeding 15,000 megawatts, the production system remained stable, with generation levels continuing to match consumption.

Sources stated that the ministry continues to benefit from the Gulf electrical interconnection network to reinforce the national grid and enhance its preparedness to respond to emergencies.

In a related development, the ministry urged consumers to continue conserving electricity and water and to limit usage to actual need in order to avoid waste and unnecessary consumption. It asserted that such efforts will contribute to maintaining the stability of the electrical system throughout the summer season.

Meanwhile, acting Director of the Meteorological Department, Dhirar Al-Ali, says the weather in Kuwait will generally be extremely hot during the day and warm at night over the weekend.

Al-Ali explained to Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) that the country is expected to be affected by hot and dry weather and dust-raising winds with reduced horizontal visibility on Friday.

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Kuwait 'revokes' citizenship of 51

KUWAIT CITY, June 11: The official gazette "Kuwait Al-Youm" published decision No. 10/59/2026, issued by the Higher Committee for Kuwaiti Citizenship Investigation, concerning the revocation of Kuwaiti citizenship for 51 individuals, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The decision stipulates the loss of citizenship for these individuals in accordance with Article 11 of Amiri Decree No. 15 of 1959 on the Kuwaiti Nationality Law and its amendments.

Kuwait finalizes Muharram plan

KUWAIT CITY, June 11: Head of the Security Directorates Sector at the Ministry of Interior Major General Hammad Al-Munaifi convened a coordination meeting in order to discuss preparations for the month of Muharram, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

Officials and representatives of Husseiniyas, along with the representatives of Kuwait Fire Force (KFF), Kuwait Municipality, Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy, and Emergency Medical Services at the Ministry of Health attended the meeting.

At the start of the meeting, Al-Munaifi conveyed the greetings of First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah to

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Kuwait, Oman move to strengthen service, infrastructure cooperation

By Mohammad Ghanem
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 11: Public Works Minister Dr. Noura Al-Mashaan on Thursday met with Minister of Transport, Communications and Information Technology in the Sultanate of Oman Eng. Saeed Al-Maawali, during which they discussed ways to strengthen bilateral ties and promote the exchange of expertise between the two brotherly nations.

Also present at the meeting were Undersecretary of the Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology Eng. Khamis bin Mohammed bin Abdullah Al-Shamkhi, Deputy Head of Mis-

sion at the Embassy of the Sultanate of Oman in the State of Kuwait Shihab bin Salem Al-Rawas, Chief Executive Officer of ASYAD Group Eng. Abdulrahman bin Saleem Al-Hatmi, Head of the Minister's Office Fadhil Bashar bin Issa bin Saleh Al-Balushi, and senior officials at the Ministry of Public Works.

Various issues of mutual concern were discussed, as well as the opportunities to strengthen coordination in service and development sectors. These efforts are expected to improve the services provided to citizens and residents in the two countries.

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Zain, INJAZ support 8 student innovations in AI and sustainability



Gulf Bank welcomes GUST students back to campus



Ministry of Public Works photo

Kuwait's Public Works Minister Dr. Noura Al-Mashaan during talks with Omani Minister of Transport, Communications and Information Technology Eng. Saeed Al-Maawali.



Prayer Timings

| | | | |
|---------|-------|---------|-------|
| Fajr | 03:13 | Asr | 15:22 |
| Sunrise | 04:48 | Maghrib | 18:48 |
| Zohr | 11:48 | Isha | 20:20 |



HH Amir Sheikh Meshal



António José Martins Seguro

Amir congratulates Pres. of Portugal on Nat'l Day

KUWAIT CITY, June 11, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent on Wednesday, a cable of congratulations to the President of the Portuguese Republic António José Martins Seguro, on his country's National Day.

In the cable, His Highness the Amir wished President António José Martins Seguro good health and well-being, and wished more progress and prosperity to Portugal and its people.

Crown Prince congratulates

His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah sent a cable of congratulations on Wednesday, to the President of the Portuguese Republic, António José Martins Seguro, on his country's National Day.

In the cable, His Highness the Crown Prince wished President António José Martins Seguro good health and well-being.

Prime Minister congratulates

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah sent Wednesday, a cable of congratulations to the President of the Portuguese Republic, António José Martins Seguro, on his country's National Day.

Kuwait forces vigilance, combat readiness wins praise



KUNA photo

Deputy Chief of the General Staff of the Kuwaiti Army Major General (Pilot) Sabah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah with Kuwait Army soldiers during a comprehensive field tour.

KUWAIT CITY, June 11, (KUNA): The Deputy Chief of the General Staff of the Kuwaiti Army Major General (Pilot) Sabah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah conducted a comprehensive field inspection on Wednesday across several strategic military installations.

The General Staff of the Army said in a press statement that Major General Al-Sabah commended the high level of discipline, vigilance, and combat readiness displayed by the personnel deployed at the inspected locations.

The Deputy Chief of Staff emphasized that the continuous, high-efficiency execution of duties by the military personnel embodies a profound sense of responsibility and dedication to defending the country's sovereignty and stability.

Wars, crises, poverty ups 'child labor' in Arab region

Need to identify, tackle root causes: local bodies

CAIRO, June 11, (KUNA): The Arab League, the Arab Labor Organization, the Arab Council for Childhood and Development, and the Arab Gulf Programme for Development (AGFUND) warned on Thursday of the worsening child labor phenomenon in the region.

In a joint statement issued on the occasion of the World Day Against Child Labour, observed annually on June 12, the four organizations renewed their commitment to intensifying efforts aimed at eliminating child labor in all its forms and strengthening the protection of children's rights.

The statement noted that this year's observance comes amid mounting challenges that continue to hinder progress toward achieving the global target

of ending child labor under Sustainable Development Goal 8.7.

According to international estimates cited in the statement, around 138 million children worldwide remain engaged in labor, including 54 million involved in hazardous work that threatens their health, safety and development.

Poverty, armed conflicts, climate change, and economic and social crises were identified among the main drivers of the phenomenon, it added.

The organizations warned that child labor is expanding across the Arab region as a result of accumulated crises, particularly ongoing conflicts that have led to displacement, economic deterioration, growing poverty, and declining education and social protection services.

The statement added that increasing numbers of children are being pushed into the labor market at an early age and often under dangerous conditions, amid shortcomings in protection and monitoring

mechanisms.

It also highlighted emerging risks in the digital environment, warning that children are increasingly vulnerable to new forms of economic exploitation through online platforms and applications.

The organizations stressed the need for stronger policies and legal frameworks to ensure children's protection in the digital sphere.

Regarding the occupied Palestinian territories, the statement said Palestinian children, particularly in the Gaza Strip, continue to face severe humanitarian conditions, including displacement, deprivation of basic services, and disruption of education.

The organizations emphasized that ending child labor requires comprehensive approaches that address its root causes through effective social protection systems, quality education, stronger legislation, and enhanced regional and international cooperation to ensure a safe and dignified future for all children.



First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah inquires welfare of the victim injured in the drone attack.

1st Dpty PM pays get well visit to victims of Iran attack

KUWAIT CITY, June 11: First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah visited Farwaniya Hospital on Thursday morning to check on victims of the recent Iranian attack, including injured citizen Ayed Saad Al-Otaibi, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

According to a Ministry of Interior statement, Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef was briefed on Al-Otaibi's condition after he was moved from intensive care to a regular ward to continue treatment. He also received updates from medical staff on the condition of other

injured patients and the care being provided.

Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef directed that all necessary healthcare services be ensured and stressed the importance of continuous follow-up on patients' conditions. He underscored the need to provide comprehensive medical care and mobilize all available resources to support recovery.

He also called for ongoing coordination among relevant authorities and the provision of full support to the injured to help stabilize their conditions and accelerate their recovery.



KUNA photo

Qatari Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Defense Affairs Sheikh Saud bin Abdulrahman Al-Thani and Kuwaiti Army Chief of Staff Lieutenant General Khaled Al-Shuraiaan held extensive talks on fortifying defense relations.

Kuwait & Qatar explore plans to further invigorate defense

DOHA, June 11, (KUNA): Qatari Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Defense Affairs Sheikh Saud bin Abdulrahman Al-Thani and Kuwaiti Army Chief of Staff Lieutenant General Khaled Al-Shuraiaan held extensive talks on Wednesday to discuss defense issues of mutual concern.

The Kuwaiti Army General Staff said in a press statement that the meeting focused on reviewing bilateral defense relations and exploring strategic avenues to develop and strengthen them, reflecting the deep-rooted fraternal ties binding the two nations.

The discussions took place during Lieuten

enant General Al-Shuraiaan's official visit to the State of Qatar, where he separately met with his counterpart, the Chief of Staff of the Qatari Armed Forces, Lieutenant General (Pilot) Jassim Al-Mannai.

During their session, the two military chiefs reviewed existing military cooperation and coordinated mechanisms to elevate joint defense action and operational integration.

The Kuwaiti Army Chief of Staff was accompanied by the Ambassador of the State of Kuwait to Qatar, Ahmad Al-Shraim, along with a delegation of senior military officers.

'Platform vital project to streamline charity work'

By Fares Ghaleb

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 11: Undersecretary of the Ministry of Social Affairs Dr. Khaled Al-Ajmi disclosed that the Central Aid Platform is a national project for the advancement of the charitable and social work system of the country.

Al-Ajmi made the statement during his meeting with a delegation from Al-Najat Charitable Society, headed by Faisal Al-Zamel, with Assistant Undersecretary for Social Development Iman Al-Enezi in attendance.

The meeting focused on opportunities for joint action between the ministry and Al-Najat, as well as the initiatives and projects of the latter in and outside the country.

He explained that the platform achieves the abovementioned objective by unifying beneficiary data and strengthening integration of public institutions and charitable organizations to raise the efficiency of aid delivery to eligible recipients in accordance with the highest standards of transparency, accuracy and organization.

He lauded the role of Al-Najat in the development and implementation of the platform, describing it as one of the most significant technical and organizational initiatives aimed at enhancing charitable work and strengthening governance and oversight mechanisms for granting social and charitable assistance.

He explained that the platform provides an accurate and comprehensive database of beneficiaries to ensure fairness in the distribution of aid and prevent duplication of assistance. He added that the platform enables beneficiaries to submit applications and track their requests electronically through a secure and streamlined process, thereby, safeguarding their dignity and aligning with the technological transformation of State institutions.

He stressed that the ministry remains committed to strengthening its partnership with charitable organizations, recognizing the importance of cooperation between government agencies, civil society institutions, and charitable entities in developing social and humanitarian services and ensuring the sustainability of charitable work.

6 Kuwaitis, expat held in mad rush on streets

By Munif Naif

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 11: The General Traffic Department (GTD) continued its intensive campaigns targeting speeding violations in various governorates.

Within 24 hours, the latest campaigns led to the arrest of six citizens and one Arab for driving at more than 150 kilometers per hour. All of them were referred to the traffic police station and their vehicles were impounded.

A security source stated that highway patrol officers apprehended two citizens driving at 180 and 190 kilometers per hour, in addition to an Arab who was driving at 154 kilometers per hour.

The source added that traffic officers arrested two citizens for engaging in car racing on the road, while the Jahra traffic officers apprehended two other citizens for driving at more than 170 kilometers per hour.

The source urged motorists to comply with speed limit regulations in order to ensure their safety and that of other road users, and to avoid legal accountability.

Other Voices

Halt foreign donations!

By Ahmad alsarraf

I worked diligently and tirelessly, with the support of sincere colleagues and senior officials, to stop the leakage or theft of tens of millions of dinars in monthly donation funds allocated to projects abroad about which little was known.

These efforts led to the disappearance of roadside fundraising campaigns, as well as dozens of similar campaigns on social media.

I felt relieved after the campaign's success, but this relief ultimately faded with the renewed surge of advertisements for dozens of projects outside the country.

Here are a few examples:
 ■ Renovating schools in Syria, target amount KD 41,300.
 ■ Funding medical convoys to assist Sudanese refugees, amount to be raised KD 8,445.

■ Building a humanitarian city in Yemen, amount to be raised KD 265,000.
 ■ Building five sub-desalination plants in Gaza City, amount not specified.

And this is just a sample, as it is difficult to list them all. It is noticeable that the requested amounts have become much lower compared to the past, as if this indicates the credibility of the advertisers.

In a recently broadcast interview, the Saudi Minister of Islamic Affairs, Dawah and Guidance, Sheikh Abdul Latif bin Abdul Aziz Al-Sheikh, expressed strong views regarding his stance on donating to charitable organizations.

He stated that some organizations that collect donations take people's money unjustly, adding that he rarely trusts charitable organizations.

Sheikh Abdul Latif explained that some entities exploit people's religious sentiments to collect donations by announcing completion percentages of mosque construction projects or issuing urgent appeals for contributions, such as repeatedly stating "60% remaining" or "20% remaining" to complete a project. Some also collect donations for serving pilgrims, despite the availability of



alsarraf

all services for them, including water, food, hospitals, air conditioning, and even misting systems to cool the roads.

He stated that the methods used by some charities are objectionable, as they are exploited by certain parties to take donors' money and spend it on themselves or on unknown entities.

Sheikh Abdul Latif stressed that the ministry discovered charities soliciting donations to build mosques in Makkah, despite not having any mosque projects there.

He emphasized that mosques are already available in Makkah and Madinah, and that the government has built tens of thousands of mosques.

Sheikh Abdul Latif stated that some charities collect funds, build a mosque for three million, and then make illegal profits of up to ten million.

He stressed that he has not and will not donate a single riyal to any charity because he considers this practice to be wrong.

Sheikh Abdul Latif called for an end to this alien and unusual practice that exploits people intellectually and financially.

Meanwhile, Algeria arrested a senior Hamas figure on charges of embezzling millions of dollars in donations intended for Gaza.

Contact with the office of Hamas leader Khaled Meshal confirmed that the arrest came after the political bureau received information about the disappearance of millions of dollars in aid.

He indicated that other individuals within Hamas were involved in the case, and that one of them had informed the authorities due to a dispute.

Gaza was among the first areas where we previously sought and succeeded in preventing certain charitable organizations from collecting donations during its most dire crisis. We demanded that aid be channeled exclusively through the Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS), and I was a major donor.

I urge the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Social Affairs to intervene once again to stop donations to any projects outside Kuwait.



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Al-Huwaila visits PADA halls to review workflow, services

KUWAIT CITY, June 11, (KUNA): Minister of Social Affairs, Family and Childhood Affairs Dr. Amthal Al-Huwaila visited on Thursday the halls of the Public Authority for Disability Affairs (PADA) to review workflow and follow up on the level of services provided to visitors and persons with disabilities.

Following a field tour in the presence of PADA Director General Dr. Dalal Al-Othman, Minister Al-Huwaila said in a statement that the visit aimed to ensure direct follow-up and assess work conditions closely in order to address any obstacles affecting the speed of completing transactions.

She stressed the importance of fa

cilitating and simplifying procedures to enhance performance efficiency and improve the quality of services, affirming the need to provide employees with the necessary technical and administrative requirements to strengthen the work environment and raise the level of performance.

Al-Huwaila noted that the authority receives continuous attention and follow-up to ensure the delivery of advanced services that meet the needs of persons with disabilities and their families, in line with the state's efforts to enhance the quality of government services and achieve the highest levels of institutional excellence.

Perseverance leads to astounding conquests

"If we take nature as our model, we find that the tide in the sea, for example, advances a step toward the shore and then retreats, but over time it gradually succeeds in reaching the shore," columnist **Ahmad Al-Dawas** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

"Similarly, a tree, as it grows, loses some of its leaves from time to time, yet it continues to grow, compensating for that loss. The end result is that the tree grows and flourishes. It would not reach such a large size without some loss and struggle.

"A Greek man suffered from a severe speech impediment. To overcome this obstacle, he practiced speaking by placing a handful of pebbles in his mouth, hoping that once he mastered speech, he would be able to speak in front of everyone and even deliver speeches. This man, Demosthenes, went on to become one of the greatest orators in history.



Ahmad Al-Dawas

"An American man tried to enter the business world in 1831 but lost his business the following year. He then turned to politics, but failed there as well. He returned to business in 1834 but lost his capital, and again attempted to enter politics, hoping to win a seat in the US Congress. However, his name did not appear on the ballot, and he did not win in the 1858 election. He later became President of the United States. This person is Abraham Lincoln.

"The late Egyptian President Anwar Sadat began his life as a simple farmer. The late British Prime Minister Winston Churchill was a poor student with a speech impediment who later became one of Britain's leading statesmen.

"The former President of India, A.P.J. Abdul Kalam came from a very poor Indian family that could not afford his education. However, he worked hard to continue his studies and became a renowned scientist and the president of a great nation like India.

"Mahatma Gandhi said, 'Strength does not come from physical ability, but from an indomitable will.'

"In Spain, student Julio Iglesias was expelled from high school, but he later became one of the most successful singers.

"In the realm of sports, Germany demonstrated remarkable determination and perseverance. The team worked over 13 years to strengthen its national squad, which culminated in its 7-1 victory over Brazil in the 2014 FIFA World Cup.

"Walt Disney said, 'All the hardships and obstacles I have faced in my life have made me stronger. You may not appreciate them when they happen, but a painful blow is the best thing ever.'

"It has been said that overcoming adversity can move mountains. A person's greatest treasure is the sum of his mistakes. Life is a series of psychological shocks that transform some people from ordinary to extraordinary.

"The Roman poet Horace said, 'Adversity reveals genius, while prosperity conceals it.'

"A friend asked his companion, 'Why doesn't God guide me to the right path?' The latter replied, 'God truly guides you to what is right through your mistakes.'

"We learn more from our losses than from our victories. When we lose, we reflect on the reasons for the loss, analyze them, and reassess our strategies.

"But when we win, we often simply celebrate the victory and learn little from it.

"The lesson here is that trials and mistakes can be a blessing. A shock can spark creative thinking and a spirit of innovation. Adversity and hardship can lead a person to deep reflection, resulting in positive changes in character.

"Most people do not try to learn from difficulties and trials, viewing them merely as painful experiences. Yet it is through these hardships that a person may find solutions to their problems."

Also:

"We often hear in the Islamic and Arab worlds that the people of the Gulf are fortunate because God has bestowed upon them oil. Praise God for this blessing," columnist Eng. **Adel Al-Jarallah Al-Kharafi** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

"While the people of the Gulf praise their Lord for the blessing of oil, they also look with envy at those who possess a blessing far greater than oil - water.

"Water is the source of all life, as stated in the Holy Quran - 'And We made from water every living thing. Then will they not believe?' (21:30). God concluded the verse with a very important question - 'Then will they not believe?'

"Believers understand that this great blessing is a source of wealth without which no human being can survive.

"Those who care about their food security, as well as the security of their communities, are keen to preserve water resources.

"Water is a great blessing for those who understand its value. Unfortunately, many Arabs, especially those blessed with abundant water resources, do not fully appreciate its importance and often squander it. Perhaps they suffer from thirst because they haven't built dams and infrastructure to help them utilize this water resource.

"Iraq, known as Mesopotamia, has been suffering from water scarcity in recent months. The country could have mitigated this crisis had it possessed the necessary infrastructure to protect its people from the water shortages they are experiencing today. Syria is facing a similar challenge.

"When rivers overflowed in recent weeks, water flooded the streets. Videos on social media even showed fish swimming among houses. Lebanon has historically been known as the 'palace of water,' yet it has suffered from water scarcity for decades.

"Some friends told me that they have to buy water from tankers every two days to meet their needs because of inadequate water supply infrastructure.

"The owners of these tankers often create significant disruption by cutting off water supplies to entire neighborhoods, and no one seems to stop them, even during the winter months.

"In the Arabian Gulf, the situation is completely different, as the Gulf states have used their oil revenues to build desalination plants. As a result, the Gulf states have managed to avoid crises caused by water scarcity.

"Water is a greater blessing than oil for those who understand the value of this resource and know how to invest it for the benefit of the nation, not for individuals. This is the difference between an institutional mindset and an exploitative one. The poet was right when he said - 'Like camels in the desert, dying of thirst... while water is carried on their backs.'



"In the hustle and bustle of life and the vicissitudes of time, a person often forgets that the greatest school one can attend is not built with walls, nor filled with seats, nor defined by academic degrees. Rather, it is established deep within oneself and conducted between a person and their conscience," Kuwaiti writer **Fatima Nasser Al-Muzayel** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

"This is the school of the soul, where a person is both teacher and student.

"The wise writer Ibn al-Muqaffa' was once asked, 'Who taught you all this refinement?'

"He replied with an answer that still resonates with discerning minds, 'My own soul taught me.'

"Ibn al-Muqaffa was asked how a person can refine themselves without an instructor.

"He replied, 'How could it be otherwise? If I saw a good quality in someone else, I adopted it, and if I saw a bad one, I rejected it. This is how I refined myself.'

"This reflects the nature of reason when it is purified from the turbidity of passion and refined from ignorance, so that the soul becomes a clear mirror, seeing in others a reflection of what it aspires to be, not merely a reflection of passion, vanity, or imitation.

"Disciplining the self is not the path of the weak, but rather the struggle of the strong, who do not wait for an external preacher to refine their course and restore balance to their souls. These strong individuals



Fatima Al-Muzayel

hear the voice of truth within themselves, so they examine their behavior, measure their actions on the scales of wisdom, and cultivate themselves as a farmer cultivates his crops, with patience, care, and refinement.

"How many people have encountered wisdom and paused to reflect upon it, not merely to pass it on to others, but to make it a guiding light in the darkness of ignorance?"

"How many people have seen a flaw in the behavior of another and striven not to emulate it, thus turning the mistake into a lesson?"

"Through this spiritual path, a person ascends from the stage of imitation to the level of self-liberation.

"Thus, a person is not righteous because someone else commands them to be, but because they see in righteousness life for their heart, light for their insight, and tranquility for their soul.

"We live in a time dominated by external influences, where voices crowd us from every direction with ideas, opinions, and trends. Yet a person is still capable of listening to their inner voice, to the innate nature God has placed within them to guide and awaken them.

Disciplining the self is a lifelong journey, beginning with meticulous self-examination, constant monitoring of one's behavior, and a humility that allows one to learn from everyone and be guided by every leading light.

"The brilliance of Ibn al-Muqaffa's saying lies not merely in its being a personal testament to his good conduct, but in its role as a profound invitation to all who wish to walk the paths of perfection to begin with themselves. If a person can reform themselves, everything else will be right."

— Compiled by Simi K. Kutty

Customs seizes 86 kg drugs hidden in UK shipment

KUWAIT CITY, June 11: Inspectors at the Air Cargo Customs Department seized a shipment of personal belongings arriving from the United Kingdom that consisted of three suitcases containing large quantities of narcotics, reports **Al-Seyassah** daily.

Approximately 63 kilograms of hashish, 9 kilograms of cocaine and 14 kilograms of marijuana, totaling 86 kilograms of narcotics were seized.

The General Administration of Customs said the seizure was carried out in accordance with directives issued by First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef, and in the presence of Customs Director General Yousef Al-Nuwaiif and Deputy Director General for Ports, Search and Customs Investigation Affairs Saleh Al-Omar, in coordination with the Ministry of Interior's Drug Control General Department.

Highway lanes shut for 20 days near 'Shuaiba'

KUWAIT CITY, June 11: The General Traffic Department (GTD) announced the closure of the emergency lane, the right slow lane, and half of the middle lane in both directions on King Abdulaziz bin Abdulrahman Al-Saud Road (Fahaheel Road), opposite Shuaiba, reports **Al-Seyassah** daily.

The department said the closure began on Wednesday, June 10, 2026, and will remain in effect for 20 days.



Jahra Governorate photo

The Jahra Governorate Council convened its regular meeting in the presence of Jahra Governor Hamad Al-Habashi.

Jahra panel talks focus on security and traffic

KUWAIT CITY, June 11: In the presence of Jahra Governor Hamad Al-Habashi, the Security Committee at the Jahra Governorate Council convened its regular meeting under the chairmanship of Assistant Director General of the Jahra Governorate Security Directorate Brigadier General Faisal Al-Rabbah.

The meeting focused on security and traffic issues in the governorate.

During the meeting, the committee members discussed a number of items on the agenda, particularly the assessment of the overall security situation and identifying unused sites in order to take the necessary measures in coordination with the relevant authorities.

The committee looked into several proposals aimed at improving traffic movement and reducing congestion. One of the proposals is conducting a feasibility study on establishing new entrances and exits at various locations in light of the ongoing urban development in residential areas and to meet the demands of the growing population in the governorate.

It underscored the importance of developing the traffic control system surrounding markets and commercial districts to improve traffic management and raise the effectiveness of field monitoring efforts.

The members also talked about the traffic congestion points on several main roads and practical solutions that could be implemented in coordination with the relevant authorities.

Towards the end of the meeting, the committee reaffirmed its commitment to continuously monitor the issues discussed and present recommendations to improve security and safety standards, while ensuring the high quality of services provided to the residents in the governorate.

Retirees losers as airline absolved in benefits case

KUWAIT CITY, June 11: The Court of Appeals overturned the ruling of a lower court that nullified the decision of the Kuwait Airways chairman on the discontinuation of benefits granted to retired employees, including travel vouchers and other privileges, reports **Al-Seyassah** daily.

The court also dismissed the lawsuit filed by the former employees challenging the decision.

Earlier, the Administrative Court ruled in favor of the retirees and annulled the chairman's decision to suspend the abovementioned benefits. It based its ruling on the fact that Kuwait Airways followed a long-established practice of providing retired employees with travel and other incentives following the end of their service.

However, in its latest judgment, the Court of Appeals reversed the Administrative Court's decision and rejected the retirees' claims, affirming the legality and validity of the challenged administrative measure.

With this ruling, the judicial dispute has been conclusively resolved in favor of Kuwait Airways, bringing the litigation to an end.

Egyptian student gets 3 years in libel lawsuit

KUWAIT CITY, June 11: The Court of Cassation upheld the three-year prison sentence imposed on an Egyptian student at the College of Business Studies for insulting HH the Amir and undermining his status by writing offensive statements on a classroom board, reports **Al-Seyassah** daily.

The case was filed based on a report submitted by the dean of the college, who stated that a student wrote phrases deemed insulting to HH the Amir and the system of governance in Kuwait on a board in one of the classrooms. The case was referred to the concerned authorities for legal action.

Upon receiving the report, the State Security Department opened an investigation, leading to the identification and arrest of the suspect.

During the investigation, the accused admitted to committing the act and his confession was documented in the official case records.

The Criminal Court sentenced the defendant to three years in prison after finding him guilty of the charges against him.

The Court of Appeals upheld the ruling and the Court of Cassation rejected the defendant's appeal, confirming the sentence as final and enforceable.

Hearing delayed in funds scandal

2 'royals' implicated in two cases

KUWAIT CITY, June 11: The Ministers Court postponed until Oct 14 the proceedings in the case of former Interior Minister Sheikh Talal Al-Khaled, who allegedly failed to report the embezzlement of public funds at Kuwait Fire Force (KFF) through the manipulation of the attendance system, reports **Al-Seyassah** daily.

The case was filed based on the report submitted by Kuwait Anti-Corruption Authority (Nazaha) to the Permanent Investigation Committee for the Trial of Ministers. The report accused Sheikh Talal Al-Khaled of failing to report the alleged embezzlement of public funds at KFF.

Following its assessment of the issue, the committee decided to refer the case to the Ministers Court for consideration of the charges brought against the former interior minister.

Several employees were referred to the Public Prosecution for investigation over suspicions that they improperly obtained salaries and other financial benefits through manipulation of the attendance system.

In a separate case, the same court scheduled a hearing for Oct 6 to receive the report of the Experts Department on the case filed against former Minister of Defense Sheikh Ahmad Al-Fahad and his office director, a matter widely referred to in the media as the "secret expenses case in the Ministry of Defense."

The Permanent Investigation Committee for the Trial of Ministers had earlier decided to refer Sheikh Ahmed Al-Fahad to the Ministers Court based on a report submitted by First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef concerning the file related to secret expenses.

The court previously assigned the Experts Department to prepare a technical report on the case, and the upcoming session was designated for the submission and review of that report.



From life-term to acquittal: The Court of Appeals overturned the ruling of the Criminal Court which sentenced a Kuwaiti citizen to life-imprisonment in a drug trafficking case and instead acquitted him of the charges of possessing drugs and intoxicants for trafficking, reports **Al-Seyassah** daily.

The court amended the legal classification of the charges to drug use and sentenced him to three years in prison and a fine of KD 1,000.

The Public Prosecution had charged the defendant and another individual with possessing various narcotics and intoxicants for trafficking and personal use, in addition to driving under the influence of drugs.

The Drug Control General Department arrested the defendants following prior investigations and seized drugs, intoxicants, and related paraphernalia. The defendants were referred to the Public Prosecution and then to the Criminal Court.

The Court of First Instance convicted the defendants and sentenced each of them to life imprisonment with hard labor and a fine of KD 20,000, along with the confiscation of the seized items.

During the appeal hearings, Lawyer Abdulmohsen Al-Qattan, representing the first defendant, stressed that there was insufficient evidence to prove his client's involvement in drug trafficking.

He also pointed to procedural flaws in the search and inspection process and their legal implications.




Defendant convicted: The Misdemeanor Court convicted the defendant in a defamation case after the lawyer of the victim, Attorney Ali Al-Hussainan, presented his arguments, reports **Al-Seyassah** daily.

In its reasoning, the court confirmed the defendant's guilt and found that all the legal elements required to establish the offenses of defamation and slander were satisfied.

The court based its judgment on the evidence and documents submitted in the case, in addition to the pleadings and discussions that took place during the trial, concluding that the defendant should be convicted in accordance with the law.


Al-Hussainan stated that the ruling reflects the important role of the Kuwaiti judiciary in protecting individual rights and the dignity and reputation of people from abuse. He affirmed that the law guarantees the right of every injured party to pursue legal action in order to claim their rights and hold accountable any person found to have exceeded legal limits.

He added that defamation and slander are offenses that directly affect an individual's honor and reputation, and that the Kuwaiti legislature enacted clear legal provisions to punish offenders in a manner that ensures deterrence and promotes mutual respect among members of society.



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Cabinet reviews regional tensions, condemns attacks

Kuwait reaffirms sovereignty and receives international backing

KUWAIT CITY, June 11, (KUNA): The Council of Ministers held its weekly meeting on Wednesday under the chairmanship of Acting Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yusuf Saud Al-Sabah.

Following the meeting, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Sharida Abdullah Al-Mausherji made the following statement:

The Cabinet began its meeting by extending sincere congratulations and best wishes to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, and His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, as well as to the honorable Kuwaiti people and respected residents on the occasion of the approaching Hijri New Year 1448 AH, praying to Almighty Allah to bring this occasion back to Kuwait and to the Arab and Islamic nations with goodness, prosperity, and blessings.

The Council of Ministers was briefed on the content of the phone call made on Tuesday, by His Highness the Amir of Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah with Amir of Qatar Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani.

During the call, the deep fraternal relations between the two countries and peoples were reviewed, along with ways to support and develop them across various fields in a manner that serves their mutual interests and enhances security and stability in the region.

The two sides also discussed key issues of mutual concern and the latest regional and international developments, exchanging views thereon.

The Council of Ministers was also briefed on the content of the phone call received by His Highness the Amir on Tuesday from Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

The call reviewed the friendly relations between the two countries and peoples and the latest regional and international developments, particularly the current circumstances in the region.

The Indian Prime Minister reiterated the condemnation of the friendly Republic of India of the heinous and blatant Iranian attacks on Kuwaiti territory and airspace, including the recent targeting of civilians and Kuwait International Airport, in a barbaric attack that resulted in the death of a member of the Indian community and injuries to others.

He considered these attacks a flagrant violation of the sovereignty of the State of Kuwait and of international law and the Charter of the United Nations, and an act of terror against innocent civilians and residents on its territory. He affirmed India's support for Kuwait and solidarity with its people and its backing of all measures taken to safeguard its sovereignty, security, and stability.

His Highness the Amir expressed his sincere condolences and sympathy over the death of a member of the Indian community as a result of the Iranian attack targeting civilians and Kuwait International Airport, praying for mercy upon the deceased and a speedy recovery for the injured, and expressed his appreciation for India's supportive stance.

On another matter, the Council of Ministers was briefed on the content of the phone call received by His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, from President of Palestine Mahmoud Abbas last week.

During the call, the Palestinian President conveyed his greetings to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, expressing his strong condemnation of the Iranian attacks on civilian installations and affirming Palestine's full solidarity with Kuwait and its support for all measures it takes to preserve its sovereignty and security.

His Highness the Crown Prince expressed his deep appreciation for these sincere fraternal sentiments and the supportive position toward Kuwait.

The Council was also briefed on the phone call received by His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, from Prince Salman bin Hamad Al-Khalifa, Crown Prince and Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Bahrain, last week.

During the call, he conveyed the greetings of King Hamad bin Isa Al-Khalifa, King



Acting Prime Minister and Minister of Interior, Sheikh Fahad Yusuf Saud Al-Sabah chairs the weekly Cabinet meeting, on Wednesday.

of Bahrain, to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

He also expressed Bahrain's condemnation of the Iranian attacks targeting Kuwaiti territory and civilian facilities, affirming Bahrain's full solidarity with Kuwait and stressing the importance of continued coordination and communication in the interest of shared security and stability.

His Highness the Crown Prince expressed his appreciation for this call, which reflects Gulf unity, emphasizing the importance of continued coordination and follow-up to strengthen joint Gulf action.

The Council of Ministers was likewise briefed on the content of the phone call received by His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, from Antonio Costa, President of the European Council.

The call reviewed the close and distinguished bilateral relations between Kuwait and the European Union.

His Excellency expressed Europe's full solidarity and support for Kuwait following the recent attacks launched by Iran and its proxies, affirming that diplomacy is the only path to achieving security and stability in the Middle East region.

He stressed the EU's call for de-escalation and continuation of diplomatic efforts, noting his aspiration to build a deeper and stronger partnership coinciding with the 40th anniversary of relations.

His Highness expressed his sincere gratitude for these supportive positions and highlighted the depth of historical relations between Kuwait and the European Union.

On another front, the Council of Ministers was briefed on the results of the official visit of First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yusuf Saud Al-Sabah to the Jordanian capital, Amman, last week.

During the visit, he met with Jordanian Minister of Interior Mazen Al-Faraya to discuss bilateral relations between the two brotherly countries, as well as the latest regional security developments and efforts being undertaken in this regard.

He praised the depth of the fraternal and historical relations between the State of Kuwait and the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and the ongoing coordination between the interior ministries of both countries, which contributes to enhancing security and stability.

The Council also listened to a briefing presented by His Excellency the Minister of Defense Sheikh Abdullah Ali Abdullah Al-Salem Al-Sabah on the latest developments in the region and current military developments in light of the Iranian attacks on Kuwait, the GCC countries, and the region.

In another development, the Council of Ministers expressed its condemnation and strong denunciation of the continued and repeated Iranian attacks using ballistic missiles and drones against Kuwait, the latest of which occurred on Wednesday, in a new

escalation added to a series of ongoing attacks targeting civilian and vital installations, including Kuwait International Airport, resulting in the death of a member of the Indian community and injuries to others, in addition to damage to infrastructure and diplomatic missions.

The Council affirmed Kuwait's categorical rejection of these blatant aggressive acts, which increase escalation, raise regional tensions, and constitute a flagrant violation of international law, the United Nations Charter, and UN Security Council Resolution No. 2817 of 2026. It stressed that Kuwait's security, sovereignty, and the safety of its citizens and residents are a red line that cannot be compromised, and affirmed Kuwait's full right to take appropriate measures in response in accordance with international law.

In the same context, the Council also condemned the continued Iranian attacks against the sisterly Kingdom of Bahrain, the latest of which occurred this morning, Wednesday, in a dangerous escalation that constitutes a flagrant violation of international law, a threat to regional security and stability, and disregard for state sovereignty. It stressed that the security of Bahrain and the GCC states is indivisible, reaffirming Kuwait's full solidarity with Bahrain and its support for all measures it takes to preserve its security and sovereignty.

The Council further condemned the Iranian attacks targeting the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan today, Wednesday, describing them as a flagrant violation of state sovereignty and international law, stressing that such continued attacks undermine efforts to de-escalate tensions and expose regional security to further risks. It reaffirmed Kuwait's steadfast position in support of Jordan's security and stability and its standing alongside it in all measures it takes to protect its sovereignty.

On another matter, the Council of Ministers condemned the Israeli occupation forces' attack that targeted a Lebanese army patrol, which resulted in military casualties last Saturday, describing it as a flagrant violation of Lebanese sovereignty and international law. It reiterated Kuwait's categorical rejection of continued violations and called on the international community to assume its responsibilities and ensure full compliance with UN Security Council Resolution 1701, reaffirming Kuwait's solidarity with Lebanon.

The Council was also briefed on the latest political and diplomatic efforts undertaken by the Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and its diplomatic missions abroad.

It was further briefed on the summons of the Acting Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Ambassador Hamad Suliman Al-Mashaan to the Charge d' Affaires of the Embassy of Iran in Kuwait, where he was handed an official protest memorandum regarding the ongoing Iranian attacks and the decision to reduce the number of Iranian embassy staff and declare two members of the mission persona non grata, requiring them to leave the country within 24 hours.

The Council reiterated Kuwait's strongest condemnation of the attacks and its categorical rejection of the use of its territory or airspace for any hostile acts against any state, stressing that Iranian allegations are baseless and that Kuwait reserves its full right to defend its sovereignty and take all necessary measures.

The Council was also briefed on the results of the official visit of the Minister of Foreign Affairs to Washington D.C., and his meeting with US Secretary of State Marco Rubio, where both sides reviewed the strategic partnership between the two friendly countries and affirmed their commitment to strengthening cooperation across various fields. They also condemned the repeated Iranian attacks against Kuwait and emphasized Kuwait's right to take all necessary measures to protect its sovereignty.

The Council was further briefed on his meeting with Chairman of the US House Foreign Affairs Committee Brian Mast, as well as the outcomes of the 11th session of the Kuwaiti-Omani Joint Committee held in Muscat, and his meeting with the Omani Foreign Minister on the sidelines of the visit.

Finally, the Council was briefed on arrangements regarding the Hijri New Year holiday for the year 1448 AH under two possible scenarios depending on the number of days in the month of Dhu Al-Hijjah.

In light of the continued developments and rapidly evolving circumstances, the Council of Ministers remains in continuous session to follow up on the latest developments at the local and regional levels.



Kuwait's Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah meets Canadian Foreign Minister Anita Anand on the sidelines of the GCC-Canada strategic dialogue in Bahrain.

Bahrain talks highlight stronger ties

Kuwait leads GCC delegation at strategic dialogue with Canada

MANAMA, June 11, (KUNA): Kuwait's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, chaired the Kuwaiti delegation on Wednesday at the joint ministerial meeting of the GCC-Canada strategic dialogue held in Bahrain.

In a statement, the Kuwaiti Ministry of Foreign Affairs said the meeting between Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) foreign ministers and Canadian Foreign Minister Anita Anand underscored the strength of GCC-Canada relations and the longstanding ties of friendship between both sides. The discussions focused on expanding cooperation into broader fields, particularly trade, investment, food security, energy, and logistics, in a way that serves mutual interests.

The meeting also reviewed regional and international developments, with ministers discussing recent tensions and their impact on regional and global security. Participants also explored ways to strengthen coordination between the GCC and Canada in addressing shared challenges and supporting efforts to promote peace and stability.

On the sidelines of the dialogue, Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah met with his Canadian counterpart Anita Anand, where both sides reviewed bilateral relations and ways to further enhance cooperation across various sectors, in addition to discussing the latest regional developments and related efforts.

Separately, the Foreign Minister received a phone call on Thursday from EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Kaja Kallas, during which they discussed the latest regional developments.

Meanwhile, Bahraini Minister of Foreign Affairs Dr. Abdullatif bin Rashid Al-Zayani said the GCC takes pride in its growing partnership with Canada, reflected in the joint action plan for 2025-2029 covering political, security, trade, and investment cooperation.

Al-Zayani, who chaired the 167th GCC Ministerial Council session during the GCC-Canada strategic dialogue, said Canada's participation amid sensitive regional circumstances sends a strong message of support for Gulf security and stability. He noted that the meeting took place amid a heightened security environment due to continued attacks on GCC states, including the use of missiles and drones targeting civilian facilities and infrastructure, in violation of international law and relevant UN resolutions.

He emphasized the GCC's right to protect its security while calling for intensified diplomatic efforts to prevent escalation, welcoming Canada's condemnation of the attacks and its support for international resolutions. He also warned that Gulf security is closely tied to global economic stability and energy security, stressing that any disruption to international waterways, including the Strait of Hormuz, would pose a serious risk to global trade and energy flows, while reaffirming the principle of freedom of navigation.

Al-Zayani added that regional stability requires peaceful solutions, highlighting the need for a just and comprehensive peace in Palestine and the establishment of an independent Palestinian state, alongside continued humanitarian efforts in Gaza. He also reiterated GCC support for stability in Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, Yemen, Libya, and Sudan, stressing respect for state sovereignty and legitimate authority.

The meeting further reviewed GCC-Canada cooperation under the strategic dialogue framework, including trade, investment, energy, infrastructure, logistics, defense industries, and food security, with both sides agreeing to strengthen coordination under the 2025-2029 action plan. They also discussed broader regional developments and ongoing mediation efforts aimed at de-escalation and restoring stability.



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Continued from Page 1

Kuwait maintains

It described the attacks as direct infringement on the sovereignty of Kuwait -- a violation of the Charter of the United Nations and international law, and a threat to efforts aimed at maintaining peace and stability in the region.

The ministry reaffirmed Kuwait's sovereign right to take all the necessary measures to defend its territory, protect its citizens, and safeguard its vital facilities and infrastructure.

According to cumulative figures released by the Ministry of Defense, a total of 893 drones, 15 cruise missiles, and 379 ballistic missiles have been launched on Kuwait since the beginning of the conflict.

Meanwhile, Kuwait's airspace and airport operations returned to normal on Thursday after a temporary precautionary closure earlier in the day, as regional tensions escalated following a series of Iranian attacks targeting Gulf and Arab states.

The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (PACA) said air traffic had resumed after the end of circumstances that prompted the early-morning shutdown, during which flights were diverted to alternative airports to ensure safety. In a statement to KUNA, PACA confirmed that Kuwait International Airport is now operating according to approved schedules, while authorities continue round-the-clock monitoring in coordination with regional and international partners.

PACA reiterated its commitment to passenger safety and secure air navigation, urging the public to rely on official channels for updates.

The developments come amid widespread regional condemnation of Iranian missile and drone attacks targeting Kuwait, Bahrain and Jordan, which officials say caused damage to civilian areas and infrastructure.

Kuwait's Ministry of Foreign Affairs denounced the attacks as a "blatant violation" of sovereignty and international law, reaffirming full support for Bahrain and Jordan. Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Sharida Al-Maousherji echoed the condemnation, describing the strikes as a breach of international legitimacy and warning of their impact on energy security and maritime navigation, particularly following disruptions linked to the Strait of Hormuz.

Speaking at the Arab Inter-Parliamentary Union conference, Al-Maousherji called for unified Arab positions and stronger parliamentary diplomacy, while backing international efforts led by Pakistan to de-

escalate tensions.

Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates also issued strong condemnations, calling the attacks serious violations of sovereignty and urging restraint and renewed diplomatic efforts. Riyadh highlighted ongoing mediation initiatives involving Pakistan and Qatar aimed at restoring regional stability.

GCC Secretary-General Jassem Al-Budaiwi condemned what he described as repeated hostile attacks on civilian facilities, warning they undermine efforts to maintain regional security. The Arab Parliament similarly labeled the escalation unprecedented, stressing that Arab national security is indivisible and calling for coordinated international action.

Algeria joined the condemnation, warning that continued escalation threatens international peace and security and reaffirming the need to respect state sovereignty under international law.

Elsewhere, U.S. President Donald Trump said Thursday he has called off new military strikes on Iran, hours after threatening to escalate the war.

The president said in a social media post that he made the move "based on the fact that discussions with the Islamic Republic of Iran have been brought to the highest level of Iranian leadership and approved."

Trump also suggested that progress has been made in talks to extend the fragile ceasefire, writing that "discussions and final points have been, in both concept and great detail," approved by United States, Israel, and other regional allies. He did not offer details.

Trump on multiple occasions over the last several weeks has claimed that the warring parties have been on the cusp of a deal without anything coming to fruition.

Earlier, Trump threatened to launch major strikes on Iran and seize control of its oil industry as escalating attacks between the countries pushed the Middle East closer to the resumption of a full-scale war.

Trump said in a social media post that the U.S. would hit Iran "VERY HARD TONIGHT" and take "total control" of Iran's oil and gas industries, including the vital Kharg Island oil terminal, in the "not too distant future."

The American leader's latest threats came as efforts to negotiate an end to the war appeared stuck. Trump has voiced his frustration with the stalled negotiations, warning earlier in the week that Tehran would "pay the price" for taking too long to reach a deal.

Iran's parliamentary speaker, Mo-

hammad Bagher Qalibaf, warned in a social media post Thursday that "wrong strategies and impulsive decisions" would wreak havoc on energy markets and "create an endless quagmire that you will be stuck in for years."

Iran's monthslong stranglehold on the Strait of Hormuz has disrupted global energy supplies, driven up fuel prices and made food and other basics more expensive well beyond the region.

The U.S. and Iran traded strikes for a second straight day Thursday after reaching a tenuous ceasefire more than a month ago. While the strikes have increased tensions in the region, they have been more limited compared to the early weeks of the war and negotiations between the U.S. and Iran are ongoing.

Trump's threats on Thursday, while stark, represented his latest verbal escalation in the Iran war. In April, he warned Iran that "a whole civilization will die tonight, never to be brought back again" if it didn't agree to his terms, before extending a ceasefire.

Kharg Island - located on the other side of the Persian Gulf from U.S. bases in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia - is the beating heart of Iran's oil industry, through which 90% of its exports pass. It is important because Iran's coastline is mostly too shallow for tanker ships to dock.

It was unclear how serious Trump was about his threat to seize it.

"My preference has always been to take Kharg Island," Trump said in an interview Thursday on Fox News. "I don't know that America has the stomach for it to be honest."

American troops would be vulnerable on Kharg Island because of its proximity - about 33 kilometers (21 miles) - to the Iranian mainland, from which missiles, drones and artillery could be fired.

Trump indicated in the interview that he remains averse to sending U.S. forces into Iran.

Kuwait grid

The weather maps and numerical models indicate the country will be affected by an extension of a surface low-pressure system accompanied by a very hot and dry air mass, which will raise temperatures along with light to moderate northwesterly winds that may become active at times, especially on Friday, raising dust and reducing horizontal visibility in some areas.

The weather on Friday during daytime will be extremely hot, with northwesterly winds moderate to ac-

tive at 20 to 55 km/h, raising dust. Maximum temperatures are expected between 46 and 48 degrees Celsius, and sea conditions will be moderate to rough, with waves of three to six feet.

Weather on Friday night will be warm, with dust gradually settling, and northwesterly winds light to moderate at 12 to 32 km/h. Minimum temperatures are expected to range between 29 and 31 degrees Celsius, and sea conditions will be light to moderate with waves of two to four feet.

On Saturday, weather will be extremely hot during the daytime with northwesterly winds light to moderate at 10 to 35 km/h. Maximum temperatures are expected between 46 and 48 degrees Celsius, and sea conditions will be light to moderate with waves of two to five feet.

Saturday night weather will be warm and relatively humid in coastal areas, with northwesterly to variable winds light to moderate at 8 to 30 km/h. Minimum temperatures are expected between 26 and 28 degrees Celsius, and sea conditions will be light to moderate with waves of one to three feet.

In other news, the Al-Ojeiri Scientific Center announced the results of its study of the crescent moon of Muharram 1448 AH, based on precise astronomical calculations and specialized astronomical charts, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The center said Islamic countries will observe the crescent moon of Muharram on the evening of Monday, June 15, 2026.

According to the center, astronomical calculations indicate the possibility of sighting the crescent in many regions across the Islamic world.

The moon will set in Kuwait 43.2 minutes after sunset and will be 12 hours and 9 minutes old. The new moon will be born at 5:54 a.m. In Makkah, the moon will set 40.01 minutes after sunset and will be 13 hours and 2 minutes old.

Based on these calculations, the center confirmed that Tuesday, June 16 will be the first day of Muharram 1448 AH astronomically in Kuwait and most Islamic countries.

It stressed that the official announcement of the start of the month is the responsibility of the relevant religious authorities in each country.

Kuwait finalizes

the officials and representatives of the Husseiniyas.

He affirmed the ministry's commitment to provide the necessary resources and ensure a safe and organ-

ized environment for the observance of religious rituals, while praising the cooperation between the relevant authorities and those responsible for the Husseiniyas.

The meeting addressed several organizational regulations related to the Husseiniyas, most notably the prohibition of raising banners or flags outside the perimeter of the Husseiniyas, and limiting cooking activities to schools in line with security and safety regulations.

It also emphasized the importance of regulating attendance inside the Husseiniyas, adhering to the instructions, strengthening cooperation with the Ministry of Interior personnel, and restricting the collection of donations to official channels approved by the Ministry of Social Affairs, all of which contribute to ongoing efforts to maintain security and public order.

The Ministry of Interior reaffirmed its coordination with relevant authorities and its commitment to utilize all available resources to guarantee security and public safety, as well as to ensure a suitable environment for the smooth and orderly observance of religious rituals.

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Kuwait, Oman

The two sides also stressed the importance of consolidating efforts and sharing expertise to support joint Gulf action. They underscored the need to expand integration and collaboration

among the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries in order to serve common interests and fulfill the aspiration for more development and prosperity of the citizens in the region.

30 warnings

procedures. The measures included dismissing committee directors, along with several supervisors and investigators, and referring the violations for urgent administrative investigation.

New administrative and supervisory teams have been assigned to manage the committees and review previous work and results to ensure procedural integrity.

The ministry emphasized that the irregularities remain limited, noting that most school administrations and examination committees have largely complied with regulations and instructions.

Security of

Al-Budaiwi highlighted efforts to enhance supply chain resilience, ensure the flow of goods, and intensify diplomatic engagement with countries and international and regional blocs.

He said these efforts reflected a unified Gulf position and a firm commitment to safeguarding security and stability and advancing GCC integration.

He extended gratitude and appreciation to the King of Bahrain Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa for Bahrain's facilitation and support for the GCC's work, stressing the continued backing of the leaders of GCC states for joint Gulf action.

Al-Budaiwi noted that since February 28, 2026, GCC states have been subjected to attacks involving ballistic missiles and drones targeting infrastructure and vital civilian facilities, adding that the latest attacks targeted Bahrain and Kuwait on Wednesday morning, in violation of sovereignty, international law, international humanitarian law, and the UN Charter.

He expressed condolences over the victims among civilians and military personnel, praying for mercy for the deceased and a speedy recovery for the injured, and commended the work of ministerial and technical committees that responded swiftly to the developments.

He also praised the efficiency and readiness of GCC armed forces, which he said had intercepted more than 7,000 ballistic missiles and drones launched toward member states, contributing to neutralizing threats and protecting lives and vital installations.



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Trump signs bill giving nearly \$70B to immigration enforcement agenda

Largest ICE detention facility wasted millions and put detainees at risk: report

WASHINGTON, June 11, (AP) — Mismanagement at a massive Immigration and Customs Enforcement facility in Texas created unsafe conditions that contributed to detainee deaths and suffering even as millions of wasted tax dollars enriched contractors, according to a federal report released.

The Government Accountability Office report documents serious problems at Camp East Montana, a sprawling tent facility at Fort Bliss in El Paso where three detainees have died in little more than six months. Evidence in one of those deaths, of a 55-year-old Cuban migrant who died in January after being held down by guards, was "missing or destroyed," the report found.

ICE rushed to open the camp in August before construction was complete and failed to conduct required oversight to ensure detainees were held in sanitary conditions and receiving adequate medical care, according to the report.

The Department of Homeland Security noted that ICE has replaced the contractor running the facility. "This new contractor will allow Camp East Montana to continue abiding by the

highest detention standards with the ability to provide more medical care on-site," said DHS spokesperson Lauren Bis.

The GAO's findings echo past reporting by The Associated Press and other news outlets about dangerous conditions at Camp East Montana, which quickly became the nation's largest immigration detention facility.

But the government report also details previously undisclosed incidents, including that a detainee escaped in October due to what ICE called the contractor's oversight failure. In January, a security guard lost a loaded firearm inside the facility that was never recovered.

The contractor failed to administer skin tests to screen detainees for tuberculosis, relying on a questionnaire instead, the report said. The inadequate screening allowed a detainee with tuberculosis to be housed with the general population, which later suffered an outbreak.

GAO is an independent, nonpartisan agency in Congress that investigates how federal funds are spent and evaluates whether programs and policies are operating effectively.



A sign marks the entrance to a series of hardened tents at the Camp East Montana immigrant detention center in the desert at a US Army base on the outskirts of El Paso, Texas on Feb 13. (AP)

The office opened its review into Camp East Montana at the request of Democrats in the House and Senate.

Sen. Dick Durbin of Illinois called the report's findings "damning."

"We now know even more details of how dangerous and irresponsible the Trump administration's mass

deportation campaign truly is," said Durbin, the ranking Democrat on the Senate Judiciary Committee, adding that "those detained are experiencing conditions that shock the conscience."

Facing pressure to increase its detention capacity, the Trump ad-

ministration routed the contract to build Camp East Montana through the Army to speed construction after ICE twice failed to successfully award one. That resulted in selecting a small, little-known contractor, Acquisition Logistics, for the \$1.3 billion deal despite it having no prior experience operating detention facilities and facing what ICE called a "significant learning curve."

The Army - and later ICE after the camp was transferred to the agency - wasted millions of dollars paying for services it did not need because the contract did not account for fluctuations in the detainee population, the report said.

The Army blew up to \$11.5 million paying for guards, medical services, transportation and meals in the weeks before the camp held detainees. The agencies wasted millions more because it was contracted to pay the cost of meals for the camp's maximum population of 5,000, even when the number of detainees there dropped to around 1,600, the report said.

The facility did not meet ICE detention standards or the contract's requirements in several ways when it opened, in part because it had not

been inspected as required by ICE policy, the report said. The camp lacked security cameras on the perimeter and had other surveillance blind spots that raised the risk of sexual assaults or escapes.

Also:

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump signed a bill into law on Wednesday that gives his immigration and deportation agenda a nearly \$70 billion boost for the rest of his time in the White House.

The bill provides \$38 billion for US Immigration and Customs Enforcement and \$26 billion for the Border Patrol. An additional \$5 billion would cover unforeseen costs, according to the White House.

Trump signed the legislation in the Oval Office a day after House Republicans pushed the measure through by a 214-212 vote over the objections of Democrats. His signature ended a nearly six-month fight over Department of Homeland Security funding that began with shooting deaths of two US citizens, Alex Pretti and Renee Good, in January during federal immigration enforcement operations in Minneapolis.

America

FBI seizes evidence at California plant: Federal authorities served a search warrant on Wednesday at a Southern California aerospace facility where a chemical tank overheated last month, forcing 50,000 residents to evacuate because authorities feared a catastrophic explosion.

The warrant signed by a federal judge last week approved the seizure of documents and records related to the "storage, use, or disposal" of methyl methacrylate, the chemical inside the affected tank.

"Samples of the substance within any tank, tote, drum, vat, vessel, or container suspected of containing or having previously contained methyl methacrylate and/or any hazardous substance" were also sought, according to the warrant. (AP)

'Gates made a grave error in judgment': Bill Gates said Wednesday that he made a "grave error in judgment" by meeting with Jeffrey Epstein but denied any wrongdoing as the Microsoft co-founder faced hours of questioning from lawmakers about his relationship with the disgraced financier.

In an opening statement provided to The Associated Press, Gates said he "should never have met with Epstein in the first place," but that he "never witnessed nor had any indication that Epstein was engaged in ongoing criminal conduct."

The tech billionaire became the latest powerful figure linked to Epstein to testify before the House Oversight Committee in a closed-door deposition. The committee chairman, Republican Rep. James Comer, formally requested that Gates testify after he appeared multiple times in a trove of documents released by the Justice Department as part of its Epstein probe.

As Gates arrived at the Capitol, he noted that his appearance was voluntary and said he hoped his testimony would help lawmakers "find justice for the



FBI agents work around GKN Aerospace in Garden Grove, Calif. on June 10. (AP)

victims." Gates did not take questions from reporters at the conclusion of the interview late Wednesday afternoon. (AP)

Gunman kills 4 at suburban Detroit house: A 25-year-old man killed four people at a house in suburban Detroit, including his parents and brother, and quickly surrendered when police arrived, authorities said Wednesday.

"We don't know why this happened," though the suspect had a "contentious relationship" with his parents, said Livonia police Chief Tom Goralski.

"Whether that had anything to do with what occurred, we don't know yet," he said.

Officers who were dispatched to a house Tuesday afternoon found the parents, Sterling Pierce, 58, and Holly Kimball, 53, in the backyard with gunshot wounds, Goralski said.

Tanner Pierce, 22, and Tanner's 21-year-old girlfriend were discovered shot in a bedroom, he said.

When police arrived, the suspect emerged from the house "with his hands above his head and his fingers interlocked. ... The subject responded and indicated that he had shot his family," Goralski said. (AP)

Storms knock out power in US Midwest and disrupt Chicago flights

LOS ANGELES, June 11, (AP) — Damaging storms swept through the Midwest, knocking out power to hundreds of thousands of customers and causing more than a thousand flight delays or cancellations at Chicago airports with more potentially severe weather expected Thursday.

The National Weather Service said it received more than a dozen reports of tornadoes Wednesday across northern Missouri, Iowa, Kansas and Illinois. There were no immediate reports of injuries or deaths.

Weather service meteorologist Frank Pereira said the frontal system that produced the storms, including high winds and hail, was moving eastward Thursday. There was also a slight risk of severe thunderstorms in parts of the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic. The storms are being fueled by cool air from Canada clashing with warm, humid air from the South.

"Going forward, we're expecting another area of severe weather to develop across portions of the central Plains, Midwest, particularly from Iowa, northern Missouri, north-eastward through the Great Lakes," Pereira said. "Again, it's all tied into a pretty well-defined frontal system."

Storms moved into the Chicago area on Wednesday afternoon,



This frame grab from aerial video shows a building in Stickney, Illinois, after its roof was damaged by the severe storms that struck the Chicago area on June 10. (AP)

downing trees and damaging some buildings.

The two major Chicago airports, Chicago O'Hare International Airport and Chicago Midway International Airport, temporarily put all flights on hold in the evening due to thunderstorms. A similar ground stop was issued at John F. Kennedy International Airport in New York due to thunderstorms.

By Wednesday evening, more than 1,000 flights going into and out of Chicago had been delayed or canceled, according to FlightAware, a

flight tracking website. Air traffic appeared to return to normal Thursday morning, with only 24 flight cancellations and 34 delays nationwide, FlightAware reported.

Strong winds blew part of the roof off an apartment building in the Chicago area, forcing residents to leave, according to NBC 5 Chicago. Elsewhere, barns collapsed in Wisconsin, buildings were crushed in rural northern Missouri and some large trees and power lines were downed in other areas across the Midwest, photos and video online showed.



The Gordie Howe Bridge is shown under construction between Windsor, Ontario and Detroit on May 22. (AP)

Opening of Canada-US bridge may take 'a little longer': PM

A new Canadian-built bridge across the Detroit River that US President Donald Trump has threatened to block may take longer to open than anticipated, Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney said Wednesday.

"Look, everyone's working hard to make sure the bridge is open as soon as possible.

There is no big drama. If it takes a little longer it will take a little bit longer, but this will benefit Canadians, Americans, business, tourists, residents for decades and decades to come," Carney said on his way into Parliament.

A ribbon-cutting ceremony for the Gordie Howe Interna-

tional Bridge, jointly owned by Canada and the US state of Michigan, is set to take place on Friday, while the bridge itself may not open to traffic immediately.

Carney said Tuesday that the second bridge between Windsor and Detroit would "be open at the end of the week." (AP)

Pope visits Canary Islands

ARGUINEGUÍN, Spain, June 11, (AP) — Pope Leo XIV traveled to a once-notorious epicenter of the European migration debate on Thursday, challenging countries to uphold migrants' rights while shaming those leaders, including Christians, who turn them away with indifference.

Leo issued an impassioned plea to recognize the dignity of migrants from the port of Arguineguin, in the Canary Islands. In 2020, the port was dubbed "dock of shame" because of the squalid conditions migrants were forced to live in for months during a spike in arrivals.

"Human dignity has no passport and does not lose its value when crossing a border," Leo said, with rescue ships docked behind him and a simple wooden cross made from a shipwrecked migrant boat nearby.

Leo is spending the final two days of his weeklong trip to Spain in the Canary Islands, a Spanish archipelago closer to Africa than the Iberian Peninsula and a key point of entry for migrants who make the perilous Atlantic crossing from West Africa.

He was fulfilling a wish of Pope Francis to visit the Canary Islands to commemorate the thousands of lives lost at sea.



Pope Leo XIV waves as he arrives to celebrate Mass at the Basilica of the Sagrada Família in Barcelona, Spain on June 10. (AP)

Europe

Police blast water cannons at Belfast protesters: Police blasted water cannons Wednesday at protesters in Northern Ireland who set small fires and hurled bricks, rocks and bottles at them during a second night of violence over a brutal stabbing on a Belfast street.

Demonstrators wearing masks tore bricks from the walls outside homes and smashed sidewalks with sledgehammers to toss at riot police. In one place, the unruly crowd used sections of a dismantled picket fence to take cover on the street.

The clashes with police came several hours after a 30-year-old man from Sudan appeared in a Belfast court charged with attempted murder in a stabbing attack that left a man seriously injured and triggered anti-immigrant violence.

Hadi Alodid, 30, was ordered held in jail after appearing by video in Belfast Magistrates' Court, where a detective said he blinded Stephen Ogilvie in the



Ogilvie

left eye during the knife attack. He was also charged with possessing a knife and threatening to kill a radiographer while being treated for a hand injury after the assault. (AP)

Fire on Spanish island of Mallorca kills 2: A fire that broke out early Thursday morning at a home in a tourist area on the Spanish island of Mallorca killed two people and injured several, authorities said.

The fire broke out around 5 am on the third floor of a residential building in the Magaluf area, the Civil Guard said in a statement.

Residents tried unsuccessfully to put out the blaze, which spread to the rest of the building, especially toward the upper floors, it added. More than 12 people were evacuated. The flames were extinguished about two hours later.

Nine people were taken to medical facilities for treatment of smoke inhalation, a Civil Guard spokesperson said. The official spoke on condition of anonymity under department policy.

One of the deceased was a 58-year-old Argentine citizen, and the other was a woman who has not yet been identified, the Civil Guard said. They were in two separate apartments. (AP)

'King of the North' seeks path to becoming Britain's next leader in special election

ASHTON-IN-MAKERFIELD, England, June 11, (AP) — About 75,000 voters in a pocket of northwest England are about to make a momentous decision. They will cast ballots in a contest that may well pick the UK's next prime minister, or plunge Britain's febrile politics into even more turmoil. Possibly both.

Some of them aren't too enthusiastic.

"I think they're all a waste of time," said Shirley Prior on the choice of candidates in Makerfield, where a special election on June 18 has drawn interest from journalists around the world. That level of attention is all-but unheard of for a midterm by-election to fill one of the 650 seats in the House of Commons.

If Andy Burnham from the center-left Labour Party wins, there's a strong chance he will replace embattled Prime Minister Keir Starmer as leader of both party and country. He's up against Reform UK, a hard-right party hoping to prove that this longtime Labour stronghold is fertile ground for its anti-immigration message, with potentially seismic consequences for British democracy.

This district has elected Labour lawmakers for 120 years, but Burn-



Andy Burnham speaks with police personnel during a campaign visit to the town of Ashton-in-Makerfield before the forthcoming Makerfield by-election, in Greater Manchester, England on June 9. (AP)

ham is not a shoo-in. Reform, led by the veteran anti-immigration politician Nigel Farage, won 24 of the 25 council seats up for grabs in local elections in this area last month.

"I always voted Labour because my dad, my grandad, everybody voted Labour then," Prior said. "I've never done that for a lot, a lot of years."

The election is taking place amid heightened tensions over immigra-

tion. A stabbing in Belfast this week, for which a Sudanese man has been charged with attempted murder, triggered violent protests in Northern Ireland in which cars and houses torched.

In the constituency's main town of Ashton-in-Makerfield, 200 miles (320 kilometers) northwest of London, some voters echo Reform claims that recent arrivals are straining housing and public services.

INTERNATIONAL

Asia

Philippine town seeks airlift of food to ease hunger in villages: The mayor of a southern Philippine town that was devastated by a powerful earthquake pleaded Thursday for helicopters to transport food to stave off hunger in several landslide-isolated villages.

The 7.8 magnitude offshore quake, one of the strongest to hit the Philippine archipelago in a half century, struck Monday off the southern province of Sarangani and has left at least 47 people dead and injured 688 with 31 still missing.

More than 45,000 people remained displaced, about half in emergency shelters, after the quake damaged more than 12,600 houses in farming towns and cities. Many were still too traumatized to return home due to aftershocks, provincial officials said.

Sarangani reported 20 dead from the quake, the highest toll from the affected provinces, mostly due to a landslide that buried houses in the coastal town of Glan, according to the government's Office of Civil Defense, which deals with major disasters.

Glan Mayor Victor James Yap said power has not been restored to his province and 10 of 31 villages in his town of more than 100,000 people remained inaccessible mostly due to landslides. He asked the government to immediately deploy air force helicopters to deliver food and other aid to the stricken areas.

"We need food and water but it's difficult to transport them to some of our villages which remain isolated," Yap told DZMM radio network. "Choppers are needed to transport food because people there are already very hungry."

A key access road to the town has been reopened and will allow the delivery of fuel as early as Thursday, but the town remained without power and cellphone services were still spotty, according to Yap.

The Office of Civil Defense said more than 26 million pesos (\$426,000) worth of food packs, cash and other aid have been provided so far and 180 government and military planes, helicopters, ships and trucks have been deployed to respond to the disaster. (AP)

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Thai woman faces murder charges in killing of US diplomat: A Thai woman appeared in a Myanmar court on Thursday to answer charges of murder in the killing of an American diplomat in Yangon, according to two attorneys familiar with the case.

The woman, whose identity has not been released, was charged with murder as well as a charge under the country's immigration code that applies to any foreign national who commits a crime in Myanmar, according to one of the attorneys.

It was not clear whether she entered a plea or had legal representation during the hearing in Kamayut Township Court. She faces the possibility of a sentence ranging from 10 years in prison to the death penalty if she is convicted of murder.

Both lawyers spoke on condition of anonymity to avoid possible reper-



The Unit 6 reactor building is pictured during a media tour at Tokyo Electric Power Company Holdings' (TEPCO) Kashiwazaki-Kariwa nuclear power station in Kariwa Village, Niigata prefecture, Japan on May 1. (AP)

cussions from authorities in Myanmar's military-run government.

The diplomat was found dead May 11 at the Sakura Residence & Hotel, a facility popular with diplomats, business people and other international visitors that is about 1.5 kilometers (1 mile) from the American Embassy, according to one of the attorneys. He had suffered stab wounds to the head and neck.

The US State Department confirmed the death, but refused to provide further information, including the name of the diplomat.

The military seized power from democratically-elected Aung San Suu Kyi in 2021, giving rise to widespread protests that have expanded into a bloody civil war in Myanmar, which is also known as Burma.

Authorities rarely speak with the media, and the police investigating the case, the prison where the suspect is believed to be being held, and the court where she made her appearance all refused to comment.

Officials at the State Department's Asia Pacific Media Hub on Thursday referred questions as to whether American observers were sent to the court appearance to the US Embassy in Myanmar. The Embassy repeated the State Department's original statement on the death, and referred other questions to local Myanmar authorities.

Thailand's Foreign Ministry has said that it is providing consular assistance to the woman in custody, but said it had no immediate information on whether it had helped her with legal assistance at her hearing on Thursday. (AP)

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Indonesia detains 10 nationals: Indonesia's National Narcotics Agency (BNN) said on Wednesday it detained 10 Indonesian nationals who tested

positive for drugs after arriving from Bangkok, Thailand, at Soekarno-Hatta International Airport in Tangerang, Banten province.

BNN Chief Commissioner General Suyudi Ario Seto said the operation followed an investigation into two foreigners caught smuggling 7.8 kg of hashish from Thailand.

Out of 14 passengers screened, 10 tested positive for various illicit drugs. A suitcase belonging to one passenger contained 22 grams of suspected ketamine, which is being tested, said Seto.

The 10 Indonesians, identified by initials, were classified as minor or first-time users and referred to outpatient rehabilitation at the agency's clinic in Jakarta. (Xinhua)

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Japan's former LDP president Kono dies: Yohei Kono, former president of Japan's Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), passed away at the age of 89 on Monday, local media reported Wednesday.

In 1993, Kono, then chief cabinet secretary, issued the landmark Kono Statement, acknowledging the Japanese military's direct involvement in setting up "comfort stations" and forcibly recruiting women on the Korean Peninsula, in China, and elsewhere, and offering an apology and expressing remorse for these actions.

Born in 1937, Kono was the son of former Japanese agriculture and forestry minister Ichiro Kono. He was first elected to the House of Representatives in 1967.

Kono became LDP president in 1993 after the party lost power. The following year, he was appointed deputy prime minister and minister of foreign affairs. He also served as speaker of the House of Representatives and was one of Japan's most prominent political figures.

Kono was devoted to promoting friendship between Japan and China. During a visit to China in June 2025 as president of the Japanese Association for the Promotion of International Trade, he said history should not be forgotten, nor should it be denied. The past cannot be changed, but the future can be shaped through efforts. (Xinhua)

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Release of Fukushima N-contaminated wastewater halted: The release of nuclear-contaminated wastewater from the crippled Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant into the ocean was automatically halted at around 4 pm local time on Wednesday after an abnormal system alarm was triggered during water transfer operations, Kyodo News reported.

According to the plant's operator, Tokyo Electric Power Company Holdings (TEPCO), workers subsequently inspected the relevant equipment and found no abnormalities. The company is currently investigating the cause of the alarm.

TEPCO began the 20th round of discharge of Fukushima nuclear-contaminated water on June 1.

According to the company's previously announced plan, the latest discharge is scheduled to continue through June 19, with about 7,800 tonnes of wastewater expected to be released into the sea, containing approximately 1.3 trillion becquerels of radioactive tritium. (Xinhua)

'Visit was a complete success'

China, DPRK reach new important consensus on bilateral ties: senior CPC official

BEIJING, June 11, (Xinhua): China and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) have reached a series of new important consensus, said a senior official of the Communist Party of China (CPC).

During the visit of Xi Jinping, general secretary of the CPC Central Committee and Chinese president, to the DPRK, the two sides discussed plans for the development of bilateral relations and shared their visions for bright prospects for the socialist cause of both countries, said Liu Haixing, head of the International Department of the CPC Central Committee.

Kim Jong Un, general secretary of the Workers' Party of Korea and president of the State Affairs of the DPRK, welcomed Xi at the airport, held a grand welcoming ceremony at Kim Il Sung Square, and accompanied Xi throughout his visit to the DPRK, Liu said.

Liu said the visit was a complete success, with the main achievements highlighted in three aspects:

First, the top leaders of the two parties and two countries have steered the course and provided guidance for the China-DPRK relationship to advance with the times.

Xi said no matter how the international situation changes, the Chinese party and government's firm stance on highly valuing China-DPRK traditional friendship will not change, the firm support for Kim in leading the DPRK's socialist cause will not change, and the firm commitment to safeguarding the shared interests of the two countries and preserving a favorable strategic environment will not change.



In this photo provided by the North Korean government, North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, (left), and Chinese President Xi Jinping, (right), shake hands before Xi's departure for China, at the airport in Pyongyang on June 9. (AP)

The two sides agreed to continue maintaining close strategic communication through meetings, exchanges of letters and messages, and the mutual dispatch of special envoys, among other forms.

Second, the visit deepened practical cooperation and friendly exchanges in various fields to inject new impetus into the socialist cause of China and the DPRK.

Xi called for further invigoration of friendly exchanges at various levels between the two parties, as well as the deepening of exchanges of experience and mutual learning on party and state governance.

The top leaders of the two countries agreed to strengthen the alignment of development strategies, expand practical cooperation in such areas as economy and trade, agriculture, construction, science and technology, as well as health care, enhance friendly exchanges in education, culture and the arts, tourism, sports, media, youth affairs, subnational engagement, and sister-city relations, so as to promote high-level connectivity and facilitate personnel and economic and trade exchanges.

Third, the visit injected positive energy into regional and world peace and development.

During the visit, Xi emphasized that China and the DPRK should strengthen strategic communication and coordination, firmly safeguard their respective sovereignty, security and development interests, jointly uphold regional peace and development, and create a better external environment for the two countries' socialist cause.

Humanitarian assistance has saved lives: Salih

Nearly 118m displaced by conflict, persecution last year: UN

WASHINGTON, June 11, (AP): The UN refugee agency said forced displacement of people due to conflict or persecution fell in 2025 for the first time in a decade. But the agency warned in its annual report Thursday that 118 million people who had to flee their homes or nations is still alarmingly high.

A look at the agency's Global Trends Report on refugees and displaced people, by the numbers:

The total number of people forcibly displaced by conflict, violence or persecution at the end of 2025 was 117.8 million. The figure includes refugees, asylum seekers, internally displaced and other groups in need of international protection. It's the first time in a decade the statistic fell. Behind the decline is both an increase in people who returned home and the fact that many refugees acquired citizenship of their host countries, among other reasons, said Tarek Abou Chabake, the UN agency's chief statistician. The UN High Commissioner for Refugees warned the number of those displaced globally, mostly by conflict, was unacceptably high.

Percentage of children among 41.6 million refugees last year. While Colombia, Germany and Turkey hosted more than 2 million refugees each, the majority live in low- to middle-income countries. Despite a 3% fall from the previous year, 5.4 million people crossed an international border in 2025 seeking refuge.

Seven out of 10 refugees have lived in exile for five years or more, often trapped in sprawling camps in poor nations. "Humanitarian assistance has saved lives," High Commissioner for Refugees Barham Salih said, adding that "it was never intended to sustain generations of people indefinitely." The agency aims to slash by half the number of refugees in protracted displacement who are dependent on humanitarian assistance by 2035.

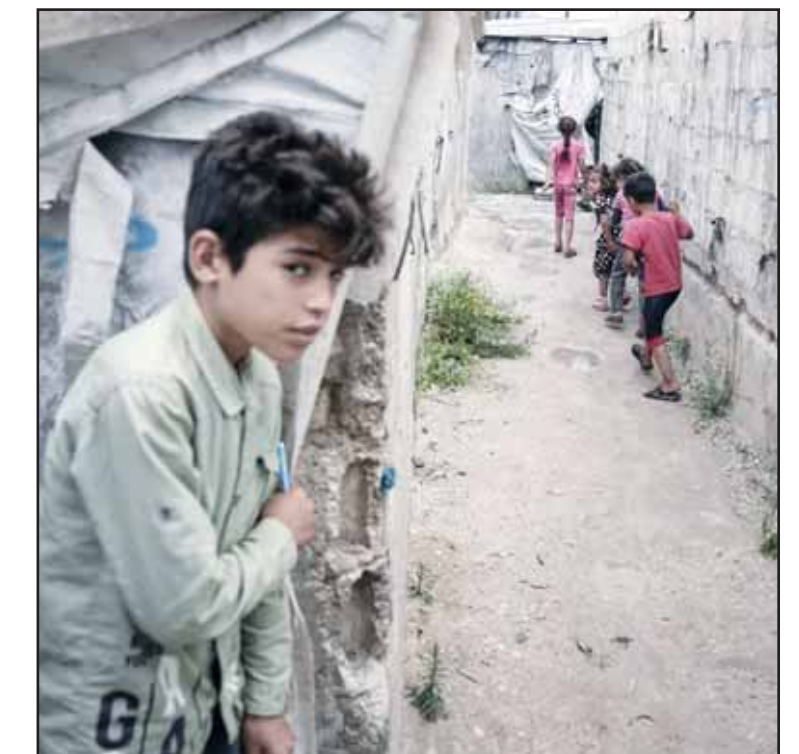
The number of internally displaced people. The ongoing war in Sudan was behind the largest displacement in the world with 9.1 million people forced to flee their homes. Colombia, Syria, Yemen and Afghanistan also have large displaced populations.

Projections for 2026 did not look much better. With the Iran war erupting in February, 3.2 million people had been displaced by March inside Iran, and by mid-May, 1 million were displaced inside Lebanon. "This is truly unacceptable and we must make sure this doesn't become a new normal," Salih said.

Three countries - Syria, Afghanistan and Sudan - saw 90% of the 4.4 million refugee return home in 2025. The number was the second highest since UNHCR began keeping records six decades ago. Another 10.3 million internally displaced people returned to their areas of origin last year. But Salih warned that many of those who went back did so under pressure and without basic infrastructure and conditions for a dignified life. "Voluntary returns to post-conflict Syria and returns under pressure to Afghanistan are not the same thing," Salih said.

The number of stateless people, of which the Rohingya from Myanmar make up the largest group. The majority of the stateless people live in Bangladesh, Ivory Coast, Thailand and Myanmar. Only 46,000 acquired citizenship in 2025.

The number of refugees resettled, which fell sharply from 188,000 in 2024. That's a fraction of those in need, Salih said, as he urged governments to expand legal pathways for refugees to be relocated. "Every dangerous sea crossing and every death in the desert represents a failure of the international community," Salih said. "The human cost of the failure is measured not with statistics but with lives."



Children play through al-Karama camp, established in the early years of the Syrian conflict and built from scratch with light-brick structures covered with fabric to house internally displaced Syrians near the village of Atme, Idlib province, Syria on May 19. (AP)

Mass funeral held

22 Pakistanis die in Kashmir helicopter crash

MUZAFFARABAD, Pakistan, June 11, (AP): Rescuers recovered the remains of all 22 soldiers aboard a military helicopter that crashed in Pakistan-administered Kashmir the previous day, officials said Thursday, confirming there were no survivors, as senior government and military officials attended a mass funeral for the victims.

The helicopter crashed Wednesday in Muzaffarabad, the regional capital, apparently because of a technical fault, according to Pakistan's military. An investigation is underway to determine the exact cause.

An Associated Press reporter counted 22 coffins draped in Pakistan's national flag at a funeral ceremony.

Witnesses and regional officials said the remains of the soldiers were recovered from the badly burned wreckage. The dead included a colonel and two army majors, according to two security officials who spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to speak publicly.

Among those attending the funerals was regional Prime Minister Faisal



Army soldiers arrive to perform honor-guard for military personnel, killed in Wednesday's helicopter crash, during a funeral prayer, in Muzaffarabad, the capital of Pakistan-administered Kashmir on June 11. (AP)

Mumtaz Rathore.

According to the officials, the soldiers had been traveling to carry out security duties after a call for a march on Muzaffarabad by the Joint Awami Action Committee, a recently banned alliance of various groups.

Authorities have not indicated any

connection between the planned protest and the crash.

Pakistan has deployed additional security forces across the region, where tensions have been high since the weekend after members of an outlawed group attacked police and security personnel, killing four officers.

Lat/Am

2 killed in Brazil small plane crash: Two people were killed and one was injured after a small aircraft crashed on Wednesday shortly after takeoff in Brazil's southeastern Sao Paulo state, firefighters said.

The private aircraft was carrying three people when it went down near a recreational club close to the Frank Miloye Milenkovich Airport in the city of Marilia, according to airport operator Rede Voa.

Two people died at the scene, while the third person was rescued and taken for medical treatment at a local hospital, the fire department said.

Brazil's National Civil Aviation Agency said the aircraft had valid airworthiness status in the country's aeronautical registry. (Xinhua)

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108 Cuban migrants rescued: More than 100 Cuban migrants attempting to enter Brazil on its northern border with Guyana were rescued from human smugglers, Brazilian police said.

The 108 migrants were in custody in Roraima state while authorities regularize their immigration status before referring them to social services workers, police said Tuesday.

Police also said they arrested five people on migrant smuggling charges. Known as "coyotes," the smugglers charged abusive fees while promising a safe crossing to Brazil, police said. (AP)

Africa

7 dead in Zimbabwe minibus fire: A minibus packed with schoolchildren caught fire in central Zimbabwe Wednesday afternoon, killing seven, authorities said. Twenty-four children were on board when the vehicle burst into flames in the city of Gweru, according to a police statement, adding that an investigation was underway, but initial examination suggested a jerry can of petrol kept in the minibus may have fueled the fire.

Authorities didn't immediately share the number of the injured. Local media reported the driver and conductor were taken to a hospital and that all the dead were schoolchildren. (AP)

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Landslide kills 8 at CAR illegal mining site: At least eight artisanal gold miners were killed overnight into Tuesday in a landslide at the Konyeme mining site in the western Central African Republic, according to local authorities and media.

"Individuals arrived at the site around 2:00 a.m. local time to carry out illegal mining activities, which caused a collapse," said El Adj Mousa Laurent Ngon Baba, a member of parliament for Baboua 1, where the mining site is located.

"Among the eight victims are a local resident and seven suspected Fulani foreign nationals. Furthermore, this was a site still under development. I urge artisanal miners to be aware of the risks involved," he told Xinhua by phone. (Xinhua)

Kuwaiti oil drops to \$99.54

KUWAIT CITY, June 11, (KUNA): Price of Kuwaiti oil fell by USD 2.3 to USD 99.54 per barrel (pb) in Wednesday's trading, compared with USD 101.84 pb on Tuesday, said the Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) on

Thursday.

In global markets, Brent crude rose by USD 1.65 to USD 93.1 pb, and West Texas Intermediate rose USD 1.83 to USD 90.03 pb.

Business

At annual Company Program competition for high school and university students

Zain, INJAZ support student innovations in AI and sustainability



Waleed Al-Khashti and Layla Al-Mutairi award a winning university team.



Hamad Al-Musaibeeh and Faisal Al-Duwaihees honor a winning high school team.

KUWAIT CITY, June 11: Zain Kuwait supported the 20th edition of the annual Company Program competition for high school and university students, organized by INJAZ Kuwait. This came as part of the strategic partnership between the two organizations, which has extended for more than two decades, reaffirming Zain's commitment to supporting educational and youth-focused initiatives that empower the next generation and contribute to developing future-ready skills.

Zain took part in awarding the first-place winners across the competition's various categories, joined by Chief Corporate Affairs and Relations Officer at Zain Kuwait Waleed Al-Khashti, Corporate Relations and Communications Director at Zain Kuwait Hamad Al-Musaibeeh, INJAZ Kuwait Director Layla Hilal Al-Mutairi, and representatives of the sponsors and partners.

Ahead of the awards ceremony, Youth and Partnerships Team Leader at Zain Kuwait Faisal Al-Duwaihees joined the judges panel, which included entrepreneurs and private-sector executives. The panel listened to the students' final pitches, after which the projects were evaluated and the winning teams in each category were selected based on a set of criteria.

Zain is proud to be a key success partner of this annual educational initiative, which it supports in line with its corporate sustainability and social responsibility strategy. The company places youth empowerment, education, and the promotion of entrepreneurship among its top priorities.

This also comes in light of the rapid transformations shaping the market and the growing need to prepare a generation capable of creative thinking, leveraging technology, and developing practical solutions that address real-world challenges and meet future needs.

This year's high school category saw the participation of around 100 students from various public and private schools, competing across 12 teams through innovative projects and ideas that reflected an advanced level of awareness of future-related issues. The projects focused on AI, sustainability, digital transformation, and smart community solutions.

The university category featured 10 teams, who competed through entrepreneurial projects and innovative ideas designed to address real-world challenges and respond to market needs. Their participation reflected the growing interest among students in initiative, teamwork, and applied innovation across different sectors.

By supporting the competition, Zain continues to foster an educational environment that brings a hands-on experience in social entrepreneurship. This begins with developing an idea and turning it into an applicable project, continues through preparing business plans and feasibility studies and managing teams, and culminates in presenting products and services before judges panels comprising leading entrepreneurs and private-sector executives.

Zain sponsored the Best Innovative Product category, which aimed to encourage stu-

dents to develop creative ideas and products with positive and sustainable impact. The category recognized projects that demonstrated a clear ability to employ innovation in addressing social, environmental, and economic challenges, in line with the company's direction to support youth-led solutions with the potential to grow and create impact.

In addition, and for the second consecutive year, Zain and INJAZ collaborated with Nestlé on the Sustainability Heroes initiative within the Company Program competition. The initiative aimed to promote sustainability among students, encourage them to adopt innovative practices and solutions that serve society and the environment, and reinforce the importance of responsible thinking in designing entrepreneurial projects from their earliest stages.

This year's student projects reflected the growing interest of the new generation in technology, innovation, and entrepreneurship, particularly in fields related to AI, sustainability, and digital transformation. This highlights the importance of providing educational and training platforms that help youth explore their capabilities, develop their skills, and turn their ideas into practical, applicable solutions.

Through its continued partnership with INJAZ Kuwait, Zain seeks to support Kuwait's educational and youth ecosystem, contribute to building a generation equipped with the tools of the future, and empower young people to lead digital transformation, participate effectively in the development of the national economy, and promote a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship.

KUFPEC net profit to dip on oil prices, oversupply

By Najeh Bilal

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 11: Kuwait Foreign Petroleum Exploration Company (KUFPEC) is expected to record a decline in net profits, falling from KD226,231,000 for the fiscal year ending December 2024 to KD107,175,000 by the end of 2025, attributed to four main factors.

First, oil prices were projected to decline in 2025 due to the global economic slowdown affecting Europe and the United States of America, coinciding with the impact of tariffs introduced by American President Donald Trump, which intensified over the past year.

Second, the oil sector was expected to face an oversupply in global markets, which will negatively affect profitability in major international oil companies, including ExxonMobil.

The net profits of France's TotalEnergies have also been reported to have declined during the same period.

Sources indicated that Chevron recorded profits of \$12.48 billion last year, compared to around \$17.75 billion in 2024.

The third factor behind the decline in KUFPEC's profits relates to new acquisitions completed during the third and fourth quarters of last year, while the fourth factor is linked to maintenance activities undertaken by the company, including maintenance work on projects in Yemen, particularly in the 'Jannah 5' area of the Sab'atayn Basin (Block 18).

Sources attributed KUFPEC's record net profit in 2022, which reached about KD308 million, to the sharp rise in global oil and gas prices following the post-COVID-19 economic recovery.

Confirming what was reported by the newspaper on May 8, 2026 about the divestment of unprofitable assets and pursuit of value-enhancing acquisitions, the company stated in its 2026 annual report that it will continue implementing its portfolio rationalization strategy, while advancing divestment discussions and improving asset performance in line with its value creation objectives.

The report cited the divestment of Block 536 WA in Western Australia as an example of ongoing efforts to optimize the company's portfolio and strengthen capital discipline.

According to its forward-looking strategy, KUFPEC will continue focusing on strategic acquisitions, disciplined portfolio management, and strengthening partnerships aimed at enhancing resilience, competitiveness, and long-term growth.

The company revealed that it acquired a new exploration block offshore Suriname, on the northern coast of South America, in December 2025. This acquisition marks a significant milestone for KUFPEC, providing a strategic entry into a new market and expanding its international exploration footprint.

In Egypt, following the signing of a new concession agreement for the Geisum and West Telem project in the Gulf of Suez, Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) played a major role in extending the field's license for an additional 20 years. This extension ensures continuous production and adds new reserves, thereby, increasing the field's overall value and long-term development potential.

KPC's average production share was expected to reach 5,612 barrels of oil equivalent per day in 2025, compared with 4,011 barrels of oil equivalent per day in 2024.

Among KPC's gas assets in Pakistan, the Kadanwari gas field in northeastern Sindh province recorded remarkable progress in its development drilling program (44-K). This includes maintenance of development facilities, linking well 44-K to the well intervention system without the use of drilling rigs, maintenance of surface facilities, roadworks, infrastructure upkeep, and other construction activities, all contributing to increased operational capacity.

At the Zamzama onshore gas field in the Sindh region of Pakistan, the 2025 work program included perforation operations on wells Zam 2 and Zam 7, pressure adjustment activities at processing facilities, road rehabilitation, and maintenance of residential infrastructure.

Supporting youth as they begin their summer semester in person

Gulf Bank welcomes GUST students back to campus



Group photo of the Gulf Bank team.



High student turnout at Gulf Bank's booth.

KUWAIT CITY, June 11: Gulf Bank welcomed students of Gulf University for Science and Technology (GUST) as they returned to campus for in-person classes at the start of the summer semester.

The Bank's team was present on campus through an interactive booth, engaging with students and introducing them to banking solutions designed around their needs, including the red youth account and the red Plus prepaid card. The visit created an opportunity to connect directly with students, answer their questions, and highlight the importance of building financial awareness at an early stage.

Gulf Bank's presence at GUST reflects its continued commitment to supporting young people beyond traditional banking. Through its youth-focused initiatives, the Bank aims to be closer to students in the spaces where they learn, grow, and

prepare for their future.

Supporting youth remains a key pillar of Gulf Bank's strategy. The Bank continues to strengthen its partnerships with educational institutions, with the aim of empowering students, enhancing their financial literacy, and helping them develop the confidence to make informed financial decisions as they begin shaping their academic and professional paths.

During the visit, students showed strong interest in learning more about the red account and red Plus prepaid card, which were designed specifically for students and young people. These solutions help students manage their daily spending, track expenses, set budgets, and

gain practical experience in using banking tools responsibly.

The red account offers young customers a simple and accessible way to begin their banking journey, with no minimum balance required to open the account. It also brings together a range of benefits that match students' lifestyles, including rewards, selected offers, and access to experiences that go beyond everyday banking.

Upon transferring their student allowance and activating the red Plus prepaid card, customers receive 5,000 welcome points through the "Gulf Points" program. These points can be redeemed for cashback or used for purchases through the Bank's onlien store.

Students can also benefit from vouchers at popular restaurants, cafés, and clothing stores, KD 50 worth of Oula fuel, and a daily 50% discount on cinema tickets from Cinescape and VOX Cinemas.

As part of its participation, Gulf Bank also supported the "Let's Be Aware" campaign, encouraging students to strengthen their understanding of banking rights and responsibilities, safe banking practices, and ways to protect themselves from financial fraud.

Gulf Bank's engagement with GUST students comes as part of its wider approach to building meaningful and long-term relationships with young people. By meeting students in their academic environment and listening to their needs, the Bank continues to reinforce its role as a partner in their educational, personal, and professional journey.

■ red Plus prepaid card offers students a wide range of benefits and discounts that suit their lifestyle

HSBC's GCC Exchanges Conference brings together its largest ever audience as investors seek clarity amid volatility

Global investors meet to discuss Kuwait long term prospects at HSBC Conference

KUWAIT CITY, June 11: As ongoing volatility and regional tensions continue to disrupt global markets, the HSBC GCC Exchanges Conference in London this week brought together more than 300 institutional investors, over 100 Middle East corporates and all seven stock exchanges from the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), in more than 3,000 meetings, marking the largest convening in its five-year history.

Opened by Georges Elhedery, Group CEO, HSBC Group PLC, discussions centred on the resilience, agility and adaptability of the GCC's economies, and the sectoral and asset diversification opportunities open to global investors seeking long-term exposure to the region.

Ahmed Almurad, Chief Executive Officer, Kuwait, HSBC Bank Middle East Limited, said: "Kuwait's underlying fundamentals, low debt, substantial sovereign resources and clear focus on strategic infrastructure projects provide confidence in the long-term outlook. Many of these investments are being delivered through the PPP framework, creating opportunities for both public and private capital. The regions' swift



Ahmed Almurad

and measured response underscores its resilience, while initiatives such as Boursa Kuwait's listing of ETFs and fixed-income instruments such as bonds and sukuk will help deepen capital markets and support future growth."

Speaking at the conference, Noura Al Abdulkareem, Head of Markets Sector, Boursa Kuwait, said: "Our participation in investment conferences, corporate



Record turnout at HSBC GCC Exchanges Conference in London.

days and roadshows reflects Boursa Kuwait's commitment to its pivotal role in showcasing the market's attractiveness on the global investment map."

She added, "These events serve as a strategic platform to highlight the competitive strengths of the Kuwaiti capital market and reinforce its position as a regional financial center distinguished by transparency and efficiency. They

also provide an important opportunity to exchange expertise and adopt global best practices, strengthening investor confidence and supporting our aspirations to develop a sustainable market that keeps pace with global economic transformations."

Al-Abdulkareem added that Boursa Kuwait's participation in the HSBC GCC Exchanges Conference comes at

an important stage, as GCC capital markets continue to attract growing interest from international investors, driven by the resilience of the region's economies and the expansion of investment opportunities.

The exchange continues to support listed companies in building direct and effective dialogue with global investment institutions, enhancing transpar-

ency, supporting institutional investment flows and reinforcing the Kuwaiti capital market's position as a promising investment destination in the region.

Conversations at the conference reflected how businesses and policymakers are responding at pace to build greater flexibility into supply chains, funding structures and market access, including a focus on technology and digital infrastructure.

HSBC has been a longstanding partner to Kuwait's economic development and the evolution of its financial markets. Most recently, HSBC supported the State of Kuwait's return to the international debt capital markets after eight years through its sovereign Bond issuance, helping connect the Government with a broad global investor base and reinforcing Kuwait's access to international funding markets.

As the number 1 custodian of international investment flows in Kuwait, and with deep connectivity to Kuwait's financial ecosystem and market infrastructure, HSBC helps connect local issuers and investors with international capital markets.

As part of its ongoing support for the 'Let's Be Aware' banking awareness campaign

National Bank of Kuwait warns against fake travel & booking websites as the holiday season approaches

KUWAIT CITY, June 11: With higher travel rates during the summer season, National Bank of Kuwait warns its customers and the public against scams associated with fake travel and online booking sites, as part of its ongoing support for the banking awareness campaign "Let's Be Aware," launched by the Central Bank of Kuwait in collaboration with Kuwaiti banks and the Kuwait Banking Association to spread financial literacy in society and enhance customer awareness from various segments.



NBK Headquarters.

This warning comes amid growing digital fraud targeting online users, especially during peak travel booking periods, where scammers exploit customers' eagerness and desire to take advantage of quick promotional offers by creating fake websites that closely mimic the websites of airlines, hotels, and global booking platforms, making it difficult for users to distinguish them from the original sites.

These sites are often promoted through attractive advertisements on social media or misleading emails that include offers at exaggeratedly low prices, with the aim of tempting victims and pushing them to complete bookings without sufficiently verifying the credibility of the service provider.

NBK noted that fraud begins when a user enters these websites and completes a payment process after being asked to enter card details or personal information. In some cases, the victim receives a seemingly official booking confirmation message, only to later discover that no actual booking exists, or that their financial data has been misused for unauthorized purposes.

Moreover, the Bank emphasized the importance of verifying the credibility of websites before making any bookings or payments, pointing out that several indicators can suggest a website is untrustworthy, such as spelling errors in the website address, the use of domains similar to real

- NBK urges consumers to verify the credibility of websites before making any bookings or payments.
- Tempting offers on social media are among the most prominent signs of fraud.
- NBK's efforts to combat fraud and raise customer awareness are a fundamental and deeply rooted pillar of its strategy.

websites, the absence of the secure protocol (https), or the presence of incomplete pages and broken links within the site.



Additionally, NBK indicated that enticing offers are among the most prominent signs of fraud, as scammers exploit users' desire for low prices to persuade them to complete bookings quickly without verification, thus increasing the likelihood of falling victim to fraud.

In this light, the Bank urged customers to follow several preventative guidelines, most importantly making bookings only through official websites or well-known platforms, avoiding clicking on links from untrusted sources, using credit cards which offer better protection against fraud, and avoiding unsafe payment methods such as direct money transfers, cryptocurrencies, or gift cards.

Finally, NBK stressed that public awareness is the first line of defense against cybercrime, calling for the importance of not sharing personal or banking information with any untrusted entity and immediately contacting the Bank in case of any suspicious activity to take the necessary protective measures.

NBK's efforts to combat fraud and raise customer awareness are a fundamental and deeply rooted pillar of its strategy. The bank consistently publishes awareness materials across all its digital channels and social media platforms, which enjoy the largest following among Kuwaiti banks, and it utilizes its extensive resources to promote financial literacy among the widest possible segment of the public.

It is worth noting that NBK is a supporter and key partner of all the campaigns and initiatives of CBK that aim to raise the level of financial awareness and spread banking awareness in society. As the largest financial institution in Kuwait and the region, NBK has consistently organized various events that contribute to raising community awareness within the banking sector. It also organizes many training courses for its employees to enhance their expertise in combating fraud and financial crimes.

Major economies grapple with supply shock as central banks turn hawkish

By National Bank of Kuwait

The Middle East conflict has dragged on beyond initial expectations, with the blockage of the Strait of Hormuz raising inflation and pressuring economic growth globally. Pressures on supply chains have increased to the highest level since the post-pandemic surge and global food prices climbed to the highest in more than three years. Latest global PMI surveys indicate significant price pressures are in the pipeline as government bond yields are up sharply since the onset of the military conflict at the end of February, driven not only by the worsening inflation outlook, but also by fiscal pressures. And while the draw-down of global oil inventories has softened the oil price spike, these inventories are reaching critical levels. This risks a much higher increase in oil prices if the Strait of Hormuz remains blocked. Obviously, this supply-side energy price shock has greatly complicated monetary policy for all central banks. The monetary easing bias that had generally prevailed pre-war has turned into a hiking bias. New Fed Chair Warsh, who came with a mandate to cut rates, is in a very difficult situation, the ECB/BoJ are set to hike rates soon and the BoE in the second half of the year.

US: Worsening inflation and improving labor market complicating new Fed Chair Warsh's easing plans

The US economy remains resilient, absorbing shocks from last year's tariff drama and the current energy price spike, supported by robust household spending and an ongoing AI-related investment boom. Moreover, the job market has been improving with average job growth of 114K per month YTD through May versus a monthly average of only 10K in 2025, along with an unemployment rate (4.3%) that is close to "full employment". Despite the weaker-than-expected Q1 GDP growth of 1.6% (annualized), underlying growth was more robust as the key measure of "final sales to private domestic purchasers" rose by 2.4%. The strong momentum is ongoing with retail sales up 0.5% m/m in April and other high-frequency measures pointing to solid growth in May, supported by larger-than-usual tax refunds and a powerful wealth effect given record-high stock markets that is being driven by very strong corporate earnings. Consensus estimates largely indicate solid growth in Q2 with, for example, the Atlanta Fed GDPNow model at +3.0%.

Meanwhile, inflation, which was still problematic even before the current energy shock, surged. Core PCE inflation (3.3% y/y in April) jumped to the highest level since late 2023 (a level not seen since 1992 outside the post-pandemic 2021-2023 surge), with the headline rate also hitting a three-year high (3.8%). Inflation looks set to stay well above the Fed's 2% target in 2026, and for the sixth consecutive year. This backdrop of worsening inflation and improving labor market will make the job of new Fed Chair Warsh challenging, precisely because he is coming with a pre-set mandate to cut interest rates. This is not the view shared by most FOMC members. Keeping or removing the easing bias from the policy statement at the upcoming June FOMC meeting may be the first real test for Warsh at the Fed. The futures market currently indicates around 75% probability for a 25bps interest rate hike by end-2026.

Eurozone: Accelerating inflation as the ECB set to hike rates this week for the first time since 2023

The Eurozone's economic outlook is being shaped

by the rising energy-driven inflation and the policy response. GDP fell by 0.2% q/q but driven by a sharp contraction (12%) in Ireland's volatile GDP, with growth excluding Ireland slightly positive following +0.2% in Q4. The key shift has been on inflation, with headline CPI accelerating to 3.2% y/y in May (from just 1.9% in February), largely reflecting higher energy costs. Looking ahead, while the trajectory of inflation will continue to depend heavily on energy markets, it is likely that the ECB will further increase its base-line inflation projection from the current peak forecast of 3.2% y/y in Q2 given the ongoing disruption in the Strait of Hormuz. Against this backdrop and given the ECB's sole mandate of maintaining price stability, the bank is near certain to hike rates by 25bps in its upcoming meeting later this week, while maintaining a flexible stance in future meetings depending on the inflation outlook. Overall, the Eurozone faces a challenging near-term mix of subdued growth, resurgent inflation, and tightening financial conditions. As for the long-delayed adoption of the US-EU trade deal,

this seems finally to be approaching the end-game with ratification expected by the EU before the Trump-imposed deadline of 4 July.

UK: Pre-war momentum crippled as business activity tumbled; BoE seen hiking one or two times in 2026

The UK economy grew by 0.6% q/q in Q1, up from 0.2% in Q4. However, that pre-Middle East war momentum is stalling as May's composite PMI (49.7) was the lowest in 13 months. Furthermore, April's retail sales (volumes) declined by 1.3% m/m, the sharpest fall since May 2025. The IMF is now projecting relatively muted GDP growth of 1% in 2026, down from 1.4% in 2025. The employment scene remains poor, with a cumulative fall of 144K jobs since February and the unemployment rate staying elevated (5%). With yields on long-duration gilts close to decades-high, any support from fiscal policy remains challenged. Meanwhile, PM Starmer's premiership has become more unstable after Labor's poor showing in council elections, weighing on business confidence.

growth turning negative in April. Moreover, new house prices remained on a downtrend, falling by 3.5% y/y in April, a 34th consecutive month of decline, weighing on sentiment with spillovers on domestic demand. However, exports remain a bright spot, rising 14% y/y in April, following a strong Q1 as well, and reflecting the divergence between solid external demand and the weak domestic one. Meanwhile, monetary policy remains cautious, with the PBoC keeping benchmark lending rates unchanged over the past year. The recent Trump-Xi summit has stabilized near-term trade tensions as the two countries agreed to a constructive "strategic stability" to govern their relationship, though structural frictions remain. Energy market disruptions remain a key risk (PPI inflation jumped to a 45-month high of 2.8% y/y in April), despite ample oil inventories providing a partial buffer. Overall, 2026 GDP growth seems unlikely to deviate much (if at all) from the 4.5-5% official growth target with the hope that external demand will continue to offset the persistent domestic weakness.

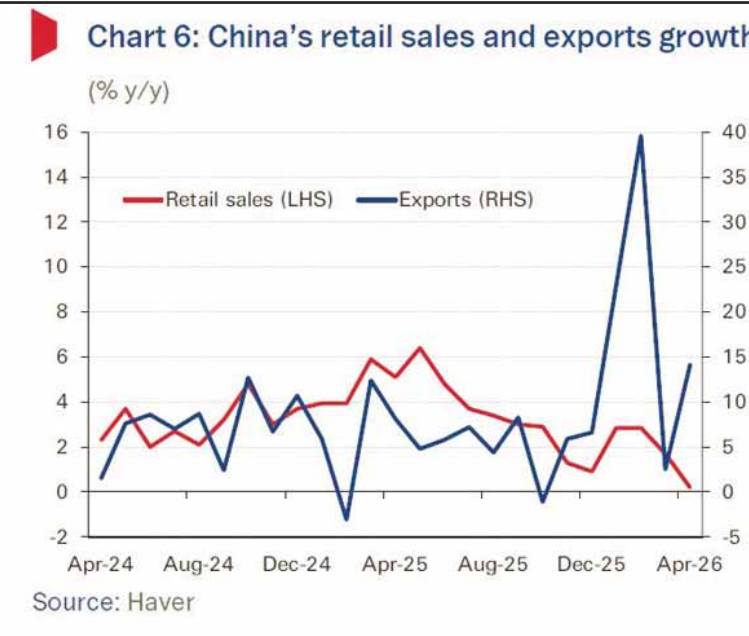
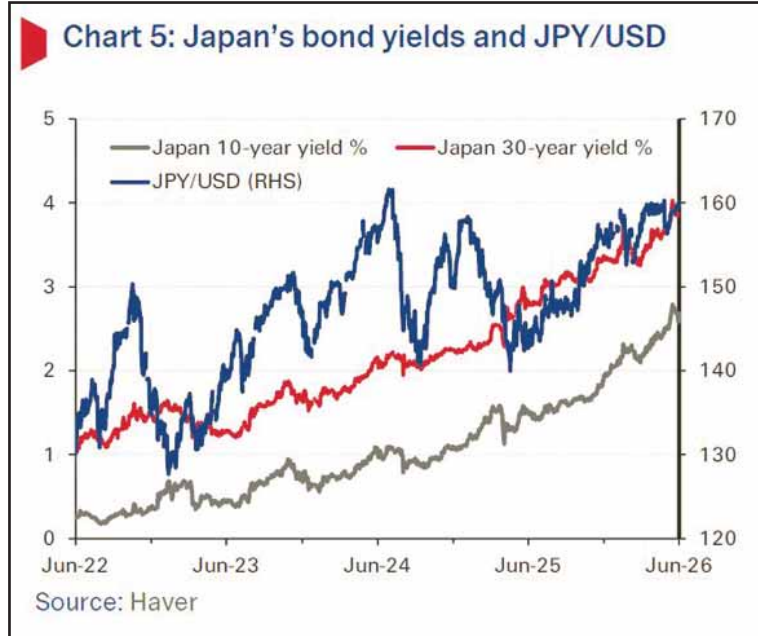
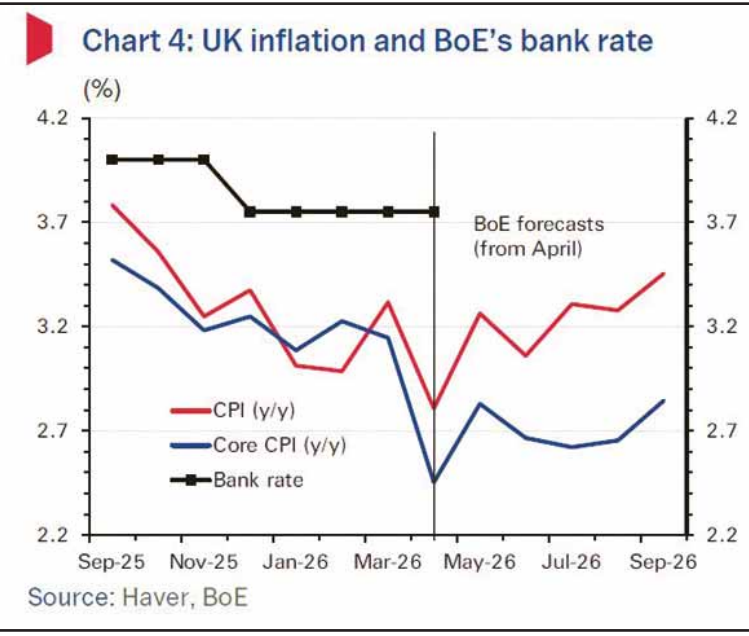
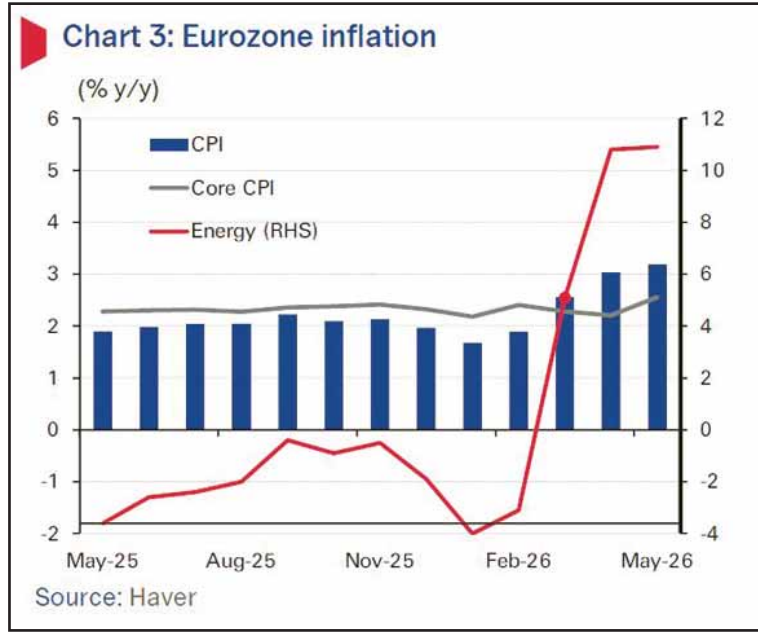
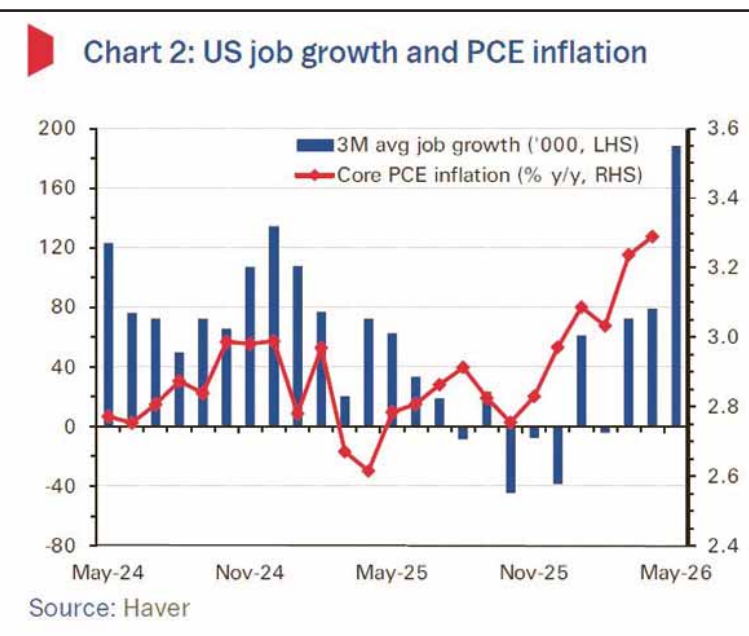
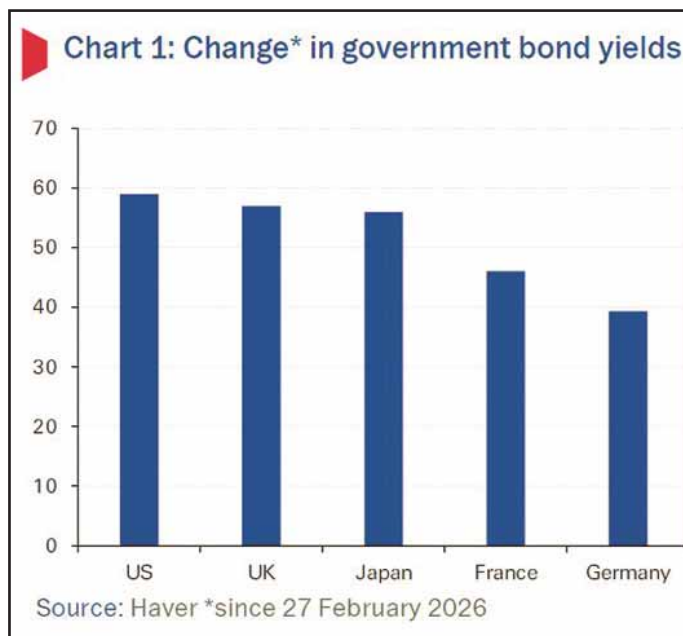
Inflationary pressures are rising even though government price freezes and other data distortions helped CPI inflation ease to 2.8% y/y in April from 3.3% in March. Once those effects fade and given the current high energy prices, inflation will likely rebound and the BoE expects inflation to hit 3.5% by September. Given the inflation outlook, current market pricing indicates one to two 25bps BoE rate hikes by end-2026, after rate cuts were expected before the war.

Japan: BoJ rate hike expected in June or July as long-term bond yields touch multi-decade highs

Japan's economic growth beat expectations in Q1 at 0.5% q/q, helped by solid export growth (+10% y/y). Trade dynamics remained supportive in April with exports rising 15% y/y with also imports growing fast despite a steep fall in shipments from the Middle East, given the situation in the Strait of Hormuz. Japan is heavily reliant on Middle Eastern energy, with around 90% of the country's oil supply coming from the region. The BoJ, in its April meeting, slashed its FY2026 (ending March 2027) growth forecast to 0.5% y/y (from 1%) and raised its core inflation forecast to 2.8% y/y (from 1.9%). The expected pickup in inflation has raised prospects of a BoJ rate hike, with the market pricing in a 25bp hike in the June or July meeting. And while PPI inflation rose to a three-year high of 4.9% y/y in April (from just 2.1% in February), core CPI remained tame (1.4% in April) helped by government subsidies. The government has unveiled an extra budget of JPY 3.1 trillion (\$19.4 billion) to fund household subsidies, putting further pressure on JGBs with long-term yields touching multi-decade highs. The yen, despite the recent interventions by the authorities, remains under pressure against a backdrop of still-low interest rates versus peers and a rising energy import bill, and is more than 2% weaker than a recent peak seen in early May.

China: External demand offsets weak domestic environment as Trump-Xi agree on "strategic stability"

Economic growth in China likely softened recently after a solid Q1 (+5% y/y). Specifically, April's macroeconomic data came much weaker than expected, with growth in retail sales (+0.2% y/y) and industrial production (+4.1%) the lowest in several years. Fixed asset investment also disappointed, with



Ongoing support for Diraya campaign

KFH urges vigilance against fraudulent online links

KUWAIT CITY, June 11: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) warns customers to remain cautious when dealing with fraudulent online links, reaffirming its commitment to customer protection and secure banking practices. This warning comes as part of KFH's ongoing support for the Diraya campaign, launched in collaboration with the Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) and the Kuwait Banking Association (KBA) to promote banking awareness.

In a press release, KFH stated that the new form

of online scam involves sending a message with a suspicious link tricking victims to click the link to visit a particular website or participate in a survey. Once they click the link, their devices will be hacked, enabling the hacker to access and exploit their personal data for harmful purposes.

KFH urged customers to stay vigilant and refrain from disclosing their personal information to requests received through e-mails, text messages, or phone calls, as they are attempts to obtain customers' banking information to steal their funds or

data.

KFH advised customers to be careful when receiving links as these links could lead to theft of sensitive banking information. The bank also recommended that customers protect their bank accounts by avoiding the storage of confidential information, such as card numbers or passwords, on their mobile phones. Additionally, customers were urged not to share their OTP with anyone and to log out of the bank's application or website promptly after finishing a transaction.



World Bank cuts global growth forecast amid Iran war fallout

Hormuz closure drives oil prices higher

WASHINGTON, June 11, (AP): The economic fallout from the Iran war - higher energy prices and increased uncertainty - will drag down global growth this year, the World Bank said Thursday.

The 189-country anti-poverty agency expects the world economy to grow just 2.5% this year, its weakest performance since the COVID-19 pandemic upended global commerce six years ago.

The bank downgraded its forecast for growth in two-thirds of the world's countries.

But the United States, which started the war by joining Israel to attack Iran on Feb. 28, is being spared a downgrade. The World Bank still expects the world's biggest economy to grow 2.2% this year, unchanged from a January forecast and up a tick from 2.1%

in 2025.

As a major energy producer, the world's biggest economy is more resilient than countries that import their oil and natural gas, and the U.S. economy is benefiting from big tax cuts and booming investment in artificial intelligence. But ordinary Americans are still frustrated by higher gasoline and other prices.

Other economies are getting hit harder. The World Bank is slashing its 2026 growth forecast for developing and emerging market countries by 0.4 percentage points to a post-pandemic low of 3.6%. In those countries, the bank said, "the disruption in energy supplies and sharp increase in energy prices caused by the conflict have dampened confidence and weakened broader economic activity."

China, the world's No. 2 economy, is expected to register economic growth of 4.2% this year, down from 5% in 2025 and from

the 4.4% the bank had forecast for this year back in January. India is once again expected to be the world's fastest-growing major economy, expanding 6.6% this year; but that's down sharply from 7.7% in 2025.

The 21 European countries that share the euro currency are collectively expected to eke out 0.8% growth this year, down from 1.4% in 2025.

Iran responded to U.S. and Israeli attacks by closing down the Strait of Hormuz, through a fifth of the world's oil and natural gas passes. Energy prices rocketed. The World Bank expects the price of the benchmark Brent crude oil to average \$94 a barrel this year, up 36% from 2025 and 50% more than the bank had forecast in January.

The war has also disrupted trade in fertilizer, much of which is exported through the Arabian Gulf. That could lead to food shortages as farmers skimp on fertilizer to avoid higher costs.

Lebanese exporters gain relief

Saudi Arabia lifts five-year ban on Lebanese imports

BEIRUT, June 11, (AP): Saudi Arabia announced Wednesday the end of a ban it imposed on Lebanese imports five years ago, marking a major step in attempts to rebuild relations between Lebanon and Gulf countries.

The kingdom slapped a ban on Lebanese fruits and vegetables in 2021, saying they were being used to smuggle drugs. In one notable case, Saudi Arabia announced it had seized over 5 million pills of the amphetamine drug Captagon hidden in a shipment of pomegranates coming from Lebanon.

Months later, the wealthy Gulf country extended the ban to all Lebanese products after Lebanon's information minister at the time, George Kordahi, publicly criticized Saudi Arabia's war against Iran-backed rebels in Yemen.

At the root of the diplomatic crisis was Saudi Arabia's regional rivalry with Iran and its displeasure with the influence of the Iran-backed militant group Hezbollah in Lebanon. The ban came at a time when Lebanon's economy was already reeling from a major financial crisis and the collapse of its currency.

Saudi Arabia's Foreign Ministry said in a statement Wednesday that the reversal of the

ban at the order of Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman came as a result of "positive steps taken by the Lebanese state."

It did not specify what those steps were, but over the past year, the Lebanese government has announced plans to disarm all non-state groups, including Hezbollah. Before the outbreak of the latest Israel-Hezbollah war, the Lebanese army had made progress on implementing the plan in southern Lebanon.

Lebanese President Joseph Aoun in a statement thanked Prince Mohammed for the decision, which he said "will contribute tangibly to reviving the national economy and providing support to broad segments of Lebanese producers and exporters."

The current government of Lebanon, which came to power last year with promises of reform, has sought to rebuild ties with the Gulf countries. Before the outbreak of the latest war, Lebanese officials were courting Gulf tourists to return to the country in hopes of reviving the economy, and some Gulf countries had lifted travel bans preventing their citizens from visiting Lebanon.

Visa plugs its payment network into ChatGPT

SAN FRANCISCO, June 11, (AP): Betting that people will soon grow more comfortable having artificial intelligence agents shop for groceries, plane tickets or diapers on their behalf, payments giant Visa said Wednesday that it has embedded its payment network inside of ChatGPT, empowering the chatbot to independently shop and complete transactions.

It means AI agents can not only recommend products but complete the purchase on the user's behalf at potentially any merchant that accepts Visa. The payment network's previous attempts at this technological leap were confined to a single retailer or a small set of enrolled merchants.

It is not OpenAI's first attempt at e-commerce. The company late last year announced Instant Checkout, which allowed ChatGPT to scour the internet for a specific item like a digital personal shopper. But the process was prone to errors and was not widely adopted by merchants due to the fee that OpenAI was charging merchants. The company retired Instant Checkout in March.

Visa's collaboration is different from OpenAI's previous attempts, as it will allow users to link their Visa cards to ChatGPT to shop and make it easier for merchants to accept transactions initiated by agents.

OpenAI will provide the technology to allow agents to interact, make decisions and initiate purchases through ChatGPT. Visa, the world's largest payment network outside of China, will provide the payment authorization and fraud monitoring needed to do this at scale.

"As AI agents become active participants in the economy, Visa's focus is to ensure transactions are trusted, secure and seamless," said Jack Forestell, chief product and strategy officer at Visa.

Speaking at a company event Wednesday in San Francisco, Forestell gave an example of a customer telling ChatGPT they're looking for a pair of wireless headphones under \$150. The chatbot would find a pair for sale under those parameters and buy it on behalf of the customer.

"I think we're generally at a place where most people are very comfortable with the shopping aspects of it and have discovered this as a superior discovery experience," Forestell said in an interview. But, he added, making the leap from having AI agents recommend what to buy to doing the purchasing "just requires a whole different level of trust."

"But that all comes from the underlying infrastructure, the process, the security that we build into it and the rules," he said.

Visa and OpenAI did not disclose the financial terms of the collaboration and did not give details on the fees merchants or

customers would have to pay.

Instant Checkout charged merchants 4% of the transaction's value, which merchants saw as being too expensive.

Allowing AI agents to buy products on behalf of a consumer raises concerns for both banks and retailers. A customer could overspend, or the agent buys the wrong item, or the customer claims they did not authorize that transaction. Banks have been concerned about potential fraud claims that could occur when an agent uses a bank customer's credit or debit card.

Visa says the feature will have guardrails like spending limits, required approval steps and approved merchants for shopping in order to protect consumers and minimize fraud.

Forestell said Visa will handle disputes with the same essential rules it uses for any other transaction: Did the consumer really intend to make the purchase and did the merchant process it the correct way? Where it might change, he added, is if both the consumer intent and the merchant processing were done the right way, but "something happened in the middle that caused a problem."

"And that's why we're modifying our whole token framework and data capture process with Visa Intelligent Commerce to make sure that problem doesn't happen," Forestell said.

Retailers have introduced shopping assistants powered by AI that can recommend products and personalize the customer's shopping experience, with the earliest iterations of those experiments being Amazon's Alexa. But Alexa could only shop on Amazon, and OpenAI's Instant Checkout feature was limited to select merchants.

Visa's biggest competitor, Mastercard, has also been introducing its own AI-shopping features to its payment network on a smaller scale.

Mastercard announced that AI agents will have the capability to procure services on behalf of a business. For example, a coffee shop wants to start an advertising campaign as part of a launch, so it gives an AI agent the authorization to purchase services from web and ad providers in order for the coffee shop to build out its campaign.

It will take time for people to fully trust AI agents to do their shopping, Forestell acknowledged. At first, Visa expects the majority of transactions to still loop in humans, with AI agents sending a notification for consumers to approve the actual purchase.

"Now, imagine you do that a thousand times over the course of some period of time," he said. "And then your agent says, 'Do you want me to just not check?'"

Oil-fueled inflation forces ECB policy shift

ECB raises interest rates as Iran war fuels inflation

FRANKFURT, June 11, (AP): The European Central Bank on Thursday became the first major central bank to raise interest rates in response to the Iran war as policymakers around the world including new U.S. Federal Reserve Chair Kevin Warsh wrestle with how to confront the inflation fed by sharply higher oil prices.

The ECB's rate-setting council raised its benchmark rate to 2.25% from 2%, where it had been for a year. The move comes ahead of rate-setting meetings next week at the Fed, the Bank of Japan, and the Bank of England.

Oil prices have risen sharply due to Iran choking off the flow of crude oil through the Strait of Hormuz, the sea passage for a fifth of the world's oil and fuel products during normal times. Raising rates aims to dampen the consumer price inflation fed by higher costs for products made from crude such as gasoline, diesel fuel, cooking gas and heating oil.

International benchmark Brent crude was trading at around \$93 per barrel on Thursday, up from around \$73 on the eve of the war. That has helped push inflation to 3.2% in May in the 21 countries that use the euro currency, above the ECB's target of 2%.

But ECB policymakers must also consider the impact of higher borrowing costs on an economy showing only mediocre growth. That has led analysts to think Thursday's hike will be a one and done affair, aimed mainly at signaling to financial markets that the bank

is determined not to get behind the curve if inflation spirals higher.

The bank's future decisions depend to a great extent on how long energy prices remain elevated and how high they go, ECB President Christine Lagarde said at a post-decision news conference. She said the bank was "well positioned to navigate the uncertainty caused by the war" and would "closely monitor the situation and follow a data-dependent and meeting-by-meeting approach." She said the bank was "not pre-committing to a particular rate path."

She said oil prices were expected to "lift inflation further over the summer" and that inflation was expected to remain "well above target" into the first half of next year. The Strait of Hormuz has been closed to most ship traffic for 103 days now.

Central banks in Australia and the Philippines have raised rates since the start of the war, and attention is focusing now on decisions in larger economies. For its part, the U.S. Federal Reserve is expected to keep its key interest rate unchanged when it meets next week with new chair Warsh, appointed earlier this year by President Donald Trump.

Warsh advocated for rate cuts last year and Trump repeatedly attacked Warsh's predecessor, Jerome Powell, for not cutting borrowing costs deeply enough. Yet with inflation jumping to a three-year high as gas prices have spiked in the wake of the Iran

war, even Trump and his officials have started to shift their focus more to a push to keep rates unchanged.

The Fed is likely to change the statement it issues after each meeting by removing language that had suggested that its next move would be a cut. That would open the door for a rate hike down the road. Many Fed officials have warned that if inflation doesn't begin to cool soon, a rate hike may be necessary by the end of the year.

Raising benchmark rates influences what lenders charge throughout the economy, increasing the cost of borrowing money to buy things and thus dampening demand for goods. Higher central bank rates can send interest costs higher for home purchases, investment in new factories, and government borrowing.

The ECB may be able to get by with only one or two increases because the inflationary surge may be milder than feared, said Carsten Brzeski, global chief of macro at ING bank.

That is because consumers burned by the post-pandemic spike in inflation are in no mood to pay higher prices, leaving businesses little choice but to swallow higher energy costs: "The pass-through of higher energy and input prices to final consumption will be limited due to a lack of ability and willingness of consumers to actually pay for these higher prices," he wrote in an emailed comment.

US unemployment aid filings rise to 229k last week, remain historically low despite Iran war headwinds

WASHINGTON, June 11, (AP): U.S. applications for jobless aid rose modestly last week, but remain at a historically low level despite economic headwinds brought on by the Iran war.

The number of Americans filing for unemployment aid for the week ending June 6 rose by 4,000 to 229,000, the Labor Department reported Thursday. That's the most since early February, before the U.S. and Israel launched attacks on Iran, but still considered a healthy level. It's also more than the 216,000 new applications forecast by analysts surveyed by the data firm FactSet.

Weekly filings for unemployment benefits are considered a proxy for U.S. layoffs and are close to a real-time indicator of the health of the job market.

Despite concerns that the conflict in the Middle East could further squeeze a flagging labor market, hiring has picked up in recent months following a miserable 2025 that saw fewer than 200,000 job gains. For comparison, about 1.5 million jobs were added in 2024.

U.S. employers delivered a surprising 172,000 new jobs in May and the economy is averaging 188,000 job gains in the three months since the Iran war began in late Feb-

ruary. That's the best three months of hiring since early 2024. The unemployment rate remains historically low at 4.3%.

Job openings also rose in April as employers posted 7.6 million vacancies, up from 6.9 million in March and the most since May 2024.

The government reported Wednesday that rising gas prices - triggered by the closure of the Strait of Hormuz off Iran's southern border - pushed U.S. consumer inflation in May to 4.2%, its highest level in three years. Despite recent declines, prices for oil and gas remain elevated, which can squeeze consumers' budgets and make businesses think twice about hiring.

With inflation well above the Federal Reserve's 2% target, most analysts expect officials at the U.S. central bank to stand pat on its benchmark interest rate when they meet next week. That meeting will be the first with new Fed Chair Kevin Warsh, who replaces Jerome Powell after his eight-year run as the U.S. central bank's leader.

Lower interest rates can boost the economy and hiring, but also tend to stoke inflation, leading a number of Fed policymakers to say they are actually willing to consider an interest rate hike this year. That could potentially help bring inflation down, but higher

borrowing costs generally make businesses more reluctant to hire.

Optimism over artificial intelligence has also injected a degree of uncertainty about the job market due to the investment required to develop it and because the powerful technology could alter or even replace some jobs.

Among the companies that have cut jobs recently are Verizon, UPS, Amazon, Disney, Starbucks and Walmart.

Weekly jobless aid applications have stabilized in a range mostly between 200,000 and 250,000 since the U.S. economy emerged from the pandemic recession. However, hiring began slowing about two years ago and tapered further in 2025 due to President Donald Trump's tariffs, his purge of the federal workforce and the lingering effects of high interest rates meant to control inflation.

The Labor Department's report Thursday showed that the four-week moving average of jobless claims, which even out some of the weekly volatility, rose by 4,250 to 219,000.

The total number of Americans filing for unemployment benefits for the previous week ending May 30 jumped by 24,000 to 1.8 million, slightly more than analysts predicted.

Trump has a new, surprising take on the higher cost of living: 'I love the inflation'

WASHINGTON, June 11, (AP): President Donald Trump on Wednesday showed how he had learned to stop worrying about inflation and simply, in his own words, "love" it.

Asked about the new report that the consumer price index in May had jumped 4.2% over the last year, the president took a surprisingly optimistic tack with the challenging news. Trump didn't dismiss the affordability issue as a "hoax" that was being downed by Democrats, as he has done previously. Nor did he claim that he was starting by the cost of living.

Instead, after the government said that inflation spiked to the highest level since April 2023, Trump praised the numbers.

"You know what I really love?" Trump said. "I love the inflation."

It was an unexpected take given that voters ahead of the November midterm elections have ranked the economy as a top concern - and have given Trump low marks on that issue. Within minutes of his on-camera comment, Democrats quickly rushed to promote it on social media.

Trump had pledged in his 2024 campaign to quickly vanquish inflation, but his argument now is that higher prices are solely a function of the Iran war raising energy costs. On Wednesday, he claimed that relief is already on its way because of a secret military operation that had ferried what he said was 100 million barrels of oil through the Strait of Hormuz, the primary shipping

channel for 20% of the world's global oil supply that has been effectively closed by the war since late February.

"Trump really said, 'I love the inflation.' On camera. For all of America to hear," Senate Democratic Leader Chuck Schumer quickly posted on X. "His contempt for you knows no bounds."

House Democratic Leader Hakeem Jeffries said on X that with Trump's stated love of inflation, "We finally found something that Donald Trump loves as much as he loves himself."

Rep. Emilia Sykes, D-Ohio, quickly pressed Energy Secretary Chris Wright at a hearing about whether he, too, loved inflation.

Stormaganza chaos fuels punchlines at express pace

'Stop! That! Train!' runs full speed on laughs

LOS ANGELES, June 11, (AP): Presidential candidates take note: If you ever want an effectively simple campaign slogan, you could do worse than this: "SHE FUN!"

That's the slogan that got President Judy Gagwell - aka RuPaul - elected, and if it puts a smile on your face, it's a good sign that lots of other gags from "Stop! That! Train!," a delightfully absurd disaster-flick spoof with a wildly impressive joke-per-minute ratio, will be up your alley, too.

Especially when RuPaul is on the screen, in presidential pantsuits recalling Hillary Rodham Clinton or Kamala Harris. A memorable visual moment in director Adam Shankman's film is when RuPaul's president is being briefed during a White House corridor walk-and-talk a la "West Wing" and "Veep," while her chief aide (a hilariously sycophantic Matt Rogers) is also gravely piling things into her arms. He starts with briefing papers and quickly escalates to ridiculous items like a bowling pin, a board game and a stuffed animal.

Even funnier is when the president, seeing that her aide has bad news to impart, asks: "Tell it to me straight." He informs her of the catastrophic storm - the "Stormaganza!" - in the path of a runaway train full of passengers.

But most of the screen time is devoted to the train, and so we begin our tale with the real stars of this buddy film - the sweet duo of Tess and DeeDee (Ginger Minj and Jujubee, both alums of RuPaul's "Drag Race" universe).

These ladies are longtime friends, who attended train hostess academy together and had dreams of seeing the world - important things like the Grand Canyon and the Dakotas, "Fanning AND Johnson!" But they ended up stuck at a low-rent com-



Ginger Minj, left, and Jujubee appear in a scene from 'Stop! That! Train!' (AP)

pany called Stank Rail.

Well, until now. When we meet them, they've just been handed pink slips. Thinking fast, they sneak their way onto the luxury Glamazonian Express, filled with very rich people

and passengers from all walks of life, including those with complicated relationships.

The journey soon turns into an amalgam of "Airplane!" - the conductor looks a lot like Leslie

Nielsen, a star of that 1980 classic - and "Mean Girls," where the three popular hostesses are just like Regina George and her friends. Only their names are Amber, Alli and, in a wonderful spelling gag - Ayshle-

igh. Yes, Ayshleiygh.

Needless to say, they're based in first class. Tess and DeeDee take care of the coach passengers, who include a peasant woman washing clothes on a washboard. (Also a nun

- a nod to "Airplane!")

The safety announcement is, not surprisingly, a lively song-and-dance number. One memorable rhyme combines "There ain't no TSA" with "We're like if Amtrak was fabulous." You get the picture.

But what of the Stormaganza? Well, for that we're taken to Train Headquarters, where the only person who takes anything seriously is feisty Donna Dusk (Rachel Bloom), who tries to warn that the train must be stopped. For one thing, it's on track to crash in an area that contains - bear with us here - a nuclear plant, a hotel for dogs, and "the home of beloved actress Laurie Metcalf."

"Not Laurie Metcalf!" Donna's fellow worker gasps.

Meanwhile, President Gagwell needs to discover who she really is. Is she brave enough to guide the country through this crisis? And will she need to press either of the panic buttons on her Oval Office desk? One of them says "Game Over" and apparently leads to a nuclear strike.

The other says "JK LOL."

Which, in a few letters, perfectly captures "Stop! That! Train!," a movie so chock full of gags - the screenplay is by Connor Wright and Christina Friel - that the blooper reel at the end feels slow.

But we told you this was a buddy film. There's usually a moment in buddy films where the friends separate for some reason. And when Tess and DeeDee do, the film becomes something of a dark, somber Ingmar Bergman movie.

Of course it doesn't. The gags never stop. Not every one of them soars, but enough do that you'll likely just be giggling for 90 minutes.

As the president might say, "They fun!"

Soundtrack of the beautiful game

Shakira and fellow stars reveal the secrets of memorable WC anthem

NEW YORK, June 11, (AP): What makes a memorable World Cup anthem? Is it a song that best reflects the host countries? Is it a global banger, incorporating multiple languages and genres? Or should it simply value a chant-along chorus above all?

There's an argument to make for each - or perhaps all. To get to the bottom of it ahead of the 2026 FIFA World Cup, The Associated Press asked a few of the performers behind World Cup songs past and present. It's a list that includes Shakira - who, alongside Afrobeats star Burna Boy, is responsible for the official 2026 FIFA World Cup anthem, "Dai Dai" - as well as Colombian singer J Balvin, Wyclef Jean and newcomer Nora Fatehi.

Before "Dai Dai," the Colombian superstar co-wrote and performed "Waka Waka (This Time for Africa)" featuring Freshlyground, the official anthem of the 2010 FIFA World Cup held in South Africa.

"Fútbol is a thing that unites so many cultures and people of different walks of life," she told the AP. "The big responsibility of making a World Cup song is that you've got to make a song that represents people's feelings, emotions, and passion."

"So you've got to write that song, in a way, understanding that it has to be global. It has to encompass so many cultures and represent so many in one tune," Shakira continued. "That, in a way, has helped me craft those songs in the past."

But beyond those conceptual ideas, Shakira has some specific sonic suggestions as well.

"I feel like a good World Cup song needs to definitely have rhythm. It has to be rhythmic. It has to make people want to dance. And it has to be an anthem as well. It has to make people want to sing along in unison, sing out loud at the top of their lungs. It also has that kind of energy," she says. "That's a must."

Colombian singer J Balvin is one-fourth of Coca-Cola's official song for the FIFA World Cup 2026, a reimagining of Van Halen's "Jump" that also features drummer Travis Barker, pop/R&B singer Amber Mark and guitarist Steve Vai. He says any song - not just a World Cup anthem - must engage listeners right off the bat.

"Nowadays, with the music and every type of music - it doesn't matter if it's the World Cup, if it is a reggaeton or hip-hop (song) - you know, people's attention (span) is only like five seconds. And that's the reality. I'm not judging - you've just got to do it with all the love," he says.

But a World Cup anthem specifically? That should match the intensity of a soccer game. "Fút-



Shakira performs during the Global Citizen Festival in New York on Sept. 27, 2025. (AP)

bol brings us together, with all different highs and lows," he says. "All these different emotions happen in one game." The song should have the same energy.

The Canadian Moroccan singer-songwriter Nora Fatehi is featured on the official 2026 FIFA World Cup album with "Siir, Siir," a collaboration with French artist VegeDream and Bangladeshi American DJ Sanjoy.

"It needs a great beat because we're here to dance and we need to celebrate," she says of a World Cup anthem.

But beyond that, Fatehi, who is best known for work in Bollywood films, says that when you hear it, "You feel like you're winning, or you're gonna win, or you won. That's the emotion it needs to evoke."

For "Siir, Siir," she says, "what we were after was finding an emotion. So, the minute you hear that song, it should make you feel like you've conquered the world. It should make you feel motivated. It should be aspirational. That's what it should feel like."

Wyclef Jean, the Fugees multi-hyphenate, co-wrote and performed "Dar um Jeito (We Will Find a Way)" for the 2014 FIFA World Cup held in Brazil, with guitar guru Santana, the late EDM

icon Avicii and Brazil's beloved singer-songwriter Alexandre Pires.

"The topline? It has to electrify the stadium," Jean says. "You literally have to feel the entire stadium shaking." If you don't - the anthem won't fly. "I don't know any World Cup song that don't have amazing rhythm and amazing movement," he says.

Though many nations are represented in the identity of his song's performers - Brazil, Sweden, Haiti, Mexico and the U.S. - Jean says he doesn't "think like necessarily you need to have five different artists to make a global anthem."

"Whether they come from the Middle East, Africa, Europe, America, any part of the world, the Caribbean - people gravitate towards culture," he says. "And what I love best about World Cup is that before it has a language, it has an energy and a vibe. It has absolutely nothing to do with a language."

A good hook, a strong melody that anyone can sing along to - that's what's key.

But "Dar um Jeito" has a strong message of unity, adding to its anthemic quality. "Resilience is a very important word," he says of the song's message. Jean says it was written for "boys and girls all over the world," particularly those in rural areas.

Showrunner departs series

Doctor Who future unclear as BBC scraps Christmas special

LONDON, June 11, (AP): The galaxy-hopping hero of "Doctor Who" has survived many narrow escapes and reinventions over more than six decades.

But is time finally up for the BBC science fiction series that has regenerated into a new body when the old one wears out, so the show can outlive any individual star.

More than a dozen actors have played the role, most recently Ncuti Gatwa.

Davies had been due to write the Christmas episode, announced when the last season ended in May 2025.

The BBC said Wednesday that it, Davies and production company Bad Wolf "have collectively decided not to go ahead" with the Christmas episode. The broadcaster said it was determined "to push forward to invest in the long-term future of the show."

It said it would put out a tender for production companies to work on the series. A deal between the BBC and Disney+ to co-produce and distribute the show ended in 2025 after two seasons.

First broadcast in 1963, "Doctor Who" follows the adventures of a Time Lord from the planet Gal-

lifrey who travels in the Tardis, a time-and-space machine that from the outside resembles a mid-20th century British police telephone box.

Its longevity is due in part to its premise: the central character can regenerate into a new body when the old one wears out, so the show can outlive any individual star.

Davies, who revived the show in 2005 after a 16-year hiatus and returned as showrunner in 2022, said the Christmas episode had not been written and no actor had been approached to play the central role of the Doctor.

Davies, who has also written dramas including "Queer as Folk," "It's a Sin" and the recent "Tip Toe," said the show's future was "unpredictable" in an Instagram post.

"You'll have to wait a bit longer for new Doctor Who ... but you'll be waiting for MORE Doctor Who than a one-off. So it's worth it!" Davies wrote. "It's all up for grabs, which is so Doctor Who - exciting and unpredictable and new! Here comes the future."



Ncuti Gatwa, from left, Russell T Davies, and Millie Gibson pose for a portrait to promote "Doctor Who" during Comic-Con International on July 26, 2024, in San Diego. (AP)

Variety

NEW YORK: Taylor Swift attended Game 4 of the NBA Finals between the New York Knicks and San Antonio Spurs at Madison Square Garden, the arena that has gotten a lot of attention recently as the possible location for her upcoming wedding to Travis Kelce.

Swift wore a blue T-shirt with "Stevie Knicks" printed in orange lettering and was seated court-side on Wednesday night next to Ben Stiller. She attended along with singers Este and Alana Haim, who also had Knicks-related references on their shirts: "Knickole Kidman" and "Knickleback."

They were joined midway through by third Haim sister Daniella, and the quartet witnessed the biggest comeback in finals history as the Knicks rallied from a 29-point deficit to win 107-106 on OG Anunoby's tip-in with 1.2 seconds left.

Swift leaped around in celebration, waving a rally towel after leaving the court for the bowels of the Garden. She may be back soon.



Taylor Swift arrives prior to Game 4 of the NBA Finals basketball series between the San Antonio Spurs and the New York Knicks, Wednesday, June 10, 2026, in New York. (AP)

Less than a year after their August engagement announcement, reports of Swift and Kelce's impending nuptials have reached a crescendo. TMZ and the New York Post's Page Six recently started insisting Swift and Kelce will marry at the Garden in early July, despite their close connections to everywhere from Kansas City, Missouri, and Nashville, Tennessee, to Cleveland and Rhode Island.

Swift and the Haim sisters were among several celebrities in the house, including Tate McRae and Hailey Bieber, and regulars like Timothée Chalamet and Spike Lee. Swift and Kelce attended Game 3 of the Eastern Conference finals between the Knicks and Cavaliers, not far from where the Kansas City Chiefs tight end is from in Cleveland Heights, Ohio.

This is the latest sporting event for Swift, who along with Kelce also attended a game during the NHL's Stanley Cup Final a year ago in Sunrise, Florida. (AP)

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PARIS: French singer and actor Patrick Bruel was handed preliminary charges of rape, attempted rape, sexual assault and sexual harassment of several women between 2008 and 2019 and released under strict judicial supervision, a prosecutor's office said Thursday.

Bruel, 67, denies the allegations. He was brought Wednesday before four investigative judges at the court of Nanterre, in Paris western suburbs, following a two-day police custody.

The Nanterre prosecutor's office said the formal investigation concerns allegations of rape in 2008 in Neuilly-sur-Seine, west of Paris, attempted rape in 2010 in Brussels, and sexual assault and sexual harassment in Perpignan, in southern France, and Ajaccio, Corsica, both in 2019.

The judicial investigation also continues into other allegations of rape, attempted rape and sexual harassment between 2010 and 2019 in three French cities and in Nyon, Switzerland, according to prosecutors. (AP)

Film

Academy recognizes Ridley & Floyd for lifetime achievement

Hollywood legends, Glenn set for honorary Oscar

NEW YORK, June 11, (AP) — Glenn Close will finally get her hands on an Oscar.

Long considered among the best actors to never win one, the eight-time nominee will get an honorary Academy Award along with director Ridley Scott and animator Floyd Norman at the annual Governors Awards, the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences announced Wednesday.

"Throughout her extraordinary body of work, Glenn Close's unparalleled emotional range has brought to life some of the most complex characters in cinema," the academy said in a statement. "Floyd Norman is the legendary animator who has broken barriers and inspired generations of artists over his remarkable career. Sir Ridley Scott is a true visionary whose decades-long legacy has left an immeasurable impact on global cinema and culture."

Nominations for the 79-year-old Close date back to 1983, when she got her first nod for "The World According to Garp." She was also nominated for her blockbuster turn as a rabbit-slaying stalker in 1987's "Fatal Attraction" and was most recently up for a statuette for 2020's "Hillbilly Elegy."

Her eight nominations tie her with Peter O'Toole for the most for an actor without a win.

She has won virtually every other major award within reach, including three Emmys, three Tonys, three Grammys and three Golden



This combination of photos show, from left, Glenn Close, Pamela Koffler, Ridley Scott, and Christine Vachon. (AP)

Globes.

The Governors Awards often go to artists with extraordinary careers, but no competitive Oscar. Tom Cruise, a recipient last year, is a case in point.

Scott, the 88-year-old director of "Alien," "Blade Runner" and "Gladiator" whose epic decades of work have blended popular success and prestige like few others, has also never won despite four nominations, including best director nods for "Thelma & Louise" and "Black Hawk Down."

Norman's 65-year career began in 1956 when he became the first Black animator for Walt Disney Animation Studios, contributing to "Sleeping Beauty," "Mary Poppins," "The Jungle Book" and "Robin Hood."

Decades later, he would work on "Mulan," "Toy Story 2" and "Mon-

sters, Inc."

Producers Christine Vachon and Pamela Koffler will get the academy's Irving G. Thalberg Memorial Award, presented to "a creative producer whose body of work reflects a consistently high quality of motion picture production," the academy said.

Vachon and Koffler co-founded the New York-based indie production hub Killer Films in 1995. Their credits as producers include "Hedwig and the Angry Inch," "One Hour Photo" and "May December." Both were nominated for best picture Oscars for "Past Lives" in 2024. Killer Films' output includes "Velvet Goldmine," "Happiness," "Boys Don't Cry," "Far from Heaven" and "Carol."

The academy statement says the two "play a central role in American

independent cinema, championing bold, ambitious and distinctive storytelling."

All the winners will be honored at a ceremony on Nov. 15 at the Ray Dolby Ballroom at Ovation Hollywood, the same complex that hosts the main Oscars ceremony. Along with luminaries who worked with the honorees, the event has been increasingly packed with young stars as it has become the unofficial kickoff to Hollywood's award season campaigning.

The Governors Awards, named for the academy's board of governors and not the leader of the state, honor "extraordinary distinction in lifetime achievement, exceptional contributions to the state of motion picture arts and sciences in any discipline, or for outstanding service to the Academy."

Tribute recalls early-year performances

Olivier honoured with a plaque at his London childhood home

LONDON, June 11, (AP) — The late Laurence Olivier, arguably Britain's greatest ever stage actor, was honored Wednesday with a blue plaque attached to the central London property where he lived as a child.

Unveiled by Ian McKellen, the plaque at 22 Lupus Street in Pimlico marks the place where Olivier began acting as a child.

"For those of us who were lucky enough to have seen him in the theater, it's of course quite right that, because he was the leader of our profession for so many years, it's appropriate that this should be put up," McKellen told The Associated Press after the event. "Actors go out of fashion very quickly, but I've a feeling that this man's name will never be forgotten, and perhaps because of this plaque."

Olivier lived at Lupus Street between the ages of 6 and 11. While there, he reportedly transformed a wooden box and blue curtains into a makeshift stage where he sang, danced, and acted for hours at a time.

Olivier was venerated as a Shakespearean actor, playing many iconic protagonists in London including Hamlet, Henry V, Macbeth and, controversially, Othello. For his role as Hamlet, Olivier won his only Academy Award for best actor in 1949. Other famous screen roles include ones in "Rebecca," "Wuthering Heights," "Marathon Man" and "Sleuth."

London owes much to Olivier, who died at age 82 in 1989.

He campaigned for the establishment of the National Theatre. The building that now houses the theatre officially opened in 1976 and its largest auditorium is named after Olivier.



In this file photo, Actors Vivien Leigh, left, and Laurence Olivier arrive in New York aboard the ocean liner Mauritania, Dec. 6, 1951. (AP)

Architecture

The basilica's secrets range from medieval symbolism to living wildlife perched in its towers

Sagrada Familia insider tour reveals 5 hidden architectural wonders



A detail of the Passion Façade shows the basilica's famous magic square at the Sagrada Família in Barcelona, Spain, May 15, 2026. Unlike a sudoku, every row, column and diagonal adds up to 33, symbolizing the age of Christ at his death. (AP)



A changing room where Pope Leo XIV will vest before presiding over Mass is seen at the Sagrada Família in Barcelona, Spain, May 15, 2026. (AP)



A priest celebrates Mass in the crypt of Antoni Gaudí beneath the Sagrada Família while crowds of visitors fill the basilica above in Barcelona, Spain, May 15, 2026. (AP)



A small square-shaped labyrinth is photographed at the Passion Façade at the basilica's Sagrada Família in Barcelona, Spain, May 15, 2026. (AP)



Antoni Gaudí's tomb is photographed inside crypt of Gaudí beneath the Sagrada Família as crowds of visitors fill the basilica above in Barcelona, Spain, May 15, 2026. (AP)

BARCELONA, Spain, June 11, (AP) — The Sagrada Família basilica features sandcastle-like spires, stone carved to look like lush flora, a kaleidoscopic interior and a trove of treasures, some hiding in plain sight. Even regular worshippers at Barcelona's world-famous landmark find themselves dumbstruck with wonder.

Josep Turull, the Catalan rector of the Sagrada Família and the priest in charge of its parish activities, recently granted The Associated Press a private tour to show off his favorite gems ahead of Pope Leo XIV's highly anticipated Mass on Wednesday night.

"We say that one of the elements of the Sagrada Família Basilica is that you never exhaust it," Turull said. "I have spent the last eight years as its rector, and each day I discover something new."

Each morning, Turull approaches the basilica's elaborately decorated façades. They are packed with an abundance of religious scenes and symbols, some easy to interpret for anyone with a basic understanding of Christianity, while others are mysterious and even shocking to see in a church.

The westward-looking Façade of the Passion is stark, its figures tormented, their bodies strained in angular poses. That was how architect Antoni Gaudí wanted it — "harsh and cruel, as if made of bones," to show the pain and torment of Christ's final days.

Decades after Gaudí's own death, sculptor Josep

Subirachs tempered the façade's misery with some playful elements. There's Gaudí himself, above the central door, staring across at Jesus carrying his cross to Calvary. And what's that suduko-like numbered grid next to Judas kissing Jesus before his betrayal?

The "magic square" symbolizes the inevitability of Christ's death; adding the numbers in any direction always produces 33, Jesus's age at his crucifixion.

Another puzzle awaits the patient eye that drifts across to the scene of Peter denying Christ: a small, square-shaped labyrinth. Turull said that it alludes to the need to keep faith in God when we feel lost.

After celebrating Mass, Leo will step outside to offer a blessing for the Tower of Jesus Christ that made the Sagrada Família the world's tallest church when it was raised in October.

The basilica's heights are bursting with nature, from the rooster who crowed while Peter denied Christ to reptiles doing the job of gargoyles, and piles of fruit that crown its spires.

There are also flesh-and-blood beasts; a family of peregrine falcons nest in the tower dedicated to St. James, keeping away pigeons and, more importantly, their excrement.

Gaudí's masterpiece was chosen as one of the ideal spots to reintroduce the species, as it was one of the last locations in town where these birds nested before

disappearing during the 1970s. The falcons have been breeding successfully at the basilica for over two decades.

Turull said that these lightning-fast birds of prey "recover the cycle of natural life."

For the millions of annual visitors who admire the colored light filtering through the basilica's stained-glass windows, jostle for position to snap selfies and huddle around tour guides, it is easy to overlook what Turull calls its "spiritual heart." That requires going through a modest side entrance and descending a staircase.

Underground is a much smaller, more intimate chapel, where dozens of worshippers silently attend Mass and faith manages to keep sightseeing at bay.

Fittingly, it is here where Gaudí, a fervent Catholic, rests in a discreet tomb set inside a nook. He died exactly 100 years ago after being hit by a streetcar.

"People come to ask for his intercession," Turull said, gesturing to the tomb interred in the floor. "That's why there are so many candles. Because people place their trust in him. Many people have received favors for having prayed at the tomb of Gaudí."

The Vatican is in the midst of a decades-long process that could eventually make Gaudí a saint. After Pope Francis named Gaudí "venerable" in 2025, the Vatican must now confirm a miracle attributed to his interces-

sion for him to be beatified, then a second miracle for him to be canonized.

The basilica has proposed that the pope pray at Gaudí's tomb during his visit, but whether he does remains to be seen.

Before ascending, Turull pauses at an enormous seashell — a real one, not made of stone — that serves as a basin for holy water. He said that Gaudí had the seashell from the Philippines set in wrought iron and fixed to the column.

"Gaudí always takes nature as an example," Turull said, referencing the way the natural world inspired his designs and decorations.

Up a twisting staircase, a private room bathed in sunlight houses two freestanding oak cabinets laced with intricate ironwork. Designed by Gaudí, they hold the basilica's most precious relics and most important clerical clothing. Among them is Pope Benedict XVI's chasuble — a cloak that clergy wear when celebrating Mass — from when he consecrated the Sagrada Família in 2010.

This is where Pope Leo will change into a chasuble that is being sewn at a workshop just for this occasion.

Turull said the vestment will feature details symbolizing the day's importance and a design related to the basilica's recently raised Cross of Jesus Christ. But he won't say anything more for now; some things need to stay secret.

Liangzhu civilization exhibition in Berlin promotes exchanges, cooperation

BERLIN, June 11, (Xinhua) — Standing before a glass showcase at the Chinese Cultural Center in Berlin, a local resident who just called herself Svetlana explored ancient Chinese artifacts with the help of smart glasses that provided AI-powered bilingual explanations.

The technology offered visitors a new way to engage with the Liangzhu civilization, one of the earliest known

centers of Chinese civilization, as the "Hello Liangzhu" exhibition opened in the German capital on Monday.

"I have always been fascinated by Chinese culture," Svetlana said. "This exhibition gave me a much more vivid and tangible understanding of Liangzhu and the roots of Chinese civilization."

First discovered in 1936 in the lower reaches of the Yangtze River, China's

longest river, the Liangzhu ruins were inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List in 2019. To date, more than 350 Liangzhu culture sites have been discovered, providing important evidence of a Chinese civilization dating back more than 5,000 years.

For Maurice Mengel, head of department at the Ethnological Museum of Berlin, the Liangzhu civilization offers insight into human settlement,

rice cultivation and the development of early urban society.

"The archaeological discoveries at Liangzhu and its status as a world heritage site reflect humanity's ongoing efforts to explore and better understand the past," he said.

The exhibition, which runs through July 8 and is open to the public free of charge, is divided into three sections: Tracing Liangzhu, Rituals Embodied

in Jade and Cultural Legacy through the Ages. Through archaeological records, digital displays and replicas of artifacts, it introduces visitors to the development, cultural significance and lasting influence of the Liangzhu civilization.

Among the exhibits is the Jade Cong, a ritual object featuring a square outer form and a circular inner tube. Its distinctive design and crafts-

manship have made it one of the most well-known emblems of Liangzhu's jade culture.

In a video message, Xu Tianjin, director of the Liangzhu Museum, said the exhibition highlights Liangzhu's achievements in urban planning, water management, social development and spiritual life through replicas of cultural relics, archaeological discoveries and digital images.

HEALTH/SCIENCE

Electricity generation from renewables growing rapidly globally

Solar power hits new milestones in US even as Trump boosts coal over clean energy

WASHINGTON, June 11, (AP) — Even as US President Donald Trump boosts coal over clean energy, solar power is hitting new milestones in the US and remains the leading source of new power.

Data released Wednesday by global energy think tank Ember, along with a report by the Solar Energy Industries Association and analytics firm Wood Mackenzie, show the continued growth of solar and decline of coal in the United States despite federal policy. In May, for the first time, solar supplied more of the nation's electricity than coal, or 12.8%, Ember said. Coal supplied 12.2%, its fourth-lowest monthly share ever.

"For years solar power has risen in the US electricity mix," said Nicolas Fulghum, senior energy and data analyst at Ember. "At the same time, coal power has lost its status, first as the largest source in the US mix, and then gradually over the years has fallen even further."

Solar also became the third-largest source of electricity in the US in May, behind natural gas and nuclear, Fulghum said. Coal generation hit

an all-time monthly low in April and rebounded only modestly in May, allowing increasing solar generation to overtake coal, he added.

Electricity is produced by converting sources of energy - fossil fuels, renewable resources and nuclear - into electrical power. Burning coal, oil and natural gas for electricity emits carbon dioxide, trapping heat in the atmosphere and warming the planet. By contrast, solar, wind, geothermal, hydropower and nuclear are carbon-free.

After about two decades of essentially flat electricity consumption in the US, electricity demand is increasing to power artificial intelligence, grow domestic manufacturing and electrify transportation and heating, Fulghum said he expects to see more months when solar exceeds coal generation, before overtaking it on an annual basis in a few years.

These milestones signify that solar "has staying power" at a time when there's less support for renewable energy at the federal level, he added.

Wind and solar combined have overtaken coal in the past, and wind power alone has outpaced coal dur-



Solar panels operate on a farm with cattle on April 28, 2026, in Christiansburg, Tenn. (AP)

ing spring months when wind speeds pick up. Ember gets its hourly and monthly data from the USEnergy Information Administration.

Globally, electricity generation from renewables is growing rapidly. Renewables will become the largest global energy source, used for

almost 45% of electricity generation by 2030, according to the International Energy Agency.

Last week, Trump, a Republican, announced a plan to boost the struggling US coal industry by spending nearly \$700 million to support coal-fired power plants and coal exports.

Trump said at a White House event that "coal's a great business" and that "in terms of power, there's really nothing like it."

Martin Pochtaruk, CEO and founder of Canadian-based solar panel manufacturer Heliene, said Trump can say that coal is coming back but investors will invest their money in whatever brings the best return. And for power generation that is solar, making it the fastest-growing fuel, he added.

A White House spokeswoman defended the Trump administration's overall energy policies, saying they were geared toward strengthening the country's security.

"The President has reversed the Left's devastating policies, saved the American coal industry, prevented the retirement of more than 17 gigawatts of power, and saved lives during heightened demand periods," Taylor Rogers said in a statement.

While Trump is trying to reverse the coal industry's decline, solar has been the top source for new power for five years, SEIA said. SEIA and Wood Mackenzie said solar and battery storage were practically the only

energy resources being built in the first quarter, making up 91% of all new generating capacity.

The Trump administration has canceled solar and wind projects, implemented policies that slowed clean energy permitting and development and terminated \$7 billion in funding intended for affordable solar energy projects across the US.

"As power demand skyrockets, political and regulatory attacks are slowing down the exact resources we rely on," Darren Van't Hof, interim president and CEO of SEIA, said in a statement. "Impeding the only sector that is actively building new power is a reckless gamble that will only drive electricity bills higher."

Several groups sued the Environmental Protection Agency over canceling the Solar for All program. A district court dismissed the case last week citing lack of jurisdiction. The plaintiffs have another filing pending in the Court of Federal Claims.

In a ruling Saturday, a federal judge struck down guidance from the Internal Revenue Service restricting tax credits for wind and solar projects.

Four immunizations routinely recommended during pregnancy

OB-GYN group makes vaccine recommendations for first time

WASHINGTON, June 11, (AP) — A prominent OB-GYN group announced vaccine recommendations on Wednesday that differ from what the US government advises.

The immunization schedule is specifically for pregnant, postpartum and breastfeeding women. It aligns with prior recommendations from the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, before changes were made under the Trump administration and Health Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr.

Earlier this year, the American College of Obstetricians & Gynecologists withdrew from a CDC advisory committee on vaccines because of those changes, which have spawned legal challenges.

"So now for the first time, ACOG has made the decision to formally release its own immunization schedule to provide and communicate clear evidence-based guidance and to address the growing vaccine misinformation that is circulating," said Dr. Christopher Zahn, the OB-GYN group's chief

of clinical practice.

The new schedule has been endorsed by 13 other professional and medical societies. Some other groups, such as the American Academy of Pediatrics, have also put out vaccine schedules this year that differ from the CDC's.

Here's what you need to know about the OB-GYN group's advice.

What does the OB-GYN group advise?

Four immunizations are routinely recommended during pregnancy:

■ The flu vaccine, which can be taken any trimester, at any time of year, although it's best to get it in early fall.

■ The COVID-19 shot, which can be taken during any trimester at any time of year, although it's best to receive it as soon as possible during pregnancy.

■ A tetanus, diphtheria, and pertussis (Tdap) shot, preferably as early as possible between 27 and 36 weeks.

■ A respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) vaccine, between 32 and 36 weeks of pregnancy in your

first pregnancy, during September through January in most parts of the U.S. If you had the RSV vaccine during a previous pregnancy, you do not need to get it again, the group says, but your baby should get an antibody shot after birth. Your baby can also get that shot instead of you receiving the maternal vaccine.

Other vaccines -- pneumococcal, meningococcal, hepatitis A and hepatitis B -- may be needed for women with certain risk factors. The group recommends talking with your doctor about them.

Three others are recommended before pregnancy or after birth, protecting against human papillomavirus; measles, mumps and rubella; and chickenpox.

How do these recommendations differ from CDC advice?

The biggest difference involves the COVID-19 vaccine.

Last May, Kennedy announced that COVID-19 vaccines are no longer recommended for healthy pregnant women and children - a move immediately questioned by several

public health experts.

Spokespeople from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Are health care providers seeing pushback on vaccines?

Yes. Several spoke at an event announcing the new guidelines.

"Vaccine hesitancy is huge in this country right now," said Carol Hayes of the American College of Nurse-Midwives. "Patients come in all the time saying I've done my own research, and sadly, they're getting information that is not scientifically based."

Sarah Vaillancourt of the National Association of Nurse Practitioners in Women's Health said her organization's members are seeing much the same. Some of the confusion is being fueled by social media, she said.

In such a landscape, she said, it's "really useful" for the OB-GYN group to provide accurate information for patients.



Lauren Ellenburg, a nurse, prepares a combination measles, mumps and rubella vaccine for a patient at Tiger Pediatrics in Easley, SC on March 17. (AP)



This stitched photo taken on Oct 9, 2024 shows the central detector of the Jiangmen Underground Neutrino Observatory (JUNO) in Jiangmen, south China's Guangdong Province. (Xinhua)

China's JUNO team releases first physics result about neutrino in Nature

GUANGZHOU, June 11, (Xinhua) — The world's largest transparent spherical neutrino detector located in south China's Guangdong Province released its first findings in the journal Nature Wednesday.

The Jiangmen Underground Neutrino Observatory (JUNO) began data taking in August 2025, with the primary physics goal of determining the mass ordering of neutrinos.

Neutrinos have no electrical charge and very little mass, with very little interaction with matter. A typical neutrino can pass through normal matter unimpeded, making the detection of neutrinos very difficult. Among all elementary particles, neutrinos are the least known.

JUNO completed the high-precision measurement of two key oscillation parameters based on the analysis of valid data collected over 59 days from Aug 26 to Nov 2, 2025. The measurement accuracy reduced the associated uncertainties by a factor of 1.6 compared to the combined experimental results in the past decades.

The reviewer of Nature commented that these results not only validate the detector performance and analysis methodology, but also establish JUNO as a key player in the emerging precision era of neutrino oscillation physics, with direct implications for tests of the three-flavor paradigm, global oscillation fits, and future determinations of the neutrino mass ordering.

Uganda tightens Ebola prevention measures

KAMPALA, June 11, (Xinhua) — Uganda's Ministry of Health on Wednesday announced additional Ebola prevention measures aimed at curbing the possible spread of the disease.

Speaking after Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni's national address on the Ebola outbreak, Health Minister Chris Baryomunsi said Ebola prevention guidelines have been distributed to all districts bordering the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, the epicenter of the current outbreak.

Baryomunsi said mass gatherings, including weddings



Museveni

and market days, have been suspended, while schools have been advised to strictly follow the Ministry of Health's prevention guidelines.

According to the ministry, Uganda has not recorded any new Ebola cases in the past five days. The country has registered a cumulative total of 19 confirmed cases so far, including two deaths.

Diana Atwine, permanent secretary at the Ministry of Health, said recent observations indicate that the Ebola virus is more concentrated in the alimentary canal than in the blood once symptoms appear.

"We have seen that when people start getting symptoms, the virus is highly concentrated in the saliva, vomitus and the stool," Atwine said, noting that the finding could help advance global knowledge on combating Ebola.

5.3-mln-year-old whale graveyard hotspot found in Indian Ocean

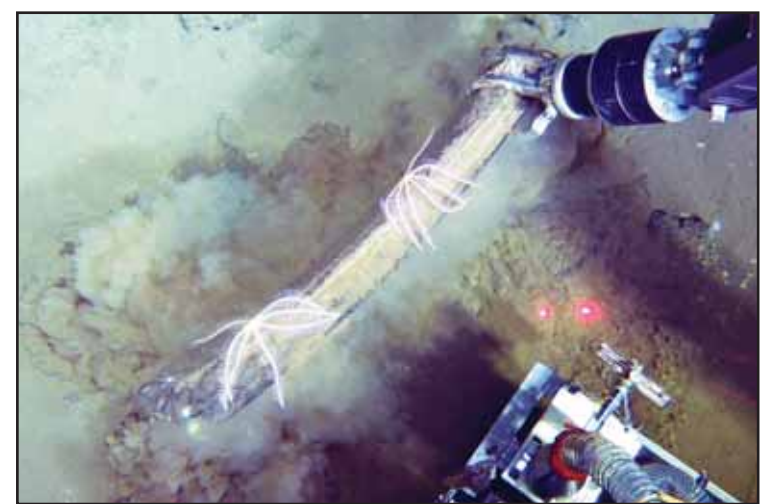
BEIJING, June 11, (Xinhua) — Scientists have discovered the world's deepest and largest collection of whale remains on the ocean floor, a site they call a "whale necropolis."

Located in the Diamantina Zone of the southeastern Indian Ocean, at depths of up to 7,000 meters, the find includes both ancient fossils and active whale-fall ecosystems that have been forming for at least 5.3 million years.

The study, conducted by the Institute of Deep-sea Science and Engineering (IDSSE) of the Chinese Academy of Sciences in collaboration with the University of Pisa in Italy and Earth Sciences New Zealand in Wellington, has been published in the latest issue of the journal Nature.

Whale falls occur when dead whales sink to the seabed. These carcasses create rich, temporary habitats for deep-sea creatures, supporting everything from bone-eating worms to sea stars. Until now, most known whale falls were found at depths of less than 4,000 meters, with the deepest active site recorded at 4,204 meters. No active whale-fall ecosystem had ever been reported from hadal depths -- which are those deeper than 6,000 meters.

In 2023, a team led by the IDSSE



This undated image provided by Zhou Peng shows a Chinese submersible recovering fossilized whale bones from the deep seafloor, southeastern Indian Ocean, in the Diamantina Fracture Zone. (AP)

carried out 32 dives using the manned deep-sea submersible Fendouzhe (Striver), aboard the research vessel Tansuo-1. They explored a 1,200-kilometer stretch of the Diamantina Zone and found five active whale falls and 476 fossil sites, ranging from 4,616 to 7,001 meters deep. The density of whale remains reached up to 759.5 individuals per square kilometer.

"If that number is extrapolated across the entire zone, it suggests there may be more than 10 million whale carcasses in the area," said Peng Xiaotong, a professor at the IDSSE.

Among the active whale falls, one site consisting of three beaked whale vertebrae at a depth of 6,789 meters represents the deepest active whale-fall ecosystem ever recorded.

FDA OKs first new sunscreen ingredient for US market in more than 25 years

WASHINGTON, June 11, (AP) — Federal health regulators on Tuesday signed off on the first new sunscreen ingredient for the US market in more than 25 years, giving Americans access to a skin-protecting chemical long used in Europe and other parts of the world.

The Food and Drug Administration says the ingredient, bemotrizinol, met the agency's standards for protecting from dangerous ultraviolet rays while causing little irritation or absorption into the skin. The ingredient is safe for adults and children 6 months and older, the agency stated in a release.

Bemotrizinol will initially be sold in the U.S. by the Dutch manufacturer DSM Nutritional Products under the brand name Parsol Shield, which is expected to launch later in the year. After an 18-month exclusivity period, the ingredient will be available for use by other manufacturers.

Efforts to introduce new sunscreen products have been bogged down for decades by the FDA's bureaucratic system for updating its lists of safe



A man applies sunscreen to a woman's arm before a spring training baseball game between the San Diego Padres and the Chicago White Sox in Phoenix on Feb 28, 2024. (AP)

nonprescription drug ingredients. Bemotrizinol is the first ingredient to go through a streamlined process authorized by Congress in 2020.

Experts say bemotrizinol will fill

an important niche in the U.S. market: protecting against both ultraviolet A and B rays while not leaving white streaks associated with mineral-based sunscreens.

South Africa and England threaten long-standing order

India's rise challenges Australia's dominance ahead of the T20 World Cup

LONDON, June 11, (AP) - Winning is what Australia is all about.

In the history of cricket's white ball world championships, the Australian women have won 13. The rest of the world has won nine.

This week, Australia start the 10th Women's Twenty20 World Cup ranked No. 1 and favored for a seventh title.

But thanks to being cricket's financial engine, India is making up for lost time. The men have won their last two T20 World Cups, the most recent in March, and the women won their first ODI World Cup last November.

That supercharged their confidence, so much so that in February they handed Australia its first T20 bilateral series defeat since 2017 and won in Australia for the first time in a decade.

"There's a belief in the team now that we can beat anybody in this world," India seam bowler Arundhati Reddy said.

Eight years after Australia started the Women's Big Bash League, India launched the Women's Premier League in 2023 along the lines of the men's IPL. That has encouraged fearless strokeplay by the likes of Jemimah Rodrigues, Richa Ghosh and Harmanpreet Kaur, who will captain India for the fifth time at her 10th T20 World Cup. The closest Kaur came to winning was in the 2020 final.

Australia, without a global trophy for the first time since 2017, began resetting while six-time T20 world champion Alyssa Healy phased herself out. Sophie Molineux has the captaincy, Beth Mooney the gloves, and Georgia Voll an opener's spot.

Voll and Mooney are the Nos. 1-2 ranked T20 batters, the great Ellyse Perry is gunning for her seventh title, and allrounder Annabel Sutherland has a shot at player of the tournament.

But one of Australia, India and South Africa in their group will miss the semifinals, and Australia has never missed out.

South Africa has reached the last three world finals (two T20s, one ODI) but an over-reliance on captain Laura Wolvaardt - averaging 54 in 13 innings



In this file photo, New Zealand's players pose with the trophy after winning the ICC Women's T20 World Cup 2024 final match against South Africa at Dubai International Cricket Stadium, United Arab Emirates. (AP)

this year - prompted the Proteas to persuade out of retirement fast bowler Shabnim Ismail, who is still ripping out batters in franchise competitions at 37, and Dane van Niekerk, the former captain who quit in controversy before the 2023 T20 World Cup.

Also in Group A are Pakistan, Bangladesh - playing in England for the first time - and first-time qualifier the Netherlands.

Group B in the first 12-team T20 World Cup features No. 2 England, New Zealand and the West Indies - all one-time champions - along with Ireland, Scotland and Sri Lanka. England and Sri Lanka open the tournament on Friday in Birmingham.

England's fitness was questioned at the last T20 World Cup and coach Charlotte Edwards, who captained England to victory at the inaugural 2009 tournament, has prioritized it. Captain Nat Sciver-Brunt sat out the recent home series wins over New Zealand and India due to a calf tear but has been passed fit to bat but not bowl until later.

New Zealand has 10 back from the 2024 champion side, including No. 1-ranked allrounder and new captain Melie Kerr. The Kiwis hope to farewell in style Suzie Bates, Sophie Devine and Lea Tahuhu, who share nearly 900 caps. "To have our three most senior players all finishing their careers at the same tournament is a rare and special occasion," coach Ben Sawyer said.

The West Indies, spearheaded by captain Hayley Matthews and leg-spinner Afy Fletcher, welcomed a tri-nations series win over Ireland and Pakistan last week after being swept at home by Sri Lanka and Australia.

Sri Lanka is headlined by trailblazer Chamari Athapaththu, who has said this 10th T20 World Cup might not be her last; Ireland hope to end a 0-17 record in their fifth appearance; and Scotland has warmed up with a home tri-nations series win against Bangladesh and the Dutch.

The top two from both groups qualify for the semifinals at The Oval, with the final at Lord's on July 5 to cap 33 games in 24 days. Each knockout game has a reserve day.

Ticket sales weeks ago eclipsed the previous tournament record of 136,549 in 2020 in Australia, skewed by 86,000 at the Australia-India final at the MCG. Sales since have passed 160,000 and are tracking toward 200,000.

In another reward for the growth of women's cricket, prizemoney was up 10% from 2024 to \$8.76 million, with the winner receiving \$2.34 million.



World Aquatics President Captain Hussein Al-Musallam addressing the audience.

Major reforms drive transparency gains

Al-Musallam leads the way as World Aquatics hits A1 grade

LAUSANNE, Switzerland, June 11: World Aquatics has earned the highest possible rating in the 2026 governance review conducted by the Association of Summer Olympic International Federations (ASOIF), receiving an A1 classification and reinforcing its standing as one of the world's best-governed international sports organizations.

The achievement marks a remarkable transformation for the federation, which has steadily climbed the governance rankings from a Category C rating in the 2019-2020 review to A2 in 2024, and then to top-tier A1 status this year.

The result reflects an ambitious reform agenda launched in 2021 to modernize the federation's governance framework and strengthen transparency, accountability, and institutional independence.

Among the key measures introduced were the establishment of an independent integrity unit, the adoption of an updated integrity code, significant constitutional reforms, enhanced safeguarding policies, greater financial transparency, and expanded representation of athletes and women in leadership and decision-making roles.

The federation's reforms have also extended beyond governance, supporting the growth and development of aquatic sports worldwide through expanded assistance programs for national federations and athletes. Initiatives such as the "Discover Water" program have further promoted participation in aquatic sports while highlighting their educational, health, and social benefits.

World Aquatics President Captain Hussein Al-Musallam described the A1 classification as a reflection of years of dedicated work and a clear vision to build a modern, athlete-centered organization founded on transparency and accountability.

"This recognition reflects the collective efforts of our committees, staff and stakeholders across the world," Al-Musallam said. "Governance is not a destination but a continuous journey that requires constant improvement, responsibility, and engagement with all members of the aquatic community."

Ospelt takes FIS presidency

World ski president loses election by one vote, alleges IOC influence

GENEVA, June 11 (AP) - World ski federation leader Johan Eliasch was ousted in a tight presidential election on Thursday after a campaign led by the sport's heartland nations in Europe and North America that was backed by top skiers including Mikaela Shiffrin.

The billionaire owner of the Head sports goods business lost a 65-64 vote to Alexander Ospelt, a lawyer from Liechtenstein who got a four-year term to lead the International Ski and Snowboard Federation (FIS).

Eliasch also loses his membership of the International Olympic Committee, one of the most exclusive clubs in world sports.

In his concession speech, Eliasch aimed an allegation at the Olympic body and urged FIS to protect its independence before congratulating Ospelt.

"The IOC tried to influence the outcome of today's vote. Against this we must stay firm," Eliasch said.

He also stood in the IOC presidential election won by Kirsty Coventry 15 months ago.

The FIS congress in the Serbian capital Belgrade started with shows of power by 75 member federations; the votes hinted at problems ahead for Eliasch.

The agenda was changed on an 88% vote to bring the presidential election forward as the first item of business. The weighted voting used by FIS gives two or three votes to established ski nations instead of a one-member-one-vote system by other federations such as soccer body FIFA.

Then there was a 60% vote to use paper ballots instead of electronic voting, which seemed to reflect some mistrust in the FIS administration.

The 64-year-old Eliasch served as FIS president for five years that were marked by constant sparring with ski nations including Austria and Switzerland over issues such as his management style and spending of the ski body's cash reserves.



In this file photo, candidate to the presidency of the International Olympic Committee Johan Eliasch arrives at the mixed zone during a break of the 144th session, which will elect the new IOC President, in Costa Navarino, western Greece. (AP)

A dual citizen of Sweden and Britain, Eliasch was not supported by either of those national federations to stand for re-election. He complied with FIS rules by getting a passport and nomination from the country of Georgia.

FIS rules mean Ospelt becomes president officially one day after the election, leaving Eliasch to oversee the rest of the congress business of what was now his last day in office.

"It's been a great privilege to serve you," said the outgoing president, who had said the election would be a win-win as he could "get my life back" if he lost. "Either way I am very happy."

Ospelt, who has been a member of the Eliasch-chaired FIS council, said he would start his new job with "great joy and humility."

"I will be the president for all of you. Let's be united," he said.

Ospelt does not immediately become an IOC member, though he would probably be invited to join as head of the sports body that oversees about half of the medal events at each Winter Olympics.

Bangladesh secures maiden ODI series win over Australia



Bangladesh's Soumya Sarkar plays a shot during the second one day international cricket match between Australia and Bangladesh in Mirpur, Bangladesh. (AP)

Hridoy & Miraz share 51 unbeaten runs

MIRPUR, Bangladesh, June 11, (AP) - Bangladesh secured its first one-day international series win over Australia on Thursday.

A 2 1/2-hour rain delay forced a revised DLS target of 192 in 41 overs and Bangladesh reached 195-5 with six overs to spare to take an unassailable 2-0 lead in the three-match series.

"It's an amazing feeling," batter Najmul Hossain Shanto said. "The way we played this series, we showed a lot of courage. We have been working really hard the last few months, and we wanted to improve our game. I'm really proud to be part of this team."

The depleted Australians started the match losing three wickets without a run on the board. Half-centuries from Marnus Labuschagne (55 not out) and Xavier Bartlett (52) bailed them out to 187-8 in 42 overs.

Opening batter Soumya Sarkar, the only change Bangladesh made from the team which won the first game by 86 runs, and Shanto made 42 runs each while Towhid Hridoy was unbeaten on 40 off 55 balls.

Shanto had a nervy start but steadied the chase with a stand of 86 runs with Sarkar. Shanto edged Riley Meredith behind to give the fast bowler his first ODI wicket in five years following his recall.

Bangladesh wobbled at 144-5 in the 27th over but Hridoy and captain Mehidy Hasan Miraz shared an unbeaten 51-run stand to clinch the historic series result.

"Bangladesh have outplayed us so far in this series so congratulations to them," Australia captain Josh Inglis said.

Just before the end, Mehidy took a blow to the helmet from a Nathan Ellis delivery and dropped to his knees and vomited. Mehidy spurned a stretcher

and was allowed to continue. He hit the winning runs, a six over fine leg. Shanto suggested he was taken to hospital afterward for observation.

Australia chose to bat first and Matthew Short was out for his third consecutive duck in ODIs followed by Cooper Connolly and Renshaw, also out for ducks. It was only the fourth time in ODI history that a team started off 3-0.

Left-arm fast bowler Mustafizur Rahman (3-27) and Taskin Ahmed (3-33) took the wickets, and Mustafizur also had Alex Carey caught at point. When Inglis holed out at deep cover Australia had lost half its wickets for 68 runs.

Labuschagne, who dropped to No. 7 in the lineup, and Bartlett revived Australia with a 103-run partnership. Labuschagne's first ODI fifty in 14 innings came after he should have been run out on 1 but Tanvir Islam missed the stumps.

The third and final game will be at the same Mirpur venue on Sunday.

Stokes dropped amid curfew breach scandal

English cricket finds itself in another mess

LONDON, June 11, (AP) - English cricket is back in a mess.

Having just dealt with a shambolic Ashes tour featuring reports of excessive drinking and unprofessionalism, the England and Wales Cricket Board is fighting another fire just one week into the international summer.

This time, the captain is at the heart of it all.

Ben Stokes, for so long the face of the English game, has been dropped from the test team after breaking a curfew he helped to draw up himself by going on a night out with teammate Gus Atkinson to celebrate a victory over New Zealand in the first match of the series on Sunday.

Stokes' precise involvement in what the ECB is describing as an "incident" under midnight in a London nightclub isn't fully clear.

What is clear, however, is that his presence there has left England's leadership group in another sticky situation - just when they were looking to show they had learnt their lesson.

This summer was supposed to be a reset for England after an Ashes tour



In this file photo, England's Joe Root leaves the pitch after losing his wicket during the second day of the test match between England and New Zealand at Lord's cricket ground in London. (AP)

Down Under that was humiliating on and off the field.

Not only did England lose 4-1, the team's players came under scrutiny for their lack of professionalism - notably because of its apparent drinking culture.

A video emerged appearing to show Ben Duckett disoriented and unable to remember how to get back to the hotel. Another video on social media showed batter Jacob Bethell dancing in a club.

England was 2-0 down in the series

by then. When the embarrassing tour was over, Harry Brook apologized for clashing with a nightclub bouncer during a short tour of New Zealand that preceded the Ashes. Brook, England's test vice captain and skipper of the ODI and T20 teams, was hit by the bouncer after being denied entry to the club.

No one from the leadership team - Stokes, coach Brendon McCullum and director of cricket Rob Key - lost their jobs following the post-Ashes review, with ECB chief executive Richard Gould saying: "I've seen the driving ambition and determination we're lucky enough to have within our leadership group to take the lessons from the Ashes."

One of the decisions taken after the Ashes was to reimpose a midnight curfew on players and staff around games that was dropped in 2022. It didn't take long for that to be broken, by the captain of all people.

Stokes said in his post-match news conference after beating New Zealand at Lord's that "I won't be really happy until I get to share a beer with the boys."



Qatar eyes dream World Cup start against Switzerland

Head coach expected to rely on a balanced squad

SAN FRANCISCO, June 11: Soccer fans across the Arab world are set for Qatar's opening match in the 2026 FIFA World Cup, as it faces Switzerland at 10:00 p.m. on Saturday at Levi's Stadium in San Francisco in Group B.

Qatar will be targeting a strong start to its campaign, aiming for maximum points or at least a positive result to build momentum ahead of the decisive fixtures in the group stage.

This marks Qatar's first appearance at the World Cup finals via the qualification pathway, a significant milestone in the nation's history.

The "Al Annabi" will look to draw confidence from its only previous meeting with Switzerland, a friendly played on November 14, 2018, in which Qatar secured a 1-0 win thanks to a late goal from Akram Afif.

Head coach Julen Lopetegui is expected to rely on a balanced squad combining experience and youth, while retaining several key players from the 2022

World Cup campaign.

Qatar's preparations for the tournament began in mid-May following the conclusion of the domestic and continental club seasons. The team held a local training camp before travelling to Dublin, where they lost 1-0 to Ireland in a friendly. A subsequent camp in Los Angeles included a goalless draw against El Salvador as part of their final buildup to the tournament.

The team's primary objective is to reach the Round of 32 and make history by advancing beyond the group stage for the first time in its second World Cup appearance. Key players include Akram Afif, two-time Asian Player of the Year, all-time top scorer Almoez Ali, as well as experienced names such as Hassan Al-Haydos, Boualem Khoukhi, Karim Boudiaf, and Lucas Mendes.

In the same group, Canada faces Bosnia and Herzegovina at BMO Field in Toronto early Friday. Canada has risen sharply in FIFA rankings in recent years, climbing 23 places from 50th to a career-high 27th.



Qatar national team players go through an intense training session ahead of their upcoming World Cup clash, showing focus, fitness, and determination on the pitch.

South Korea, Czech Republic meet in high-stakes opener

MEXICO, June 11: South Korea and the Czech Republic open their Group A campaign with both sides targeting a winning start when they face off at 10:00 p.m. today at Akron Stadium in Mexico.

South Korea will be making its 12th FIFA World Cup appearance – the most by any Asian nation – and its 11th consecutive showing at the global finals. Despite its long history in the tournament, the team has recorded just seven wins in 38 matches since its debut in 1986, with the majority coming during its stand-out 2002 campaign, which they co-hosted.

Head coach Hong Myung-bo, who famously captained South Korea during that historic run, now returns to the World Cup stage as manager in his second spell leading the national team at the tournament.

On the other hand, the Czech Republic arrives after a demanding qualification journey, booking its place at the 2026 World Cup via the European playoffs.



South Korea's head coach Hong Myung-bo, right, attends a training ahead of his FIFA World Cup match against Czech Republic in Guadalajara, Mexico. (AP)

It had earlier finished second in their qualifying group behind Croatia, before a shock 2-1 defeat to the Faroe Islands led to the dismissal of Ivan Hašek. Following a brief in-

terim period under Jaroslav Köstl, veteran coach Miroslav Koubek, 74, was appointed to lead the side into the tournament.

World Cup Diary

France camp bonus dispute resolved: The French Football Federation has brought an end to a dispute that surfaced during the national team's preparations for the 2026 FIFA World Cup.

French daily L'Équipe reported earlier that tensions had emerged between players and the federation over World Cup participation bonuses.

RTL later confirmed that both sides have now reached an agreement regarding performance-related financial rewards for the tournament.

While discussions over the exact distribution of bonuses based on team performance continued in recent days, negotiations had reportedly become tense before a breakthrough was achieved.

After several adjustments, a final deal was reached, putting an end to the disagreement that had been affecting the squad's build-up.

The resolution is a welcome boost for the French camp, allowing Didier Deschamps and his players to focus fully on their World Cup campaign, which begins against Senegal on June 16. (AP)

Comeback after 3 years away Ljubicic: The last time Dejan Ljubicic played for Austria was nearly three years ago. Now a teammate's injury has given him a surprise comeback at the World Cup.

Austria coach Ralf Rangnick called up Ljubicic late Wednesday to replace key midfielder Christoph Baumgartner, who injured his right thigh while warming up for a pre-World Cup friendly against Tunisia last week and needed surgery.

Ljubicic is set to join Austria at the team camp in

Santa Barbara on Thursday, ahead of the team's first game on Tuesday against Jordan. Austria also plays Argentina and Algeria in Group J.

He's more of a defensive midfielder option than Baumgartner, who scored 17 goals in all competitions for Leipzig in Germany last season and has remained in camp to support the team. Ljubicic also plays in Germany on the Schalke team which secured promotion from the second division last month.

Ljubicic has nine games for Austria but none at a major tournament. His last appearance was in a friendly against Moldova in September 2023 and he wasn't in the squad for any World Cup qualifiers. (AP)

Hong Kong seizes \$20m in fake goods: Just hours before the World Cup was set to kick off, Hong Kong authorities announced the seizure of 230,000 suspected counterfeit items worth an estimated \$20 million, including jerseys tied to the highly anticipated soccer tournament.

The seizure included about 30,000 jerseys, some so finely made that they're hard to distinguish from authentic team shirts, Wayne Chung, senior inspector at Hong Kong's customs department, said Thursday.

Most were copies of authentic player jerseys that are generally more expensive than fan-edition versions because they're better designed and made of higher-quality materials, he said.

All were destined for overseas markets, with nearly 80% set to be shipped to the Americas, where the World Cup is being jointly hosted by the United States, Mexico and Canada. (AP)

Jude stars as Tuchel hails England's warm-up display

NEW YORK, June 11, (Agencies): England coach Thomas Tuchel was pleased with his side's display in a convincing 3-0 win over Costa Rica in its last World Cup preparation game.

Although the kick-off in Orlando was delayed for an hour after a torrential storm flooded the pitch, England produced a crisp and aggressive performance, in contrast to Saturday's lackluster outing against New Zealand.

Declan Rice's early finish, an Anthony Gordon penalty and Ollie Watkins' late goal saw England cruise to victory as Tuchel's side dominated from start to finish, with Gordon and Jude Bellingham, who played in an advanced role, both impressing.

"I wished for that, I demanded that; I said before the match we want to push it to the next level, from intensity, commitment, cohesion, and we did that," said Tuchel, who said he was pleased with the progress his squad is making.

"We see the adaptation to the heat and we see things clicking, but we demanded it today from the players to take the next step and they did. The result takes care of itself, but we did it on a high level," he said.

Tuchel said earlier that the fact England hasn't won the World Cup since 1966 means it can't be considered one of the favorites for the tournament, but he was positive in his post-game assessment.

"The work rate gives us a good feeling and intensity, and we can impose ourselves on the opponent, and the movement is up front and not running backwards," he said, before singling out Bellingham for praise.

"I wanted to see Jude in the combination today for the first time with Harry [Kane], Elliot [Anderson] and Declan [Rice] at the center of the game. I know what Morgan [Rogers] gives us there, I just saw it so many times. It was the first time for Jude, and he buys into these ideas. He has to and he loves to do it, and that's part of our game." England will play a closed-doors friendly against local side Miami United on Thursday before facing Croatia in its first group match on June 17.



England's Jude Bellingham, center, heads the ball during an international friendly soccer match between Costa Rica and England in Orlando, Fla. (AP)

Host pins hopes on strikers for World Cup push

Balogun embraces US role ahead of home WC Challenge

IRVINE, Calif., June 11, (AP): Folarin Balogun chose to play for the United States precisely because of the opportunity he's about to get over the next few weeks.

Balogun could have stuck with England, where he grew up and with which he began his international career at the under-21 level. He also considered playing for his parents' Nigeria.

But three years ago, the goal-scoring striker chose to represent the country in which he was born – and instead of being stuck behind Harry Kane and Ollie Watkins with the Three Lions, the 24-year-old Balogun is likely to be an important player for the Americans in their home World Cup.

"I feel like my individual journey is a bit full circle now, approaching the World Cup," Balogun said this week at the U.S. training base in Orange County, California. "Especially with the World Cup being here, the opportunity to represent my nation in front of a home crowd is going to be something special for me, for my family, for my friends and for the team. I'm definitely looking forward to it, and very proud."

Balogun's decision was a coup for the U.S. because of his elite skill – he scored 19 goals for Ligue 1's Monaco this season – but also because he does a job that the American team has historically struggled to fill.

Ever since the U.S. began to achieve regular World Cup qualification nearly four decades ago, one big problem has prevented the Americans from making any additional progress: They can't win because they don't score enough.

A nation brimming with world-class athletes across the entire spectrum of sports has struggled to consistently produce soccer scorers, particularly the elite strikers who generate goals, excitement and wins.

The U.S. scored three goals in four matches at the Qatar World Cup four years ago, with just one coming from a striker. It's a generational issue: In their past eight World Cups since 1990, the Americans have scored a paltry 28 goals in 30 matches.

But the forwards likely to be at the front of the American formation this month are eager to prove they can change things, starting in the U.S. opener against Paraguay on Friday night.

Balogun and fellow striker Ricar-

do Pepi both have solid credentials in European club play, and they're entering the World Cup in strong form, with Pepi also coming off a 19-goal season for PSV Eindhoven.

Haji Wright, a Los Angeles native, scored that lone striker's goal for the U.S. in Qatar – even if he maybe did it accidentally – and he has improved since then, racking up 18 goals last season while Coventry earned promotion to the Premier League.

"We see this as a fantastic opportunity to play in front of our country," said Pepi, who wears the No. 9 shirt. "The pressure aside, we see it more as an opportunity."

The U.S. doesn't have to rely solely on its strikers to score, of course, Forward Christian Pulisic is still likely the most talented offense-

minded player in a U.S. shirt despite his recently ended scoring drought, while Weston McKennie regularly contributes offense for club and country.

"I just feel like we're deeper now," midfielder Gio Reyna said. "We've got a really, really deep squad. I feel like we can be really dangerous in all areas of attack, whether it's build-up, transition, or having the ball in the opponents' half. I think we're more complete now."

But productive strikers are usually vital to any hopes of sustained success in the sport – and all three of the Americans' top options are eager to build on their international success.

Pepi has 13 goals in 37 appearances for the U.S., while Wright has seven goals in 20 appearances, including the only World Cup experience in the group.

"In certain ways, (this World Cup) feels bigger, being here with our family and friends," Wright said. "It does add a little bit of additional pressure, but I think that's a good thing. It forces us to perform in ways maybe we didn't know we were capable of."

Balogun has scored nine goals in 27 appearances since joining the program – and he even scored a goal against Paraguay last November.

Balogun is the most compelling option in the deck, and he scored during the Americans' friendly victory over Senegal two weeks ago. U.S. captain and defender Tim Ream says Balogun is probably "the most annoying" American forward to defend in practice.



In this file photo, United States' Folarin Balogun celebrates after scoring against Canada during the first half of a CONCACAF Nations League final match in Las Vegas. (AP)

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Popular cafes all set to broadcast World Cup matches free during working hours.

Sports

Popular cafes to broadcast World Cup matches free during working hours

By Fares Ghaleb

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 11: Minister of Social Affairs, Family and Childhood Affairs Dr. Amthal Al-Huwailah announced during the reopening of Al-Shammari Café following extensive renovation works, that the ministry is pressing ahead with a comprehensive program to modernize traditional cafes throughout Kuwait and establish new facilities in areas currently underserved by such venues.

Al-Huwailah said the initiative is designed to improve services for citizens while safeguarding Kuwait's rich cultural heritage. She stressed that the ministry is committed to upgrading traditional cafes in line with the country's ongoing urban development, while preserving their unique social

and cultural character.

Meanwhile, Dr. Khaled Al-Ajmi, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Social Affairs, announced that popular cafes will broadcast World Cup soccer matches free of charge during official working hours.

He said the initiative is part of the ministry's and the Popular Cafes Board's efforts to diversify services and activities for visitors, while strengthening the role of popular cafes as social and cultural gathering spaces for different segments of society.

Speaking during the reopening of Al-Shammari Cafe following renovation works, Al-Ajmi said the ministry, in coordination with relevant authorities, is working to expand the network of popular cafes by opening several new locations in the coming period.

He explained that the Popular Cafes Board, together with its work



Dr Amthal Al-Huwailah honors an official.

teams and national staff, is continuing efforts to enhance service quality, upgrade facilities and improve

the overall environment of popular cafes to meet the needs of their patrons as well as preserve their heri-



Dr. Khaled Al-Ajmi, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Social Affairs.

tage and social traditions.

The ministry gives special atten-

tion to popular cafes, considering them important social facilities that serve as meeting places for members of the community and reflect an aspect of Kuwaiti identity.

Al-Ajmi said the reopening of Al-Shammari Café in its new form is part of a series of development projects being implemented by the ministry in cooperation with the Board of Directors of Popular Cafes.

He emphasized the commitment to providing a suitable and comfortable environment for café visitors, as well as supporting and empowering national staff working in this sector to enhance services and improve operational quality.

Al-Ajmi indicated that the next phase will include further development projects and expansions, in line with the growing popularity of popular cafes and to strengthen their social and cultural role.

Knicks on brink of title after record comeback



New York Knicks center Karl-Anthony Towns (32) dunks past San Antonio Spurs forward Victor Wembanyama during the first half of Game 4 of the NBA Finals basketball series in New York. (AP)

NY rallies from 29 down to beat Spurs

NEW YORK, June 11, (AP): A record-breaking comeback, capped off by what could go down as a legendary play.

The long road back to the top of the NBA is almost complete for the New York Knicks, and the step they took Wednesday night was unforgettable.

The Knicks came from 29 points down and moved to the brink of their first championship since 1973 by beating the San Antonio Spurs 107-106 in Game 4 of the finals on OG Anunoby's tip-in with 1.2 seconds remaining.

"That has to be the most iconic shot in the history of New York basketball," Knicks coach Mike Brown said.

It's certainly high on the list - as high as Anunoby leaped when Jalen Brunson's long 3-point shot bounced off the front of the rim, with his right hand stretching high to softly flick it in.

The Knicks, who have just two titles in their 80-year history and hadn't even been to the NBA Finals since 1999, have a 3-1 lead and three chances

to win the best-of-seven series - starting with Game 5 on Saturday night in San Antonio.

It looked impossible early, when the Spurs rolled to a 27-point halftime lead. But Brunson helped bring the Knicks back with 36 points and Anunoby finished with 33.

No team had come from more than 24 points down in a finals game, when Boston did it against the Lakers in 2008, since the NBA began keeping detailed play-by-play for all four quarters in 1997. The Spurs led 81-52 in the third quarter.

"We're a resilient group. We've been through a lot," Anunoby said. "We've come back plenty of times when we're behind. Just staying with it, weathering the storm, not being too down or angry or frustrated."

The only bigger comeback on record in any playoff game was 31 points by the Los Angeles Clippers against Golden State in Game 2 of a first-round series in 2019.

"You look at it when you're down 29 of, 'OK, let's get it to 20.' There's three minutes left in the third quarter, we're down 18, you're thinking,

"Let's get it to 10," forward Josh Hart said.

"In the fourth quarter, you're like, this is winning time. Anything can happen."

And it did.

The Knicks had their 13-game winning streak snapped in Game 3 and seemed headed for a second straight defeat throughout the first half, when Victor Wembanyama and the Spurs opened the biggest half-time lead by a visiting team in the finals.

But the young Spurs, who made 11 of their first 16 3-pointers, went cold in the second half, going 3 for 17 behind the arc as the Knicks outscored them 58-30.

"We got on our heels - we missed some shots," Spurs coach Mitch Johnson said. "It's disappointing, to say the least."

Delirious fans inside Madison Square Garden sang along to Journey's "Don't Stop Believin'" a few minutes after watching something that seemed almost impossible.

Wembanyama had 24 points and 13 rebounds but shot just 9 for 25 from the field.

Kuwait drawn in tough group at Germany World Championship

By Khaled Al-Enezi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

MUNICH, June 11: The draw for the 2027 IHF World Men's Handball Championship, held in Germany, and has placed Kuwait in a demanding Group D alongside France, Argentina, and Brazil, setting up one of the most competitive pools in the preliminary round.

Kuwait faces a significant challenge against three experienced sides with strong international pedigree. Despite the difficulty of the group, Kuwait's participation marks an important milestone and an opportunity to showcase the continued progress of its handball program in recent years.

The tournament will also serve as a platform for Kuwait to underline its growing ambitions on the world

stage, following a successful qualification campaign in the Asian qualifiers that secured its place among the world's elite.

Fans in Kuwait will be hoping for a spirited performance from "Al-Azraq" as the team prepares to test itself against top-tier global opposition.

Group A: Germany, Serbia, Tunisia, and Uruguay.

Group B: Egypt, Italy, Cape Verde, and Saudi Arabia

Group C: Croatia, Spain, Chile, and Turkey.

Group E: Sweden, Norway, Greece, and Qatar.

Group F: Portugal, the Faroe Islands, Poland, and Algeria.

Group G: Denmark, Slovenia, the United States, and Angola.

Group H: Iceland, North Macedonia, Bahrain, and Japan.

Belgium's Doku expected to be available against Egypt

RENTON, Wash., June 11, (AP): Belgium winger Jérémie Doku returned to practice Wednesday, a day after reportedly leaving a training session early, as the team prepares for its World Cup opener against Egypt on Monday.

The 24-year-old Doku, who plays for Premier League club Manchester City, experienced some breathing issues on Tuesday during a closed practice, according to Belgian newspaper HLN. Before practice ended, Doku went inside the indoor training facility of Major League Soccer's Seattle Sounders for precautionary reasons, the report said.

During the portion of Wednesday's training session open to reporters, Doku was a full participant. Winger Alexis Saelemaekers said he believes the national team's training staff can keep Doku in shape for the tournament.

"When Jérémie steps off the field, it is logical that there are immediate question marks," Saelemaekers said in French. "But it is nothing serious."

Doku has represented Belgium on the international level since 2020. In World Cup qualifying in 2025, Doku scored a goal in a 4-3 win over Wales. He put in two in a 7-0 victory over Liechtenstein, a result which clinched Belgium's berth in this year's World Cup.

Netherlands goalkeeper Bart Verbruggen was held out of training Wednesday, two days after hurting his hip in a collision during a tune-up match with Uzbekistan, leaving his status in question for the team's World Cup opener against Japan this weekend.



Belgium's Jeremy Doku in action during the international friendly soccer match between Croatia and Belgium in Rijeka, Croatia. (AP)

The 23-year-old Verbruggen is the first-choice goalkeeper for Netherlands coach Ronald Koeman. The Brighton standout was replaced by Mark Flekken in the 2-1 win over Uzbekistan, while Robin Roefs also is on the World Cup roster.

The Netherlands begins pursuit of its first World Cup title on Sunday in Dallas. The Dutch follow their match against Japan with group games against Sweden on June 20 and Tunisia on June 25.

"We have to wait. We think (Verbruggen) can reach the match on Sunday, but day-by-day we have to wait for that," Koeman said after a light, 90-minute workout at the training home of the NWSL club Kansas City Current. "The rest of the boys are physically OK."

Al-Arabi and Qadsia renew rivalry

Kuwait Club eyes fifth straight league title

By Hassan Mosa

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 11: League leader Kuwait Club will aim to take another major step toward a fifth consecutive Zain Premier League title when it visits Salmiya tonight at 8:45 p.m. in the 18th and final round of the preliminary stage.

At the same time, Al-Nasr hosts Kazma at Ali Al-Salem Stadium in a match that could have a significant impact on the race for the top six positions.

The round concludes tomorrow with the highly anticipated derby between traditional rivals Al-Arabi and Qadsia at Sabah Al-Salem Stadium in Mansouriya, while Al-Tadamon take on Al-Fahaheel at Al-Sadaqa

and Al-Salam Stadium.

The meeting between table-topper Kuwait Club (43 points) and fourth-placed Salmiya (29 points) is expected to be the standout fixture of the round. Victory for the White Knights, combined with a Qadsia stumble against Al-Arabi, would leave the defending champions within touching distance of securing their fifth straight league crown and 21st overall.

Kuwait Club is determined to enter the Championship Round with maximum confidence and reinforce their status as the strongest side in the competition.

Salmiya, meanwhile, is chasing a valuable result to strengthen its hopes of securing a continental berth next season. The Sky Blues arrive in

excellent form after recording back-to-back victories over Al-Fahaheel and Al-Shabab.

Elsewhere, seventh-placed Al-Nasr (16 points) is looking to bounce back from its defeat to Al-Arabi and continues its improved performances in recent weeks. Kazma, fifth with 27 points, will be aiming to return to winning ways and keep alive its ambitions of finishing in the upper positions.

Attention will shift tomorrow to the fierce showdown between Al-Arabi and Qadsia, a match that could determine who finishes the preliminary stage in second place.

Qadsia, currently second with 31 points, still possess a slim mathematical chance of challenging for the title but require a series of favorable

results. The Yellow side will also be eager to avenge their 2-1 defeat to Al-Arabi in the first meeting between the teams this season.

The recent emergence of several talented young players has helped Qadsia maintain strong form heading into the derby.

Al-Arabi, third on 29 points, is equally motivated as they seek to continue its recent success against its traditional rivals and claim another crucial victory in front of their supporters.

In the final match of the round, eighth-placed Al-Tadamon (15 points) will be fighting for a result that could boost its survival hopes, while sixth-placed Al-Fahaheel (21 points) has already secured its place in next season's Premier League.



Bader Al-Mutawa under pressure from Al-Arabi player, but still composed on the ball as he leads his team's attacking play.