



PAM bid in regulating labor market hailed Page 3



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## KUWAIT CROWN PRINCE WELCOMES PROGRESS TOWARD IRAN-U.S. DEAL

**Opinion**  
**Ahmed Al-Jarallah**  
 Editor-in-Chief, the Arab Times

# Kuwait mutes Iran spy case

### Trump bets on Sunday peace pact

**KUWAIT CITY, June 13, (Agencies): His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah received a telephone call on Thursday from US President Donald Trump, a Diwan statement said.**

During the call, His Highness conveyed greetings of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-

Sabah to President Trump.

The call also included a review of latest developments on the regional and international scenes, particularly those related to diplomatic efforts to de-escalate tensions in the region.

The two sides discussed ways to coordinate on the agreement expected to be reached between the United States of America and the Islamic Republic of Iran to end the war.

Continued on Page 5



Photo by Samer Shiqer

A fiery sunset crowns Kuwait City as beachgoers soak in the sea, escaping yet still wrapped in rising heat.

## Justice Ministry logs surge in April caseload

### Arrest warrants for debtors hit historic low

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

**KUWAIT CITY, June 13:** The Statistics and Research Department at the Ministry of Justice revealed that more than half a million judicial and enforcement

procedures and transactions were recorded in various sectors in April, including judicial notification, family court, rental, inheritance and travel ban, showing the rising workload in judicial facilities and the expansion of reliance

on electronic services.

Statistics showed that the Enforcement General Department handled the largest share of the workload with a total of 417,172 procedures.

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## Social security and those whose citizenship has been revoked

SUSTAINING social stability is the foundation of any organized system in any country.

Therefore, decisions must be made with a calm approach, carefully weighing the negative consequences before the positive outcomes.

The decision-maker takes the necessary measures to maximize the benefits of the present in order to build for the future and serve future generations.

This introduction is necessary to discuss the decision issued by the Public Institution for Social Security (PIFSS) regarding the refund of social security contributions to employees whose citizenship has been revoked.

I would like to point out an important issue. For some time now, annual reports have been issued about an actuarial deficit that PIFSS is facing.

While this deficit is theoretically a book deficit, it is still a deficit that needs to be reduced.

The employees covered by this decision have served the institutions where they worked for many years, and ultimately, their citizenship was revoked for one reason or another. The installments paid by both employees and employers over the years were invested and generated profits for PIFSS. This means they are entitled to a share of those profits.

Many countries have social security systems even for resident workers who pay installments during their employment and then receive pensions after retirement.

Some countries grant such residents permanent residency based on the compensation they are entitled to. When a worker is forced to stop working or loses their job for any reason, they receive monthly payments until they find a new job. Social security institutions invest the funds in profitable projects.

When PIFSS pays money to those whose citizenship has been revoked, whether they have obtained citizenship in another country or not, the amounts paid to them have previously generated profits. Since these workers will not receive the profits, who will benefit from those profits?

As per general administrative principles, the side effects can be more serious than the decision itself due to their potential immediate and future consequences.

Therefore, the decision-maker should strive to mitigate the impact and transform the threat into an opportunity.

Accordingly, expatriate workers whose citizenship has been revoked should be utilized as an added societal force that contributes to boosting commercial activity and, in turn, supporting the national product, even if only by a few thousand dinars annually.

When these individuals leave Kuwait after receiving their due compensation, the country loses a significant workforce and their contribution to driving commercial activity forward.

Kuwait possesses considerable potential, some of which is being wasted. These individuals have left the labor market, resulting in reduced spending on goods and other projects. Therefore, it is important to develop new laws that facilitate the use of their skills, and indeed, the potential of all residents in Kuwait.

As a capable and strong nation, Kuwait needs to continuously develop its laws to serve the future, foster societal progress, strengthen the state, and create a stable environment for all types of businesses, from basic services and small enterprises to major development projects. These legislative amendments contribute to creating an industrial and service-oriented environment that enhances Kuwait's competitive position among regional countries. Gulf states are currently moving towards diversifying their economies and benefiting from the expertise of their expatriate residents.

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### NewsWatch

**ISTANBUL:** Turkish official newspaper published on Saturday a presidential statement ratifying a Turkish-Saudi agreement on joint exemption of entry permit for diplomatic passport holders.

According to the agreement signed by Turkish President **Recep Tayyip Erdogan**, the exemption includes entry to both countries, transit and temporary residency for a period not exceeding 90 days. (KUNA)

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**Boursa Kuwait and KCC launch annual blood donation campaign with the theme of Invest in Life, Donate Blood**



**Kuwait Finance House wins 3 Global Private Banking Innovation Awards**



Russian ambassador joins members of the diplomatic corps and guests for a group photo.

## Russia signals strong Kuwait bond at National Day event

**By Fares Ghaleb**  
 Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

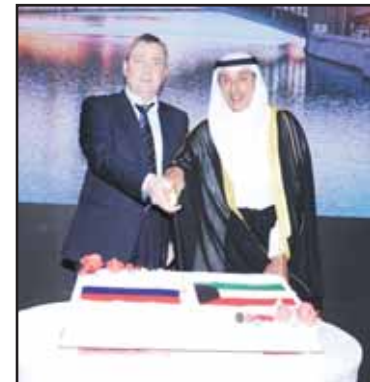
**KUWAIT CITY, June 13:** Russian Ambassador to Kuwait Vladimir Zheltov asserted that Russia considers Kuwait a trusted partner and a close friend, indicating that relations between the two countries continue to advance in various sectors and praised the wisdom, foresight and balanced approach of the Kuwaiti leadership in addressing regional and international issues.

Ambassador Zheltov made the statement at a reception hosted by the Russian Embassy on the occasion of the National Day of Russia. Deputy Foreign Affairs Minister Hamad Al-Mashaan, a number of senior officials, diplomats, and members of the diplomatic corps attended the event.

He clarified that although the National Day of Russia was declared only 35 years ago, it symbolizes the continuity of the Russian nation, whose historical roots date back to more than one thousand years ago.

He stated that throughout its history, Russia has succeeded in building a unique civilization, covering a large part of Eurasia and it is known for its rich cultural heritage, lasting traditions and deeply rooted values.

On the situation in Eastern Europe, Zheltov said Russia views the crisis as a result of the failure to take



Photos by Rezk Tawfiq  
 National Day reception cake cutting with Russian Ambassador to Kuwait Vladimir Zheltov and Deputy Foreign Affairs Minister Hamad Al-Mashaan.

its legitimate security concerns into account, including the ongoing expansion of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) toward Russian borders. He stressed that safeguarding the national interests of Russia, maintaining its sovereignty, and ensuring the security of its citizens remain the core priorities of the Russian policy.

About the Middle East, he indicated that the region is facing complex political and security challenges, which necessitate collective responses based

Continued on Page 4

### Other Voices

## Before you post: What I learned inside State Security courtrooms

**By Dr. Fawaz Khaled Alkhateeb**  
 Managing Partner, Taher Group Law Firm

Over the years, I have defended clients in numerous State Security cases. During the past three months, amid the regional tensions and the unlawful Iranian attacks that placed national security concerns at the forefront of public attention, I found myself once again inside State Security courtrooms.

The experience reinforced a lesson I have learned repeatedly: what the public sees in a social media post is often very different from what a court sees.

Today, with Kuwait's State Security Court preparing to hear 33 new cases involving allegations of sympathy and incitement, that lesson is more relevant than ever.

Whenever these cases make headlines, public debate usually focuses on a single question: What exactly was written?

Inside the courtroom, however, the discussion is often much broader. Courts do not simply read words. They read context. They examine timing. They consider surrounding circumstances. They evaluate how a message may be understood and what impact it may have beyond the person who wrote it.

Over the years, I have learned that many social media users view online platforms as an extension of private conversation. The law often views them differently. A message posted in seconds can be shared thousands of times, reach audiences far beyond its original target, and become part of a much larger public discussion.

This is why courts frequently look beyond the author's intention alone. They may also consider how an ordinary reader could understand the message and what consequences may reasonably arise from its publication.

Another lesson from inside these

Continued on Page 5

## Kuwait acts on co-op 'failures'

**By Fares Ghaleb**  
 Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

**KUWAIT CITY, June 13:** Minister of Social, Family and Childhood Affairs Dr. Amthal Al-Huwailah issued a directive on the referral of several financial and administrative inspectors tasked to oversee cooperative societies to the Public Prosecution, as it has been proven that they either colluded or failed in their duties to uncover grave financial and administrative violations committed by the boards of directors of some cooperatives, according to reliable sources.

Continued on Page 5



Ministry of Social Affairs photo  
 Minister Al-Huwailah conducts on-site inspection of rehabilitation facility.



### Prayer Timings

Fajr ..... 03:13 Asr ..... 15:22  
 Sunrise .. 04:48 Maghrib .. 18:48  
 Zohr ..... 11:48 Isha ..... 20:21



HH Amir Sheikh Meshal



Ferdinand Romualdez Marcos Jr

## Amir felicitates Philippines Pres. on Independence Day

KUWAIT CITY, June 13, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent, on Friday, a cable of congratulations to the President of the Philippines, Ferdinand Romualdez Marcos Jr., on his country's Independence Day.

In the cable, His Highness the Amir wished President Marcos good health and well-being, and wished more progress and prosperity to the Philippines and its people.

### Crown Prince congratulates

His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-

Sabah sent, on Friday, a cable of congratulations to the President of the Philippines, Ferdinand Romualdez Marcos Jr., on his country's Independence Day.

In the cable, His Highness wished President Marcos good health and well-being, and more progress and prosperity.

### PM congratulates

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah sent, on Friday, a cable of congratulations to the President of the Philippines, Ferdinand Romualdez Marcos Jr., on his country's Independence Day.

## Chinese envoy cherishes Kuwaiti culture, heritage

By Fares Ghaleb

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 13: In a scene that reflected the warmth of Kuwaiti hospitality and the richness of its cultural heritage, Chinese Ambassador to Kuwait Yang Xin visited the Al-Fayez Diwaniya, where he immersed in the Kuwaiti cultural experience, traditions and customs distinguishing the Kuwaiti society.

During the visit, the Ambassador wore the traditional Kuwaiti 'bisht' -- a symbol of prestige, dignity and social status. He sat among the attendees at the diwaniya, shared Arabic coffee, and participated in friendly conversations, while the fragrance of oud filled the atmosphere, creating a heritage-inspired setting, which showcased an authentic aspect of the Kuwaiti identity.

He captured and shared moments during the visit in a video posted on his Instagram account. The video showed him wearing the 'bisht', and receiving warm and enthusiastic welcome from those present. The video attracted significant attention from his followers and generated widespread engagement.

Accompanying the video was a lighthearted caption by the Ambassador who wrote: "He who lives with people for 40 days becomes one of them, and I, in one swoop, became a sheikh... Thank you to my Kuwaiti friends." The statement reflected his happiness over the



Al-Seyassah photos

Chinese Ambassador to Kuwait Yang Xin during his visit to the Al-Fayez Diwaniya.

experience and his appreciation for the generosity, hospitality and warm reception extended to him.

The visit was not just a social gathering, as it also served as a meaningful example of cultural and human exchange between Kuwait and China. It provided the Ambassador with the opportunity to experience one of the most important social traditions of Kuwait—the diwaniya, which serves as a platform for dialogue, com-

munication and the exchange of ideas, while functioning as a venue for receiving guests and preserving and showcasing the Kuwaiti heritage.

The visit depicted the image of Kuwait as a society that values and preserves its traditions and cultural legacy, while seeking to strengthen bridges of communication, understanding, and friendship with peoples and cultures from around the world.

## Kuwait, India to expand ties in multiple arenas

KUWAIT CITY, June 13: Governor of Ahmadi Sheikh Hamoud Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah met with Ambassador of the Republic of India to the State of Kuwait Paramita Tripathi in his office at the Ahmadi Governorate headquarters on Thursday.

After the exchange of greetings and introductions, the two sides had a cordial discussion on enhancing bilateral relations between the State of Kuwait and the Republic of India in different fields.

During the meeting, the Governor warmly welcomed the Ambassador and wished her success in carrying out her duties, expressing hope that her tenure will further strengthen the long-standing ties between the two friendly countries.

Meanwhile, Ambassador Tripathi expressed her appreciation and gratitude for the warm reception, while praising the attention and support extended to the diplomatic mission and to Indian citizens residing in Kuwait at the official and public levels.



Ahmadi Governorate photo

Governor of Ahmadi Sheikh Hamoud Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah meets Ambassador of the Republic of India Paramita Tripathi in his office at the Ahmadi Governorate headquarters.

# 'Respect ceasefire deals in thriving battle zones'

Global religious summit urges sustainable peace

KUALA LUMPUR, June 13, (KUNA): Religious leaders and participants in the Third International Summit of Religious Leaders on Friday called for consolidating ceasefires in conflict zones.

In the summit's final communique, participants also stressed the need to halt arms races, particularly those involving weapons of mass destruction, and underscored the importance of utilizing international mechanisms and peaceful legal means to address growing crises and promote dialogue and understanding.

The summit, held in the Malaysian capital Kuala Lumpur, brought together around 1,500 religious leaders, scholars, academics, policymakers and community leaders from 31 countries. Kuwait's Ambassador to Malaysia, Rashid Mohammad Al-Saleh, attended the event.

The communique noted that participants discussed recent tensions in the Middle East and their significant economic repercussions on communities, emphasizing that the international community

must assume its responsibilities toward humanitarian tragedies, particularly the suffering of the Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip.

They called for serious efforts to halt violations and ensure the protection of civilians in accordance with international conventions and norms.

Participants warned that accelerating global transformations, rising polarization, extremism and growing feelings of fear and uncertainty among younger generations require more balanced and prudent approaches rooted in shared human values while countering hate speech, racism and extremism.

They stressed the need to expand areas of human partnership and regional integration to build societies that respect religious and cultural diversity, safeguard human dignity and transform differences into opportunities for cooperation and understanding.

The communique highlighted youth empowerment as both a civilizational necessity and a strategic investment, calling for strengthening intellectual resilience, promoting values, developing skills and leveraging modern technologies and artificial intelligence while mitigating their social and ideological risks.

Participants affirmed that religion remains a fundamental source of values that promote ethical responsibility and guide human efforts toward goodness, reform and sustainable development.

The summit welcomed the contributions of the Makkah Document and the initiative for

building bridges among Islamic schools of thought in promoting social peace, managing diversity and protecting societies from extremism and intolerance.

Participants announced the launch of a global award for religious diplomacy, sponsored by international organizations and the Muslim World League, to honor individuals and institutions that have made outstanding contributions to promoting global peace, moderation, tolerance, coexistence and conflict resolution.

Opening the summit, Malaysia's Deputy King Sultan Nazrin Muizzuddin Shah highlighted the challenges facing youth in a world marked by conflict, displacement, economic insecurity, digital polarization and declining trust in institutions.

He warned that hate speech and extremism increasingly reach young people through algorithms and AI-generated misinformation, urging religious institutions to engage youth in their own language and through their preferred platforms.

Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim said ceasefires in conflict zones are often violated before they can take hold, while military operations continue even during negotiations, describing this as evidence of a profound moral crisis in the international system.

He pointed to the continuing destruction and humanitarian suffering in Gaza and Lebanon as evidence of the need for a greater role by religious leaders in defending moral and humanitarian values and influencing decision-makers.



Al-Saleh



Photos by Rizk Taufik

Top and above: Some photos taken at the event.

## Smart cities, greening studied as young envoys talent tapped

By Fares Ghaleb

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 13: The Fourth Youth Ambassadors Program concluded after seven months of training and awareness activities, with support and funding from the British Embassy in Kuwait, in cooperation with the Canadian Embassy and the Office of the United Nations Resident Coordinator.

This year's edition of the program focused on Sustainable Development Goal 11 -- creating more sustainable and resilient cities and communities.

The program witnessed the participation of 41 young ambassadors, high school students aged between 14 and 18, who engaged in workshops and dialogue sessions covering different topics, such as urban planning, sustainable transportation, green infrastructure, waste management, climate change adaptation, cultural heritage preservation, and promotion of social inclusion.

In a speech delivered on behalf of Deputy Foreign Affairs Minister Ambassador Sadiq Marafi, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs for International Organizations Counselor Abdulmohsen Al-Mansour asserted that investing in youth potential is essential for building a more sustainable and prosperous future. He said the program helped participants gain a deeper understanding of inclusive and safe cities, while contributing to the development of their leadership, communication and decision-making skills.

Meanwhile, Ghada Al-Taher, the

United Nations Resident Coordinator in Kuwait and Chairperson of the Steering Committee for the Sustainable Development Goals, affirmed that the program served as an effective platform for raising youth awareness on issues related to urban sustainability.

She indicated that participants explored various subjects, such as smart cities, green spaces and social inclusion from a more comprehensive sustainability perspective.

On the sidelines of the closing ceremony, Al-Taher expressed hope that wisdom and dialogue will prevail in order to maintain regional security and stability.

She also confirmed the ongoing coordination between the United Nations, Kuwaiti government entities, and regional partners to enhance preparedness and exchange expertise in crisis management.

Deputy Head of Mission at the British Embassy Stuart Summers disclosed that the program provided participants with opportunities to engage with international experts and institutions, gaining practical experience in leadership and teamwork. He emphasized importance of cooperation and shared responsibility in addressing global and local challenges.

Canadian Ambassador to Kuwait Tara Scheurwater stated that the program contributed to the development of communication and teamwork skills and promoting respect for diversity among participants despite the complex regional and international circumstances surrounding this year's edition of the program.

## Gang of Asians held in sale of forged stamps to expats

By Munif Naif

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 13: A gang of five Bshis involved in forgery and the illegal sale of government stamps to expatriates and businesses has been arrested.

In a press statement, the Ministry of Interior indicated that the arrest is in line with the ongoing security efforts of the Criminal Investigation General Department under the Criminal Security Sector in the ministry.

According to the ministry, the results of investigations showed that the suspects sold KD5 and KD10 government stamps at prices below their official value in order to generate illicit profits.

The suspects were also found to be distributing forged government stamps in and outside hospital premises.

The ministry disclosed that the arrest

and search operations led to the confiscation of a laptop, a printer and rolls of stamp paper used in carrying out the forgery activities.

Investigations also proved that the accused stole the paper rolls used for the production of the stamps from a hospital and utilized them in their counterfeiting operations.

The ministry confirmed that the necessary legal measures were taken against the suspects, and that they, along with the confiscated items, were referred to the competent authorities for further legal action.

It stressed that it is keen on continuing the security campaigns to apprehend anyone involved in the embezzlement of public funds or the falsification of official documents, warning that legal action will be taken against all those proven to be responsible.

### Other Voices

## Tips for hearing impaired and those at risk of hearing loss

By Ahmad alsarraf

WITH age and exposure to noise, environmental pollution, machinery, and loudspeakers, some people may experience gradual hearing loss, which can eventually lead to severe impairment requiring a hearing aid.

Before choosing a hearing aid, the following should be considered:

1. A thorough hearing assessment or audiogram is necessary to determine the level of hearing loss and whether hearing aids are suitable. The examination also helps rule out underlying causes that cannot be addressed with hearing aids, such as excessive earwax, infections, or middle ear problems.

2. Choose the appropriate device and try it for at least two weeks, ensuring the option to return it and avoiding any offer that does not include this option.

3. Select either a battery-operated or rechargeable device depending on the user's needs and circumstances.

One type of hearing aid is the behind-the-ear model, which has a thin wire that extends into the ear canal. This type is very common and suitable for mild to severe hearing loss. It is also easy to adjust and repair.

There are also hearing aids that fit discreetly inside the ear canal, making them nearly unnoticeable and ideal for mild to moderate hearing loss. However, smaller models typically have shorter battery life and fewer features.

Generally, no hearing aid can fully restore hearing. Most, however, come with smartphone apps that allow precise volume adjustment in different environments. Some hearing aids also support Bluetooth, which is useful for making phone calls or watching videos on a phone or TV, allowing audio to be streamed directly to the hearing aids.

The price of hearing aids varies considerably depending on the brand, technology, features, and size. Therefore, it is essential to check the total cost before purchasing. In some cases, a seller may offer a reasonable price initially, only for the buyer to later discover that addi-

tional parts, such as a charger, are required and are often not inexpensive.

It is also important to obtain a warranty of at least two years and to consult a qualified audiologist and a reputable hearing care clinic to ensure proper and ongoing support.

It is important not to have unrealistic expectations. Hearing aids are advanced audio devices, not a cure. They improve speech comprehension but do not fully restore hearing to its original state.

The brain needs time (often around 6 weeks) to adjust to hearing aids. Therefore, daily use during the trial period is essential for a realistic assessment of comfort and benefit.

It is recommended to put on hearing aids after getting dressed and after using hair products, creams, or perfumes to prevent sprays or powders from entering the microphones. Users should also learn when and how to clean their hearing aids properly.

If hearing difficulties persist, it may indicate changes in hearing or that the device needs reprogramming or repair.



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# diwaniya ديوانية

A DIGEST OF PUBLIC OPINION

## Kuwait, Iran: Struggle for sovereignty and influence

"THE repeated Iranian aggression towards Kuwait cannot be viewed in isolation from a broader strategic context. It extends beyond localized disputes to touch upon the structural framework of Iran's regional strategy," Yemeni writer **Taha Hussein Bafadhel** wrote for *Al-Seyassah* daily.

"A close examination of the nature of recent Iranian pressures and statements, particularly those concerning the Durra gas field, and threats of unilaterally imposing realities in the submerged area, reveals a recurring effort to test the waters and gauge the limits of resolve of a smaller yet more vital neighbor in the delicate balance of power in the northern Gulf.

"The issue is not a delay or retreat in Kuwait's current policy, but rather a fundamental shift in the nature of its approach.

"Kuwait today appears less inclined towards the traditional diplomatic accommodation that has long characterized its foreign policy and increasingly committed to strict legal and sovereign principles that leave little room for ambiguity or interpretation.

"This internal shift is clearly reflected in the government's comprehensive approach to purifying national identity, addressing illegal naturalization, and revoking citizenships obtained through illegitimate means. This step represents a reconstruction of the concept of a fortified state.

"As history teaches us, domestic and foreign affairs are interconnected. Kuwait's determination to close internal loopholes that could be exploited as leverage or for soft power infiltration sends a clear message to its regional neighbors - the era of gray-scale maneuvering is over.

"Iran, which has long been adept at exploiting the internal contradictions of other countries, now finds itself facing a Kuwaiti model that seeks to eliminate any room for political bargaining or blackmail. This is pushing Tehran to shift the arena of the conflict from politics to the economic and maritime spheres, with the aim of imposing a new negotiating reality.

"It is a mistake to reduce Iranian ambitions to the borders of Iraq. For the Iranian regional project, Iraq has never been the final destination, but rather a launching pad and a bridge to the other side of the Gulf and the Arabian Peninsula.

"Kuwait, with its unique geopolitical position, represents one of the most sensitive points in the regional balance of power and a vulnerable flank that Tehran has consistently sought to keep under the pressure of strategic uncertainty.

"The repeated Iranian political and media provocations reflect Tehran's desire to prevent the emergence of a cohesive and fully stable Gulf front.

"Kuwait, through its full and unwavering coordination with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia on the issue of the shared oil fields, stands as an obstacle to the Iranian vision, which has always preferred bilateral negotiations, where it is easier to leverage a surplus of power to impose conditions.

"A return to the roots of the relationship reveals that ties between Kuwait and Iran have always been governed by the dual realities of unavoidable neighborliness and mutual suspicion.

"The former Imperial Iran, and later Revolutionary Iran, never abandoned the view of the Gulf as a natural sphere of imperial influence.

"In contrast, Kuwait developed over the decades a flexible diplomacy based on balance and the avoidance of regional alignments, relying on a broad network of Arab and international support. However, this historical flexibility never meant compromising on sovereignty or national resources.

"Today, when Tehran finds that this flexibility has transformed into institutional firmness, supported by a recalibration of the sovereign house from within and close strategic coordination with Riyadh, it resorts to its usual method of harsh escalation in an attempt to reshuffle the cards and test Kuwait's capacity for resilience and defiance.

"At its core, this continuing tension is a clash of wills between two fundamentally different approaches. One is the logic of the sovereign state based on law and documented international agreements, represented by Kuwait and its current firm policies. The other is the logic of the "revolution," which views borders as flexible lines that can be redrawn through facts and shifting balances of power on the ground.

"Kuwait's legal and historical position is strong and steadfast, backed by Gulf and international consensus. "What truly unsettles Tehran, how-

ever, is not the legal documents filed in the archives of the United Nations, but rather this new pulse in Kuwaiti policy, a pulse that rejects concessions under pressure and insists that protecting national security begins with safeguarding identity and preserving national cohesion at home, and ends with refusing to surrender a single drop of gas at sea."

### Also:

"There are issues that may appear at first glance to be administrative, housing, or legal files, but in reality, they are painful human stories hidden behind numbers, decisions, and official documents," columnist **Bassam Fahad Thunayan Al-Ghanim** wrote for *Al-Seyassah* daily.

"The issue of citizens who "sold their homes" is one such case. Therefore, I address this message today to His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Al-Abdullah Al-Ahmed Al-Sabah, the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef Al-Sabah, the Minister of State for Housing Affairs Engineer Abdul Latif Hamed Al-Mishari, the Governor of Jahra Hamad Jassim Al-Habashi, Sheikh Bibi Al-Yousef Al-Sabah who has made providing housing for Kuwaiti families her priority, and to every official who has the authority or influence to address this painful human issue.

"What we are discussing today is not merely a housing or administrative issue, but a matter concerning over 500 Kuwaiti families living in a state of anxiety, fear, and uncertainty after receiving eviction notices from homes they have inhabited for many years and considered their final refuge.

"Unfortunately, many people are unaware of the reality of those who "sold their homes," mistakenly believing they were granted ready-made government housing and then sold it for profit. The reality is quite different.

"Many of them did not even wait for government housing. They purchased their homes on the open market through their own efforts, using loans from the Kuwait Credit Bank. They repaid those loans in full and were later forced to sell their homes due to various circumstances. Some were living in old houses in need of renovation, while others were compelled to sell for family, health, or financial reasons.

"Others were simply seeking better housing for their families, as thousands of citizens do, but they did not anticipate the sharp rise in real estate, land, and housing prices.

"Purchasing a new home has become a distant dream for many citizens who sold their homes years ago. The state provided housing solutions for this group in accordance with the laws in force at the time. They legally occupied these residences, signing the required contracts and paying their rent regularly.

"In many cases, these residences were not properly prepared for occupancy. Many were forced to carry out repairs, renovations, and finishing work at their own expense. Some even spent considerable sums, taking out loans

and accumulating debts over 10 to 15 years to make these homes suitable for their families.

"Today, eviction notices have been issued, shocking them once again. What is most painful is that most of those affected are no longer young and are unable to start over. The majority are over 60 years old, many are over 65 or 70, and some are 75 or 80.

"Is it easy for a citizen of this age to begin searching for a new home? Is it fair to tell a man who dedicated his life to serving his country, spent his savings, and took on loans and debts that he is now required to vacate and find alternative accommodation?"

"The issue is no longer about walls and roofs, but about psychological, social, and human stability. Eviction orders do not only mean leaving a home; they mean uprooting years of memories. No one is calling for new housing applicants to be deprived of their rights.

"However, a just state is capable of ensuring fairness for all and finding balanced solutions that preserve the rights of new applicants while safeguarding the dignity and stability of more than 500 Kuwaiti families.

"We hope that His Highness the Crown Prince, His Highness the Prime Minister, and the relevant authorities will reconsider this matter with compassion and humanity, and explore more equitable alternatives, whether by extending current contracts, granting a suitable grace period, compensating families for their renovation and repair expenses, or finding housing options that preserve their dignity and stability."

— Compiled by Simi K. Kutty



Taha Bafadhel



KUNA photo  
First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah chairs the meeting of the Board of Directors of the Public Authority for Manpower.

## PAM bid in regulating labor market hailed

KUWAIT CITY, June 13, (KUNA): Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah, First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior, chaired the recent meeting of the Board of Directors of the Public Authority for Manpower (PAM).

In a press statement on Saturday, PAM disclosed that present at the meeting were the newly appointed board members, during which several items on the agenda were discussed and the final accounts of the authority were approved.

According to PAM, Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef welcomed the new board members at the beginning of the meeting and expressed his wish for their success in carrying out their duties.

He underscored the importance of supporting PAM in improving its work and achieving its objectives in a manner that serves the public interest and contributes to the development of the local labor market.

He also stressed the need to strengthen institutional work and improve performance in line with the directives of the State to raise the efficiency of government agencies and achieve the highest standards of governance and transparency in managing financial and administrative resources.

He praised the efforts of PAM in regulating the labor market and enhancing the services it provides to citizens and expatriates, specifically the employers and employees.

# Streamlining judicial system

MoJ, experts in meet in new initiative

By Jaber Al-Hamoud

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 13: **Dr. Fawaz Boudi, Head of the General Department of Experts at the Ministry of Justice, has had two extensive meetings with experts as part of the 'Partners in Work and Success' initiative.**

The initiative was launched as per the directive of Minister of Justice Judge Nasser Al-Sumait, with the objective of improving direct communication with experts, and obtaining their views and proposals on developing work processes and the quality of expert outputs.

The first meeting was held on June 3 and brought together experts from the Capital and Farwaniya governorates, while the second meeting took place the following day at the Al-Ruqai Building and included experts from the Mubarak Al-Kabeer, Hawally and Jahra governorates. Meetings with the remaining experts will be held later at the Mahboula and Jahra Courts Building.

During the meetings, participants discussed a number of issues related to the development of the expert system, such as digital transformation, modernization of systems and procedures, methods for improving the quality of technical reports, activating various specializations, and strengthening coordination with relevant government entities.

The discussion also covered several organizational matters, including the distribution of

a questionnaire to litigants to evaluate service levels, mechanisms for rotating experts, and regulation of the fingerprint attendance system in a manner that aligns with the nature of the work of experts, as well as a number of proposals to improve the work environment and support services.

At the end of the meetings, Boudi affirmed that all comments and suggestions presented by the experts will be carefully reviewed and taken into consideration in line with the development plans of the department.

He praised the active participation of the attendees and their commitment to contribute to the advancement of work processes and raising the efficiency of the expert system at the ministry, stressing that these efforts will have a positive impact on the quality of services provided to litigants.

## Minister shows 8 board members door

# Court reinstates citizen's agricultural plot

KUWAIT CITY, June 13: Lawyer Ayed Al-Rashidi announced that the Administrative Court overturned the decision of the Public Authority for Agricultural Affairs and Fish Resources (PAAAFR) to withdraw an agricultural plot from his client and ordered its return after confirming that the alleged violations were unfounded, reports *Al-Seyassah* daily.

Lawyer Al-Rashidi stated that the court accepted the defense's arguments and ultimately annulled the contested administrative decision.

He clarified that PAAAFR had claimed that violations on the plot justified its withdrawal, while the defense presented evidence proving that no such violations existed and that there were no valid legal grounds for the decision.

Lawyer Al-Rashidi noted that PAAAFR had

abused its authority in issuing the decision to revoke the plot.

He stressed that the ruling represents an important precedent in the field of judicial oversight of administrative decisions and reinforces the principle that government entities are subject to judicial review.



**8 board members sacked:** Minister of Social, Family and Childhood Affairs Dr. Amthal Al-Huwaila issued a ministerial decree dismissing eight members of the board of directors of Firdous Cooperative Society after they were found to have committed serious financial and administrative violations, according to audit reports and findings from the relevant authorities, reports *Al-Jarida*

daily. The decision was based on the application of the laws and regulations governing cooperative work and aimed at preserving cooperative funds and ensuring the smooth operation of the cooperative society.

The decree requires the dismissed members to hand over all funds, documents, records, and files in their possession to the board of directors within one week of the decree's issuance.

Minister Al-Huwaila affirmed that the ministry is committed to applying the law to everyone without exception and will not tolerate any violations or transgressions that affect shareholders' funds or undermine the principles of transparency, governance, and integrity in the cooperative sector.

## Exceptional promotions as escapees recaptured

KUWAIT CITY, June 13: The First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior, Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef, granted exceptional promotions to four members of the General Department of Criminal Investigation in recognition of their efforts, dedication, and efficiency, which contributed to the capture of escaped inmates from the Central Jail, reports *Al-Seyassah* daily.

In a statement, the Ministry of Interior explained that the promotions included Warrant Officer Khalid Jaber Al-Daihani, Sergeant Abdulrahman Mohammed Al-Khaldi, Corporal Fahad Samar Al-Hazimi, and Lance Corporal Nasser Mohammed Al-Zaid.

Each was awarded an exceptional promotion to the next higher rank in recognition of their outstanding performance and commitment to carrying out their assigned duties.

Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef affirmed that the achievements of those honored serve as a shining example for security personnel who prioritize the security of the nation and the safety of society.

## Wanted Asian women arrested after flee bid

KUWAIT CITY, June 13: Security personnel apprehended two Asian women wanted in absconding cases after they attempted to flee from a patrol, reports *Al-Anba* daily.

According to security sources, a security patrol became suspicious of the two women walking in Farwaniya. When they were asked to present identification to verify their legal status, they attempted to flee on foot.

The officers quickly apprehended one of the women, and she guided the security personnel to her colleague.

The necessary legal procedures were taken against both women, and they were referred to the appropriate authorities.

## KFF shuts 15 industrial facilities in Jahra drive

KUWAIT CITY, June 13: The Kuwait Fire Force (KFF) conducted an inspection campaign in Jahra and Ahmadi governorates aimed at identifying buildings and facilities that violate safety and fire prevention requirements, reports *Al-Seyassah* daily.

In an official statement, KFF noted that the campaign resulted in the administrative closure of 15 industrial facilities and shops, in addition to the issuance of 346 warnings to other establishments for failing to meet the required standards.


## Suicide or foul play?

KUWAIT CITY, June 13: The Ministry of Interior conducted an investigation into the suicide of an Asian expatriate who jumped from the ninth floor and died instantly, reports *Al-Anba* daily.

The deceased's colleagues stated that he had been experiencing psychological and family problems, which may have led him to take his own life.


According to a security source, the Ministry of Interior received a report on Friday morning about a loud thud and the discovery of a body in front of a building in Salmiya.

Police officers from the Salmiya Police Station proceeded to the scene. Upon questioning, the security guard confirmed that the deceased was an expatriate who used to reside in an apartment on the ninth floor.



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# Al-Mudaires: Management flourishes with consultation and teamwork

By Bassam Al-Qassas

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 13: In the records of Kuwaiti figures who combined administrative competence with a strong cultural and media presence, Bader Al-Mudaires stands out as one of the first-generation personalities who quietly and steadily left their mark.

From his early years, his personality was evident, characterized by early ambition, academic excellence, and active participation in sports and cultural activities.

These traits accompanied him from his school days at Omar Bin Al-Khat-tab School in the Qibla neighborhood. Upon completing his high school education, Al-Mudaires moved to Egypt to pursue his university studies at Al-Azhar University. He was involved in social and student activism before returning home with early experience in leadership and teamwork.

At Kuwait University, his career began, spanning decades and encompassing various positions. Al-Mudaires served as the first Registrar of the Faculty of Science, then as Director of the Public Relations Department, and Editor-in-Chief of the university's newspaper, Afaq.

He also served as Assistant Secretary-General, equivalent to Assistant Under-secretary, for 16 consecutive years.

In an interview with Al-Mudaires, he spoke about his philosophy of responsibility, his vision for management, and his relationship with the nation.

He emphasized that his management approach was based on consultation and teamwork.

Below are details of the interview with Al-Mudaires:

**Q.** Tell us about the moment you were entrusted with responsibility. What were your feelings at that time?

**A.** The transition from academic life to institutional work was a pivotal moment in my career. I felt then that I was facing a new phase that required a different commitment and greater responsibility. I realized the magnitude of the shift from the classroom to the workplace, with all the challenges and opportunities for self-discovery

that it entailed.

**Q.** What changed in you personally after leaving the position?

**A.** The position did not change the essence of my personality, but it added to my experience a wealth of human relationships and institutional knowledge. I maintained a network of mutual respect and appreciation with colleagues, academics, and alumni. These relationships grew stronger over time.

**Q.** Do you miss the position or feel relieved to be away from it?

**A.** I don't view the position as a goal in itself, but rather as an opportunity to serve the nation. Therefore, I don't yearn for the position as much as I cherish the trust of the political leadership it represented, especially when my term was renewed multiple times by an Amiri decree. This honor remains one of the most cherished aspects of my professional life.

**Q.** What was the most difficult decision you made while in the position?

**A.** My administrative approach has always been based on consultation and teamwork. I did not believe in making decisions individually.

The most difficult personal decision was when I refused an additional financial bonus because I preferred to continue performing my duty until the end of my term, without financial gain being the primary motivation.

**Q.** How did you deal with media pressure and public opinion?

**A.** Dealing with public opinion is based on respecting freedom of expression, which is guaranteed by the Kuwaiti Constitution. The media is a key partner in building awareness. Interaction with the media must be based on transparency and responsibility in a way that achieves the public interest and maintains mutual trust.

**Q.** What is the difference between what you aspired to before assuming the position and what you discovered within it?

**A.** The position itself was not my goal; rather, it was to perform my duties diligently wherever I was assigned. I discovered that a person's worth is not measured by their job title, but by their commitment to their



Kuwaiti figure Bader Al-Mudaires



Al-Mudaires speaking to colleague Bassam Al-Qassas

country and institution. Patriotism is what gives responsibility its meaning.

**Q.** What project faltered despite your conviction in it?

**A.** I was not one for individual projects; I worked within a comprehensive institutional framework. Therefore, I focused on the success of teamwork more than on specific personal initiatives.

**Q.** Were administrative or political constraints the biggest obstacle?

**A.** In institutional work, every system has its regulations and organizational frameworks. These are not obstacles so much as they are tools for regulating performance and achieving administrative harmony.

**Q.** To what extent was the manager's room for maneuver available?

**A.** The room for maneuver is linked to the manager's understanding of their role and the limits of their authority. The more committed the manager is to the law and aware of their responsibility, the more efficiently they can accomplish tasks within the available framework.

**Q.** How are disagreements managed within state institutions?

**A.** Disagreements are normal in any work environment, but an organization's success is measured by its ability to manage these differences collaboratively and in accordance

with rules and regulations, setting aside personal considerations.

**Q.** Was competence alone sufficient for success?

**A.** Competence is fundamental, but it requires discipline, dedication, and a team spirit. Organizational success is not achieved through experience alone, but through a comprehensive value system.

**Q.** When did you feel truly close to the pulse of ordinary citizens?

**A.** Closeness to the people is not tied to a specific moment, but rather to the ability of an official to understand society and interact with its issues consciously and responsibly, without emotional outbursts or impulsiveness.

**Q.** Have you received complaints that changed your decisions?

**A.** I was always concerned about hearing feedback and complaints, but the final decision was based on professional and objective conviction, not on immediate reactions.

**Q.** What was the most common misunderstanding you faced from citizens?

**A.** Misunderstandings are possible in any human or professional relationship, but dealing with them wisely and with clarification is enough to overcome many problems.

**Q.** How did you view media criti-

cism?

**A.** Media criticism is a healthy phenomenon if it is objective and constructive. I treated it as an opportunity for clarification and development, not as an act of hostility.

**Q.** Did the media treat you unfairly or fail to explain what you do?

**A.** On the contrary, I have great appreciation for the Kuwaiti media, which gave me ample space to express myself and embraced my articles for many years. The relationship with the media was based on mutual respect and appreciation.

**Q.** What advice would you give to the media regarding their dealings with officials?

**A.** Professional media understands its mission well, and its true role is to be a bridge between officials and society in a way that serves the public interest.

**Q.** Would you admit today to a mistake you once considered right?

**A.** Human beings are not infallible by nature. But what is most important is that the intention is sincere and that one bears responsibility for their decisions with a clear conscience.

**Q.** If you could go back in time, what is the first thing you would change?

**A.** The past is part of experience, and it is experience that shapes a per-

son. I believe that every stage, with its successes and challenges, has shaped my career as it is.

**Q.** Was politics a supporting factor or a burden on executive performance?

**A.** Every field has its own specificities. Executive work must remain based on professionalism and institutional commitment, far removed from any influences that disrupt performance.

**Q.** How do you make decisions in times of crisis?

**A.** In times of crisis, calmness, consultation, and adherence to accurate information are the true foundations for making sound decisions.

**Q.** What was the most dangerous moment you experienced as a leader?

**A.** I always strive to avoid haste and mistakes. This is what helped me manage my responsibilities with composure and stability.

**Q.** How do you view how a leader is treated after leaving office?

**A.** Respect should be for the person and their worth, not just their position. Those who treat people well while in a position of responsibility will find the same appreciation after leaving.

**Q.** Is a position truly temporary, or does it leave a lasting impact?

**A.** A position is undoubtedly temporary, but the impact a person leaves on people and the institution is what endures.

**Q.** What would you say to whoever takes over your position?

**A.** I advise them to abide by the law, respect people, and be humble and flexible. True leadership is based on serving others.

**Q.** What would you say to the citizens today?

**A.** Loyalty to one's country is the highest value, and it must be translated into respecting the laws and defending the national interest under all circumstances.

**Q.** How would you like to be remembered?

**A.** People are the ones who write a person's true legacy. I hope my name will be remembered for the good I did, my honest work, and my respect for others.

# Pens, stables expropriated

Minister cites misuse of property

**KUWAIT CITY, June 13: Minister of State for Youth and Sports Affairs Dr. Tariq Al-Jalahma announced that the Committee for Removing Encroachments on State Property has decided to reclaim 41 livestock pens and stables, including 12 pens belonging to the Kuwait Camel Racing Club and 29 stables belonging to the Hunting and Equestrian Club, due to serious violations identified during intensive inspection campaigns conducted by specialized teams, reports Al-Seyassah daily.**

In a press statement issued recently, Minister Al-Jalahma explained that the violations involved the exploitation of state-allocated plots for activities and purposes that contravene the terms of allocation as stipulated in the contracts

signed with beneficiaries.

The violations recently came to light, with some members of the Hunting and Equestrian Club's general assembly exploiting the plots and pens for activities that violated the signed agreements, including commercial businesses, grocery stores, residences, warehouses, and factories.

The Committee for Removing Encroachments, in coordination with the relevant authorities, is responsible for monitoring compliance with the established terms and conditions of use, identifying any violations, and taking legal action through periodic inspections and examinations.

The minister affirmed that the committee works according to a clear methodology based on applying the law to everyone without exception, indicating that the goal is to protect state property and ensure it is used as designated.

He said recent inspection campaigns have uncovered a number of recurring violations, which have been dealt with according to established legal procedures.

Minister Al-Jalahma emphasized that the committee will not hesitate to take similar action against any entity or individual found to have violated allocation terms or exploited sites in breach of contracts.

Continued from Page 1

## Russia signals

on dialogue, diplomacy and respect for international law. He emphasized the need for coordinated efforts to restore security and stability throughout the region.

He reiterated that Russia supports the establishment of a comprehensive collective security framework in the Gulf region, one that ensures security for all countries and helps prevent conflicts, while solidifying trust and regional cooperation among all parties.

On the global stage, Zheltov observed that the international system is gradually evolving toward a more balanced and multipolar order. He said Russia advocates the creation of a multipolar international system founded on the sovereign equality of states, adherence to international law, and the principle of equal and indivisible security.

He added that Russia has consistently regarded the Arab world as a dependable partner and friend, maintaining relations based on mutual respect, trust, non-interference in internal affairs, and recognition of the legitimate interests of all parties. He said this approach is evident in Russia's relationship with the State of Kuwait.

He disclosed that relations between Russia and Kuwait date back to a period preceding the establishment of formal diplomatic ties 63 years ago. He indicated that the first contacts between the two countries occurred at the beginning of the 20th century, when Russian naval vessels anchored at Kuwait Bay during the reign

of HH the late Sheikh Mubarak Al-Sabah.

He added that Kuwait is the first Gulf state to establish diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union in 1963, laying the foundation for a strong partnership that demonstrated resilience and continuous growth over the decades.

He asserted that Russia and Kuwait continue to expand their cooperation in trade, investment, energy, military-technical collaboration, culture, education and humanitarian exchange.

He also highlighted tourism as an increasingly important area of cooperation and a promising avenue for strengthening ties between the Russians and Kuwaitis.

He then affirmed his confidence that the friendly and cooperative relations between Russia and Kuwait will continue to develop and prosper in the years ahead in the interest of both nations.

## Arrest warrants

Requests for enforcement attachments on debtors' assets held by third parties topped the list with 102,773 procedures or 24.6 percent of the total transactions. Arrest warrants for debtors were the lowest, with only two cases recorded. No new requests or renewals of such warrants were issued in the same month.

The Capital Governorate led in terms of the volume of completed procedures at 32.2 percent, followed by Jahra Governorate at 16.2 percent, and Al-Ahmadi Governorate at 16.1 percent. The remaining transactions were distributed among the other three governorates and external centers.

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Continued from Page 1

**Before you**

courtrooms is that no two cases are ever the same. Public opinion sometimes assumes that all State Security cases end in conviction. That is simply not true. Courts have issued convictions in some cases, acquittals in others, and decisions involving abstention from pronouncing punishment in appropriate circumstances.

Each case ultimately turns on its own facts, evidence, context, and legal assessment. Yet the most important lesson I have learned is not legal. It is human.

Most people ask themselves one question before posting online: What do I want to say?

Courts often ask a different question: How is this message likely to be understood?

The distance between those two questions is where many legal problems begin. As these 33 new cases move through the judicial process, public attention will naturally focus on the outcomes.

But perhaps the greater value lies elsewhere. They remind us that legal awareness is no longer a subject reserved for lawyers and judges. It has become an essential life skill for anyone with a smartphone, a social media account, and a public voice.

In a world where a message can cross a nation in seconds, understanding how courts assess public communication may be just as important as understanding the message itself.



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**Kuwait acts**

Sources disclosed that the violations were discovered through the investigations conducted by the committees formed to review the activities and financial records of the cooperative societies. Sources said the results of these investigations led to the issuance of ministerial decisions on dissolving certain boards of directors, dismissing some board members, and referring cases to the prosecution and other investigative bodies.

Sources affirmed that accountability will not stop at those directly responsible for committing the violations, as it will extend to those entrusted with supervising and monitoring the cooperatives whenever negligence, dereliction of duty or failure to perform their responsibilities are proven. They stressed that loopholes, collusion, attempts to bypass regulations, or deliberate disregard of violations in-

tended to shield the boards of directors from responsibility will be dealt with through legal procedures and disciplinary measures against the supervisors involved.

Sources warned that the ministry will take firm action against employees proven to have neglected their duties or concealed violations affecting public funds or the rights of shareholders. They pointed out that certain cases may require referral to the prosecution for investigation and the implementation of appropriate legal measures.

Meanwhile, Al-Huwailah conducted a surprise visit at the Care and Rehabilitation Center for Persons with Disabilities of the Public Authority for Disability Affairs (PADA) in Sabahiyyah, where she discovered a number of shortcomings and deficiencies. This prompted the referral of several officials for investigation in order to determine responsibility and take the necessary action against those found negligent.

Al-Huwailah asserted that negligence or deficiencies affecting the health or safety of the residents will neither be accepted nor overlooked, stressing that safeguarding the well-being of residents and ensuring the high quality of care provided to them remain top priorities.

She revealed that she will personally oversee the progress of the investigations and make sure that all identified shortcomings are addressed. She also confirmed that surprise field inspections of care facilities will continue to guarantee compliance with the standards and delivery of the highest quality services to residents. She added that positions of responsibility within care centers are not merely ceremonial and that any negligence will be met with decisive action. She asserted that the dignity and rights of residents are considered a sacred responsibility, which must be fully protected.

During the visit, she looked into various facilities at the center, including the kitchens, where she assessed the level of readiness and quality of meals provided to residents.

She also inspected the laundry, ironing and clothing preparation units, and scrutinized the operational procedures, as well as the cleanliness and safety standards in different departments at the center.

On the other hand, Al-Huwailah issued two ministerial decrees for dissolving two public benefit associations and referring them to liquidation.

The decision came after completing the legal procedures and obtaining the necessary approvals from the relevant authorities.

**Kuwait mutes**

Both sides emphasized the importance of strengthening security and stability in the region and the necessity of intensifying diplomatic efforts aimed at reducing tensions and resolving disputes through dialogue and peaceful means, in a manner that contributes to establishing the foundations of peace and prosperity and serves the interests of all parties and the peoples of the region and the world.

His Highness the Crown Prince welcomed the nearing agreement between the parties, stressing support for all efforts that would consolidate regional and international security and stability, and enhance chances for peace and cooperation among the countries of the region. His Highness praised the tireless efforts made by His Excellency the President of the United States in supporting the path to ending the war, concluded the statement.

In other news, Kuwait's Public Authority for Civil Aviation (PACA) announced on Thursday that it had sent a third official protest letter to the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) regarding the continued Iranian attacks on Kuwait International Airport.

The letter included the targeting of the airport's radar earlier in the day, which had serious implications for the safety and security of civil aviation operations.

In a statement to KUNA, PACA said that the attacks resulted in human injuries and significant material damage and losses affecting radar facilities and equipment linked to air traffic management.

It added that the incident necessitated urgent precautionary and operational measures, including a partial suspension of air navigation in Kuwait for a limited period to preserve the safety and security of civil aviation before air traffic was restored to normal in accordance with approved procedures and standards.

In its letter, the PACA stressed that the continued targeting of civil aviation facilities and infrastructure dedicated to air navigation services constitutes a grave violation of the provisions of the Convention on International Civil Aviation (Chicago Convention of 1944) and relevant international rules and principles governing the safety and security of international civil aviation, while endangering passengers, flight crews and personnel working in the vital sector.

The authority called on ICAO to take the necessary measures within its mandate, document these viola-

tions and examine their serious repercussions on the safety and security of regional and international air navigation.

It affirmed that Kuwait reserves all its legal rights arising from these attacks, including the right to take all appropriate measures in accordance with international law and relevant international conventions.

Meanwhile, the State Security Circuit of the Criminal Court issued a gag order regarding the case of Iranian Revolutionary Guard officers accused of illegally entering Kuwaiti territorial waters and a restricted military zone, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

According to the case file, the defendants crossed Kuwaiti maritime borders using boats and navigational and field equipment, and were carrying weapons, ammunition, and communication and surveillance devices, with the intent of targeting Kuwaiti military, sovereign, and security sites and facilities.

The Kuwaiti Armed Forces, tasked with securing the area, detected and intercepted them within the military zone and subsequently referred them to the relevant authorities for legal proceedings.

Momentum for a deal to end the Iran war appeared to grow Saturday as Iran mediator Pakistan said an agreement was closer than "ever before" and Iran made some of its most optimistic statements yet.

U.S. President Donald Trump said on social media the deal was "scheduled to get signed tomorrow," and that the Strait of Hormuz would open immediately. Iran foreign ministry spokesperson Esmail Baghaei, however, said "although it will not happen tomorrow, the possibility that it could take place in the coming days cannot be ruled out."

Each side was expected to sign electronically. Meanwhile, Trump was expected to discuss demining the Strait of Hormuz during the Group of Seven summit that starts Monday. And Iran's state-run television said funeral ceremonies for former Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, killed in the war's opening attack, will take place in July.

A senior U.S. official, who briefed journalists on condition of anonymity under rules set by the White House, said Trump planned to meet on the G7 sidelines with the leaders of Egypt, Qatar and United Arab Emirates to discuss efforts to wind down the war. G7 members Britain and France have expressed interest in assisting with demining once the conflict is paused.

**National Day of Sweden marked****'Kuwait, Sweden ties continue to deepen'**

KUWAIT CITY, June 13: Swedish Ambassador to Kuwait Fredrik Florén affirmed that relations between Sweden and Kuwait continue to develop, built on the foundation of mutual respect, friendship and constructive dialogue.

Speaking during a media gathering to celebrate the National Day of Sweden, Florén pointed out that the occasion is more than just a celebration of Swedish history and identity, because it is also an opportunity to recognize the partnerships and international relationships, embodying the abovementioned values around the world.

He asserted that his country remains committed to strengthening cooperation with Kuwait in cultural, economic and political fields, reflecting the shared interests and aspirations of both countries.

He indicated that Sweden and Kuwait enjoy strong and distinguished relations, along with the expansion of cooperation in different areas like trade, investment and regional dialogue.

He disclosed that the decision to hold Swedish National Day celebrations in Kuwait last year, despite his status as a non-resident ambassador, shows the deep appreciation of Sweden for the Kuwaiti people and their positive role on the international stage. He added that Kuwait's long-standing tradition of cultural openness and engagement depicts a society genuinely embracing diversity and inclusion.

He went on to confirm that many European visitors are impressed by the strong humanitarian spirit evident in everyday life in Kuwait, whether through volunteer initiatives, community support or the generosity that is deeply rooted in Kuwaiti culture and traditions.

On regional developments, he reiterated that his country fully supports Kuwait as it faces security threats, as well as its solidarity with the latter and the con-



H.E. Fredrik Florén, Swedish Ambassador to Kuwait

demnation of Iranian attacks on Kuwait and neighboring states.

He said such developments highlight the instability of the region and the international rules-based order, while underscoring the importance of protecting both through cooperation, mutual trust and continuous dialogue. He stated that instability in the Gulf region, particularly concerning the Strait of Hormuz, has significant global implications. He explained that preserving freedom of navigation, protecting supply chains, and maintaining respect for international law are priorities shared by Kuwait, Sweden and the international community.

He added that Sweden supports international efforts aimed at reducing tensions and safeguarding global maritime trade and commerce.

He praised the role of Kuwait in maintaining regional stability and peace and its diplomatic approach, which is based on moderation, dialogue and multilateral cooperation.

He asserted that building and maintaining strong partnerships are even more important during times of uncertainty, adding that Sweden is keen on strengthening its relationship with Kuwait, which is founded on a shared vision to guarantee peace, stability and prosperity.



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## America

**Shooter kills 1, injures 10 in Texas:** A man who opened fire in the West Texas city of Midland in an attack Friday morning that left one person dead and 10 injured had shot at a police officer just days earlier during a chase, authorities said.

The suspect, 45-year-old Victor Mata Villarreal, already was being sought by authorities when he began firing at police and bystanders in Midland on Friday before barricading himself in an abandoned veterinary clinic, where he was eventually found dead, according to the Texas Department of Public Safety.

Police have provided limited details about how the shooting unfolded. Police arrived in the area after receiving reports of an active shooter, and Mata Villarreal started firing at officers, said Midland Police Chief Greg Snow. Several officers were pinned down behind their patrol cars and had to be rescued by an armored vehicle, Snow said, but no officers were shot.

Police then got everyone out of the area. "We moved to deny more targets for this active shooter," Snow said.

A few hours after the shooting began, authorities used robot and drone footage from inside the building to confirm the shooter was dead, Midland Mayor Lori Blong. Police did not say how he died.

A spokesperson for the city identified a man killed in the shooting as Ed Scott, a father and husband who worked in solid waste for Midland. He also did a lot of work with local and regional softball organizations, according to the city. (AP)

□ □ □

**Tent collapse kills 1, injures 22:** A large tent collapsed during a Virginia church's 20th anniversary celebration on Friday evening, killing one person and injuring nearly two dozen others, officials said.

Heavy rain, lightning and strong winds tore through Moneta, a small community about 124 miles (200 kilometers) southwest of Richmond, as the EastLake Community Church was holding an outdoor service, Shelley Basinger, a spokesperson for Bedford Coun-



Law enforcement responds to an active shooting scene on June 12, in Midland, Texas. (AP)

ty, said in a statement. The group was in the process of leaving the event tent when it collapsed, according to Abbey Johnston, acting chief of Bedford County Fire and Rescue.

Eleven people were taken to the hospital and 11 others had minor injuries and were treated at the scene, Basinger said. (AP)

□ □ □

**'Gilgo Beach killer writes to jailed murderer':** The Manhattan architect who lived a secret life as the Gilgo Beach serial killer has spent the past three years alone in a segregated cell, reading crime novels and occasionally being visited by his lawyers or family, according to the sheriff who oversees the jail.

Rex Heuermann also struck up a brief correspondence with Keith Hunter Jespersen, the infamous "Happy Face Killer" who confessed to killing eight women across the country in the 1990s, said Suffolk County Sheriff Errol Toulon.

The sheriff said it was Jespersen, who is serving multiple life sentences without the possibility of parole in Oregon, who wrote first to Heuermann at the jail in Riverhead, New York, where he's been held since his arrest in July 2023. (AP)

## Calif House member Thompson to face Democratic challenger in Nov

WASHINGTON, June 13, (AP): Democrat Eric Jones on Friday advanced to the November ballot in a Northern California congressional district, where he will face fellow Democratic Rep. Mike Thompson in the latest generational battle within the party.

Jones, a 35-year-old former venture capitalist, took the second slot in California's top-two, nonpartisan June 2 primary for the state's 4th Congressional District. Thompson was first elected to the U.S. House in 1998 after serving as a state lawmaker.

Having two Democrats on the ballot will ensure that the district, which includes the Napa-Sonoma wine country and stretches across a wide swath of Northern California north of the state capital, will remain in Democratic hands.

The race becomes the second generational challenge against a California U.S. House Democrat. Rep. Doris Matsui, 81, replaced her late husband in the House when he died in 2005. She is facing a challenge from 41-year-old Sacramento City Councilwoman Mai Vang.

In Los Angeles, 15-term Rep. Brad Sherman successfully fended off a younger Democratic challenger who did not advance to the November ballot because he failed



Ballots are inspected the day after California's primary election at the Los Angeles County Ballot Processing Center on June 3, in City of Industry, Calif. (AP)

to make the top two. Younger Democrats across the country have challenged older incumbents in the wake of former President Joe Biden's term.

Also:

**TRENTON, NJ: Rosie Pino, a Clifton City, New Jersey, councilwoman,** has won the Republican primary in the state's 9th Congressional District to take on Democratic Rep. **Nellie Pou.**

Pino defeated attorney **Tiffany**

**Burress** in the northern New Jersey district, where Pou is seeking a second term. The Associated Press called the race for Pino on Friday.

The district is being watched closely in this year's hotly contested midterm elections, with Republicans in particular drawing a target on the longtime Democratic-held seat.

The GOP saw an opportunity there after the 2024 election was closer than expected and **Donald Trump** won in places where his party hadn't been victorious for decades.

### Cleanup efforts underway

## Tornadoes in Illinois and Indiana leave residents grappling with damage

WASHINGTON, June 13, (AP): Residents in tornado-ravaged areas in Illinois and Indiana were grappling with the damage to their homes and neighborhoods on Friday, after the strong line of storms barreled through communities south of Chicago and left trails of destruction. Cleanup efforts were underway, and utility companies said power restoration efforts could extend into next week.

Thursday's storms ripped roofs off of buildings, flattened homes, brought down scores of trees and power lines and caused hundreds of thousands of power outages and major air traffic disruptions. Officials said there were no reports of deaths or life-threatening injuries, though there were several people treated for minor injuries.

Tornado damage was reported in several towns including Merrillville and Hebron in Indiana and Streator, Illinois. Authorities were surveying the damage Friday and preparing to issue emergency declarations needed to get recovery funding.

Marsha Smith was in her apartment building in Merrillville, about 33 miles (53 kilometers) southeast of Chicago, when the tornado struck the complex, tearing roofs off three buildings, knocking down trees and breaking car windshields before heavy rain caused more damage to the homes. She and some neighbors huddled under an indoor stairwell holding hands and praying.

"The louder the tornado got, the louder I started praying," said Smith, 54, a CPR instructor. "I said, Oh God it's here." I said, "Lord Jesus make it pass, let it pass, let it pass over. I said, "God give us the strength to make it through



This photo made from video provided by WLS shows an aerial view of storm damage on June 12, in Merrillville, Ind. (AP)

this." And it just started wrecking."

Smith said there was an eerie calm just before the tornado struck. Then it sounded like a freight train smashing into her building, she said. She thanked

God no one was hurt. Friday morning, she surveyed her neighborhood and described it as a catastrophe.

Officials in Merrillville said more than 200 buildings were damaged, including some that were destroyed. Downed trees and power lines blocked streets, and part of a high school's roof was ripped off. Cleanup crews were out working Friday.

Multiple agencies from the region helped local first responders search and assessed damaged areas, town officials said on social media. Crews worked into the night clearing roads. The American Red Cross set up a 700-bed shelter.

In and around Streator and Hebron, photos and videos posted on social media showed damage in those areas similar to that in Merrillville. The National Weather Service said tornadoes hit those areas as well, and it was surveying the damage to determine exactly how many tornadoes touched down.

In Streator, a manufacturing and farm city about 100 miles (160 kilometers) southwest of Chicago, emergency crews were inspecting the damage. Officials said nearly a dozen homes were damaged, including some that were destroyed. A reunification center for displaced residents was set up in its city hall and the Red Cross opened a shelter.

Streator Mayor Tara Bedei said there were no reported deaths. "We are incredibly grateful for the safety of our residents and the quick action of emergency personnel," she said in a statement. Officials said four people were treated at a hospital for minor injuries.



From left: Danish Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen, Finnish Prime Minister Petteri Orpo, Iceland's Prime Minister Kristrun Mjoll Frostadottir, Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, Estonia's Prime Minister Kristen Michal, Norwegian Prime Minister Jonas Gahr Store, Latvia's Prime Minister Andris Kulbergs, Lithuania's Prime Minister Inga Ruginiene and Sweden's Prime Minister Ulf Kristersson attend a news conference after the Nordic and Baltic countries meeting in Tallinn, Estonia on June 9. (AP)

## European Union agrees to launch membership talks with Ukraine next week

BRUSSELS, June 13, (AP): European Union nations agreed on Friday to open membership talks with Ukraine next week, officially launching the process for the war-torn country to eventually join the world's biggest trading bloc.

At a meeting in Brussels, ambassadors from the 27 EU nations decided to officially open negotiations with Ukraine as well as with Moldova, which Russia has also tried to drag back into its orbit, on Monday in Luxembourg.

Ukraine sees EU membership as an important "security guarantee" for a stable future once war with Russia ends.

Its best guarantee would be NATO membership, but the Trump administration insists that cannot happen. Others oppose it joining while fighting continues. Russia is strongly against it, and has cited moves toward NATO membership as a reason for launching its full-scale invasion in 2022, though it has not objected to EU membership for Kyiv.

Countries hoping to join the EU must complete negotiations in 35 policy areas, or chapters, ranging from agriculture to trade, a process which can take years.

An intergovernmental conference

will be held on Monday to open key chapters - grouped together as "clusters" - concerning the values and principles on which the bloc was founded.

"This is a recognition of the determination, courage and hard work shown by both countries in advancing reforms, even in the face of immense challenges," EU Council President Antonio Costa and Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said in a statement.

They described the move as "a strategic choice" that strengthens "peace, security and prosperity across our continent." It's also a "signal that the EU's offer of peace, stability and opportunity is unmatched," they said.

Ukraine officially applied for EU accession less than a week after Russia invaded in February 2022. The EU commission has praised the country for reforms it has been able to push through in wartime, although deep concerns about corruption and justice standards remain.

Last month, German Chancellor Friedrich Merz urged his EU partners to consider offering "associate membership" to Ukraine and breathe new life into talks aimed at ending more than four years of war with Russia.

Other countries - France and the

Netherlands among them - have suggested work arounds to bring Ukraine into the fold more quickly but without the rights of full membership.

It all comes as the EU weighs whether to try to launch its own negotiations with Russian President Vladimir Putin, with US mediated talks bogged down while America's attention focuses on the Iran war.

Also:

**KYIV, Ukraine:** A Ukrainian drone attack killed one person and injured three in Russia's southern **Krasnodar** region, local officials said Saturday, as part of Kyiv's campaign of strikes on military and energy targets deep inside **Russia.**

Drone debris sparked a fire at a sea terminal, local Gov. **Veniamin Kondratyev** said. He did not give details, but Russian news outlets reported that a Black Sea export terminal transporting terminal crude oil, petroleum products and liquefied gas in the village of Volna was damaged.

Ukraine's General Staff did not comment on the Krasnodar strike Saturday, but said that its forces had hit an oil preparation and pumping station overnight in Russia's **Volgograd** region, as well as Russian-occupied areas in Ukraine's **Donetsk** and **Zaporizhzhia** regions.

## King Charles III appoints Mirren to select group in birthday honors list

LONDON, June 13, (AP): Helen Mirren, one of the world's most acclaimed actors, was added Friday to a very select group of people recognized by King Charles III for their "major contribution" over the years to British life.

The 80-year-old was named a "Companion of Honour," one of the highest awards the king can bestow to citizens in the United Kingdom and across the Commonwealth, limited to only 65 people at any time.

Mirren's elevation to the group, which also includes British environmentalist David Attenborough, Canadian author Margaret Atwood and former British Prime Minister Gordon Brown, was one of the highlights of Charles' latest award of honors.

The honors, which aim to reward individuals for their contributions to British life, are awarded twice a year to celebrities and public figures as well as ordinary people, once at New Year's, and then in June, to mark the king's birthday.

Nearly 1,200 people received honors in the king's 2026 birthday list.

Mirren is no stranger to awards and has for decades been a star on stage and screen, as well as a powerful advocate for female actors.

She has tackled numerous classical parts in theater - both in the



Helen Mirren arrives at the Golden Globes Golden Eve on Jan 6 at The Beverly Hilton Hotel, in Beverly Hills, Calif. (AP)

National Youth Theatre and the Royal Shakespeare Company from the 1960s - before winning roles in movies such as "The Long Good Friday," "Excalibur," and "The Madness of King George."

She also wowed British television audiences with her portrayal of Detective Chief Inspector Jane Tennison over seven seasons of "Prime Suspect."

At the Oscars in 2007, she won best actress for her performance in "The Queen," a film that follows the late Queen Elizabeth II in the aftermath of the 1997 death of Diana,

Princess of Wales.

Introduced in 1917 by King George V, the "Companion of Honour" recognizes people who have made "a major contribution to the arts, science, medicine, or government" over an extended time period.

They remain members until they die, when a replacement is then added. A new member will likely be named at the next honors list in the new year following the death Thursday of David Hockney, one of the most popular and critically lauded British artists of the last century.

## Starmer will fight to stay in office



Britain's Prime Minister Keir Starmer hosts a roundtable meeting for leaders of NHS Trusts, at 10 Downing Street in central London on June 9. (AP)

LONDON, June 13, (AP): British Prime Minister Keir Starmer vowed Friday that he will fight to stay in office after the sudden resignation of his trusted defense minister left his shaky leadership weakened still further.

Starmer has seen the departure of several junior and senior ministers in recent weeks, as Labour Party lawmakers revolt and rivals plot, in despair at the government's relentless unpopularity.

But the sudden resignation of Defense Secretary John Healey is a heavy blow. Healey quit Thursday, warning that the government is not spending enough on the military to keep Britain safe "at this time of rising threats."

His departure hits Starmer in the one place the often embattled prime minister has won consistent praise: the world stage.

# Ousted S.Korean president Yoon gets 30-year prison term for drone flights over Pyongyang

SEOUL, South Korea, June 13, (AP): South Korea's ousted President Yoon Suk Yeol and his former defense minister were sentenced to 30 years in prison Friday in a case alleging Yoon ordered drone flights over Pyongyang in 2024 to heighten tensions with North Korea and justify declaring martial law at home.

The Seoul Central District Court found Yoon and his ex-defense minister, Kim Yong Hyun, guilty of aiding an adversary and abusing their power, saying they sought to provoke North Korea into launching armed attacks or other serious retaliation against South Korea to manufacture a national emergency. It said the moves harmed South Korea's military interests by exposing its capabilities, undermining its ability to conduct future operations and prompting North Korea to strengthen its defense posture. Yoon's lawyers appealed the ruling.

The same court earlier sentenced Yoon to life in prison for a rebellion conviction over his short-lived imposition of martial law in December 2024.

North Korea accused Seoul of flying drones over Pyongyang to drop propaganda leaflets three times in October 2024. Kim, who was South



South Korea's ousted former President Yoon Suk Yeol arrives to attend his trial at the Seoul Central District Court in Seoul, South Korea on May 12, 2025. (AP)

Korea's defense minister at the time, issued a vague denial before the Defense Ministry said it could neither confirm nor deny the allegations. Tensions rose sharply but did not lead to any military clashes.

Yoon's lawyers criticized the latest ruling, saying the drone flights were a response to North Korea fly-

ing thousands of trash-carrying balloons into the South earlier in 2024. They argued that a guilty verdict would undermine South Korea's security interests.

Investigators led by special prosecutor Cho Eun-suk had sought a 30-year prison term for Yoon, accusing him of trying to create a warlike situ-

ation between the Koreans while plotting an authoritarian push to remove his political opponents and "monopolize" power. They had sought a 25-year prison term for Kim, a key confidant of Yoon who helped plan and mobilize forces for Yoon's martial law declaration.

Yoon proceeded with the declaration late in the night of Dec. 3, 2024, delivering a televised address in which he accused liberal lawmakers of being North Korea-sympathizing "anti-state" forces. He cited a range of grievances, but particularly the opposition's impeachments of senior officials and cuts to his government's budget bill.

Martial law lasted about six hours until lawmakers broke through a blockade of soldiers and police at the National Assembly and voted to overturn it, forcing Yoon's Cabinet to lift the measure.

Yoon was quickly impeached, suspended from office, and formally removed by the Constitutional Court. He was arrested in July 2025 and several criminal trials are ongoing.

The verdict in the most serious case, of rebellion, has been appealed both by Yoon and prosecutors, who had sought a death sentence.

## Woman critically injured in shark attack off Sydney's beach

MELBOURNE, Australia, June 13, (AP): A 3.5-meter (11-foot) shark critically injured a woman off a popular Sydney beach on Saturday, and she managed to grab onto a lifeguard's paddleboard before they made it to shore.

The 35-year-old suffered serious leg and arm injuries in the attack at 11:15 a.m. off Coogee Beach, a police statement said.

"I saw the shark come out of the water and just the size of it shocked me," lifeguard **Charlie Verco** told Sydney's The Sunday Telegraph newspaper. He was in the area on his 5.5-meter (18-foot) paddleboard and was the first rescuer to the scene.

"I kept paddling towards her and the shark took her underwater and I was going, 'What do I do now?' A couple of seconds later, she popped up again," Verco said.

He said the woman was too weak to climb onto the board, but he managed to grab her by an arm and they headed toward the beach. Other bystanders reached the pair and helped them back to shore.

An off-duty hospital doctor Ian Ferguson was spending the morning at the beach with his young family when he said he heard screaming and saw a "big cloud of blood in the water."

Ferguson and others applied tourniquets to her wounds after she reached the beach. She had a 30-centimeter (12-inch) wide bite on her thigh, the flesh had been removed and bone was exposed, Ferguson told the newspaper. She had a similar wound to her arm, he said.

The victim was taken to a rugby field near the beach, from where she was flown by helicopter to a hospital. Police described her condition as critical.

The woman, who was not identified, was swimming with two friends 30 meters (100 feet) from the beach when she was attacked, ambulance official Michael Corlis said.



Verco



Chinese Vice President Han Zheng meets with Speaker of the Parliament of Singapore Seah Kian Peng in Beijing, capital of China on June 12. (Xinhua)

### Chinese VP meets with Singapore's parliament speaker

Chinese Vice President Han Zheng met with Speaker of the Parliament of Singapore Seah Kian Peng in Beijing on Friday.

Noting China and Singapore are friendly neighbors and important cooperative partners to each other, Han said China is willing to work with Singapore to earnestly implement the important consensus reached by the leaders of the two countries, further enhance strategic communication, increase mutual support, expand high-quality

cooperation, and promote people-to-people connectivity, in order to advance the all-round high-quality future-oriented partnership between China and Singapore.

He urged both sides to enhance multilateral collaboration, jointly advocate for an equal and orderly multipolar world and a universally beneficial and inclusive economic globalization, and promote the building of a more just and reasonable global governance system. (Xinhua)

## Indonesian students protest govt policies as economic pressures grow

JAKARTA, Indonesia, June 13, (AP): Hundreds of Indonesian students rallied Friday in Indonesia's capital, demanding lower fuel and food prices and urging President Prabowo Subianto to roll back costly state spending programs as economic pressures mount.

The protest was held after the prices of some fuel jumped 32% this week for the first time since the United States launched its war against Iran more than three months ago.

About 1,500 protesters attempted to march toward the Hotel Indonesia traffic circle, a key Jakarta landmark, after Friday prayers. Anti-riot police blocked many of them from reaching the site, which has long been off-limits for rallies because of its location at the heart of the city's main business and commercial district.

More than 6,000 police and soldiers were deployed to secure key sites, including the presidential palace, and directed the protesters toward areas near the parliament building and the National Monument park. But many demonstrators resisted, saying they wanted to hold their protest in the business district due to their concerns about economic conditions.

"People will not be silent, they



Student protesters tear down a police barricade during a rally against a fuel price hike, government inefficient spendings, and military involvement in civilian affairs in Jakarta, Indonesia on June 12. (AP)

will speak out when they cannot eat, cannot work, cannot have a decent life. That is the simple reason why we are taking to the streets today," said Jordan, a student protester who goes by a single name.

Some protesters forcefully kicked a line of large black metal police shields in an attempt to break through a strong barricade of anti-riot officers, others chanting "Revolution!"

Amid the signs of economic pressure, Indonesia's rupiah currency has also come under pressure recently, hitting a historic low of 18,000 rupiah to the U.S. dollar earlier this month.

Demonstrators demanded cuts to what they called wasteful state spending, lower prices for fuel and staple goods, and a halt to major government programs such as a free meals program and a plan to revitalize rural areas.

Gang responsible for countless acts of violence and extortion in N.America, S.America

## US military strike killed Tren de Aragua leader with help from Venezuela: Trump

WASHINGTON, June 13, (AP): President Donald Trump said Friday that a "swift and lethal kinetic" US strike has killed Héctor Rusthenford Guerrero Flores, whom he called "the infamous leader" of the Tren de Aragua gang.

Tren de Aragua has been labeled by the United States as a terrorist organization. Guerrero Flores was charged in a New York federal court with racketeering conspiracy and other crimes, including lending support to terrorists in crimes that stretched more than a decade, authorities announced in December.

Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth posted on X that the strike occurred earlier in the week on a Tren de Aragua compound in Venezuela.

US Attorney Jay Clayton said at the time that the gang is responsible for countless acts of violence, extortion and drug trafficking in North America, South America and Europe. Trump nominated Clayton on Thursday to be director of national intelligence.

The US State Department had offered rewards of up to \$5 million for information leading to Guerrero Flores' arrest.

In a post on his social media site, Trump wrote, "Tren de Aragua terrorists no longer have safe haven in Venezuela or anywhere else and, under my leadership, we will find these vicious murderers and drug lords anytime, anywhere, and send them to the depths of hell where they belong." Trump's post referred to Guerrero Flores by his alias, "Niño Guerrero."

The post also included unclassified video, shot from above, of a small building with a green roof exploding.

Hegseth said, "The operation underscores the shared US and Venezuelan commitment to take the fight to narco-terrorists and deny them any safe haven in our hemisphere."



Soldiers raid the Tocarón Penitentiary Center, where the Tren de Aragua gang originated, in Tocarón, Venezuela on Sept 20, 2023. (AP)

Venezuela's government released a statement confirmed its participation in the operation and revealed it took place in the southeastern state of Bolívar.

"During the operation, clashes occurred with members of criminal groups, resulting in the death of Héctor Rusthenford Guerrero Flores, alias 'Niño Guerrero,' the leader of one of these criminal organizations," according to

the statement.

The mineral-rich state, which borders Brazil and Guyana, is home to large illegal mining operations long controlled by gangs and other actors who mine with the consent - and to the benefit - of officials and the military.

Trump has taken a series of extraordinary actions against the gang, including a series of strikes on small boats his administration has accused of smuggling drugs to America. At least 207 people have been killed in boat strikes by the US military in the eastern Pacific Ocean and Caribbean Sea since the Trump administration began targeting those it calls "narcoterrorists" in early September.

Trump and administration officials have consistently blamed Tren de Aragua for being at the root of the violence and illicit drug dealing that plague some US cities. The president spent months repeating the claim - contradicted by a declassified US intelligence assessment - that Tren de Aragua had operated under Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro's control. The US whisked Maduro out of Venezuela to face U.S. drug charges in January.

Tren de Aragua originated more than a decade ago at an infamously lawless prison with hardened criminals in Venezuela's central state of Aragua. The gang has expanded in recent years as millions of Venezuelans migrated to other Latin American countries or the US in search of better living conditions.

Guerrero Flores returned to the prison in Aragua for murder and other convictions in 2013, when Venezuela's crisis began as corruption, mismanagement and a drop in crude prices wrecked the oil-dependent economy. Guerrero Flores and a few other inmates saw a profitable opportunity as the government neglected prisons.

## US lawmakers pledge to help speed up disaster recovery in Puerto Rico

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico, June 13, (AP): A group of US Democratic lawmakers promised Puerto Ricans on Friday that they would try to speed up the island's sluggish recovery from destructive hurricanes and earthquakes, a process that relies heavily on federal funds.

Mississippi Rep. Bennie G. Thompson, ranking member of the House Committee of Homeland Security, said he and other legislators met with Puerto Rico mayors as part of a two-day trip to the U.S. territory and heard their concerns including delays in reimbursements and project approvals.

"We'll move some of those concerns into corrective actions," he said at a news conference. "The system should work better."

Pablo José Hernández, Puerto Rico's representative in Congress, said the island's mayors flagged their concerns after former Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem implemented a policy that DHS expenditures over \$100,000 be personally approved by that office.



A house lays in the mud after it was washed away by Hurricane Fiona at Villa Esperanza in Salinas, Puerto Rico, Sept. 21, 2022. (AP)

The policy further delayed recovery efforts in Puerto Rico from hurricanes Maria and Fiona, and a series of strong quakes that struck in late 2019 and early 2020.

In April, new Homeland Security Secretary Markwayne Mullin rescinded the rule, but challenges

remain.

Thompson noted that about a third of the workforce of the U.S. Federal Emergency Management Agency "has been done away with."

He added: "Not a lot of people to answer the phones or look at the paperwork because they're not there."

### Subcontinent

**Indian army plane crashes, 5 dead:** Five Indian Air Force personnel were killed when a transport aircraft crashed during a routine training flight in the northeastern state of Assam, officials said Saturday.

The AN-32 transport aircraft crashed near Jorhat area in Assam, the Indian Air Force said in a statement posted on X.

Images from the crash site showed wreckage of the aircraft strewn across a field. (AP)

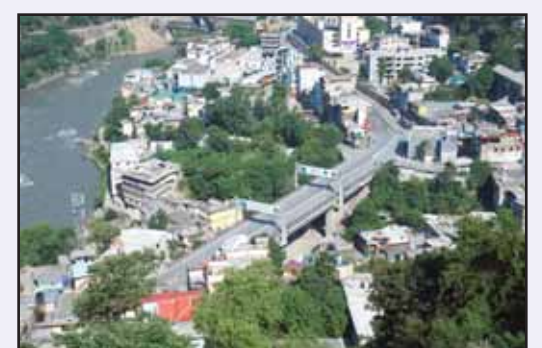
**Security forces kill 21 militants in Pakistan:** Pakistani security forces killed 21 militants, including four local ring leaders, during a series of intelligence-based operations in the northwest Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, the military's media wing said Saturday.

The operations were conducted in Miran Shah and North Waziristan districts, the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), the media wing of the Pakistani military, said in a statement.

The militants killed were involved in multiple attacks on security personnel and civilians, the ISPR said. (Xinhua)

**Pakistan sets free 763 Afghan prisoners:** Pakistan has freed 763 Afghan inmates from its prisons over the past week, while 3,700 Afghan refugees returned home from the country in a single day, Afghan officials said on Saturday.

The freed prisoners, who were held on various charges, crossed into Afghanistan through the Spin



Local residents walk through an empty road during a strike called by an outlawed alliance of activist groups 'Joint Awami Action Committee' (JAAC) demanding greater political rights and the abolition of 12 legislative seats, in Muzaffarabad, the capital of Pakistan-administered Kashmir on June 9. (AP)

Boldak border crossing in southern Kandahar province and the Torkham crossing in eastern Nangarhar province, according to the Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation. (Xinhua)

**8 dead in Nepal bus accident:** Eight people died after a passenger bus veered off a cliff in Nepal's Kavrepalanchok district on Friday, a police officer said.

"We have recovered eight dead bodies from the accident site," Rabin Bista, information officer at the district police, told Xinhua.

There were 15 people injured, including the driver, he said. Four of the injured are in serious condition. (Xinhua)

## Kuwait oil plunge to \$94.84 pb

KUWAIT CITY, June 13, (KUNA): Kuwait crude oil down USD 6.20 during Friday's trading to reach USD 94.84 per barrel, compared with USD 101.04 pb the previous day, Kuwait Petroleum Corpora-

tion (KPC) said Saturday. Brent futures dropped USD 3.05 to USD 87.33 pb and West Texas Intermediate declined by USD 2.83 to USD 84.88 pb.

### Other Voices

## Oil is down, now below \$100 pb

By Kamel Al-Harami  
Independent Oil Analyst

THIS is good news for global oil consumers, despite the continued closure of the Strait of Hormuz. Tensions between the United States and Iran seem to be easing, and threats of war are slowly fading, even though uncertainty around the strait persists.



Al-Harami

The panic over oil prices surging above \$100 has also eased. A more relaxed atmosphere has emerged, with expectations of sharply higher petrol prices for U.S. consumers fading. This supports lower fuel cost pressures, giving U.S. drivers greater mileage and the ability to travel more freely, including visiting relatives and friends across the country.

Despite the closure of the Strait of Hormuz and the disruption of roughly 22 million barrels of oil in global transit, oil markets appear more stable, through the use of commercial inventories and strategic reserves.

Current global strategic reserve is about 2.5 billion barrels, with China holding the largest share.

The top five largest oil reserves in the world are Venezuela with 303 billion barrels, Saudi Arabia with 267, Iran with 208, Canada with 145, and Iraq with 145 billion barrels.

The other major holders of reserves are mainly from the Arabian Gulf countries. So, of the top eight countries with proven oil reserves, five of them are located in the Arabian Gulf. The other non-Arabian Gulf countries are Venezuela, Canada, and Russia, with Russia being the last in the group of eight countries with high oil reserves.

Venezuela's oil reserves are the most

difficult crude oil to explore and produce, being heavy with high sulfur content. At the end, there must be ways and means to bring it to the surface, as the world is always in need of oil.

Oil markets are in need of some stability, with a return to steady flows of oil from the Arabian Gulf, increased volumes, and reliable supply to meet market demand, as well as to rebuild and replenish the used strategic reserves.

Oil prices are no longer trading at \$100 and above, as most oil indicators are now below \$95 per barrel, while Russian crude is trading above \$104. It is the only crude that is freely traded, with part of it going to Asian markets to meet strong demand amid the absence of Arabian Gulf crude oils, including Iran.

Iran, which previously threatened to close the Strait of Hormuz and block Arab Gulf oil exports, would face the same consequences itself, as it would also be unable to export its oil through the same strait it had closed and blocked.

Will they ever learn how to respect their neighbors and avoid greed? Did Iran ever think it could close the Gulf while being the only one able to export oil to the world? When will they learn to respect their harmless neighbor?

The world needs stability and a steady flow of oil supply from the Arabian Gulf. Soon, the Gulf will return to flowing peacefully and smoothly, with producers generating more revenues and selling higher volumes of oil to meet immediate demand and rebuild strategic reserves for the future, filling storage levels once again. This would support stable oil prices that satisfy both consumers' needs and budgets, while producing countries continue investing and ensuring more crude oil is available to the global market.

Oil-producing countries are certainly welcoming back their customers with open arms.

Email: [naftikuwaiti@yahoo.com](mailto:naftikuwaiti@yahoo.com)

Al enhances seismic analysis

## KPC approves Egypt gas project, output set for Q4

By Najeh Bilal

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 13: Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) has approved an investment in a gas exploration project in the Arab Republic of Egypt, specifically in West Mena, off the coast of Alexandria, such that the initial production from the field is expected to start in the fourth quarter of this year, according to reliable sources who disclosed that Kuwait Foreign Petroleum Exploration Company (KUFPEC) owns 40 percent stake in the project.

As part of efforts to expand overseas investments in the oil and gas sectors in Egypt, sources revealed that a meeting was held two days ago between KPC Chief Executive Officer Sheikh Nawaf Al-Saud Al-Sabah and Egyptian Minister of Petroleum and Mineral Resources Karim Badawi.

During their visit to the United States of America, the two officials discussed opportunities to expand the investments of KPC in the Egyptian oil and gas industry, as well as ways in which the petroleum sector of Egypt could benefit from the expertise and technical capabilities of KPC. Sources revealed that Badawi commended exploration activities of KPC, particularly its contributions to the oil and gas sector in Egypt. He presented several promising investment opportunities in the Red Sea, Mediterranean Sea and western desert areas.

Sources said the discussions also covered the use of advanced technologies, exchange of expertise in reservoir management, and methods to increase production rates.

In a related development, the latest report of KPC highlighted its achievements in 2025, indicating that Block Three Northeast Amriya in Alexandria, where KPC holds 40 percent interest, is one of the major natural gas production assets of the corporation. The report stated that within the Nile Delta Basin, cubic reserves are estimated at 200 trillion cubic feet, two major discoveries were made in

Block Three Northeast Amriya, which is operated by KUFPEC. These discoveries include the West Mina 1X well, which confirmed the presence of Miocene-era gas and condensates in shallow-water formations and is currently undergoing development, as well as the Khuff R1 well, a deep and high-pressure well that affirmed the existence of gas within lower Miocene sandstone reservoirs.

The report indicated that the recent processing of three-dimensional seismic data in the southern section of Block Three produced highly favorable results. It added that the integration of artificial intelligence and machine learning technologies into seismic data processing significantly enhanced the quality of subsurface imaging and accelerated operational workflows, thereby, improving the reliability of geological interpretations and supporting future exploration decisions.

It affirmed that KUFPEC continues to achieve progress internationally, including securing approval from the Indonesian government for the Anambas development plan. The project has advanced into its third phase, known as the project definition stage, which will lead to the final investment decision, alongside a number of other strategic projects.

It outlined the scope of KUFPEC's global expansion, emphasizing that its growth strategy is based on carefully defined standards and criteria and not limited to any single geographic region.

The operations and asset portfolio of the company, which include 30 projects, are spread in two major regions covering six continents and are managed through seven overseas offices located in Australia, Canada, Egypt, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Netherlands and Pakistan.

The report added that KUFPEC continues to strengthen workforce diversity by recruiting highly qualified professionals with extensive experience and expertise in various regions, in which the company operates.

options through the introduction of new destinations.

Al-Shatti affirmed Kuwait Airways' continued efforts to enhance operational performance, improve service quality and strengthen the overall passenger experience in line with its network expansion plans.

He added that the airline is implementing its operational plans according to the highest standards, reflecting its role as Kuwait's national carrier and its commitment to providing the best services and offers throughout the travel seasons.

## Kuwait Airways adds Zurich to growing global network

KUWAIT CITY, June 13, (KUNA): Kuwait Airways announced the launch of its first commercial flights to Zurich, Switzerland, effective Friday, with two weekly flights operating on Fridays and Sundays as part of its summer schedule.

Acting CEO Abdulwahab Al-Shatti said the addition of Zurich supports the airline's strategy to expand its global network and reach new markets that meet customer demand.

He noted that Zurich is a popular summer destination and said the airline remains committed to offering passengers wider travel

# Business

From Global Private Banker

## Kuwait Finance House wins 3 Global Private Banking Innovation Awards

KUWAIT CITY, June 13: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) has won three prestigious awards at the Global Private Banker "Global Private Banking Innovation Awards 2026": Best Private Bank – Kuwait, Best Private Bank for Islamic Services, and Best Private Bank for Discretionary Portfolios – Kuwait.

These awards reflect KFH's leadership and successful strategy to become the premier Sharia-compliant private banking and wealth management provider, while highlighting its vision to protect and grow high-net-worth clients' investments.

KFH earned these awards following a thorough evaluation by Global Private Banker magazine's judging panel. The selection was based on KFH's comprehensive Sharia-compliant banking solutions and its vast geographical footprint, which spans over 600 branches across the Middle East, Asia, and Europe, most notably in Kuwait, Bahrain, Turkey, Egypt, UK, and Germany.

The criteria also included KFH's commitment to long-term customer relationships, backed by advanced expertise, innovative digital solutions, exceptional everyday banking, and a sophisticated experience tailored for HNW and UHNW clients. KFH provides high-quality private banking and wealth management through regional portfolio management, international equity and real estate funds, leasing, trade finance, treasury, and diverse local and international investment solutions, all while adapting to global economic and market developments.



Hamad Alghannam

KFH General Manager Private Banking, Wealth Management and Individual Financing, Hamad Mohammed Alghannam said that these awards reflect the strength of the bank's integrated model. He added that the model offers diverse, Sharia-compliant investment opportunities and services for HNW and UHNW clients, utilizing a vision that builds risk-consistent portfolios by combining local market expertise with global opportunities.

He noted that Private Banking and Wealth Management enable clients to monitor portfolios through a disciplined, scalable discretionary approach, operating under a comprehensive governance framework ensuring full Islamic Sharia compliance across all products and services.



He added: "KFH enables its Private Banking and Wealth Management clients to trade Sukuk, stocks, commodities, and real estate by providing real-time data for faster decision-making and access to diverse local and international investment opportunities."

Furthermore, Alghannamsaid that KFH stands out by offering a wide range of banking solutions and facilities that meet the evolving needs of its HNW clients. This includes a comprehensive suite of advisory services delivered by highly experienced relationship managers, all operating under the guidance of seasoned private banking and wealth management leaders.

Launched in 2009, the Global Private Banker Awards evaluate and honor the quantitative and qualitative performance of outstanding private banking institutions worldwide.

## Boursa Kuwait and KCC launch annual blood donation campaign with the theme of Invest in Life, Donate Blood

KUWAIT CITY, June 13: As part of their commitment to social responsibility and promoting the values of national solidarity, Boursa Kuwait and Kuwait Clearing Company organized their annual blood donation campaign in collaboration with the Central Blood Bank, marking World Blood Donor Day, which is observed globally on 14 June each year.

Held under the theme "Invest in Life... Donate Blood," the campaign bridges the language of capital markets with the values of humanitarian giving, aiming to promote a culture of blood donation as social investment that saves lives and strengthens the community's health security.

The campaign also reflects Boursa Kuwait and Kuwait Clearing Company's continued commitment to supporting humanitarian efforts that enhance quality of life and reinforce the values of solidarity, compassion and social cohesion across the community.

**Social responsibility in response to current challenges**

This year's campaign carries particular significance amid the geopolitical challenges and rising tensions facing the region, which continue to cast their shadow across various sectors. At such times, community initiatives play an important role in strengthening society's readiness and the resilience of its vital institutions, particularly the healthcare system, which remains an essential safeguard in responding to emergencies.

Ensuring the availability of safe and sustainable blood supplies is a healthcare responsibility, and an investment in the security and stability of society. Both Boursa Kuwait and KCC recognize that their role extends beyond organizing, operating and developing the capital market and strengthening investor confidence, extending to active contributions to building a cohesive society capable of facing challenges and tensions effectively and efficiently.

**An institutional partnership translating sustainability commitments into tangible impact**



Boursa Kuwait, KCC mark World Blood Donor Day with Annual Campaign.

■ The humanitarian initiative in collaboration with the Central Blood Bank aims to strengthen solidarity within the community and support the readiness of the healthcare system amid geopolitical tensions

Organized in collaboration with the Central Blood Bank, the campaign reflects Boursa Kuwait and KCC's approach to institutional integration and purposeful partnerships across the healthcare and community ecosystem and embodies the belief that sustainability extends beyond economic dimensions to include humanitarian and social responsibility. The campaign is also aligned with Boursa Kuwait's commitment to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly:

■ Goal 3: Good Health and Well-being, by supporting safe and sustainable blood supplies for the national healthcare system

■ Goal 17: Partnerships for the Goals, by bringing together the financial sector, healthcare institutions and civil society

It also supports the objectives of Kuwait Vision 2035, which seeks to build a cohesive society with a high quality of life and strengthen effective partnerships between state institutions and the private sector in service of citizens.

**Effective participation that reflects a community-oriented institutional culture**

The annual campaign saw broad participation from employees of Boursa Kuwait, KCC and companies operating in the Boursa Kuwait building, as well as market participants and visitors.

This reflected a practical embodiment of the social responsibility values that form an integral part of both companies' institutional culture and demonstrated growing awareness that humanitarian giving is a shared commitment that strengthens belonging and reinforces solidarity across society.

**A social responsibility strategy rooted in Boursa Kuwait's core business**

Boursa Kuwait believes that investing in social capital is no less valuable than financial investment, as both contribute to building a safer and more sustainable future for generations to come.

The company implements an integrated social responsibility strategy aligned with its mission, vision and corporate values, built around the pillars of community and environment. This strategy is delivered through impactful initiatives and sustainable partnerships with leading local and international organizations, including United Nations agencies such as UN-HCR, UNDP, UNEP and UN Women.

In addition, the exchange maintains a humanitarian partnership with the Kuwait Red Crescent Society and continues to support the Kuwait Association for the Care of Children in Hospital (KACCH) and Bayt Abdullah, alongside its collaborations with several national institutions and associations.

To enhance customer experience

## Warba Bank launches mobile app update

KUWAIT CITY, June 13: Warba Bank announced the launch of a comprehensive update for its mobile banking application. The update introduces features designed to improve customer experience, upgrade digital infrastructure, and provide seamless Sharia-compliant banking solutions that support everyday banking needs.

**Automated Zakat Calculators:**

A key feature of the new update is the introduction of the automated Cash Zakat Calculator. This digital tool automatically calculates Zakat obligations on eligible balances within the bank. It also allows customers to manually add external cash balances or additional amounts for a comprehensive calculation.

The calculator automatically verifies whether the balance has reached the Nisab (minimum wealth threshold). Furthermore, aligned with the directives of the Warba Bank Sharia Board, the tool includes an option to deduct outstanding annual debt installments from the Zakat base by entering the value and remaining duration of the installments.

**The update also introduces Zakat calculators for:**

■ Warba Bank Shares Zakat: Calculates Zakat on held bank shares in accordance with approved Sharia rules.

■ Warba Bank Sukuk Zakat: Determines Zakat due on Sukuk based on their structure and investment nature.

■ Investment Funds Zakat: Assesses Zakat on mutual fund investments according to the underlying asset criteria of each fund.

■ Gold Zakat: Evaluates Zakat on owned gold after verifying weight and Nisab requirements.

**Notification Preferences and Controls:**



Nasser Al-Mutawa



Abdullah Fakhro

Nasser Al-Mutawa emphasizes digital transformation investments, while Abdullah Fakhro highlights new Sharia-compliant Zakat calculators

The update introduces an upgraded interface for notification management, giving users greater flexibility in choosing how they receive banking alerts and One-Time Passwords (OTPs)—either via SMS or push notifications within the application. It also allows customers to customize content preferences, separating operational banking alerts from marketing offers and digital services notifications.

**Executive Commentary:**

Nasser Maher Al-Mutawa, Chief Digital Officer at Warba Bank, stated: "Digital innovation is essential to meeting the lifestyle needs of our customers. We continue to invest in expanding our digital services to ensure they are smarter

and more aligned with customer needs, while maintaining the highest security standards. The deployment of features like the Cash Zakat Calculator and customizable notification controls delivers meaningful value that reflects our corporate vision."

Abdullah Abdulrahim Fakhro, Executive Manager of the Sharia Department at Warba Bank, added: "Warba Bank is keen on utilizing financial technology to simplify religious obligations. Providing specialized calculators for shares, Sukuk, mutual funds, and gold combines Sharia precision with digital accessibility, enabling customers to complete their calculations with confidence."

In line with its commitment to meeting the needs of this important segment and enhancing their quality of life

# NBK's experienced individuals package ... integrated banking solutions for senior customers with competitive returns and exclusive benefits

KUWAIT CITY, June 13: In line with its continued commitment to meeting the evolving needs of its diverse customer segments, National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) offers a comprehensive suite of tailored banking solutions and exclusive benefits designed specifically for its senior customers (retirees), enabling this valued segment of society to enjoy retirement with greater comfort and peace of mind through a combination of competitive returns, advanced banking services, and lifestyle-related privileges.

The offering includes competitive interest rates on deposits starting from balances of KWD 25,000, reaching up to 3.625% on NBK Fixed Deposits and 3.500% on NBK Flexible Term Deposit and NBK Partial Withdrawal Deposit, providing retired customers with attractive opportunities to grow their savings. In addition, NBK's Experienced Individuals Package allows retired customers to benefit from lifetime free credit cards, including the NBK Visa Signature Credit Card, NBK World Mastercard Credit Card, and NBK Visa Platinum Credit Card, as part of a promotional offer valid until December 31, 2026.

Retired customers can also benefit from a cash reward upon transferring their pension to the Bank, reflecting NBK's commitment to delivering added value and strengthening its relationship with this important customer segment.

In addition, the package grants retired customers within the NBK Thahabi segment access to home banking services previously available exclusively to Privilege Banking customers. Through this service, customers can conveniently and securely request banking documents or cash delivery to their homes in collaboration with concierge service providers Peacock Concierge and Q'go Concierge, further enhancing accessibility, convenience, and overall customer experience.

As part of its commitment to enriching customers' lifestyles, the Experienced Individuals Package also offers exclusive seasonal travel promotions throughout the year, alongside a range of additional benefits set to be introduced in the near future. These offerings are specifically designed to meet the evolving aspirations of retirees and deliver added



Abdullah Al Najdi

**Al Najdi:**

- A tailored package designed to enhance retirees' lifestyle through greater convenience, flexibility, and exclusive benefits
- A seamless banking experience integrating innovative financial solutions with services that enhance everyday convenience for retirees

value, reflecting NBK's vision of providing a comprehensive banking experience that extends beyond traditional banking services.

As part of NBK's broader commitment to rewarding customers across all segments, retirees can also benefit from the Bank's renowned Al Jawhara Account, which offers Kuwait's biggest prize pool totaling KD 5,000,000. With every KD 50 saved counting as one chance to win, customers can enter weekly, monthly, and grand prize draws, doubling their chances through exclusive program features. The Al Jawhara Saver Account additionally provides interest bearing benefits, making it an ideal choice for customers seeking both savings growth and life changing rewards. Eligibility for monthly and grand draws begins at KD 1,000 for Al Jawhara and KD 5,000 for Al Jawhara Saver.

On this occasion, Abdullah Al Najdi Associate Vice President – Segments said: "At NBK, we highly value

our retired customers in recognition of their meaningful contributions to society and our commitment to supporting their aspirations and evolving needs during this important stage of life. The Experienced Individuals Package has been carefully curated to provide a seamless and rewarding banking experience that combines convenience, flexibility, and exclusive benefits designed to enrich their lifestyle and enhance their overall quality of life."

"Through this package, we aim to offer retirees a seamless and integrated banking experience that combines innovative financial solutions with services designed to simplify their daily lives, while reaffirming our commitment to being a trusted financial partner that evolves alongside their needs and supports their wellbeing," Al Najdi added.

These initiatives reaffirm NBK's commitment to delivering thoughtfully designed banking solutions built on a deep understanding of the needs of senior customers within an advanced banking environment that combines innovation, convenience, and reliability.

NBK also continues to innovate and invest in initiatives that enhance community wellbeing, ensuring a comprehensive, convenient, and rewarding banking experience for customers across all segments.



## New AI security strategy aims to protect critical infrastructure

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

By Anjana Susarla  
Michigan State University

Some technology and policy watchers were surprised when President Donald Trump signed an executive order on June 2, 2026, establishing a framework for AI security. It seemed to move in a different direction from a December 2025 executive order that sought to create a "minimally burdensome" national framework for artificial intelligence and supersede state laws the administration saw as restrictive.

The new executive order focuses on using AI to boost the security of federal and private computer systems. It also aims to ensure that the federal government has access to major new AI models before they are released to the public, to determine if they pose a threat.

However, the order's provisions relating to the AI industry are voluntary, and it explicitly prohibits interpreting its provisions as authorizing "a mandatory governmental licensing, pre-clearance, or permitting requirement" for new AI models.

As a professor who studies responsible AI, the questions the executive order raises for me are how its new reporting structure changes the governance of AI safety, and whether the order reflects what AI safety experts see as best practices.

The executive order expresses concern about AI systems that can discover software vulnerabilities and write malicious code to exploit them. It directs various government secretaries to enact cyber defenses for federal systems. It also establishes an AI cybersecurity clearinghouse in voluntary collaboration with the AI industry and operators of critical infrastructure to scan for vulnerabilities and distribute fixes.

This approach may be the Trump administration's response to the April 2026 announcement by Anthropic that its newest version of Claude, called Mythos, autonomously found hundreds of software vulnerabilities in critical systems across the U.S. and crafted attacks against them. That prompted several large financial institutions to request early access to such models.

The executive order directs various high-ranking government officials to develop and maintain a classified process for assessing whether new AI programs should be designated as frontier models, also called foundation models.

In industry parlance, a frontier model is a new, cutting edge AI model trained on massive amounts of data that can reason and autonomously use tools to initiate actions. The latest versions of ChatGPT, Claude, DeepMind and Llama fall into this category.

If a new model meets the frontier criteria, then the developer is supposed to provide the government with access to it at least 30 days before they plan to release the model. It also says developers will collaborate with the federal government to select third parties to preview covered frontier models to assess the risk to the cybersecurity of critical infrastructure.

AI companies that develop frontier AI models currently share information with the Center for AI Standards and Innovation, part of the National Institute of Standards and Technology governed by the Department of Commerce. According to the International AI safety report, most risk

management initiatives around the world are largely voluntary for AI companies. This includes the Frontier AI Safety Frameworks that AI developers consult, the G7 Hiroshima AI Process endorsed by leaders of G7 countries, and the EU Code of Practice followed across Europe.

The new executive order retains the voluntary nature of AI developers reporting potential safety risks. The administration continues to argue that restrictive safety barriers could hamper innovation.

However, AI safety pioneers, including Turing Award winners Geoffrey Hinton and Yoshua Bengio, maintain that safety cannot rest solely on corporate self-regulation, because commercial pressures prioritize development speed over risk mitigation. The International AI Safety Report warns that AI risk management is still immature and that corporate safety measures have to grow with the pace of innovation.

This is the so-called "evidence dilemma": Acting too slowly leaves societies vulnerable. In creating AI safety standards, industry and government have to specify and agree on what information is required from AI model developers, such as training data and methods, "red team" practices for probing vulnerabilities, and incident reports about model theft.

Despite its lack of mandatory safety measures for the AI industry, I find it striking that the executive order acknowledges the serious potential for harm posed by AI models.

The order is also in line with expert consensus that individual technical safeguards are imperfect and can be bypassed by attackers. Instead, the order advocates for multiple, overlapping layers of protection, including hardware and computer infrastructure tracking, rigorous testing before deployment, and real-time monitoring.

The order also reflects expert opinion in noting that advanced AI tools have a fundamental duality: They can transform disciplines ranging from healthcare to defense, but they can also enable malicious hackers and cybercriminals, pose societal harms and threaten national defense.

International cooperation is also fundamental to AI safety.

For instance, Argentina has created nonhuman corporations run entirely by AI agents. How much safety does the new executive order provide in a world where models can be deployed from anywhere? The order makes no mention of multilateral coordination, allied engagement or globally shared governance. Indeed, the order's purpose is to "cultivate America's advanced AI-enabled capabilities" as a competitive national asset.

Bodies such as the International Atomic Energy Agency can serve as models for an international consensus on AI safety. The existing AI Safety Summit process, which held summits in the U.K. in 2023; South Korea in 2024; France in 2025; and India in 2026, is the closest approximation in practice. It involves a network of government AI safety institutes, including from the U.S. and Europe. It holds summits every six to 12 months.

Such independent, expert-led bodies could also shape expectations about protocols and norms related to AI risk.

The executive order represents a first step in acknowledging some of the AI safety risks for national security. Moving forward, I believe it is important for the U.S. government to connect such efforts with broader, independent and scientific approaches to identify and counter threats from AI. (AP)

Promoting Kuwait's capital markets and investment ecosystem

## Markaz sponsors Thought Leadership Circle organized by KDIPA and The Business Year

KUWAIT CITY, June 13: Kuwait Financial Centre "Markaz" concluded its gold sponsorship of the "Thought Leadership Circle: Unlocking Kuwait's Market Potential", part of a high-level roundtable series that brought together senior leaders from the public and private sector to discuss how Kuwait can deepen its capital markets, attract investment, and strengthen the institutional foundations needed to support long-term economic development and Vision 2035. The event, held on June 10, 2026, was co-hosted by the Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority (KDIPA) and The Business Year. The sponsorship reflects Markaz's commitment to supporting dialogue that advances Kuwait's capital markets, investment ecosystem, and long-term economic competitiveness.

The event provided a platform for constructive dialogue between public- and private-sector stakeholders, encouraging the exchange of perspectives on the opportunities and challenges shaping Kuwait's investment landscape. The roundtable convened policymakers, regulators, financial institutions, and business leaders to examine how Kuwait can unlock greater investment activity and further strengthen its position as a regional financial center. Discus-



Kuwait leaders discuss path to stronger financial ecosystem.

sions focused on expanding access to capital markets, enabling more family-owned businesses to institutionalize and access public markets, strengthening the role of fund management in channelling capital toward productive sectors, attracting foreign investment, and leveraging public-private partnerships to support national development priorities.

Commenting on Markaz's sponsorship, Mr. Ali Khalil, Chief Executive Officer of Markaz, said: "Kuwait has made significant progress in developing its capital markets, and the next phase of growth will depend on expanding participation, attracting long-term investment, and creating deeper

connections between capital and the real economy. This requires fair and predictable regulation, deeper liquidity, efficient entry and exit mechanisms, and a financial ecosystem that enables institutions to operate and scale effectively. Whether through supporting family businesses as they transition across generations, developing innovative investment products, attracting global asset managers, or mobilizing private capital through public-private partnerships, the objective is the same: building a more dynamic and competitive investment ecosystem. Forums such as the Thought Leadership Circle are valuable because they bring together poli-

cymakers, regulators, investors, and business leaders to help shape practical solutions that support Kuwait's long-term economic development and Vision 2035 objectives."

As one of Kuwait's leading investment institutions, Markaz remains committed to supporting the continued development of the country's capital markets and investment ecosystem. Through active engagement with policymakers, regulators, and market participants, Markaz seeks to contribute to initiatives that enhance market competitiveness, attract investment, and create sustainable long-term value for Kuwait's economy.

### Analysts warn SpaceX shares are overvalued

## SpaceX IPO makes Musk the world's first trillionaire

NEW YORK, June 13, (AP) — Elon Musk became the world's first trillionaire after shares of his rocket company SpaceX soared in Wall Street's biggest initial public offering of stock.

Shares in SpaceX jumped more than 19% after opening for trading Friday, a sign that investors are looking past the billions the company is losing and instead betting that its massive investments in satellites, orbital data centers and artificial intelligence will pay off in the future.

SpaceX opened around midday at \$150 a share, then rose to around \$168, before finishing the day just below \$161. That price gave the company a market value of \$2.1 trillion, making it the sixth largest public U.S. company - larger even than its founder and CEO's other big business, the electric vehicle maker Tesla.

Between his holdings in SpaceX and Tesla, where he is also CEO, Musk is now worth an estimated \$1.1 trillion, according to Forbes.

Musk says SpaceX, founded in 2002, is going public now because it needs money to fund its ambitions of putting satellites and data centers in space and eventually establishing a colony of people on Mars.

He marked the opening of trading on Nasdaq by joining a ceremonial bell ringing from Starbase, the South Texas home of SpaceX.

He reiterated his lofty goals "to make life multiplanetary."

"Not just a few astronauts, I mean literally you," Musk said. "Whoever you are watching this, SpaceX wants to be able to take you to the moon, take you to Mars and ultimately beyond."

Known for his technological

breakthroughs, as well as wild claims and missed deadlines, Musk was able to whip up enthusiasm for the IPO. The typical company going public has seen a 7% jump in its first day of trading, from 1980 through 2025, according to Jay Ritter, a professor at the University of Florida's Warrington College of Business.

Institutional and retail investors alike jumped at the opportunity to buy a piece of the company at \$135 per share before trading began. The \$75 billion in proceeds SpaceX raised easily topped the previous record IPO from oil giant Saudi Aramco in 2019.

In addition to establishing a one-million person Martian colony, the company has promised to save humanity by establishing other outposts in space, launch data centers the size of football fields into orbit and outdo rivals Anthropic and OpenAI in the race to make money from artificial intelligence.

To reach its goals, SpaceX needs billions more than it currently takes in from its rocket and satellite business. Between the start of 2025 and March 31, 2026, the company, formally known as Space Exploration Technologies Corp., lost \$8.7 billion.

Betting on SpaceX is in many ways a bet on Musk himself. In an unusual arrangement that has drawn criticism from shareholder watchdogs, he holds 82% interest in a special B class of shares, giving him sweeping power to control the company even though his ownership stake is about half that.

"There's a lot of hype, but I see the faith that investors have in Musk," said Yordys Coro, an IT support contractor in Miami as he watched his

\$14,000 investment in SpaceX shoot up to \$17,000 in just a few hours. "I'm going to hold on."

Wall Street bankers that helped take SpaceX public are also enthusiastic about the company - and the big fees they will earn - but not everyone thinks the stock price is justified.

Analysts at research firm Morningstar, which doesn't earn any investment banking fees, wrote that the IPO is "significantly overvalued."

Citing SpaceX's technology challenges, including shielding its orbiting datacenters from radiation damage and catching up to leaders in AI such as Anthropic and OpenAI, they estimated the company is only worth \$780 billion - less than half its IPO value.

SpaceX itself has hinted at the challenges, conceding in regulatory documents that some of its business plans rest on "unproven technologies." It also indicated that another part of the company, its artificial intelligence business called xAI, has no clear path to profitability and is burning cash to catch up with rivals.

On a livestreamed conference Thursday with the CEO of JPMorgan Chase, one of the investment banks making big money off the IPO, Musk offered few details.

He entertained the crowd with talk of "moon hotels," a future Martian colony and a network of Earth-orbiting data centers powered by the sun. But when asked about plans for his flagship chatbot offering Grok, he pivoted to talking about his satellites.

Still, Musk has pulled off the seemingly impossible before. The now-trillionaire - on paper at least - made his initial fortune by creating two companies, Zip2 and Pay-

Pal, that netted him about \$200 million at sale. He used that money to start SpaceX and invest in Tesla, and defied the odds by creating a space company that figured out how to reuse rockets and a car company that made electric vehicles cool.

Musk has realized vast sums of wealth for himself, much of it in stock he has yet to cash in or grants for shares he'll only receive if Tesla or SpaceX hit ambitious performance targets.

His recent pay package from Tesla was so large it even drew criticism from the Vatican. At Tesla, he's worried shareholders by fighting with regulators or dividing his attention between multiple companies and last year by taking a role in the Trump administration.

But a rising stock price has cured all ills: Since it went public in 2010, Tesla has returned 20,000% for shareholders, or more than \$1.2 trillion in investor wealth.

SpaceX is the first of three "mega-cap" companies expected to go public this year, with Anthropic and OpenAI to follow. Nasdaq even revised its rules to allow SpaceX to gain entry into funds tied to its indexes in 15 days, which means investors will end up buying the rocket maker's shares much earlier.

Not all investors are thrilled about SpaceX potentially showing up in their holdings of index funds.

Officials from pension funds for firefighters, teachers and other workers in California and New York sent a letter to SpaceX last month decrying some of the provisions in its IPO, including mandatory arbitration of shareholder claims and how much power Musk will hold over the company.

# What's On

## SPOTLIGHT

Got a birthday or event?

Share your story and snapshots with Arab Times!  
Email your write-up and photos to  
arabtimes@arabtimesonline.com  
We'll feature it on our What's On page!



Ambassador promotes mango trade at Avenues Mall fiesta

## Indian Mango Festival highlights growing trade ties with Kuwait

KUWAIT CITY, June 13: An 11-day Indian Mango Festival concluded in Kuwait with a Mango Tasting Fiesta at The Avenues Mall, celebrating the rich diversity and premium quality of India's iconic "King of Fruits."

Visitors sampled fresh mango slices, mango lassi and a variety of mango-based delicacies, while participating restaurants also hosted a three-day "Mango Mania" featuring specially curated dishes showcasing the fruit's versatility. As the world's largest producer of mangoes, India is home to hundreds of varieties renowned for their distinctive flavour, aroma and nutritional value.

The festival highlighted the growing agricultural and food trade partnership between India and Kuwait.

The Indian Ambassador HE Paramita Tripathi, highlighted the



Indian Ambassador Paramita Tripathi

fruit's cultural and economic significance.

Addressing visitors at the event, the ambassador welcomed Kuwaiti residents and mem-

bers of the Indian community, describing Indian mangoes as the "king of fruits" and one of India's most prized seasonal exports.

She noted that India produces

Indian mangoes take center stage at The Avenues Mall.



more than 500 varieties of mangoes across different states, with the world-renowned Alphonso mango among the most sought-after.

Visitors at the festival were offered the opportunity to sample several popular varieties, including Alphonso, Dasher, Banganapalli and Kesari.

The ambassador said Indian mangoes, like India's spices, jewellery and textiles, represent an important export product and play a significant role in strengthening trade ties between India and Kuwait.

She also noted that Indian mangoes have been arriving in Kuwait for more than a month and are highly popular among local consumers.

Encouraging greater trade cooperation, she invited Kuwaiti importers interested in sourcing more Indian mangoes to connect with the Embassy of India, which can facilitate contacts with exporters across India.

The festival aimed to promote Indian agricultural products in Kuwait while giving residents an opportunity to experience the wide range of flavours and varieties that have made Indian mangoes famous around the world.

### Experts stress early oral care

## IDAK & KALA Kuwait join hands to advance children's oral awareness

KUWAIT CITY, June 13: The Indian Dentists' Alliance in Kuwait (IDAK), in collaboration with Balavedi, the children's wing of Kerala Art Lovers Association (KALA), Kuwait, successfully conducted an Oral Hygiene Awareness Seminar and Dental Screening Camp on 5 June, 2026, benefiting around 250 children.

The programme which was sponsored by Mango Hypermarket aimed to create awareness among children about the importance of oral hygiene and preventive dental care through interactive and engaging activities.

The event commenced with an engaging solo mime by Dr. Sharon J. Thomas, representing the IDAK Cultural Committee. Through creative storytelling and expressive acting, the mime effectively conveyed the importance of proper brushing techniques, healthy dietary choices, and regular dental check-ups.

Following the inaugural ceremony organized by KALA Kuwait, an oral hygiene seminar was conducted by Dr. Joshin Thomas, Chair of the Community Welfare Committee (CWC), IDAK. The session focused on the importance of proper brushing techniques, healthy dietary practices and regular dental check-ups.

A fun-filled quiz based on the seminar was subsequently conducted by Dr. Valentina Fernandes, CWC Member, encouraging active participation and re-

inforcing the key oral health messages among the young audience.

Simultaneously, a comprehensive dental screening camp was carried out by members of the IDAK Community Welfare Committee under the leadership of the Co-Chair, Dr. Shibu George. The screening team included Dr. Jemy Shibu, Dr. Suja Mary John, Dr. Subu Thomas, and Dr. Manoj Kumar Yasangi.

The programme also received valuable support from IDAK volunteers Dr. Subin Bharath, Dr. Abey Kurian, Dr. Reshma Rajendran and Dr. Annlyn Roy Tharakan, who played an active role in the smooth execution of the camp.

IDAK Council members including President Dr. Shalin Anna Simon, Vice President Dr. Aju Wilson, General Secretary Dr. Dilip George, and Joint Secretary Dr. Fawwaz Khan actively participated in the programme. Their presence and involvement contributed significantly to the success of the event.

The camp successfully delivered important oral health messages to approximately 250 participating children, who enthusiastically engaged in the activities and benefited from detailed dental screenings. The programme concluded on a positive note, further strengthening IDAK's commitment to promoting oral health awareness and preventive dental care within the community.



Photos during the event.

Children play key role in successful beach clean-up drive

## PPF Kuwait marks World Environment Day with beach clean-up drive

KUWAIT CITY, June 13: Progressive Professional Forum (PPF) Kuwait observed World Environment Day 2026 by organizing ENVIRO'26, a beach clean-up drive at Mahboula Beach on Friday, bringing together members, families, children, and community volunteers in a collective effort to promote environmental responsibility and sustainability.

The initiative witnessed enthusiastic participation from PPF members and their families, including a significant number of children, highlighting the importance of nurturing environmental awareness among younger generations. Participants worked together to collect litter and plastic waste from the shoreline, contributing to the preservation of Kuwait's coastal ecosystem.

A notable achievement of the initiative was its inclusion on the official

World Environment Day activity map of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), placing PPF Kuwait's local environmental action among thousands of initiatives conducted worldwide in observance of World Environment Day.

PPF Kuwait acknowledged the support extended by Keralite Medical Forum (KMF) Kuwait. Mr. Sujeesh, Secretary of KMF Abu Halifa Unit, participated in the event and provided paramedical support throughout the programme, ensuring the well-being and safety of participants.

Addressing the gathering at the conclusion of the clean-up drive, PPF President Mr. Anil Kumar, General Secretary Mr. Bipin Punathil and Treasurer Mr. Sreejith S Nair, appreciated the participants for their enthusiastic involvement and congratulated them on making ENVIRO'26 a

grand success through their collective effort and commitment.

Delivering the concluding remarks, Mr. Kiran Babu, Program Convener, expressed gratitude to all participants including children for dedicating their weekend to the cause of environmental protection.

The successful mobilization and participation of members were coordinated by the forum's Unit Conveners and Executive Committee members.

Through ENVIRO'26, PPF Kuwait reaffirmed its commitment to promoting environmental awareness, community engagement, and sustainable living practices. The forum emphasized that meaningful environmental change begins with collective action and individual responsibility, and called upon the community to continue supporting initiatives that contribute to a cleaner and healthier future.



PPF Kuwait promotes sustainability through ENVIRO'26.

## How Kuwait's diwaniyas became a UNESCO-recognized heritage

By Shahad Kamal

**K**uwait's diwaniyas, a longstanding social and cultural institution, have been recognized internationally following the inscription on the UNESCO Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in 2025.

The listing of diwaniyas in UN's intangible cultural heritage list highlights their role in preserving dialogue, social cohesion, and national identity. Traditionally, the diwaniya serves as a gathering place within Kuwaiti society where people meet to discuss social, cultural, and public affairs.

Over the years, it has evolved into a platform for intellectual, cultural, political, and economic discussions while helping preserve values such as hospitality, tolerance, and community engagement.

Assistant Secretary-General for Antiquities and Museums at the National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters, Mohammad bin Redha told KUNA that the UNESCO inscription represents a national and cultural achievement reflecting Kuwait's commitment to safeguarding its living heritage and cultural identity.

He said the recognition confirms the diwaniya's importance as a cultural and social practice that promotes dialogue, tolerance, and the exchange of knowledge and values across generations.

Bin Redha noted that the listing was achieved through efforts led by the council in coordination with relevant authorities and in accordance with UNESCO standards for protecting intangible cultural heritage.

He added that the recognition will support initiatives aimed at strengthening the diwaniya's cultural, educational, and media role through academic research, youth programs, and public events, while enhancing Kuwait's cultural presence internationally.

President of Kuwait Heritage Society, Fahad Al-Abduljalil said the diwaniya has been closely associated with Kuwait's history and development, becoming an integral part of the country's cultural heritage and national identity.

He highlighted the role of diwaniyas in supporting educational and cultural initiatives, noting that the establishment of Al-Mubarakiya School, the first formal school in Kuwait, in 1911, originated from the diwaniya of Yusuf bin Isa Al-Qina'i. He also pointed out that the diwaniya of the Shuaib family on Failaka Island hosted the island's first formal school, Al-Salahiya Al-Amiriya School, in 1937.

Professor of Modern and Contemporary History Ayed Ateeq Al-Juraid told KUNA that many of Kuwait's reform, educational, and cultural projects



Left: Mohammad bin Redha, Assistant Secretary-General for Antiquities and Museums at the National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters. Right: Fahad Al-Abduljalil, President of Kuwait Heritage Society



Ayed Ateeq Al-Juraid, Professor of Modern and Contemporary History



Souad Al-Mejel, professor and writer

originated in diwaniyas, including initiatives related to education, civic participation, and cultural development.

He cited examples such as the Shura Council, whose idea was proposed

in the diwaniya of Nasser Al-Bader in 1921, and the idea of founding the first Kuwaiti literary club, which emerged in the diwaniya of Sheikh Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. The club was established in 1924 and is considered the first civil society institution in Kuwait's history.

In addition to their cultural role, diwaniyas have historically contributed to community support during times of hardship and have served as a channel for communication between citizens and leadership.

The diwaniya became a well-established civic institution and an important source of social support during times of crisis. Historical records indicate that it played a significant role in mitigating the effects of economic hardships in Kuwait. One notable example occurred in 1868, when diwaniyas opened their storage facilities to assist people affected by famine.

Over the decades, the diwaniya also reflected the close relationship between Kuwait's rulers and citizens. Through the longstanding practice of rulers visiting diwaniyas, it served as a direct channel of communication between the government and the public, providing a forum for discussing community concerns, public issues, and potential solutions.

The institution has also evolved in recent decades with the emergence of women's diwaniyas, which have expanded opportunities for social engagement, cultural exchange, and community initiatives.

Addressing women's participation in diwaniyas, professor and writer Souad Al-Mejel told KUNA that any discussion of women's diwaniyas must begin with the historical role of Kuwaiti women, which directly gave rise to the tradition.

Al-Mejel said Kuwaiti women were active contributors to social and economic life, particularly during the era of pearl diving and seafaring, when they assumed significant family responsibilities.

She noted that their efforts later led to the establishment of formal girls' schools in 1937 and culminated in their political participation following the granting of political rights in 2005.

She highlighted the emergence of pioneering women who entered fields traditionally dominated by men, including the diwaniya sphere.

Among the most prominent examples, she said, were the diwaniya of Lulwa Al-Qatami, which became a platform for discussing women's affairs and rights, and that of Dr. Souad Al-Sabah, which evolved into a cultural and intellectual forum.

Drawing on her personal experience, Al-Mejel said she regularly participates in a number of diwaniyas that bring together politicians, intellectuals, and citizens from diverse backgrounds and viewpoints. (KUNA)

## Culture at the heart of Egypt-China cooperation

CAIRO, June 13, (Xinhua): As Egypt and China mark the 70th anniversary of diplomatic relations this year, the interaction between their ancient civilizations can offer a new vision for global cultural exchange, Egyptian Sinologist Mohsen Fergani has said.

"The fundamental essence in both civilizations is culture," Fergani, a professor of Chinese language at Ain Shams University in Cairo, told Xinhua in a recent interview. "I hope the two cultures will present a general cultural program of work for humanity."

Egypt was the first Arab and African country to establish diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of China. In late 2014, the two countries officially elevated their already close ties to the level of comprehensive strategic partnership.

Fergani, who has translated several Chinese classics into Arabic, including The Analects of Confucius, The Book of Poetry and Tao Te Ching, emphasized that cultural understanding remains at the heart of Egypt-China relations.

He said that what is needed now is "a new vision for human culture, and a new philosophy for global cultural exchange."

Fergani linked his translation work to a wider historical need for cross-cultural learning, saying Chinese thought has long been part of global intellectual exchange.

"The world today needs to understand Chinese wisdom more deeply, just as it did in previous periods," he said. "The West translated the books of Confucian wisdom into Latin in ancient times. I hoped through my translation of them to introduce them to the Arabs."

Fergani said deepening exchange between Egypt and China is especially important because both countries carry long historical experience.

"Countries that carry history on their shoulders need to constantly learn, especially from one another, because they have mostly gone through the same experiences and the same challenges and obstacles, and they have a shared destiny," he

said. "The shared experience answers the shared questions, and this is the importance of mutual learning between the Egyptian and Chinese civilizations."

Egypt-China cooperation under the Belt and Road Initiative has expanded in recent years across infrastructure, trade, investment and cultural exchange, giving new momentum to a relationship already rooted in long historical interaction.

"Reviving the Silk Road symbolizes the revival of the great exchange that enriched the Arab and Chinese civilizations with intellectual and philosophical achievements, along with trade exchange," he said.

Fergani also voiced hope that future Arab-Chinese cooperation would give greater attention to cultural exchange and translation. "China, with its long history, deep-rooted civilization and political wisdom, has an important role to play in promoting human exchange and understanding."

The veteran Sinologist also highlighted the growing interest in learning Chinese in Egypt and the Arab world, supported by Confucius Institutes in several universities in the region.

However, he stressed that studying Chinese should go beyond language alone to include broader knowledge that helps in understanding China, such as art, civilization, history and archaeology.

"The new generation of students of Chinese culture and language serves as ambassadors between Egypt and China," Fergani said, adding that they are "ambassadors in the modern sense because they possess the tools of the modern age."

Fergani received the Special Book Award of China in 2013 for his contribution to promoting China-Arab cultural exchanges, and in 2016, received the Award for Outstanding Contribution to China-Arab Friendship.

The 70th anniversary of diplomatic relations should be seen not only as a diplomatic milestone but also as an opportunity to deepen mutual learning between the Egyptian and Chinese civilizations, he said.

## Television



This image released by HBO shows Dexter Sol Ansell, left, and Peter Claffey in a scene from 'A Knight of the Seven Kingdoms.' (AP)

### 'Thrones' spinoff refuses to go big

## Dunk and Egg keep it simple in world of epics

LOS ANGELES, June 13, (AP): Ser Duncan is tall, but his story is small.

And Ira Parker, showrunner of "A Knight of the Seven Kingdoms," HBO's latest entry to the "Game of Thrones" universe that has charmed and disarmed viewers with its humble story of big, raw, aspiring knight Dunk and his tiny, cue ball-bald squire Egg, says it's going to stay that way.

"If anything, I'd say Season 2 might feel even smaller," Parker said. "It's not at all busy and everything. There's almost some loneliness creeping into this."

Parker spoke to The Associated Press from the island of Gran Canaria, Spain, where he's making the second season of the show based on George R.R. Martin's series of novellas about the journeys and adventures of Ser Duncan the Tall and his sidekick whose nickname obscures his true identity.

After eight sprawling seasons of "Game of Thrones" and two seasons of the almost-as-epic "House of the Dragon," some worried about Westeros fatigue when "A Knight of the Seven Kingdoms" arrived in January. Instead, it was enthusiastically embraced by fans and plenty of newcomers. People seemed to want a world with no dragons or clashing kings, just an overgrown orphan without a last name trying to become somebody.

Everything about the show is scaled down. Season 1 had just six episodes averaging about 35 minutes, all of them centered entirely on Dunk and Egg.

"It is 100% a function of the underlying material," Parker said. "We don't want to have to stretch the story. We like building out the world and hanging out with our characters and having some fun in Westeros. But we don't want to have odd little side quests."

Smaller stories may be having a moment in elite TV. "The Pitt," last year's best-drama Emmy winner and a favorite to repeat the win, is set almost entirely in one part of one hospital. "Pluribus," the acclaimed Apple TV+ show that will give it Emmy competition this year, has a single main character.

"Game of Thrones" was also the mother of all Emmy contenders, getting more nominations during its full run than any drama ever.

This little brother of a show could get a little Emmy attention too when nominations are announced next month after a voting period that started Thursday. Its two stars, each as unlikely to find themselves in the spotlight as the characters they play, could both get acting nominations.

Peter Claffey, who plays Dunk, is a 6-foot-5, 29-year-old former professional rugby player who has had a steady stream of supporting roles since switching to acting in 2019 but nothing remotely like the title role in a franchise series.

When he got the Egg gig, Dexter Sol Ansell was plenty experienced for a 9-year-old. (He's 11 now.) But now he's become a memeable charmer as the little hairless scamp who's devoted to Dunk but sitting on big secrets.

They were both big, and lucky, finds for Parker and his team. Dunk was the first kid they looked at for Egg. And he and Claffey have established an off-screen rapport that translates to the screen.

"They've just been growing up together and they're coming up together and they really do talk to each

other like brothers now," Parker said. "There's an aspect of that that you just can't create."

Parker himself has a humble background and isn't used to being the center of such attention. He wrote for shows including "The Last Ship," "Better Things" and, crucially, "House of the Dragon" before having this gig, and a sort of stardom, fall into his lap.

The sophomore year, however, is going a little roughly.

"Worst experience of my life," Parker said, smiling but not entirely joking.

Season 2, based on Martin's 2003 novella "The Sworn Sword," is set in a drought that they're supposed to be recreating in Spain. But Gran Canaria is getting historic downpours.

"The whole story is about the drought," he said. "The whole story is somebody damming the water to keep it from someone else."

But he spoke to AP after a day of sun, with hope for more.

"If we can somehow manage to corral this thing back into its box of sunshiny-ness," he said, "I think we're going to have something special."



A contestant competes during the final of the 25th "Chinese Bridge" Chinese Proficiency Competition for Foreign College Students in Cairo, Egypt, May 15, 2026. (Xinhua)

From first date to final silence, the tracks turn romance into revelation

# Olivia Rodrigo finds new depth on 'You Seem Pretty Sad for a Girl So in Love'

NEW YORK, June 13, (AP) — Olivia Rodrigo's done it again. Her third album, "You seem pretty sad for a girl so in love," is her best yet - a giant step forward for the songwriter who emerged a promising young talent before she could even parallel park.

Across 13 tracks, Rodrigo telegraphs the story of a romance - from a first date to its dissolution, with a lot of self-realization along the way. It's a concept album about a first big love - one that dares to dive into the revelation that sometimes the greatest mirror is revealing yourself to another.

The world's introduction to Rodrigo arrived with the power ballad heard 'round the world: 2021's smash "drivers license," leading to her spirited power pop-punk debut, "SOUR." Then came "GUTS," a musical maturation from an artist entering her 20s, and an acute reminder that there are few forces more potent than a young creative woman's dissatisfaction - if she so chooses to wield it.

And she did, like on the Babes In Toyland-esque "All-American Bitch," inspired by Joan Didion's "The White Album," or "Pretty Isn't Pretty," with its dreamy guitar tones that recalled The Cure. That song might've been the best indication of what was to come. The first single from her latest album, "Drop Dead," name-checks the '80s band's best-known love song, "Just Like Heaven." The second was

titled "The Cure," with its orchestral strings and an explosive bridge. And the third song, revealed onstage at Barcelona's Primavera Festival just ahead of the album's release? Her first-ever collaboration, "What's Wrong with Me," a duet with The Cure mastermind Robert Smith. The Cure's lush guitar tones are also heard on the standout "Maggots for Brains" - gothic love songs, Rodrigo's got a few.

On "You seem pretty sad for a girl so in love," she once again teamed up with principal collaborator Dan Nigro, and their partnership has been further refined. Their productions, now more complicated, nuanced and vibrant with the addition of elements like string arrangements, have a sort of ease of presentation: His emo guitars are still heard on "Purple," now delivered with multi-track harmonics. Her playful expressions of girlhood crushing remain intact; now through '90s jangly guitar pop influences ("u + me = 3," an easy contender for one of the best songs she's ever written.)

But there's a lot of exciting new territory here. The cheer-leading cadence of the synth-y "My Way" evokes the punk sounds of Kathleen Hanna's Le Tigre project. By the time Rodrigo reaches her "Expectations" on track 12, she's pulling from the New Romanticism movement's ebullient synths and robotic vocals in a cheeky tune about hooking up with Mr. Wrong to realize it's time for Mr. Right.

At every corner, there's something to celebrate. When

Rodrigo cheers "Nobody's wanted somebody more" in the Swiftian refrain on the ballad fake out "Stupid Song," she ascends. Those wanting her delicate moments will want to zoom to the piano-forward "Honeybee," which features choirlike background vocals, partially courtesy her friend Conan Gray - or the acoustic "Begg'd," with its overdubbed vocal harmonies. Or even the broken "Less," with its clever devastation. But it's the big feeling up-tempo moments listeners will want to live within.

There are no unimpeachable formulas in music, but there is a widely held belief that a first album is an introduction - the one an artist has their whole life to work on - the second builds off the first and the third is a moment of catharsis. Ideally, on that record, they've arrived at a more evolved version of who they've worked to become. Nothing is so simple, of course, but Rodrigo seems to be a shining example. She seems pretty self-actualized, for a girl so open to falling hard.

"You seem pretty sad for a girl so in love" by Olivia Rodrigo

Four and a half stars out of five.

On repeat: "u + me = 3," "Maggots for Brains," "The Cure"

Skip it: "Honeybee"

For fans of: Guitar pop, big hooks, bigger heart



This album cover image released by Geffen Records shows 'you seem pretty sad for a girl so in love' by Olivia Rodrigo. (Geffen Records via AP)

## Obituary

### Helped popularize TV film reviews

## Gene Shalit, longtime 'Today' show film critic, dies at 100

NEW YORK, June 13, (AP) — Gene Shalit, a movie critic and arts reporter for the "Today" show over four decades who was known for his puffy hair, oversized handlebar mustache and affection for groan-inducing puns, has died. He was 100.

Shalit's family announced the death Friday to NBC News, saying in a statement that he "passed away peacefully today after 100 years of an amazing life."

Shalit joined "Today" as a contributor in 1970 and became arts editor in 1973, later settling in for his segment, "Critic's Corner." When he left the show in 2010, he was one of the last high-profile film critics on a major network.

"What resonated above his unusual appearance was his incredible wit, his remarkable intelligence. But he didn't pound you over the head with it. He amused you. He enlightened and amused whatever subject he was on," Guy Ludwig, Shalit's producer for more than 20 years, wrote in an essay at the time of Shalit's retirement.

It was no coincidence that Chicago critics Roger Ebert and Gene Siskel's local "thumbs-up, thumbs-down" movie-review program, "Sneak Previews," went national on PBS in the late 1970s and that "Today" show's ABC rival, "Good Morning America," hired Joel Siegel to be its movie critic in 1981.

"Shalit was instrumental in changing the balance of critical power in America. When he began his 'Today' tenure, newspapers and magazines were the primary sources for movie reviews. That's where cinematic opinion was sparked and shaped." The Plain Dealer wrote in 2010, calling Shalit "Daniel Boone in a bow tie and Groucho glasses."

Shalit started as an entertainment columnist for McCall's magazine, eventually becoming senior film critic for Look magazine in 1968 and writing for Ladies' Home Journal. His popularity in magazines led to an offer from NBC.

"No one at NBC had seen him. They'd only read his stuff. So he walked into this executive's office and the executive took one look at him and said, 'Mr. Shalit, have you ever thought of radio?'" wrote Ludwig. "They didn't know how the public would react to someone who looked so different from people who were typically on TV in 1967."

On the air, Shalit was a middle-of-the-road critic. Of 1986's classic "Stand By Me," he said it was different from other movies about youth "because of instead of grossing you out, 'Stand by Me' is engrossing."

"Many critics will give so much of the plot of a movie away that they destroy the movie for the viewer. ... I just don't give away the story," he told The Associated Press in 1993.

He liked "Enemy at the Gates," starring Jude Law, calling it "a vivid dramatization of one of history's titanic turning points." But he called "Brokeback Mountain" "wildly overpraised, but not by me" and drew condemnation from GLAAD for calling Jake Gyllenhaal's character, Jack, a "sexual predator." Shalit apologized.

He called "Frozen" "very cool." He said the oddball title of "The Men Who Stare at Goats" was "heard to bleat," and his review of "The Lovely Bones" read in part: "There's no bones about it."

He began reviewing on air the year of "Patton" and "Love Story" and ended his run with a critique of "Shrek Forever After," of which he noted that the "bellow fellow is now a mellow fellow." One highlight of this tenure was his descent into a fit of giggles while interviewing Carol Channing.

He called a remake of "King Kong" so "gargantuan that I must create new words to describe it: fabulousness ... a brilliantological humongousness of marvelousity." His take on Steven Spielberg's adaptation of Alice Walker's "The Color Purple": "It should be against the law not to see it."

In a 1981 interview with John Belushi and Dan Aykroyd, Belushi said Shalit's hair looked like "an ant farm on fire." Nevertheless, he peppered his guest with so many questions about their daily life that it felt like therapy. He asked both comedians what their last meals would be. "What do you want to be doing 10 years from now, John Belushi?" Shalit asked. "Fiddler on the Roof?" Belushi replied.

During his tenure, he traded quips with anchors ranging from Edwin Newman, Barbara Walters and Jane Pauley to Tom Brokaw, Bryant Gumbel, Katie Couric, Al Roker and Meredith Vieira.

Gumbel was not always a fan, once saying Shalit's reviews "are often late and his interviews aren't very good." The critique came in what was supposed to be a confidential memo to Marty Ryan, the show's executive producer at the time.

In 1994, while in St. Pete Beach, Florida, to cover Major League Baseball spring training, a car hit Shalit as he was crossing a street and broke his leg. After that, "Today" began recording his movie reviews in his home studio.



In this file photo, film critic Gene Shalit is seen during a toast with 'Today' show cast and crew at the end of Katie Couric's final show, in New York. (AP)

## Music

Global cast of performers turns Mexico City into global music stage

## Shakira, Andrea Bocelli and Salma Hayek kick-start the World Cup at opening ceremony in Mexico City



Colombian singer J Balvin, center on stairs, performs before the start of the World Cup Group A soccer match between Mexico and South Africa in Mexico City, Thursday, June 11, 2026. Inset left: Mexican-American actress Salma Hayek gestures on the pitch before the start of the World Cup Group A soccer match between Mexico and South Africa in Mexico City. Inset right: Shakira performs during the opening ceremony before the World Cup Group A soccer match between Mexico and South Africa in Mexico City (AP)

MEXICO CITY, June 13, (AP) — Shakira, Maná, Andrea Bocelli and a surprise appearance by Salma Hayek lit up the World Cup opening ceremony ahead of Mexico's 2-0 victory over South Africa on Thursday.

Shakira performed "Dai Dai," the tournament's official song, with Burna Boy. The Colombian star had a hit with "Waka Waka (This Time For Africa)" from the 2010 World Cup in South Africa and now seeks to score again.

A good World Cup song, Shakira earlier told The Associated Press, "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."

Shakira has performed at previous World Cups, too: 2006 in Germany, 2010 in South Africa, and 2014 in Brazil.

In addition, she will perform at the first halftime show of a World Cup final on July 19 at MetLife Stadium in New Jersey with Madonna and BTS. Mexico, the United States and Canada are co-hosting the 48-team tournament.

Lila Downs welcomed fans and

players in Spanish, English, and the indigenous languages Mixtec and Nahuatl.

"People of the world, welcome to Mexico," said Downs, who wore a white indigenous huipil with a lilac edge. "Mexico welcomes you with smiles from our heart, we are a nation of diversity, heritage and pride in ancestral lands where movement and ritual spirit endure."



Mexican singer Belinda performs before the start of the World Cup Group A soccer match between Mexico and South Africa in Mexico City. (AP)

Downs, who is a singer-songwriter, was born in Tlaxiaco, Oaxaca. Her mother is Mixtec, and her father was American of Scottish descent. But her heart is green, white and red when it comes to the ball.

"It's a great honor for me to represent my beautiful and diverse country," Downs said in an interview with The AP. "Of course I'm going to root for Mexico's team,

Viva Mexico!"

Maná electrified the stadium with "Oye Mi Amor" surrounded by pre-Hispanic dancers who moved their head plumes to the rhythm of rock while tens of thousands of fans chanted.

The band, founded in 1986, has sold more than 40 million records. Shortly before their performance, they announced that they will be touring in Latin America, including stops in Bogotá, Lima, Santiago, Buenos Aires, and Mexico City.

The Mexican cumbia group Los Ángeles Azules performed "Por Ella" with Belinda, one of the most danceable songs of FIFA's official World Cup album.

The band, founded in the mid-70s by the Mejía Avante brothers, is originally from the district of Iztapalapa, a working-class area of Mexico City, so their battle cry is "From Iztapalapa to the world!"

J Balvin had a dynamic performance - he started driving a cardboard car with "Que Calor" and then he was accompanied by Ryan Castro for "Una A La Vez" before ending with "I Like It," a hit he originally released with Cardi B and Bad Bunny.

## Tributes highlight songwriting icons across pop, rock and R&B

## Swift becomes youngest Songwriters Hall of Fame inductee

NEW YORK, June 13, (AP) — Taylor Swift became the youngest woman ever inducted into the Songwriters Hall of Fame Thursday night at age 36.

"It was instinctual. No one taught me how to do it," she said of songwriting through a raspy voice she attributed to screaming along to the night's performances and Wednesday night's historic NBA game between the New York Knicks and the San Antonio Spurs.

She told the room about her family uprooting their lives to move her from Pennsylvania to Nashville, Tennessee, as a tween.

"I will never be able to express my gratitude," the singer-songwriter said while holding back tears - crediting their sacrifice for her career.

She offered young songwriters advice: "You really have to prioritize what you love, down to your very core. Because you'll need

that."

Steven Spielberg introduced Swift with a surprise speech about the power of songwriting. "There is something undeniable about how songs imprint on our souls," he said, before changing his focus to Swift. "Somehow Taylor knows us all too well."

Swift started her speech by acknowledging Spielberg. "Because of examples like Steven's, I trusted my imagination," she said.

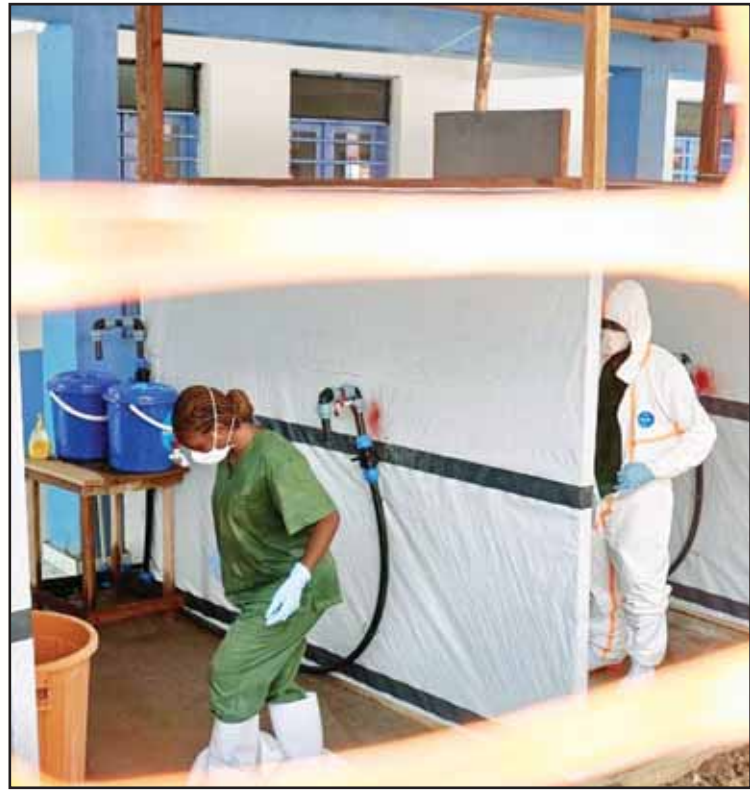
The Gen Z singer Sombra launched Swift's segment by performing "Cardigan" and "Dear John" in front of her.

Swift has brought new eyes to this year's ceremony and undeniably shaped contemporary pop music trends with her songwriting. Swift is the youngest woman inducted, but Stevie Wonder, who started his recording career at 13, was the youngest ever inducted, it was announced on stage.



Sombra, from left, Taylor Swift, and Jimmy Jam attend the 55th annual Songwriters Hall of Fame Induction and Awards Gala at the Marriott Marquis Hotel on Thursday, June 11, 2026, in New York. (AP)

## HEALTH/SCIENCE



A staff member carries out disinfection at an Ebola treatment center in Bunia, Ituri Province, the Democratic Republic of the Congo on June 9. (Xinhua)

## Escalating violence raises risk of Ebola spreading further in Democratic Republic of the Congo: UN

UNITED NATIONS, June 13, (Xinhua): Escalating violence in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) undermines Ebola response, raising the risk of further spread across the eastern part of the country, UN humanitarian workers warned Friday.

In North Kivu province, an armed attack in Beni territory on Friday killed at least five civilians, said the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), citing local civil society.

Elsewhere in the province, renewed clashes in Masisi territory have triggered further displacement and forced humanitarian organizations to restrict their movements in several areas. This significantly limits access to people in need and disrupts Ebola response activities, said OCHA.

In South Kivu province, hostilities in Kabare territory in the past three days have also resulted in civilian casualties and new displacement. The hostilities have forced the World Food Programme and its partners to delay planned food distribution in the affected areas, said the office.

Meanwhile, in Ituri province, a health worker in Mongwalu health zone, which is at the center of the outbreak, was taken by armed group elements on Monday and forced to perform a post-mortem procedure without protective equipment. The incident highlights the serious risks faced by front-line health workers, said OCHA.

On Thursday, DRC health authorities reported 41 new confirmed cases, bringing the total to 676 across the provinces of Ituri, North Kivu and South Kivu.

Despite the challenges, the United Nations and its humanitarian partners, together with local communities, continue efforts to contain the Ebola outbreak, said OCHA.

"The United Nations calls on all parties to respect international humanitarian law and to ensure safe, sustained and unhindered access for medical and

humanitarian teams," said OCHA. "It is essential that surveillance, contact tracing, transport of laboratory samples, medical referrals, emergency deployments and safe and dignified burials can continue without interruption."

## Also:

**NAIROBI:** The Kenyan government on Friday assured the public that the country remains free of Ebola following intensified surveillance measures.

**Aden Duale**, cabinet secretary in the Ministry of Health, said that all suspected cases have tested negative and urged citizens to remain vigilant as the government aggressively scales up its national disease surveillance and response systems.

According to a statement issued by the Ministry of Health, Duale called for continued collaboration with the media to combat misinformation.

He also urged healthcare workers to maintain high vigilance, adhere to infection prevention protocols, and promptly report suspected cases, calling on county governments to sustain investments in disease surveillance, rapid response units, medical training, and public communication.

He said that **Kenya** is closely monitoring regional Ebola developments and has enhanced surveillance, screening at points of entry, laboratory readiness, healthcare worker training, risk communication, and isolation and treatment capacity to support a rapid response if needed.

Addressing concerns about preparedness facilities in counties across the country, Duale clarified that these measures are precautionary and do not indicate the presence of an outbreak.

"Preparedness should never be mistaken for panic," he said, emphasizing that effective emergency response depends on actions taken before a crisis occurs.

## Weather pattern's effects vary by region: Frazier

## El Nino is here and scientists fear it'll be big, bad and costly with heat, floods, droughts

WASHINGTON, June 13, (AP): El Nino, Nature's chaotic climate agent, has formed in a warmed-up Pacific Ocean and is expected to grow to historic strength, meteorologists announced.

Experts said the El Nino, a natural warming cycle, should further heat a globe already warming from fossil fuel pollution and will likely turbocharge extreme weather across the planet. Meteorologists forecast it will rival - or exceed - a record El Nino that began in 1997 and helped trigger billions of dollars in damage from heat waves, floods, droughts, tornadoes and wildfires.

The US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration officially confirmed the existence of the El Nino, which is a warming of the Pacific near the equator that affects weather patterns across the globe. NOAA's announcement said there's a 63% chance that the El Nino will get so intense this late fall and early winter that it "would rank among the largest El Nino events in the historical record going back to 1950."

The warm, deep waters of an El Nino affect weather patterns by

bringing "a lot of extra heat to the surface, fueling a lot of extreme events for a lot of places around the world," said Clark University climate scientist Abby Frazier.

She said, especially in the Pacific, "it can get dire very quickly."

United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres described El Nino as an "urgent climate warning."

"El Nino conditions will pour fuel on the fire of a warming world," Guterres said in a video message.

Then, El Nino often dampens - but doesn't eliminate - Atlantic hurricane season activity, but increases it in the Pacific. So while the US East and Gulf coasts may get a break, Hawaii and other islands are more in danger, Frazier said.

The drought-stricken Middle East could benefit, climate scientists said. Other places are looking at more danger. Parts of western South America - where the first El Ninos were noticed decades ago - often get heavy rain and floods, along with an extra warm summer. India faces more intense heat waves, while drought, wildfires and heat threaten Australia.



Drought-stressed wheat plants stand adjacent to parched ground in a field near Macksville, Kan on May 16. (AP)

Northeastern Africa is likely going to get weather whiplash from intense drought to dangerously heavy rains, said Columbia University climate scientist and El Nino expert Muhammad Azhar Ehsan.

In the US, El Ninos can cause more intense storms with heavier

rainfall in the South, but they also tend to generally benefit the US agriculture industry, said Jon Gottschalk, operational branch chief at NOAA's Climate Prediction Center.

Michael Ferrari, meteorologist and head of research at the investment research firm Moby, said con-

ditions for grains and seed, especially soybeans, look favorable in 18 major growing states, but are more mixed when it comes to dairy and cattle.

The northern Rockies and Southwest - where there's an "off the charts" snow drought - could get some strong summer rains, Gottschalk said. The biggest effect in the U.S. is often in the winter, when the south can get wetter and the Pacific Northwest warmer and drier.

But overall, temperatures raised by the weather pattern can dampen American economic growth, said Stanford climate economist Marshall Burke. Several climate scientists forecast that 2027 will be the hottest year on record because of lagging effects of this El Nino, which is expected to peak in the fall or winter.

"We have pretty clear evidence that the US economy grows more slowly when temps are above normal," Burke said.

The weather extremes caused by an El Nino also depend on when it develops.

Usually El Ninos form in the sum-

mer, peak in the late fall or early winter, and peter out the next spring, scientists said.

However, Ehsan's team forecasts that this El Nino will peak a month or two earlier based on strong early signs from recent weeks. Princeton University climate scientist Gabriel Vecchi said large El Ninos like these also tend to last longer.

The early indications - including warmer water pushing toward the surface of the Pacific - have been so strong and noticeable that forecasters have all been predicting the same ultra strong El Nino, Vecchi said, adding that El Nino forecasts often are all over the place at this time of year.

Scientists predict stronger El Ninos as the world warms from the burning of coal, oil and gas, Frazier and others said. But she said it is too early to say if this El Nino is part of that.

Even before it officially formed, this El Nino has gotten nicknames ranging from "super" to "Godzilla." "Instead of scared, we can ask people to be prepared," Columbia's Ehsan said.

## Fossil fishes buried in desert reveal a missing chapter in marine history

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

By Sanaa El-Sayed  
University of Michigan

When an asteroid struck Earth about 66 million years ago, it ended the age of dinosaurs and transformed life across the planet. The effects of that catastrophe are visible in the fossil record on land, but scientists know far less about what happened to fishes in the seas during the first few million years after the extinction.

Like many people during the pandemic, I suddenly found myself living through long stretches of isolation and uncertainty. In 2020, while alone in my apartment in Ann Arbor, Michigan, I was finishing a study on fossil fishes from Egypt. This question of what happened to fishes immediately after the age of the dinosaurs kept troubling me.

That missing chapter represented a major gap in scientific understanding of how modern marine ecosystems emerged.

At the time, I was studying younger fossil fishes, but I kept wondering whether older rocks in Egypt might preserve clues to this critical period. During those long pandemic months, I spent countless hours reading geological reports and searching for mentions of formations with fish fossils of the right age.

Then, Hesham Sallam, my adviser, introduced me to earlier work by paleontologist and geologist Robert

Speijer and colleagues who had documented rocks at Qreiya in Egypt that were deposited only about 4 million years after the asteroid impact.

That single detail changed the entirety of my Ph.D. research.

As this research started to point my work in a new direction, the pandemic was simultaneously disrupting my own life. I had been accepted into the Ph.D. program at the University of Michigan and was living in the United States, preparing to begin my studies. But COVID-19 restrictions suddenly forced me to return to Egypt, my home country. What felt like a major setback at the time ultimately became one of the most important turning points in my career.

While waiting for the embassies to reopen and student visas to be issued, I continued discussing the fossil-bearing rocks with my adviser. Those conversations soon became a plan: We would travel to Egypt's eastern desert and see the site for ourselves.

In July 2021, our team of five researchers set out for Qreiya 3, a remote fossil locality in upper Egypt. Reaching the site required two days of travel from Mansoura. The terrain was so rough that our vehicles could take us only part of the way, forcing us to hike over sharp rocks carrying equipment, food, water and eventually fossil specimens.

Finding the fossil layer itself was not easy. With limited information about its exact location, we spent hours searching before finally reaching the end of a remote desert valley.

Then came a moment I will never forget. Belal Salem, a member of our

team, struck the rock with his hammer. Almost immediately, a fossil moonfish appeared.

Moonfishes already held special significance for me because they were among the fishes I had previously studied from younger Egyptian rocks. Seeing one emerge from rocks that were millions of years older felt almost surreal, as though the site itself was answering the question that I had first asked during those quiet pandemic days.

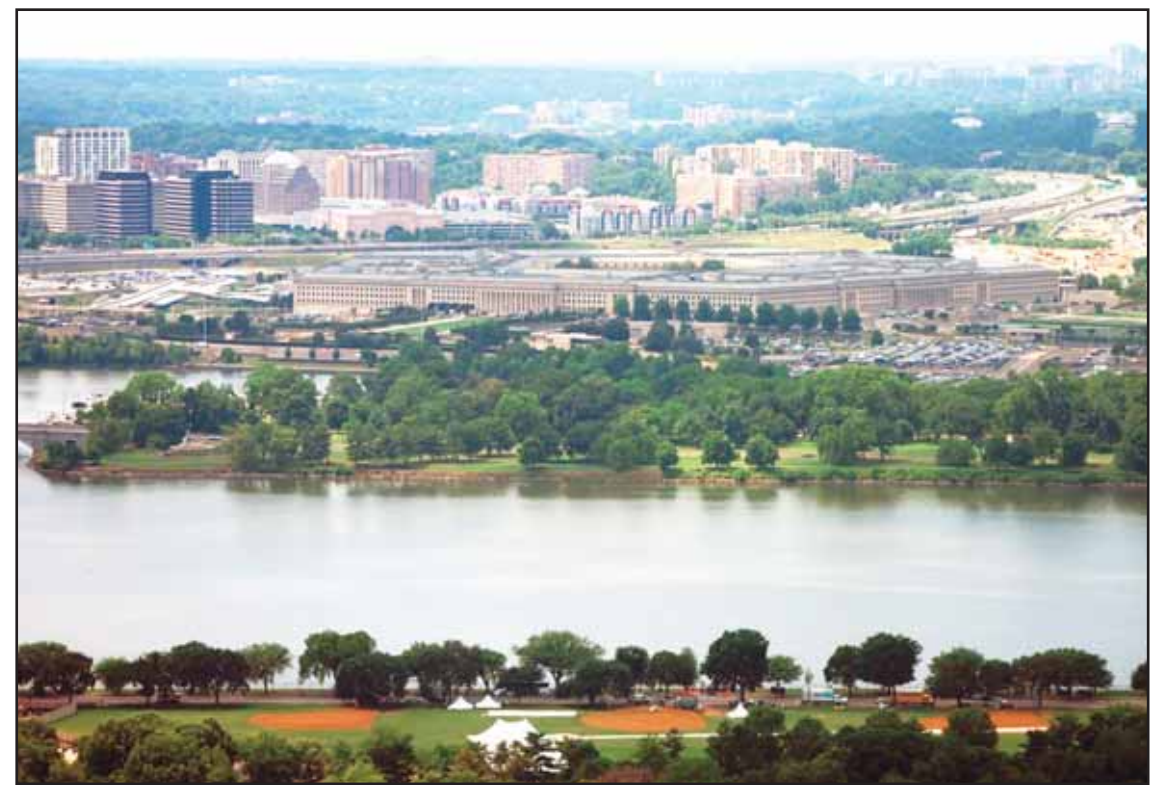
It was the first sign that Qreiya 3 might be extraordinary.

Later that same field season, I received another unexpected email: My request for an expedited student visa appointment had been approved. We had only a few days to wrap up the expedition and return home so I could prepare for my departure to the U.S.

By the fall of 2021, I had begun my Ph.D. at the University of Michigan, and Qreiya 3 quickly became the center of my dissertation research.

These expeditions had revealed the promise of the site, but it was only the beginning. Over the following field seasons, our team continued returning to Qreiya 3, and I took part in the expeditions that gradually expanded our growing collection of fossils from the site curated at the Mansoura University Vertebrate Paleontology Center.

It became clear that this was not simply another fossil locality. It preserved an unusually rich fish community from a critical moment in Earth's history, only a few million years after the extinction of the dinosaurs. (AP)



The Pentagon is pictured in Washington, Thursday, June 11, 2026. (AP)

## New UFO files describe spinning discs, glowing orbs, 1 object shaped like potato

WASHINGTON, June 13, (AP): One was a rotating disc that sent out beams of light. Another was a shining red orb of a hue the observer had never seen before. Then there was the one compared to a potato, and also a bean, but with a coat of shimmering, fish-like scales.

Those were some of the UFOs described in documents released Friday by the Pentagon, the third release since President Donald Trump directed his administration to give the public full disclosure around what it knows about alien life and mysterious objects in the sky.

The 72 files released on Friday don't include the kind of blockbuster revelation that Trump has teased. There's no conclusive evidence of alien life or government cover-ups. But the files reveal new details about some recent sightings, along with the government's efforts to explain what many find inexplicable.

Take, for instance, the potato. It happened in 2022, on a brisk February morning in Colorado Springs, Colorado. Five U.S. Army members at Fort Carson walked out of an office building and saw something strange hovering over Cheyenne Mountain, a few miles to the west.

"The object was 'potato' shaped with distinct edges and appeared to look painted in a creamy/whitish opalescent color," according to an account in an FBI document. It was made up of "articulating fish scales or panels that

were non-symmetrical, non-overlapping and irregular shaped."

It stayed motionless, shimmering, for about two minutes, the men recounted to the FBI. Then it vanished in the blink of an eye. None of the men had phones on them. There's no video, no photos.

Authorities tasked with investigating the episode said they couldn't explain it easily. Their report found - with "low confidence" - that it may have been "backscattering of sunlight." Low light from the rising sun could have reflected off the mountain's snow and illuminated low clouds above, it said.

The men insisted it was a clear,

cloudless day. No aircraft or balloons were believed to be in the area. The four-page report, heavily redacted and attributed only to an "intelligence community partner," said it didn't appear to be technology from a foreign adversary. An FBI rendering looks just like one might imagine - like a scaly, pale potato above a low mountain.

The case remains unsolved. A similarly inclusive report examined a series of sightings in October 2023, this time by six federal law enforcement agents. Multiple times, the agents said, they saw a bright orange orb appear above a ridgeline and spawn two to four smaller red orbs.



A patron passes a painting inside the International UFO Museum and Research Center in Roswell, NM, on June 10, 1997. (AP)

## Human-driven sea-level rise makes floods more likely in NZ capital: study

WELLINGTON, June 13, (Xinhua): Human-driven sea-level rise has made coastal flooding in New Zealand's capital of Wellington far more likely, with once-rare "1-in-100-year" floods now occurring about twice a year, new research reveals.

A study published in Nature Climate Change found that sea-level rise has made extreme coastal water levels about four times more frequent globally since 1900. Events that historically had a 1-percent annual chance of occurring have, at many sites, become at least ten times more likely by 2050.

It comes after Wellington lifted this week a local state of emergency for parts of the capital following large



Stephens

swell warnings for the south coast and southern Wairarapa region.

Scientists attribute most of the increase to human-driven climate change, which has raised global mean sea levels by about 20 cm over the past century. Higher baseline sea levels mean that tides and storm surges more easily exceed flooding thresholds, **Scott Stephens**, chief scientist at Earth Sciences New Zealand, said in his comment.

Rob Bell, research associate at the University of Waikato in New Zealand, said Wellington's relatively small tidal range and limited storm-tide variability mean even a small amount of sea-level rise can rapidly escalate flood frequency.

Researchers warn that continued sea-level rise will further increase coastal flood risk, underscoring the need for updated flood planning and adaptation measures, particularly in low-lying coastal communities.

Tournament reinforces Zain Group's position as a regional digital innovator & leading TechCo

# Zain Esports powers one of MENA's biggest PUBG MOBILE championship platforms across 7 countries

KUWAIT CITY, June 13: Zain Esports, the esports brand of Zain Group, powered the 2026 PUBG MOBILE National Championship (PMNC) MENA Spring Series across seven countries, marking a major milestone in its growing role as a regional force in the gaming and esports industry.

The thrilling series of events were held across Kuwait, Jordan, Bahrain, Oman, Qatar, Palestine, and Iraq, brought together players and teams from across the region in one of MENA's most prominent competitive PUBG MOBILE platforms.

The 2026 PMNC MENA Spring was organized through an official partnership with Tencent, the global technology and gaming powerhouse behind some of the world's most influential digital entertainment platforms, which handpicked Zain Esports and granted it the official license to operate the championship in the MENA region, in collaboration with Bahrain-based Teal Flamingo Studios.

The series ran for two months and featured 9 days of live-streamed finals, attracting 144,000+ registered players, 790,000 livestream views, 200+

matches played, and 25+ million social media views.

The tournament further reinforces Zain Group's position as a regional digital innovator and leading TechCo, using its scale, advanced connectivity infrastructure, and digital ecosystem to support new high-growth sectors such as gaming and esports. It also brings the Group's purpose of 'Better Lives. Lasting Connections' to life by creating meaningful digital experiences that connect communities, empower youth, and expand opportunities for talent and creators across the region.

The Series included the 2026 PUBG Mobile National Championship MENA Wildcard Spring across Kuwait, Bahrain, Oman, Palestine, and Qatar, alongside the 2026 PUBG Mobile National Championship Iraq Spring and 2026 PUBG Mobile National Championship Jordan Spring. The tournament structure was designed to provide a competitive pathway for players, beginning with open qualifiers, progressing into group stages, and concluding with the national finals across the participating markets.



Zain Esports delivered a high-impact 2026 PMNC MENA Spring Series, connecting players across seven countries with record-breaking digital engagement.

Through this championship, Zain Esports powered the full tournament journey, from planning and organization to media campaigns, streaming, broadcast execution, community engagement, and digital content amplification. The initiative further strengthened Zain Esports' role as an enabler of regional gaming commu-

nities, connecting players, fans, content creators, and partners through a professional competitive platform.

The top three winning teams from each series were announced as follows: in the 2026 PMNC MENA Wildcard Spring, Nigma Galaxy secured first place, followed by KHK Esports in second place and Earth Quake in

**Highlights**

- 2026 PUBG MOBILE National Championship (PMNC) MENA Spring Series held across Kuwait, Bahrain, Iraq, Jordan, Oman, Palestine, and Qatar
- One of region's biggest esports tournaments attracting 144k+ players, 790k livestream views, and 25m+ social media views
- Zain's advanced connectivity infrastructure and digital ecosystem supporting the growth of gaming and esports across the region

third place; in 2026 PMNC Jordan Spring, FourWiz secured first place, followed by GEE Seven in second place and STG Esports in third place; in 2026 PMNC Iraq Spring, IKURD Esports secured first place, followed by Lost Savage in second place and Rage Esports in third place.

This milestone builds on Zain Esports' broader strategy to develop a sustainable esports ecosystem across the region through tournaments, partnerships, content development, and talent-focused platforms.

PUBG MOBILE is one of the world's leading battle royale mobile games, offering competitive survival gameplay that brings players together in high-intensity matches built around strategy, teamwork,

and skill. The game is the original mobile version of PUBG: BATTLE-GROUNDS and is co-developed by LIGHTSPEED STUDIOS of Tencent Games and KRAFTON, Inc., with Level Infinite serving as publisher. Released in more than 200 markets, PUBG MOBILE has surpassed 1 billion downloads worldwide, reflecting its global popularity and strong appeal among mobile gamers.

Zain Esports' footprint, influence, and operational capabilities continues to grow across the regional esports map, as well as its ability to deliver large-scale tournaments, media campaigns, livestream production, community engagement, and competitive experiences at a demanding and high regional standard.

## Kuwait Club eyes semis spot

Al-Otaibi hails Burgan's historic debut

By Khaled Al-Enezi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 13: Kuwait Club faces a crucial test at 6:00 p.m. today against UAE's Sharjah in the seventh and final round of the preliminary stage of the 28th Asian Club Handball Championship, currently hosted in Kuwait at Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Sports Complex. The clash is pivotal in deciding the final semi-final qualifiers, with today also featuring Qatar's derby between Al Duhail and Al Arabi, alongside Bahrain's Al Najma meeting Saudi Arabia's Al Khaleej.

Kuwait Club enters the match in a strong position, needing only a win or a draw to secure a place in the semi-finals and continue their pursuit of the Asian title and qualification for the 2026 Club World Championship "Super Globe."

In contrast, defending champion Sharjah have already been eliminated from title contention and will be playing for pride, aiming to conclude its campaign on a positive note against one of the tournament favorites.

With home advantage and strong fan support behind them, Kuwait Club will look to maintain its momentum and confirm qualification before the semi-finals, in what is expected to be an intense contest despite the contrasting objectives of both teams.

Burgan and Saudi Arabia's Al Khaleej has already booked its semi-final spots, while the remaining two places are being contested by Kuwait, Al Arabi, and Al Duhail. The semi-finals will take place tomorrow, with the first-place team facing the fourth, and second meeting third, before the winners advance to Wednesday's final.

Kuwait Handball Federation Secretary-General Qaed Al-Adwani



A Burgan player unleashes a shot on goal as a Kuwait Club defender scrambles across in a bid to intervene.

expressed his satisfaction with Kuwait Club hosting the 28th Asian Men's Club Handball Championship, praising the club's major efforts in delivering a successful continental event.

Al-Adwani said Kuwait Club's strong organizational record is well known, highlighting its successful history in hosting Gulf, Arab, and Asian tournaments and consistently presenting an outstanding image of Kuwaiti sport.

He added that the federation has provided full support and placed all its capabilities at the disposal of the organizing committee to ensure the championship is delivered in the best possible way, reflecting the high standing of Kuwaiti handball region-



Anwar Al-Otaibi



Qaed Al-Adwani

ally and internationally.

He also noted that close coordination between the federation, Kuwait Club, and relevant authorities has ensured smooth organization and full readiness across technical and logistical aspects, earning praise from participating delegations.

Al-Adwani concluded by stressing that all parties are working as one team to ensure the success of the tournament and showcase Kuwait's strong sporting and organizational capabilities.

Burgan Club President Anwar Al-Otaibi expressed satisfaction with his club's historic first participation in the 28th Asian Men's Club Handball Championship,

which also serves as a qualifier for the 2026 Club World Championship in Egypt.

Al-Otaibi said Burgan's strong performances are the result of structured planning and strategy from the club's board, supported by the technical staff and players.

He added that the signings made specifically for the tournament have proven successful and made a clear impact, stressing that the club's ambition goes beyond participation, with a focus on winning titles and raising Kuwait's profile in continental competitions.

He also praised the excellent organization of the championship by Kuwait Club and the positive feedback from all participating teams regarding logistics and services, describing it as a reflection of Kuwait Club's administrative excellence. He expressed hope that both Burgan and Kuwait Club progress to the final to further elevate Kuwaiti handball on the continental stage.

Dagash praised for preparation work

Al-Mansouri secures Teen Super Fight title in Kuwait jiu-jitsu event

KUWAIT CITY, June 13: Kuwait hosted a Teen Super Fight jiu-jitsu bout at Al-Sahel Sports Club, featuring an all-Kuwaiti clash between Abdullah Al-Mansouri and Ali Al-Wuhair as part of the Kuwait Combat Club (KWCC) 2026 event. GFT Samurai Kuwait fighter Abdullah Al-Mansouri emerged victorious; delivering a dominant performance highlighted by strong technical ability and disciplined tactical execution throughout the contest.

The win reflects Al-Mansouri's consistent commitment in training under Coach Abdullah Dagash Al-Hajri, whose preparation work played a key role in sharpening the athlete's performance, ultimately contributing to his success inside the competition.

GFT Samurai Kuwait expressed pride in the achievement, noting that such results are the product of sustained effort, structured development, and a long-term vision to build a competitive generation



Al-Mansouri celebrates victory with his father, Othman Al-Mansouri

capable of excelling in both domestic and international tournaments.

The team continues its preparations for upcoming competitions, aiming to build on this success and further strengthen its presence across the martial arts scene.

Kazma edges Al-Nasr

Kuwait Club draws with Salmiya despite going down to ten men

By Hassan Mosa

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 13: Kuwait Club was forced to settle for a point after a goalless draw away to Al-Salmiya in the 18th round of the Zain Premier League, while Kazma secured a 2-1 victory over Al-Nasr in the same round at Ali Sabah Al-Salem Stadium.

Kuwait Club played the majority of the match with ten men after Mohammed Daham was shown a red card in the 10th minute, but the defending champions managed to hold on for a draw. The result took Kuwait Club's tally to 44 points, leaving it just six points away from clinching its fifth consecutive league title and 21st overall, regardless of results from nearest challenger Al-Qadisia (31 points). Salmiya moved up to 30 points, remaining in fourth place.

In the other fixture, Kazma returned to winning form after back-to-back defeats against Kuwait Club and Al-Fahaheel, losing 0-2 and 2-3 respectively in the previous two rounds. The "Orange" side climbed to 30 points and strengthened its



A Salmiya player keeps possession as a Kuwait Club player moves in to challenge him.

hold on third place, while Al-Nasr stayed on 16 points in eighth position.

The round began last Thursday with Al-Shabab defeating Al-Jahra 1-0 at Jahra Stadium. The win lifted Al-Shabab to 18 points in seventh place, while Al-Jahra remained bottom of the table on eight points.

The league's championship phase (top six) will begin on Tuesday to determine the title winner and qualification spots for continental competitions. The runner-up will enter the AFC Champions League qualifying playoffs, the third-placed team will compete in the AFC Challenge Cup, and the fourth-placed side will participate in the Gulf Club Champions Cup.

Wyatt-Hodge century helps England women crush SLanka in T20 WC clash

BIRMINGHAM, England, June 13, (AP): England launched its home Women's Twenty20 World Cup in style by crushing Sri Lanka by 87 runs at Edgbaston on Friday.

After making the highest total in tournament history - 219-1 - with 105 not out by opener Dani Wyatt-Hodge, England dismissed Sri Lanka for 132.

Left-arm pacer Freya Kemp took a career-best 4-21 including three wickets in one over that reduced Sri Lanka to 92-8.

But it was England's record-setting batting that shone on a sunny evening in front of 14,865 fans.

Wyatt-Hodge and Amy Jones, who was pushed up the order to open, combined for 100 inside 10 overs. Jones was dropped on 12 and 48 and was out for 53 off 38 balls. But her's and Wyatt-Hodge's stand of 135 was England's highest opening partnership in T20 World Cup history.

Captain Nat Sciver-Brunt, only just back from a torn calf in April, was dropped on 14. But her unbeaten 46 off 22 balls shot her past Charlotte Edwards, the former captain and current England coach, to be England's highest run-scorer in T20 World Cups. Sciver-Brunt has 784

and Edwards 768.

Sciver-Brunt gave Wyatt-Hodge, on 97, the last two balls of the innings. She immediately hit behind square to the boundary, reaching the seventh hundred in tournament history and the second by an Englishwoman. She punched the air and made a baby-rocking celebration a la Brazil's Bebeto in the 1994 men's soccer World Cup. Wyatt-Hodge was only just back from maternity leave. Her wife gave birth to their first child on May 20.

"It was great fun out there," Wyatt-Hodge said. "My century celebration was for my daughter Daisy. I hope TV got it."

Kuwait wins 11 trophies across age groups

Arab Tennis Veterans Championship concludes

CAIRO, June 13: The sixth edition of the Arab Tennis Veterans Championship came to a close in Sharm El Sheikh, organized by the Arab Tennis Federation on the courts of the Red Sea resort city, under the sponsorship of Kuwait Airways and in cooperation with the Egyptian Tennis Federation. The event featured wide Arab participation and a strong competitive atmosphere throughout.

The closing ceremony was attended by Sheikh Ahmed Al-Jaber Al-Abdullah Al-Sabah, Chairman of the Arab Tennis Federation, alongside Secretary-General Ali Lafi Al-Mutairi, representatives of the Public Authority for Sport, officials from the Arab and Egyptian tennis federations, as well as several sports figures and participating delegations.

Kuwait enjoyed a standout campaign, finishing with 11 trophies. The highlight came from Fahd Al-Haddad and Yacoub Al-Foudari, who won the over-35, doubles title. Star performer Ahmed Dashti also secured a triple crown, claiming titles in singles, doubles, and mixed doubles.

Further Kuwaiti success came through Adel Safar and Mohammed Bin Naji in the over-55 category, while Hassan Al-Yousifi and Safar added another title in the over-65 doubles. Al-Yousifi also received the Fair Play



Sheikh Ahmed Al-Jaber Al-Abdullah Al-Sabah, Chairman of the Arab Tennis Federation, together with Secretary-General Ali Lafi Al-Mutairi and Sheikh Ahmed Al-Jaber Al-Abdullah Al-Sabah, Chairman of the Arab Tennis Federation, along with Secretary-General Ali Lafi Al-Mutairi and officials from the Public Authority for Sport, pose for a group photo with Kuwait's athletes to celebrate their success.

Player award.

In his remarks at the closing ceremony, Sheikh Ahmed Al-Jaber praised the Egyptian Tennis Federation for its efforts in delivering a successful tournament, noting that the event's organization earned praise from all participating delegations.

He highlighted that Sharm El Sheikh once again proved its ability to host major Arab sporting events, sup-

ported by strong infrastructure and a vibrant competitive environment from start to finish.

Sheikh Al-Jaber also thanked the Public Authority for Sport for its attendance and commended Kuwait Airways for its continued sponsorship and support of Arab Tennis Federation events, which has helped elevate the tournament's technical, organizational, and media standards.

### Change of Name

I, SAKALI MALLESHAM S/O SAKALI RAMULU, AGE 41 years, Private Employee, my mother name SAKALI BUCHAVVA and my Wife name SAKALI RAJITHA, H.No.5-93, Lingapoor village of Kamareddy mandal, and dist. Telangana, India. Pin 503111. Intending to change my name as AERROLLA MALLESH S/O AERROLLA RAMULU, Age 37 Years, (07-08-1988) my mother name AERROLLA BUCHAVVA and my Wife name AERROLLA RAJITHA H.NO.5-93, Lingapoor village of Kamareddy mandal, and dist. Telangana India. Pin 503111. For purpose of entries in my pass port no.R3129737. (File no.F5362944) HY4070610169317

### Change Name

I, ARWA of Indian Passport No. X4810013 having permanent address HOUSE NO 16, BHOOT MAHAL, BOHRA WADI, UDAIPUR, PIN: 313001, RAJASTHAN, INDIA Residing in Kuwait at present hereby declare that henceforth my name will be read as under given name ARWA and surname ALI

### Change Name

I, MURTAZA of Indian Passport No. R2311159 having permanent address VPO JAMAL PURA, BOHRAWALI, UDAIPUR, RAJASTHAN, INDIA Residing in Kuwait at present hereby declare that henceforth my name will be read as under given name MURTAZA and surname ALI



## Visa denial sidelines Parthey for Ghana opener against Panama

TORONTO, June 13, (AP): Ghana midfielder Thomas Parthey will not play in his team's World Cup opener Wednesday after Canada denied his visa application while he awaits trial in London on multiple charges of rape.

FIFA said in a statement that the 32-year-old Parthey won't be able to travel from his team's base camp in Smithfield, Rhode Island, for Ghana's opening match with Panama in Toronto.

"His visa application has been refused by the Canadian government," the governing body of world soccer said. "FIFA is not involved in the immigration processes of host countries, including the adjudication of visas. As with previous FIFA events, the host government ultimately determines who receives a visa and is admitted into the country."

Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada did not immediately respond to an email seeking comment. Nor did the Ghana soccer association.

Parthey was traveling back to Ghana's base camp in Rhode Island after his visa denial. He will be able to play June 23 when Ghana plays England in Foxborough, Massachusetts. Ghana concludes group play June 27 against Croatia in Philadelphia.

Parthey is scheduled to stand trial in November or later on allegations dating to his time with English club Ar-



In this file photo, Villarreal's Thomas Parthey sits on the bench during the Champions League soccer match between Tottenham and Villarreal in London. (AP)

senal from 2020-25. Parthey, who now plays in Spain for Villarreal, has pleaded not guilty.

A second World Cup player, Morocco defender Achraf Hakimi, is awaiting trial on similar charges in Paris.

Ghana is making its fifth appearance in the last six World Cups.

## Egypt confirms removal of stars from national team shirts ahead of WCup

CAIRO, June 13: The Egyptian Football Association (EFA) has clarified that there is no dispute over the removal of championship stars from the national team's jerseys during the ongoing FIFA World Cup, which runs until July 19.

According to the EFA media center, FIFA had informed all participating nations months in advance that continental and tournament-winning stars would not be permitted on kits during World Cup matches, in line with standard competition regulations applied uniformly across all teams.

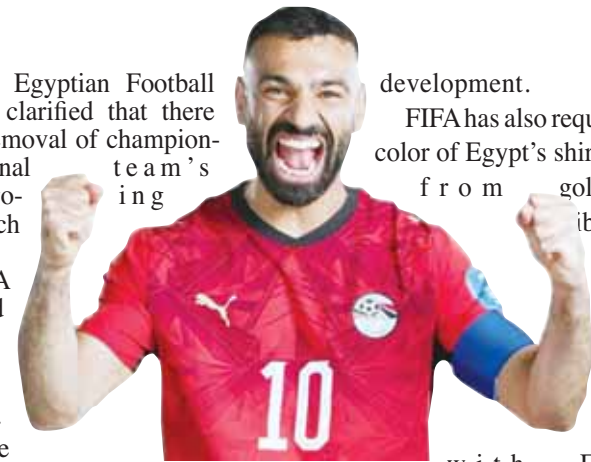
The federation stressed that Egypt had been fully aware of the directive well ahead of the tournament and had already coordinated the necessary adjustments with the relevant parties, describing the matter as routine rather than a new

development.

FIFA has also requested a modification to the color of Egypt's shirt numbers, changing them from gold to white to improve visibility for players, officials, and television broadcasts. The EFA confirmed that the national team's kit supplier has already implemented the required changes in compliance with FIFA rules.

Egypt will open their World Cup campaign against Belgium, before facing New Zealand and Iran in Group B.

This will be Egypt's fourth appearance at the World Cup, following previous participations in 1934, 1990, and 2018.



# Canada's World Cup dream begins with gritty draw

Larin delivers as co-hosts end point drought

TORONTO, June 13, (AP): Canada earned its first World Cup point in seven matches on soccer's biggest stage, and coach Jesse Marsch noted the sea of red-clad, maple leaf-waving fans who continuously belted out chants of "Go Ca-na-da!" helped get it.

A slow start and an early deficit turned into a rousing celebration once late substitute Cyle Larin scored in the 78th minute for a 1-1 draw against Bosnia-Herzegovina in Canada's tournament debut on home soil.

Playing in the shadow of Toronto's iconic CN Tower and with hockey star Connor McDavid and actors Ryan Reynolds and Mike Myers in the stands, Larin converted Promise David's pass a mere two minutes after entering the game.

"The crowd, I think, willed us into the game as (the players) could feel that energy in the second half tilting more and more," said Marsch, who took particular delight upon learning Myers, who portrayed international man of mystery Austin Powers in the movies, was among those on hand.

"Oh, sweet," Marsch said.

It was an even better feeling for Larin, who normally starts but had to bide his time watching on the bench until late in the second half.

"It was an amazing feeling, just to score a goal on home soil, where I'm from, and just to celebrate with the fans - amazing atmosphere," said Larin, who plays for second-division English club Southampton and is from Toronto's suburb of Brampton.

The goal was only the second in World Cup play scored by Canada after the team lost all three of its games at the 1986 World Cup in Mexico and again four years ago in Qatar.

Injury fill-in Jovo Lukic headed in a corner kick in the



Canada goalkeeper Maxime Crepeau punches the ball clear as Bosnia's Tarik Muharemovic attempts to head the ball during the World Cup Group B soccer match between Canada and Bosnia in Toronto. (AP)

21st minute for Bosnia-Herzegovina, which is making its second World Cup appearance. The team previously played at the 2014 tournament in Brazil but failed to advance out of group play.

Starting in place of Edin Dzeko (shoulder) and Haris

Tabakovic (undisclosed), Lukic was in an ideal position to cap a set piece with captain Sead Kolacinac flicking along a header off Ivan Basic's corner kick. The goal was Lukic's first in international play and came in the 27-year-old attacker's fourth international appearance.

Despite giving up the lead, the small Balkan nation of about 3 million people keeps coming up big on the international stage - including eliminating four-time champion Italy in the European playoffs.

Bosnia coach Sergej Barbarez couldn't help but feel relief at how his team persevered amid such a tough environment.

"This is huge pressure, and it's a huge compliment for my team to have not succumbed to that pressure, and I'm very satisfied with that aspect of the game, too," Barbarez said through a translator.

Though a large majority of the 43,000 fans filling the temporarily expanded Toronto Stadium along the shores of Lake Ontario were Canadians, a small but vibrant group of Bosnian fans in blue also stood out in the upper deck of the stands.

The Bosnians now head west, with games against Switzerland on June 18 in Los Angeles and Qatar on June 24 in Seattle.

Canada also heads west, to Vancouver, for its final two group games, against Qatar on June 18 and Switzerland on June 24.

Marsch's challenge is to get his team off to a better start.

"I told them after the match that if we play like that in the second half of the whole match, we win, right?" he said.

"We've got to find a way to have a bit more confidence and a bit of self-belief," he added. "The good part was that in a difficult moment we responded."

Before Larin's goal, Canada's best scoring chance came in the 54th minute when captain Stephen Eustaquio fed the ball to Richie Laryea in front of a wide-open net. The ball deflected off Kolacinac's foot and hit the crossbar.

Canada was playing without Alphonso Davies (hamstring), who scored the nation's first World Cup goal four years ago in Qatar.

Seven players making their World Cup debuts

## Aguirre's young stars give Mexico fresh hope

MEXICO CITY, June 13, (AP): Mexico's dire performance at the last World Cup in Qatar served as a wake-up call for this year's event. The message was clear: El Tri needed new players if it wanted a different ending on home soil in 2026.

Four years after the national soccer team's disappointing group-stage exit - Mexico's earliest World Cup finish since 1978 - coach Javier Aguirre's youthful gamble is already showing promise.

El Tri opened this year's tournament with a convincing 2-0 victory over South Africa, fielding seven players who were making their World Cup debuts - including forward Julián Quiñones, who scored the first goal in only the ninth minute of the match.

"We worked hard on our mental game so the size of the stage wouldn't affect us, and we were able to get off to a good start," said midfielder Erik Lira, another player making his debut on soccer's biggest stage.

The 26-year-old Lira played a crucial role in the victory, forcing a key turnover that directly led to Mexico's first goal.

In addition to Quiñones and Lira, Aguirre handed World Cup debuts



Mexico head coach Javier Aguirre gestures during the World Cup Group A soccer match between Mexico and South Africa in Mexico City, Thursday, June 11, 2026. (AP)

to Álvaro Fidalgo, Raúl Rangel, Israel Reyes, Brian Gutiérrez, Armando González and teenage sensation Gilberto Mora. Defender Johan Vásquez, who traveled to Qatar but didn't see any playing time, also made his tournament debut.

"It's the happiest day of my life. From the moment we walked out of the tunnel, Mateo (Chávez) and I felt like crying," said González, who

came on as a second-half substitute. "You dream about it as a kid, you imagine it, you see it on TV, but to actually make your debut is incredible."

Fidalgo, a Spanish-born playmaker who became a naturalized Mexican citizen earlier this year, echoed that pride.

"I can't describe it, maybe I'll be able to in a while. I don't think I'm

fully aware of it yet," Fidalgo said. "I'm just happy to be playing my first World Cup match, and to do it with Mexico is a source of pride and an honor. From here on out, we're on the upswing."

With this rejuvenated core, Mexico will target a second victory when the team faces South Korea on Thursday in Guadalajara. The Mexicans currently lead Group A on goal difference over the South Koreans, who opened their tournament with a 2-1 win over the Czech Republic.

A victory would virtually guarantee El Tri's passage to the knockout rounds, helping erase the bitter memory of the early exit in Qatar. It would also fuel hopes of emulating Mexico's best-ever World Cup performances - reaching the quarterfinals, a feat achieved as hosts in 1970 and 1986.

Despite the mounting excitement, the team is keeping its feet on the ground, especially with two knockout matches to play before the quarterfinals in this year's expanded 48-team World Cup.

"We can't think about playing a sixth match (the quarterfinals) without even playing the second," Lira said. "We're taking it one step at a time, but we want to make it clear that our ambitions are very high and that we won't settle for anything less."



Fans look on during the World Cup Group A soccer match between South Korea and Czechia in Zapopan, near Guadalajara, Mexico. (AP)

## FIFA blames empty seats in Mexico on fans in the concourses

GUADALAJARA, Mexico, June 13, (AP): FIFA blamed the empty seats during the World Cup match between South Korea and the Czech Republic in Guadalajara on fans who watched from the concourses.

There were many visible empty spots at the 45,664-capacity Guadalajara Stadium, with sections in the middle of the stands showing many unoccupied spaces and with other empty seats scattered around the venue. The announced attendance was 44,985 - including FIFA President Gianni Infantino.

"Official attendance figures reflect the number of tickets scanned and spectators present within the stadium footprint, rather than visual assessments of seating occupancy at any given moment during the match," FIFA said, adding that it works closely with stadium authorities and ticketing teams to ensure all published figures are based on verified operational data.

"Please note that, during last night's match in Guadalajara, several ticketed fans could be seen standing in concourses rather than staying in their assigned seats throughout the match," the governing body of world soccer said.

There was indeed a significant number of fans standing on the concourses and by the concession stands throughout Thursday's match.

On Friday, the stadium in Toronto was close to full for Canada's first World Cup match on home soil, but there were some empty spots, notably close to the field in the lower bowl, and in a high corner of temporary seating.

Toronto Stadium, with an official capacity of 43,036, is the smallest venue in the tournament and had to have the extra seats added to meet FIFA's minimum standards. The announced attendance on Friday was 43,002.

It's a busy sports weekend in Toronto, with the Blue Jays hosting the New York Yankees and the Canadian Open golf tournament about an hour away.

FIFA has been charging record ticket prices at the 11 stadiums in the United States, three in Mexico and two in Canada. The soccer body was using dynamic pricing and has repeatedly raised the prices since tickets first went on sale last fall.

Infantino defended those prices Wednesday as fitting in the North American market, but they have been criticized for list prices that have reached five figures.

## Head of Palestinian soccer not granted US visa to attend WC

RAMALLAH, West Bank, June 13, (AP): The head of the Palestinian Football Association is waiting in Mexico City for permission to enter the United States with other federation heads attending the 2026 FIFA World Cup.

Jibril Rajoub went to the opening match between Mexico and South Africa on Thursday. But he is among several people denied to attend the World Cup who have been denied visas or have yet to receive them from the United States.

"I don't believe that it's fair to use or to abuse and deny the right of all footballers all over the world to attend," the veteran Palestinian political figure said in

an interview with The Associated Press.

The Palestinian team did not qualify for the World Cup, but FIFA typically invites the heads of football associations from around the world to the event every four years, which it frames as a celebration of global unity.

"Everyone will be welcome in Canada, Mexico and the United States for the FIFA World Cup next year. We are working exactly for that," FIFA President Gianni Infantino said last year.

The United States, however, has refused entry to delegates from a raft of countries, including a referee from Somalia and a photographer traveling with Iraq's team.

Infantino said this week that FIFA had been trying to resolve visa issues but could not overrule the U.S. government.

"We need to respect that we are not the kings of the world who can rule over governments and police forces," he told reporters on Wednesday.

The U.S. State Department had no immediate comment on Rajoub's visa, but last year implemented new restrictions on Palestinian passport holders, including on anyone who had been employed by the Palestinian Authority. It revoked a visa to allow Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas to travel to the United Nations General Assembly last September.



Bosnia fans cheer before the World Cup Group B soccer match between Canada and Bosnia in Toronto. (AP)

# Sports

## US lights up World Cup with rout of Paraguay

Balogun brace headlines commanding win



United States' Christian Pulisic, left, and Paraguay's Gustavo Velazquez vie for the ball during a World Cup Group D soccer match in Inglewood, Calif., near Los Angeles. (AP)



United States' Folarin Balogun celebrates with teammates scoring his side's third goal against Paraguay during a World Cup Group D soccer match in Inglewood, Calif., near Los Angeles. (AP)

**INGLEWOOD, Calif., June 13, (AP): Folarin Balogun fired his second goal into the top far corner of Paraguay's net and then led his American teammates to the corner of their home stadium, reveling in the frenzy created by their historic first half at their World Cup opener.**

The world's biggest soccer tournament finally returned to the U.S. on Friday night after a generation of anticipation.

With this phenomenal match, the Americans also look like they've arrived.

Balogun scored twice in the Americans' three-goal barrage before halftime, and the U.S. opened its first home World Cup in 32 years with its biggest win in the tournament, a dynamic 4-1 victory over Paraguay.

Christian Pulisic had an assist in a stellar first-half playmaking performance for the Americans, who enthralled their Southern California fans with an aggressive attack while streaking to a 3-0 lead - the team's largest in any World Cup game.

"It meant everything for us," Pulisic said. "A half like that, for it to go as it did, and have the fans excited about our performance, it felt amazing."

Gio Reyna ripped another goal in the dying moments of second-half injury time, giving the Americans four goals in a World Cup match for the first time in their tournament history dating to 1930.

This production, this confidence, this dominance - it

was nothing like the vast majority of the Americans' previous performances on the international stage over the years and decades.

They've won exactly one knockout-round game in the World Cup. They've almost always struggled to score in the biggest events, most recently managing only three goals combined in their four matches at the Qatar World Cup in 2022.

In this pressure-packed home opener, the Americans were a team transformed while playing in coach Mauricio Pochettino's more creative system in front of a passionate, star-studded Los Angeles crowd of 70,492. Led by the elite talent and coach-inspired fearlessness of Balogun, Pulisic and Weston McKennie up front, the U.S. finally had its breakthrough performance at SoFi Stadium.

"It's difficult to compare with the past," said Pochettino, who took over in late 2024. "I don't know what happened in the past. I think we need to talk about today, because it was a great match. It was amazing for our fans to see, to watch this type of game, and today, I am so proud and we are so proud. I think we are winning a lot of fans, adding fans for the sport here in America."

Not everything went perfectly: Pulisic was replaced

by Sebastian Berhalter at halftime for precautionary reasons. Pochettino said Pulisic was kicked in the back of his left calf during a training session this week, and felt some subsequent tightness during the match.

"Staying positive," Pulisic said. "I don't think it's anything."

Mauricio scored in the second half for Paraguay, but La Albirroja fell too far behind early in their first World Cup match in 16 years.

"The U.S. won this match very clearly and fairly," Paraguay coach Gustavo Alfaro said through an interpreter. "They dominated tactically, technically and physically as well. ... This team is a complex challenge because they have answers to everything you throw at them."

After the U.S. went ahead on an early own-goal created by Pulisic's playmaking, Balogun scored in the 31st minute and again in the fifth minute of first-half injury time.

The New York-born, London-raised striker made his World Cup debut with the first multigoal performance from a U.S. player in the tournament since 1930. Balogun chose to represent the U.S. three years ago instead of staying in the English system, where he likely would have struggled to make the Three Lions' roster - and the 24-year-old Monaco professional has swiftly

provided the top-level striker play historically lacking on U.S. rosters.

"Poch has said many times, 'Why not us?'" Balogun said. "We have to believe. You can't do anything if you don't believe in yourself."

Pulisic created the first two U.S. goals with exceptional runs down the left side. In the seventh minute, the AC Milan standout cleverly split two defenders and passed to McKennie, whose centering touch hit Paraguay midfielder Damián Bobadilla's outstretched foot and went in, setting off pandemonium in the stands.

The Americans gradually amplified their attack centered around Pulisic's runs - and three minutes after an apparent goal from Balogun was erased by an offside call, Pulisic again drove the left side and got a deflected pass to the trailing Balogun, who banged it home.

Malik Tillman then made a perfectly weighted pass in injury time to Balogun, who sidled through the Paraguay defense and beautifully found the top shelf.

The Americans were less cohesive without Pulisic in the second half, but Reyna still added the finishing touch by gliding into the box and toe-flicking home his first World Cup goal. The moment was sweet for Reyna, who barely played at the Qatar World Cup amid a messy family dispute with former U.S. coach Gregg Berhalter.

Dozens of American celebrities and cultural icons turned out for the match 10 miles south of Hollywood, including Tom Cruise, George Lucas, Bill Gates, Halle Berry, Leonardo DiCaprio and Kareem Abdul-Jabbar.

### Yamal and Williams return to training

Spain back at full strength ahead of opener against Cape Verde



In this file photo Lamine Lamal (left) celebrates with Nico Williams. (AP)

**GUADALAJARA, Mexico, June 13, (AP):** Spain will have a full squad available for its World Cup opener against Cape Verde on Monday with forward Víctor Muñoz returning to training a day after Lamine Yamal and Nico Williams also were back.

Spain was hit by injuries late last season and had to adjust its preparations in the run-up to soccer's biggest tournament. Mikel Merino and Fabián Ruiz also dealt with injury setbacks before returning to the squad. One player who did not make it in time was Barcelona midfielder Fermín López, who has a fractured foot.

The biggest concern for Spain had been with Yamal, the young Barcelona winger who injured his left hamstring in a Spanish league game in April.

The 18-year-old Yamal is expected to lead the team as it tries to win its second World Cup title. Spain won soccer's greatest prize in South Africa in 2010, when Yamal was 2 years old.

Williams hurt his hamstring while playing for Athletic Bilbao in a league match in May. Both Williams and Yamal were out for the season with their clubs as they focused on recovering in time for the World Cup.

Muñoz, who returned to practice on Friday, sustained a muscle injury while playing with Osasuna in May.

Spain coach Luis de la Fuente probably won't use Muñoz, Yamal and Williams from the start against Cape Verde on Monday in Atlanta. They are more likely to be fully fit for Spain's second game against Saudi Arabia on June 21, also in Atlanta. The team's final group match will be against South American powerhouse Uruguay on June 26 in Guadalajara, Mexico.

Spain, which has been training in Tennessee, rebounded from a round of 16 elimination by Morocco at the 2022 World Cup by winning the 2024 European Championship in Germany. La Roja also won the 2023 Nations League, and was runner-up to Portugal in the 2025 Nations League.

### 'Step by step'

Ronaldo wants Portugal focused on good start before talking about title hopes at WC



Portugal's Cristiano Ronaldo, left, and Bernardo Silva, center, deplane as the national team arrives for the World Cup soccer tournament in West Palm Beach, Fla. (AP)

**WASHINGTON, June 13, (AP):** Portugal traveled to the United States with Cristiano Ronaldo saying the team needs to focus on getting off to a good start instead of thinking ahead about contending for its first World Cup title.

The Portuguese are among the favorites at the expanded 48-team tournament and the 41-year-old Ronaldo will be playing in his sixth World Cup, the most ever alongside rival Lionel Messi of Argentina.

"It is important to get off to a good start, do well in the first and second matches and then finish first in the group," Ronaldo told reporters in Portugal before the team's departure. "Then we go match by match, but not with the expectations of winning it all. It has to be step by step. A good start is the most important thing."

Portugal will play its opening Group K match against Congo on Wednesday in Houston. The team then faces Uzbekistan on June 23, again in Houston, and finishes the group stage against Colombia on June 27 in Miami.

Ronaldo said it will be further in the

tournament, "when things get tighter and the psychological and physical fatigue" come into play, "that we will know who the real champions are."

This is Portugal's ninth World Cup appearance. The team finished third in 1966 and fourth in 2006 - when Ronaldo made his World Cup debut. In 2022, Portugal reached the quarterfinals but was upset by Morocco 1-0.

Ronaldo, who won the European Championship with Portugal in 2016, said the team's preparation at home was intense and productive. He said he is feeling well physically and the whole squad is ready and hopeful ahead of its quest for a first World Cup title.

"It's a very good generation of players," said Ronaldo, who now plays in Saudi Arabia after spending most of professional career with Real Madrid and Manchester United. "But there are factors that we can't control. Winning or losing, which is the most important thing, depends on many factors. But it's a generation that will make the Portuguese people happy."

### 2 people in custody

Police investigate possible theft of England gear at WC

**KANSAS CITY, June 13, (AP):** Two people were detained by police investigating the possible theft of equipment from England's World Cup soccer team in Kansas City, Missouri.

The England team was due to arrive at its training base at Swope Soccer Village on Saturday after completing its pre-tournament preparations in Florida.

Its logistics team arrived ahead of the players to set up the camp where it will be based for the World Cup, the with Kansas City police department saying items were missing from a team vehicle.

The English Football Association confirmed to The Associated Press the possible theft but said it could not provide more information because it was a police matter.

Police said the incident occurred Friday night.

"We are investigating a possible theft of equipment from a team vehicle that arrived in Kansas City with items missing this evening," police said in a statement to The AP.

"Two subjects of interest were taken into custody pending further investigation."

It was reported on Saturday that some equipment had been recovered, but police did not confirm that.

England starts its World Cup campaign against Croatia in Group L at Dallas Stadium on Wednesday.

England is scheduled to have its first open practice later Saturday at Swope Soccer Village, though heavy thunderstorms are threatening to wash out the session that is open to members of the community.

Kansas City is an ideal base because of its central location, meaning the England team would largely be spared coast-to-coast flights during the tournament. Defending champion Argentina is also based in Kansas City, which has spent more than \$650 million on soccer infrastructure over the past 15 years, according to Sporting Kansas City President and CEO Jake Reid.

### World Cup Fixtures

Germany vs Curaçao 20: 00

The Netherlands vs Japan 23:00

Monday

Ivory Coast vs Ecuador 02:00

Sweden vs Tunisia 05: 00