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Kuwait sets KD 5mn threshold for 15-year investor residency permits

Fraud, inactivity, and noncompliance can end Kuwait investor residency

KUWAIT CITY, June 14: Kuwait has introduced a comprehensive regulatory framework governing long-term residency for foreign investors, under Cabinet Resolution No. 651 of 2026, published in the Official Gazette "Kuwait Al-Youm." The move aims to streamline procedures while tightening legal, financial, and compliance standards to strengthen oversight and attract high-value investment.

The resolution allows investor residency permits for up to 15 years, covering owners of licensed investment entities, partners, senior executives, and their immediate family members, including spouses, parents, and children. Applications will be processed by the General Directorate of Residency Affairs at the Ministry of Interior, based on recommendations from the Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority (KDIPA), in line

with existing investment and residency laws.

Applicants must meet strict eligibility criteria, including submitting a clean criminal record certificate confirming no security or judicial convictions that would prevent residency approval. Passports must also be valid for at least six months from the date of application.

The framework places full legal responsibility on investment entities for the accuracy of all submitted data and documents. Authorities warned that any false information or forged documents will result in immediate rejection or cancellation of residency, alongside potential legal action.

Financial thresholds form a core component of the new rules. Investment entities must have a minimum total investment of KD 5 million and capital of at least KD 1 million, with proof that the capital is deposited within Kuwait. These conditions apply to activities licensed under Law No. 116 of 2013 on the Promotion of Direct Investment, with scope for future adjustments based on recommendations from KDIPA and the competent minister.

Beyond financial requirements, entities must demonstrate a genuine operational presence in Kuwait and actively conduct business. They are also required to comply with national employment policies, including hiring minimum quotas of Kuwaiti nationals as determined by KDIPA in coordination with relevant authorities.

KDIPA will oversee the application process, reviewing submissions and verifying compliance. Decisions must be issued within five working days of receiving a complete application, although the authority may request additional information at any stage. Failure to respond within 30 days will result in automatic rejection. Submission of an application constitutes a legal declaration of the accuracy of all provided information.

The resolution also sets out renewal procedures, requiring applications to be submitted at least 60 days before expiry. Renewal depends on the continued

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Opinion

Ahmed Al-Jarallah

Editor-in-Chief, the Arab Times

Iran's backward dreams are over, and it must admit defeat

WITH the electronic signing of the memorandum of understanding between the United States and Iran, a new phase begins during which the intentions of the Tehran regime will be put to the test.

We will see whether Iran is serious about de-escalation or whether it will use the two-month grace period to regroup and continue the stalling tactics it has followed for 47 years, not just recently.

Undoubtedly, many current calculations may prove either correct or incorrect. Any delay will not serve Iran's interests. The reality is that Tehran must awaken from its expansionist aspirations and abandon the slogan of "exporting the revolution."

Iran should say thanks to the United States, and perhaps Israel, for ending its nuclear program, which brought it nothing but international isolation and placed a heavy burden on its people for five decades, during which significant resources were directed towards the nuclear program. Ultimately, the program proved that it did not change the regional or international equations.

The current Iranian regime, in its weakened state, has an opportunity to abandon its terrorist past and begin a new path based on a clear equation that prioritizes meeting the people's demands above any whimsical ambitions. These ambitions are reflected in expansionist tendencies that stem from the delusions of those who govern a great nation with a rich history and a people seeking freedom, hard work, and creativity.

Mindsets still living in medieval caves hold sway over this nation, which comprises five different ethnic groups, each with its own distinct aspirations. This is a sensitive issue that the regime has failed to consider.

For decades, the Iranian regime has relentlessly threatened its neighbors, which has led to a deep erosion of trust in it.

Restoring Iran's relations with its neighbors will take decades, and may require a radical change in the Iranian regime.

Iran has been defeated, no matter how much it denies this fact. The cost of the recent war and the

international isolation it has faced since 1979 are far greater than what Iran's leaders anticipated.

Therefore, abandoning the nuclear program opens a window of hope for the people. Iran's withdrawal from supporting regional proxies would significantly reduce the hostility towards it and help restore its standing in the world as an economically powerful nation.

After 60 days, as stipulated in the memorandum of understanding, the situation will not be the same as it was before the June 2015 war, nor even as it was at the height of Iranian tyranny in Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, and Yemen.

These militias, formed under the Iranian regime to influence decision-making in these countries, are nearing their end. The dream of exporting the revolution on sectarian and religious grounds will soon become a thing of the past.

Any rational observer understands this significant shift. The Iranian regime must seize the available opportunities to lift its people out of poverty and starvation. Otherwise, cracks within the regime's structure will deepen, especially given that some of its members have already declared the agreement as a betrayal of Iran.

The hardliners within the Iranian regime believe that Iran must continue its confrontation until the "awaited Mahdi" appears.

The more pragmatic faction believes the agreement provides the regime with time to regroup and alleviate public discontent.

This means each faction views matters through the lens of its own interests and an extreme ideology, no matter if the view is right or wrong.

Tehran must balance its own interests with slogans that have cost it heavily in terms of money and resources and have generated widespread hostility.

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2 perish in fiery rollover crash



Kuwait Fire Force photo

A dramatic firefighting operation unfolds at the Al-Na'ayem scrapyard as crews bring a large fire under control in record time.

Six teams quell scrapyard inferno

By Munif Naif

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 14: A vehicle overturned after colliding with several parked buses, and caught fire, resulting in the death of two individuals.

According to an official statement issued by Kuwait Fire Force (KFF), the fire had spread to a nearby truck, causing it to burn.

Firefighters from Subhan Fire Station rushed to the location after receiving information about the accident, and extinguished the fire before it spread further. The deceased individuals were referred to the Forensics Medicine Department, and the site was handed over to the relevant authorities.

In another incident, six firefighting teams from Al-Shaqaya, Jahra Industrial, Kazma, Al-Bidaa, Al-Ihsan and Al-Istiqlal fire stations controlled the fire

that broke out in Al-Na'ayem scrapyard in Al-Salmi early morning on Sunday.

KFF stated that the teams responded immediately upon receiving the report. Firefighters worked hard to contain the fire and prevent its spread to neighboring areas until it was completely extinguished. No casualties were reported.

Director for Public Relations and Media at KFF Brigadier General Mohammad Al-Gharib confirmed to the newspaper that the fire occurred in a car scrapyard measuring 2,000 square meters.

He stressed that the firefighting teams handled the incident in an efficient manner and extinguished it in record time. He added that the firefighters proved their high level of readiness during the firefighting operations, which prevented the fire from spreading to neighboring areas, hence, no injuries were reported.

Seven decrees strip 2,192 of citizenship

KUWAIT CITY, June 14: Seven decrees were published in the official gazette "Kuwait Al-Youm" on Sunday to revoke Kuwaiti citizenship from 2,192 individuals, in addition to a decree revoking it from one person, reports Al-Seyassah

daily.

Decrees 90/2026, 92/2026, 93/2026, 96/2026, and 97/2026 stipulate the withdrawal of Kuwaiti citizenship from 2,183 individuals, including those who acquired it through dependency.

Decrees 91/2026 and 95/2026 stipulate the revocation of citizenship certificates from nine individuals.

Decree 94/2026 stipulates the revocation of Kuwaiti citizenship from one person.

Meth in frozen poultry fails to evade T5 customs checks

KUWAIT CITY, June 14: An individual has been arrested at T5 hall of Al-Jazeera Airport for attempting to smuggle drugs from the Arab Republic of Egypt, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

According to an official statement issued by the General Administration of Customs (GAC), customs officers discovered the drug, locally referred to as "shabu," during routine customs clearance and passenger inspection procedures.

The drug had been concealed inside frozen poultry products in an attempt to bypass inspection

procedures and smuggle it into the country.

Officers followed legal procedures in dealing with the incident and confiscated the drug. They are currently preparing an incident report to refer the suspect, along with the seized drug, to the Drug Control General Department.

In an effort to ensure societal security and safety, GAC highlighted its ongoing efforts to strengthen customs control through various means and confront all attempts to smuggle prohibited materials.

Rental ban enforced on chalets

KUWAIT CITY, June 14: The Ministry of Finance affirmed the importance for chalet and land (rest area) license holders to strictly comply with the terms and conditions of the administrative permits issued to them, as part of its commitment to preserving state property and ensuring its proper use in accordance with approved legal and regulatory frameworks, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The ministry explained that among the important regulations that must be observed is the absolute prohibition on renting out chalets or plots of land to third parties in any form, maintaining the boundaries of licensed sites without

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Kuwait Vision 2035 faces FDI reality check: experts

By Najeh Bilal

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 14: A number of economic experts shed light on why foreign direct investment continues to be a very small part of the total foreign investments in Kuwait, despite the efforts of the government to maximize State revenues from the oil and non-oil sectors in order to narrow the gap between public revenues and expenditures.

These efforts are consistent with the main objectives of Kuwait Vision 2035, which aims to transform the country into a regional and global financial and commercial center by creating an investment-friendly economic environment, facilitating the flow of capital, and enabling the private sector to play a leading role in economic activity.

This issue is important, taking into

consideration that the Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority (KDIPA) disclosed in its 2025 report that direct investment accounted for only 0.21 percent of total foreign investments in the country, which reached KD1.972 billion from 2015 to 2025.

Commenting on the issue, economic analyst Mohammad Ramadan pointed out that foreign direct investment in the country remains weak compared with indirect foreign investment, which continues to expand due to the strong financial position of the country and the resilience of its banking sector.

He stressed the importance of achieving a balanced growth and greater coordination between direct and indirect foreign investments. He urged the government to take the necessary measures to increase

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Beirut hit ahead of US-Iran deal

JERUSALEM, June 14, (AP): The Israeli military said it launched strikes on Hezbollah targets in Beirut on Sunday, potentially complicating efforts to finalize a deal to end the U.S.-Iran war. Smoke rose over the Lebanese capital, and the Civil Defense said it retrieved three bodies and six wounded people from the rubble.

Iran threatened a military response. The deal in its current form is a deep disappointment to Israel's government. The last time Israel struck the Beirut suburbs a week ago, it set off the most serious escalation of fighting between Iran and Israel since the tenuous ceasefire took hold April 7.

There was no immediate White House comment on Israel's strikes. U.S. President Donald Trump, who had said the deal could be signed Sunday, has pressed Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to stop hitting Lebanon hard while a deal is near, but the prime minister has defied him.

Netanyahu's office said the strikes were in response to Hezbollah attacks on the north of the country. There was no immediate comment from the Iranian-backed Hezbollah.

Israel's military earlier said Hezbollah had launched three projectiles into

Continued on Page 5

Gulf Bank honors 8 university winners of 2026 'Company Program' competition



National Bank of Kuwait sponsors the 9 Second Kuwait Forum of Major State Development Projects (ENCON 5)



KFH participates in Kuwait Second Forum on State Development Projects



Prayer Timings			
Fajr	03:13	Asr	15:22
Sunrise ..	04:48	Maghrib ..	18:49
Zohr	11:48	Isha	20:21



HH the Amir



HH the Crown Prince

Kuwait's Amir receives Crown Prince, senior gov't ministers

KUWAIT CITY, June 14, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received on Sunday His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah.

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

Crown Prince audiences

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

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

Unprecedented hindrances block UNRWA work: Kuwait

'Sustainable peace tied to respect for int'l law'

NEW YORK, June 14, (KUNA): The State of Kuwait has affirmed that achieving sustainable peace in the Middle East requires respect for international law, the protection of civilians, and the implementation of relevant UN Security Council resolutions.

Kuwait called for safeguarding humanitarian institutions that support the most vulnerable groups during times of conflict, foremost among them the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA).

This came in a statement delivered by First Secretary Fahad Al-Ajmi of Kuwait's Permanent Mission to the United Nations, on behalf of the core group of countries of the "Common Commitments" document in support of UNRWA, before the Security Council's open debate on the situation in the Middle East.

Al-Ajmi said that UNRWA has been a vi-

tal lifeline for Palestinian refugees for over seven decades, noting that it is currently facing an unprecedented campaign aimed at restricting its work and undermining its role at a time when humanitarian needs are increasing.

He expressed the core group's condemnation of the ongoing attacks against the UN agency, its staff, premises, and operations, pointing out that the killing of 391 UNRWA staff members represents the largest single loss of humanitarian workers in the history of the United Nations.

Al-Ajmi also noted the destruction or closure of UNRWA schools, health centers, and

other facilities, along with the accompanying restrictions that impede the agency's humanitarian mandate.

The First Secretary further expressed the Group's concern regarding measures aimed at obstructing UNRWA's work in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, where UNRWA facilities have been closed and demolished, and military installations have been erected on the site of one of its headquarters in East Jerusalem.

He considered these measures a violation of the UN Charter and the Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations, and an undermining of the protection due to humanitarian personnel and UN staff during armed conflicts.

Al-Ajmi reiterated that UNRWA remains a cornerstone of international efforts to promote peace, stability, and human security in the region.



Fahad Al-Ajmi

World must force Israel to join NPT, says Kuwait

KUWAIT CITY, June 14, (KUNA): The State of Kuwait stressed recently the importance of the international community assuming its responsibilities to compel the Israeli occupation to join the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).

Kuwait called on to place all of the Israeli occupation's nuclear facilities, without exception, under the International Atomic Energy Agency's (IAEA) comprehensive safeguards system, in implementation of relevant international resolutions.

This came in a statement delivered by Third Secretary at Kuwait's Permanent Mission to the United Nations and international organizations in Vienna Ahmad Al-Daikhan before the IAEA Board of Governors during discussions on the item concerning the nuclear capabilities of the Israeli occupation.

Kuwait reaffirmed the pivotal role of the IAEA as the competent body responsible for implementing the comprehensive safeguards system and verifying the peaceful nature of nuclear programs, contributing to strengthening the nuclear non-proliferation regime and consolidating security and stability at the regional and international levels.

It also affirmed its commitment to establishing a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, in accordance with the 1995 NPT Review Conference resolution and the outcomes of the 2000

and 2010 review conferences.

Kuwait noted that all countries in the region have become parties to the NPT and have placed their nuclear facilities under comprehensive safeguards agreements with the IAEA, except for the occupation, which remains outside the treaty and refuses to place all its nuclear facilities under the comprehensive safeguards system or take serious steps in this direction.

It added that the Israeli occupation continues to fail to comply with relevant international resolutions, including the 1995 NPT Review Conference resolution on the Middle East, the UN General Assembly resolution on holding a conference to establish a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East, as well as UN Security Council Resolution 487 and the resolution issued by the IAEA General Conference regarding Israeli nuclear capabilities.

Kuwait called for keeping the issue of the Israeli occupation's nuclear capabilities on the agenda of the IAEA and its relevant bodies until serious and effective steps are taken to address the situation, enabling the agency to apply the comprehensive safeguards system throughout the Middle East and move forward toward establishing a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, thereby enhancing regional and international security and peace.



Participants of the Second Kuwait Forum for State Development Projects (ENCON5), organized by the Kuwaiti Federation of Engineering Offices and Consulting Houses (KFEPOCH). Photo by Samer Shaqir

Real estate developers names soon: Eng. Al-Mishari

By Marwa Al-Bahrawi
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 14: Minister of State for Municipal and Housing Affairs Eng. Abdullatif Al-Mishari said the first phase of the real estate developer program piqued the interest of the private sector in the three investment opportunities that were offered.

Al-Mishari made the statement during the opening of the Second Kuwait Forum for State Development Projects (ENCON5), organized by the Kuwaiti Federation of Engineering Offices and Consulting Houses (KFEPOCH) with the theme, "Investment Opportunities for Housing and Mortgage Projects: Transparency, Achievement and Sustainability – Principles of the New Era."

Procedures

He stated that the Public Authority for Housing Welfare (PAHW) is currently completing the procedures related to this phase and it is

expected to announce the qualification of real estate developers in the coming weeks. He added that the housing sector remains the top national priority and the political leadership continues to focus on it.

He explained that the current challenges and future housing demand require more flexible and efficient models, drawn on international expertise and adapted to evolving economic and urban development trends, while preserving the identity of Kuwaiti society and meeting the needs of Kuwaiti families.

He pointed out that the real estate developer project is vital for the advancement of the housing sector and the achievement of housing sustainability, whose role goes beyond constructing housing units to creating integrated urban communities, which provide citizens with a modern and high-quality living environment.

He revealed that the government considers the private sector a development partner rather than just a project executor. He indicated that this partnership will raise the implementation efficiency, improve project quality, and accelerate the completion of housing and development initiatives.

In his closing remarks, he ex-

pressed appreciation to KFEPOCH, the participating organizations, sponsors and supporters of the forum. He is hoping that the outcomes of the forum will contribute to national development, improve the quality of life, and create a more sustainable and prosperous urban future for Kuwait.

On the other hand, KFEPOCH Chairman Eng. Bader Al-Salman stressed that the forum serves as an important national platform for presenting practical and ambitious solutions to the housing and development issues in the country.

He lauded the patronage of the minister and commended the efforts of the PAHW and Kuwait Municipality in organizing the event. He also expressed gratitude to all participating government entities, private companies and experts.

He stated that hosting the forum now is a manifestation of the ability of Kuwait to overcome the challenges and difficulties it encountered recently, thanks to its wise leaders and the concerted efforts of State institutions and the Kuwaiti people.

He considers the forum a vital step toward the new era of housing development aimed at providing citizens with housing that meets the sustainability, modernity and quality of life standards. He added

this objective will be achieved by benefiting from the expertise of local and international real estate developers, while introducing flexible financing solutions for different categories of beneficiaries.

He emphasized that the implementation of an advanced mortgage system for the first time in Kuwait will expand housing financing options and increase the ability of citizens to obtain suitable housing.

Ambition

He asserted that the forum reflects the ambition of Kuwait to build a better future for the next generations.

Acting Deputy Director General for Investment and Private Sector Projects at PAHW Ahmed Al-Ansari indicated that the real estate developer system is an integrated economic framework that brings together various private sector components involved in development, financing and services.

He said the authority launched three housing projects during the first phase of the program – about 5,000 residential units, and it will soon complete the developer qualification stage in cooperation with the Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Finance and Kuwait Credit Bank.



Farwaniya Governorate photo

Farwaniya Governor Sheikh Athbi Nasser Al-Athbi Al-Sabah during the meeting.

Talks focus on cleanliness, better services for public

KUWAIT CITY, June 14: Farwaniya Governor Sheikh Athbi Nasser Al-Athbi Al-Sabah had a meeting with Vice Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Cleaning Companies Union Khaled Al-Mudahaka and Secretary of the union Essam Al-Hashash at the Farwaniya Governorate headquarters on Sunday.

During the meeting, they discussed community and volunteer initiatives and programs implemented by the union and ways to strengthen coordination between the governorate and the union in order to support efforts to maintain public cleanliness and to better serve the community.

Sheikh Athbi Nasser praised the

role played by the union through its participation in volunteer and community initiatives, while emphasizing the importance of concerted efforts among official bodies and civil society organizations in the interest of the public and to shoulder their social responsibilities.

On the other hand, Al-Mudahaka and Al-Hashash expressed their gratitude to the Governor for his full support and unwavering commitment to strengthen community partnership. They affirmed their continuous cooperation with the governorate in implementing initiatives that better serve the residents and improve the environment.

Kuwaiti experts tap potential of market

KUWAIT CITY, June 14, (KUNA): Kuwait's Direct Investment Promotion Authority (KDIPA) organized a panel discussion on Wednesday in which a bevy of intellectual leaders, policymakers and officials looked into the potential of the Kuwaiti market, in addition to national economic developments.

In line with Kuwait's Vision 2035, a long-term development strategy that aims to transform Kuwait into a global financial and trade hub, the initiative was held in conjunction with global media group The Business Year, shining light on the reforms introduced in Kuwait that aim to boost the allure of the local market, according to a KDIPA statement.

On the main topics dissected amid the panel discussion, "structural reforms," and expanding the scope of participation in the Kuwaiti stock market took precedence over the rest of the matters discussed, added the statement, highlighting these measures as instrumental in attracting foreign investors.

Addressing the gathering, Kuwait's Minister of State for Economic and Investment Affairs Abdulaziz Al-Marzouq emphasized that the nation was "pushing forward" with economic reforms that help build a "multi-faceted economy," that would create equal opportunities for firms and investors alike, he said.

The statement went on to highlight the vast array of ideas and plans that the gathering has yielded, all of which call for greater cooperation across state bodies to help bring Kuwait's economic development goals to fruition, it added.



The meeting in progress.

KUNA photo

GCC, Japan discuss trade, ways to boost investment

KUWAIT CITY, June 14, (KUNA): The Minister of Commerce and Industry Osama Khalid Al-Boodai participated recently, in the first Investment and Trade Dialogue meeting between the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries and Japan, held via videoconference.

The ministry was represented by the Trademarks and Patents Department and the Commercial Control and Consumer Protection Department.

In a statement to KUNA, the ministry said that the meeting discussed the latest developments in negotiations for a free trade agreement between the GCC coun-

tries and Japan, in addition to exchanging information on local trade and investment policies, rules and regulations.

It added that the meeting featured an exchange of views on trends and developments aimed at enhancing investment opportunities and projects, as well as reviewing possible ways to strengthen coordination in international trade and economic fields, contributing to the development of relations between the GCC and Japan.

The ministry noted that best practices in the fields of intellectual property and consumer protection were also reviewed.

diwaniya ديوانية

A DIGEST OF PUBLIC OPINION

Fortified defense, unity prelude to Gulf survival

"IT IS clear that what the Arabian Gulf region is facing at this stage has gone beyond security challenges and potential developments that threaten the regional situation," Kuwaiti writer **Khalid bin Fahad Al-Mutawa** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

"Gulf countries are subjected to aggression and attacks that threaten their sovereignty, stability, and territorial integrity.



Khalid Al-Mutawa

"At the heart of this region lies Kuwait, which possesses a vital strategic location and a long history of neutrality and active diplomacy. Kuwait today is in dire need of well-considered and practical steps to protect its national security and to ensure that attacks that could affect its security, as well as the security of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries, are not repeated.

"A radical and guaranteed solution to these security challenges cannot be achieved individually, but rather through a unified Gulf stance that brings the countries of the region together under a single umbrella of protection and a shared destiny.

"The first step Kuwait must take is to strengthen the foundations of its local security and develop its defense and intelligence capabilities to deter any potential threat. This is a crucial step for Kuwait to become an active and strong partner in any security alliance and to enhance its effective contribution to protecting the GCC as a whole.

"Strong local security is the foundation upon which any successful foreign policy is built and the primary guarantee of trust from citizens and regional partners. However, this step alone is not sufficient. The nature of current threats transcends national borders and targets the security of the entire region, making Gulf integration and unity an urgent necessity.

"Here lies Kuwait's pivotal role in working diligently and tirelessly with its sister GCC states to formulate a unified and clear Gulf position. This alliance is based on rejecting any aggression and adopting a firm and unified stance towards Iran, which violates the principles of good neighborliness and contravenes international charters by targeting Gulf states with drones and missiles.

"Unified positions and purpose are the region's strongest weapon. When the Gulf states speak with one voice, they send a powerful message to the entire world that this region is a red line, and that targeting any of its countries means targeting all of them.

"Consequently, no party will dare to contemplate repeating such attacks, because it will realize that it is facing a solid, strong, and cohesive bloc.

"A genuine, multi-dimensional security framework must be built, encompassing military, political, economic, and intelligence dimensions, to cover all aspects of protection.

"Military cooperation is achieved through the development of joint capabilities, the unification of defense strategies, and the establishment of rapid response forces capable of quickly intervening to protect any country under threat.

"Intelligence cooperation is achieved through the immediate and continuous exchange of information and expertise to uncover any hostile plots before they are carried out.

"Political cooperation requires full coordination of international positions, explaining the Gulf security issue to the world, and demonstrating that the security of this region is a fundamental part of global security, affecting the stability of the global economy and the energy sector.

"Economic cooperation requires building a network of shared interests so that any harm inflicted on a Gulf state is considered an attack on all, thereby increasing the cost of aggression and making it an unbearable loss.

"The prevention of such attacks will only be achieved if any aggressor understands in advance that the price of aggression is extremely high, and that the Gulf, as a unified entity, is capable of responding, protecting, and defending itself.

"Kuwait, with its positive relations and distinguished standing, is capable of playing a leading, mediating, and coordinating role in achieving this desired unity. History has proven that as long as the Gulf states remain united, they cannot be defeated.

"Kuwait's security is an integral part of Gulf security, and Gulf security is a guarantee of Kuwait's security. "A secure future requires Kuwait and the Gulf states to work together to achieve the highest levels of coordination and unity. It is essential to build a strong security framework that protects the past, present, and future, prevents any aggression, and makes the region a model of stability and strength."

Also:

"Iran is suffering from a cost-of-living crisis, with prices rising rapidly, in a manner similar to Zimbabwe," columnist **Ahmad Al-Dawas** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

"In that country, as a citizen prepares

to leave their home, the price of an item is one figure, but by the time they get into their car, the price increases, and then it rises again when they reach the market. This is undeniably frightening.

"The price hikes, which occur multiple times in a single day, drove university graduates in Zimbabwe to beg in the streets, ultimately leading to a revolution that toppled the Zimbabwean leader.

"Iran is experiencing a similarly difficult situation. On Tuesday, an Iranian citizen bought a small package of cheese for 270,000 toman, which is about 350 fils, and by Wednesday the price had risen to 370,000 toman, which is about 600 fils. Iranians live on a monthly salary of about KD 30. How can an Iranian citizen afford the rest of the household needs and provide for their family?

"Inflation in Iran has spiraled out of control, eroding wages and savings faster than many families can manage. The prices of basic food items have skyrocketed in Iran.

"Hassan, a 32-year-old Iranian father of two who works in a small business in Isfahan, earns 30 million toman a month.

"I receive my salary on the first Saturday of every month, and by Wednesday it's completely gone," he says. His income is spent within days on rent, food, and transportation to work.

"While many citizens face these difficult conditions, members of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps receive substantial salaries and additional benefits, including free food.

"All the clerics are millionaires and own properties in London, Paris, and Berlin. Isn't this enough to spark a revolution that would overthrow the oppressive regime?

"Iran lacks a competent economy minister. And even if one were, he undoubtedly lacks the courage to advise the government."

"We witnessed the inauguration of the World Cup in the United States recently, marking another edition of this tournament being held in three countries," columnist **Eng. Adel Al-Jarallah Al-Kharafi** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

"The United States is engaged in a war with Iran, yet the World Cup schedule was not delayed for a single moment. Canada and Mexico were likewise unaffected by local or global developments because they are strong nations capable of adapting to international events and internal circumstances.

"These three countries are experiencing local developments marked by fierce opposition and mutual accusations. Each side seeks to secure the largest share of the vote. Despite the fragile economic situation, they worked to ensure the success of this World Cup.

"Learning from the experiences of others is not a weakness, as is often believed in developing countries. This mindset leads them to voluntarily fall behind in keeping pace with the times.

"I am not referring to infrastructure, which is a daily responsibility of official institutions and should not be considered an achievement. It falls within the basic duties of any public official, whether a minister, director, or undersecretary.

"The law clearly defines the powers and responsibilities of these officials. What I am referring to is the freedom to innovate, plan, and respond rapidly.

"As long as a person is working, they should be generating new ideas that prove to be right or wrong through experimentation, public discussion, and the exchange of opinions.

"Projects are born when ideas are transformed into opportunities through a scientific methodology, carefully studied, thoroughly researched, and subjected to testing.

"For example, medicine undergoes extensive testing, including laboratory studies, animal trials, and clinical trials on humans, before it is approved or rejected. Throughout the history of the World Cup, this event has coincided with major global developments. The tournament was interrupted only twice, during World War II.

"This global event has created many opportunities for countries and peoples and has contributed to strengthening development. There is no comparison between the United States, Canada, and Mexico, or between Arab countries. The former enjoy greater freedom of thought and expression, while the latter are often more inclined to suppress new ideas.

"The recent war and the American and Iranian threats did not alter the reality in the United States. That great nation remained committed to its schedules as if nothing had happened. Other countries have also met such challenges despite the difficulties surrounding them, as was the case in 2022 when the World Cup was held in Qatar despite regional challenges. Doha succeeded in organizing the tournament brilliantly.

— **Compiled by Simi K. Kutty**

Full-scale Ahmadi cleaning drive launched

KUWAIT CITY, June 14: Field teams from the Public Hygiene and Road Occupancy Department in Ahmadi Municipality conducted a large-scale cleaning campaign covering the Al-Wafra Agricultural area and several other locations within Ahmadi Governorate, reports **Al-Seyassah** daily.

The campaign was carried out under the directives of the Minister of State for Municipal Affairs Eng. Abdul Latif Al-Mishari, the follow-up of the Director General of Kuwait Municipality Eng. Manal Al-Asfour, and the supervision of the Director of Ahmadi Municipality Saad Al-Khurainj.

The campaign resulted in the removal of 10 truckloads of agricultural waste, the dismantling of four mobile grocery stores, and the issuance of six violation reports against street vendors, who were referred to the relevant authorities.

In addition, 10 abandoned vehicles and eight truckloads of used tires were removed from public squares in Fahaheel.



Al-Seyassah photo
Municipality Department lifts cars abandoned at various places.

Mol denies reports of ex-MP Ashour arrest

KUWAIT CITY, June 14: The Ministry of Interior denied reports circulating on some social media platforms claiming the arrest of former MP Saleh Ashour and one of his brothers, affirming that these reports are completely false, reports **Al-Seyassah** daily.

The ministry stressed the importance of obtaining news and information from official and accredited sources and refraining from circulating or republishing unverified news, as this could mislead the public.

The Ministry of Interior urged social media users to exercise accuracy and responsibility when sharing news and to refer to official and accredited channels to verify information before publishing or republishing it.

PAM teams find 23 working under sun

By Fares Ghaleb

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff and Agencies

KUWAIT CITY, June 14: The Public Authority for Manpower (PAM) launched an inspection campaign in Mutlaa to monitor compliance with Ministerial Resolution No. 3/2026, which regulates work in open areas during summer and adverse weather conditions.

In a press statement, PAM confirmed that the campaign aims to protect workers from health risks associated with direct exposure to sunlight and extreme temperatures. Its objective is to ensure that employers comply with the ministerial resolution, which prohibits work in open spaces from 11:00 am to 4:00 pm daily from June 1 to August 31 each year.

It revealed that the campaign covered several work sites in Mutlaa, resulting in the issuance of 23 notices requiring the correction of violations at seven work sites. Inspectors found two workers in violation of Article 20, and the necessary legal and administrative measures were taken against them in accordance with the applicable laws and regulations.

It added that inspection teams instructed the employers to fully comply with the ministerial resolution and to provide a work environment that meets occupational safety and health standards, ensuring workers are protected from the risks of heat stress and direct exposure to sunlight during the prohibited hours.

It affirmed that inspection campaigns will continue throughout the summer open space work ban period, indicating that it will take legal action against violators.

It pointed out that compliance with the resolution contributes to maintaining occupational safety and health standards and safeguarding the workforce.

2 hurt in fire: Fire broke out in a house in Qairawan on Saturday evening, resulting in injuries and burns to two individuals, reports **Al-Seyassah** daily.

Firefighters from the Qairawan and Sulaibikhat fire stations rushed to the location and extinguished the fire before it spread further. The injured individuals were handed over to paramedics for treatment. Investigations were launched to determine the cause of the fire.

Jet ski crash hurts one: A boat and a jet ski collided in the waters off Al-Zour on Saturday evening, resulting in injuries to an individual, reports **Al-Seyassah** daily.

Fire and marine rescue teams from Al-Muhallab Marine Center rushed to the location and handed over the injured individual to paramedics.

Deportation for expats speeding on roads: Mol

By Munif Naif

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 14: Assistant Director of the Traffic Awareness Unit at the General Traffic Department (GTD) Lieutenant Colonel Abdullah Bouhassan warned about the dangers of speeding, stressing that the number of such violations usually increases during weekends and that penalties include vehicle impoundment, imprisonment and deportation for expatriate offenders.

Bouhassan disclosed that GTD recorded 94 vehicles exceeding speed limits on the main roads and highways last Thursday. Legal measures were taken against the drivers and their vehicles were impounded.

He said the speed limits on highways range from 80 to 120 kilometers per hour, indicating that exceeding the posted limit by 30 kilometers per hour results in the issuance of a traffic citation and vehicle impoundment. He added that motorists who reach speeds of 170 kilometers per hour are referred to the traffic police station after being issued a citation and their vehicles are impounded.

He disclosed that more stringent measures are imposed on those driving at speeds of 200 kilometers per hour or more, such as the issuance of a traffic citation, vehicle impoundment and imprisonment. He pointed out that expatriates who commit such violations are subject to deportation procedures, in addition to traffic penalties, once the required legal procedures are completed.

He urged motorists to comply with the specified speed limits to guarantee their safety and that of other road users, stressing that speeding remains one of the leading causes of serious traffic accidents.

On towing operations, he stressed the need for tow vehicle operators to abide by the traffic regulations like driving on the right lane, maintaining appropriate speeds, ensuring the safety of towing connections, equipment, spare chains and lights, and making sure there are no passengers during the towing process. He said these measures help ensure that towing operations are conducted safely, without posing a risk to other road users.

2 held in drugs factory swoop

Thieves adopt new skills

KUWAIT CITY, June 14: The Drug Control General Department arrested two illegal residents (Bedoun) who were operating a factory for the production and processing of psychotropic substances in Kabad, reports **Al-Seyassah** daily.

Investigations and intelligence gathering led to the identification of the factory's location, after which necessary procedures were taken to raid it.

In an official statement, the ministry explained that the site was a farm used by the two suspects as a secret headquarters for their operation.

The suspects attempted to resist the security forces during the raid but failed to escape. The search resulted in the seizure of five kilograms of raw Captagon powder, a tablet-forming machine, a precision scale, and equipment and tools used for portioning and packaging, in addition to a quantity of empty bags.

Initial investigations with the suspects led to the discovery of approximately 100,000 Captagon tablets ready for distribution, which were hidden underground with a market value exceeding KD 500,000.

The suspects and the seized items were referred to the competent authorities to take the necessary legal measures.

Thieves adopt new skills: The General Department of Criminal Investigations' Salmiya Investigation Unit apprehended a four-member gang specializing in robbing grocery stores and supermarkets by impersonating inspectors from the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, reports **Al-Anba** daily.

According to a security source, several shop and supermarket owners in various areas reported being robbed by individuals claiming to be inspectors from the Ministry of Commerce and Industry. The suspects routinely pretended to conduct surprise inspections to verify licenses and

merchandise and to identify violations. The Criminal Investigation Department launched an investigation, identified the suspects, and arrested them.

During the investigation, the suspects confessed to the reported crimes, revealing that they targeted cigarettes, tobacco products, and e-cigarettes due to their high value and ease of sale.

The suspects routinely seized the merchandise, claiming they were confiscating it due to violations.

The source indicated that the accused had been carrying out their criminal activity for several months, moving between different governorates, exploiting their ability to impersonate official figures and convince their victims of the legitimacy of their actions.

Hunt for exhaust thief: Investigators from the General Department for Criminal Investigations launched an intensive investigation to apprehend an unidentified thief suspected of stealing 13 exhaust pipes from parked vehicles in several areas, reports **Anba** daily.

According to a security source, a single individual is likely responsible for these thefts, given the similarity in the modus operandi used in all incidents, as well as the perpetrator's apparent expertise in handling and dismantling the stolen parts quickly.

Clerk gets one year jail: The Criminal Court sentenced a clerk at Jahra Court to one year in prison with hard labor, followed by deportation, after finding him guilty of stealing and tampering with court revenue stamps in many case files, reports **Al-Seyassah** daily.

Case records indicate that the defendant misappropriated State-owned revenue stamps valued at KD200 by replacing KD50 stamps with KD5 stamps in case files pending in the court, thereby, obtaining an illegal financial benefit at the expense of public funds.

The Public Prosecution charged the defendant with misappropriation of public funds, causing damage to State property and tampering with official documents.



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Al-Sanad



Dr Al-Rshaid

Al-Sanad and Al-Rshaid new undersecretaries

KUWAIT CITY, June 14, (KUNA): An Amiri decree was issued on Sunday appointing Awatif Al-Sanad as Undersecretary of the Ministry of Justice. The Minister of Justice shall implement the decree and it shall enter into force from the date of its issuance and be published in the Official Gazette. Meanwhile, an Amiri decree was issued on Sunday appointing Dr. Khaled Al-Rshaid as Undersecretary of the Ministry of Education. The Minister of Education shall implement the decree and it shall enter into force from the date of its issuance and be published in the Official Gazette.

Road repairs to begin in 34 areas, eight highways

By Mohammad Ghanem
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 14: The Ministry of Public Works announced the implementation of comprehensive maintenance works under the new road contracts covering 42 areas, including 34 residential areas and eight highways, from June 13-18. In a statement posted on the X platform, the ministry revealed that the maintenance works are carried out in the six governorates as follows: five areas in Ahmadi, nine in Hawally, eight in the Capital, six in Farwaniya, six in Mubarak Al-Kabeer and one in Jahra. Moreover, the ministry stated that the highways included in the maintenance program are Abdally Road, intersection of the Fourth Ring Road and Morocco Road, Fahaheel Road, overpass at the Fourth Ring Road intersection heading toward Salmiya, Subiya Road, Fourth Ring Road between the Morocco Road and Damascus Street intersections, Salmi Road heading toward Kuwait City, and the Seventh Ring Road from Kilometer 24 to Kilometer 27 in both directions. Also, the Central Agency for Public Tenders (CAPT) extended the deadline for submitting bids for two tenders on the removal of sand from highways in the northern and southern areas on behalf of the Ministry of Public Works. The new deadline is June 23, instead of June 9.



KUNA photo
Kuwait's Assistant Foreign Minister for International Organizations Ambassador Sadiq Marafi participated in the annual meeting of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) Donor Support Group held recently in London.

Build sustainable ICRC, donors partnership

LONDON, June 14, (KUNA) : Kuwait's Assistant Foreign Minister for International Organizations Ambassador Sadiq Marafi has participated in the annual meeting of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) Donor Support Group held recently in London. The meeting, held on Thursday and Friday, focused on enhancing the efficiency of the international humanitarian system and developing crisis response mechanisms to tackle growing global challenges, the Kuwaiti Embassy in London said in a statement on Saturday. Participants emphasized building sustainable partnerships between the ICRC and donor nations. On the sidelines of the event, Ambassador Marafi held talks with ICRC President Mirjana Spoljaric to review

cooperation, focusing heavily on the issue of missing persons, which remains a top national and humanitarian priority for Kuwait. The two sides discussed regional humanitarian developments and explored practical steps to bolster strategic dialogue, support field response efforts, and strengthen adherence to international humanitarian law. The ICRC Donor Support Group serves as a consultative platform linking ICRC leadership with major financial backers to discuss operational priorities and funding hurdles. During the London session, the United Kingdom officially handed over the group's rotating presidency to the Swiss Confederation for the 2026-2027 term.

MoE in quality hunt

Training for top notch on anvil

KUWAIT CITY, June 14: The Ministry of Education (MoE) is preparing to launch the fourth phase of its promotion program for educational supervisory positions through accredited training programs for various supervisory roles, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The ministry explained that this phase is a continuation of established procedures for selecting and qualifying educational leaders, following the completion of the previous three phases, which included meeting eligibility requirements, taking an online exam, and conducting personal interviews, in accordance with Ministerial Resolution No. 116/2025. The number of applicants when nominations opened last

November reached approximately 8,000, of whom around 1,500 qualified, in addition to 2,198 who had previously qualified through the online exam and personal interviews. The training programs target four main supervisory categories - school principal, assistant school principal, head of a study department, and technical advisor. The fourth phase will be held from June 14 to 18, and includes four main training programs - interpersonal skills, leadership skills, meeting management skills, and report writing and administrative correspondence skills. The training content meets the requirements of supervisory positions and focuses on developing modern leadership, administrative, and technical skills. Candidates will be notified of the course dates and locations via the Sahel application and SMS text messages. Passing the training program and the online exam is a prerequisite for completing the qualification process for educational supervisory positions.

New traffic law saves lives

Penalty fear cuts speed, red light violations

KUWAIT CITY, June 14, (KUNA): The numbers of speed limit violations and running the red light have seen a sharp drop after the enforcement of Kuwait's new traffic law. Interior Ministry data showed on Sunday, citing the figures as a testament to road awareness. The number of violations related to breaking the speed limit dropped by 65 percent during the period from April 22, 2025 to April 21, 2026, as compared to the same period a year earlier, according to ministry statistics. After recording some 1,618,739 speed limit violations

before the new law was enforced, the figure plummeted to 561,820 after the new traffic rules were introduced, it showed. Traffic violations over running the red light had also seen a drop worth 63 percent in the same period, where said infractions amounted to 140,539 before the new law was enforced, as compared to 51,732 after its passing. In April of 2025, Kuwait introduced new and more stringent laws aiming to curb traffic deaths and protect lives, with such legislation marking a watershed in national efforts to ensure road traffic safety and protection.



KUNA photo
Kuwait Ambassador to Indonesia Khaled Al-Yaseen presented his credentials on Friday to the President of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste Jose Ramos-Horta, as non-resident Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Ambassador.

Kuwait, Timor-Leste to boost ties

KUALA LUMPUR, June 14, (KUNA) : Kuwait Ambassador to Indonesia Khaled Al-Yaseen presented his credentials on Friday to the President of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste Jose Ramos-Horta, as non-resident Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Ambassador. A statement by Kuwait's Embassy in Indonesia said that Ambassador Al-Yaseen conveyed the greetings of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah to President Jose Ramos-Horta, wishing the people of Timor-Leste continued progress and prosperity. He highlighted the strong ties between Kuwait and Timor-Leste and Kuwait's

commitment to enhancing cooperation in political, economic, trade, and cultural fields. President Horta affirmed the strong ties between the two countries since 2003, expressing his desire to deepen cooperation and praising Kuwait's support for Timor-Leste since its independence. He reaffirmed his country's condemnation of the Iranian attacks on Kuwait and other GCC states, expressing solidarity with Kuwait and support for measures to protect its sovereignty and security. He praised Kuwait's humanitarian and development efforts worldwide, commending its wise foreign policy and commitment to promoting regional and international peace and security.

News in Brief

Who all are eligible for bonus?

KUWAIT CITY, June 14: The Civil Service Commission (CSC) has clarified the issue of whether directors assigned to perform the duties of assistant undersecretaries are entitled to the financial bonuses stipulated for those holding these positions for their work on certain committees, reports Al-Rai daily. CSC explained that these bonuses are limited to those officially appointed to the rank of "assistant undersecretary" by decree, and therefore do not include those assigned to manage the position or perform its duties temporarily as interim or acting assistant undersecretaries. According to informed sources, CSC has issued an official clarification in response to an inquiry received from a government entity on this matter.

the 2026/2027 training season, reports Al-Seyassah daily. In an official statement, PAM explained that the aim of these annual training programs is to develop skills, enhance professional competence, achieve job stability, and qualify Kuwaiti nationals. Applications can be submitted via email to field-training@manpower.gov.kw. Applications will be accepted from June 14 to July 14 in a move that strengthens partnership with the public sector. Eligibility requirements for the training plan include a technical and financial proposal for each training program, a valid certificate of compliance with the national workforce quota for private sector entities, and a certificate from the Public Authority for Civil Information (PACI) for the company. The training plan must include at least 10 training programs, with the top three programs identified as most relevant to career advancement.

PAM training announced: The Public Authority for Manpower (PAM) announced the reopening of applications for its annual training plans for

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Donors reach 45,539 since start of year: Health Minister

Humanitarian spirit drives rise in Kuwait blood donations

KUWAIT CITY, June 14, (KUNA): The number of people to have donated blood in Kuwait since the start of the year stands at 45,539, Kuwait's health minister said on Sunday, citing the figure as an increase of more than 5,000 donors from the previous year.

The statistics are a testament to the "humanitarian role" assumed by blood donors, Dr. Ahmad Al-Awadhi told the press against the backdrop of "World Blood

Donor Day," underlining that a simple gesture such as blood donation can often go a long way in saving lives.

The minister went on to say that even a "drop of blood" carries substantial humanitarian value in the sense that it represents a "message of hope" directed at patients fighting for their lives, praising such an initiative as a poignant act of humanity.

He went on to mention the state of emergency im-

posed nationwide in the aftermath of a barrage of Iranian attacks against Kuwait, saying that the average number of blood donors per month had risen by some 8,000 people during this period, citing the figure as an example of "social responsibility."

Echoing the minister's sentiments, health ministry undersecretary Sheikh Dr. Salman Al-Sabah said that the national surge in blood donations during emergen-

cies encapsulates the penchant of Kuwaitis for such virtues as altruism and giving.

On the significance of "World Blood Donor Day," the health ministry's Central Blood and Cellular Therapy Management department chief Reem Al-Radhwan said that the occasion shines light on the contributions of blood donors towards supporting the national healthcare system.

Continued from Page 1

Iran's backward

Iran did not liberate Palestine; rather, it brought occupation to Lebanon, deepened divisions among the Iraqi people, and undermined national unity in Yemen. Ultimately, the Iranian regime has been defeated.

Nevertheless, Iran is likely to continue its usual tactic of covering every defeat under the guise of divine victory.

Kuwait sets

operation of the investment entity and full compliance with all regulatory requirements.

Residency permits may be cancelled before expiry in several cases, including criminal convictions related to corruption, loss of eligibility, submission of false documents, failure to commence or sustain business activity, inactivity exceeding one year, or cancellation or liquidation of the entity's license. Authorities must be notified to ensure immediate revocation.

Upon expiry of an investor's residency, all linked permits lapse unless renewed. A grace period of up to 90 days is granted to settle financial and legal obligations, extendable to 180 days in exceptional cases with approval from the Director General of Residency Affairs.

The resolution came into force upon publication, with officials stating it is designed to enhance transparency, strengthen regulatory oversight, and position Kuwait as a more structured and competitive destination for foreign direct investment while safeguarding national economic and labor policies.

Rental ban

encroachment or violation, full

compliance with the regulations governing usage, and timely payment of all financial obligations and outstanding dues.

Any breach of licensing conditions or failure to fulfill the prescribed obligations will result in legal and administrative measures, including termination of the license and immediate eviction of the site without the need for prior notice or warning.

Kuwait Vision

the overall volume of foreign investment entering Kuwait, particularly direct investment, which he described as one of the most significant indicators of economic growth.

He underscored the need to establish an investment city designed to attract foreign capital, provided that appropriate legislation is enacted to support such a project. He explained that the establishment of this city will play a crucial role in attracting foreign direct investment, particularly financial investment.

He indicated that the city should be managed with a liberal and investor-friendly approach, which promotes a competitive investment environment through incentives and facilities, including simplified procedures, tax exemptions, and other advantages capable of encouraging major international financial institutions and investment companies to invest directly in Kuwait. He added that Kuwait took positive steps in recent years toward diversifying its sources of income to reduce reliance on a single source.

On the other hand, economist Dr. Adel Al-Kandari attributed the growth of indirect foreign financial investment to the strong financial solvency of the country and its abil-

ity to withstand economic shocks and unexpected crises. He believes these factors greatly contributed to the continuous activity of indirect foreign investment in Boursa Kuwait, albeit the direct foreign investment remains limited.

He also pointed out that previous parliaments discouraged the entry of foreign capital into the country. "Prior to the suspension of parliamentary sessions, the parliamentarians exercised considerable influence over economic legislation and policy decisions. Some laws and regulations raised concerns among foreign investors, prompting many to prefer investment in the stock market rather than committing to direct investment projects," he elaborated.

He is optimistic that Kuwait will attract more foreign direct investments in the future, specifically in the financial services sector, considering no major obstacles prevent such investment.

He also thinks that the completion of the Mubarak Al Kabeer Port project will remarkably increase the foreign direct investment, while expanding the domestic and international investment opportunities in the country.

He went on to say that the plan to establish industrial cities in the country will further support foreign direct investment by encouraging multinational corporations to establish a stronger presence in the Kuwaiti market. He explained that such developments will have a positive impact on the financial sector through the business activities and transactions of these companies, thereby, contributing to the realization of the vision of Kuwait to become a global financial and commercial center.

He stressed the importance of removing barriers to foreign direct investment, because such investments can help reduce unemploy-

ment by generating employment opportunities and enhancing the skills and capabilities of Kuwaiti nationals.

He suggested the establishment of the Foreign Investment Services Authority to deal with administrative challenges that investment companies could face, and to ease the issuance of visas for business executives and employees.

Economist Ahmed Al-Khashnam said Kuwait, in its current phase of reform, is moving toward diversifying its sources of income through a variety of economic initiatives.

He underscored the need to intensify efforts to realize the vision of Kuwait to transform into a financial and commercial hub by encouraging foreign investments, considering that neighboring countries are actively competing to attract foreign capital through a range of legislative and regulatory incentives.

He added that attracting foreign direct investment requires the creation of a suitable investment climate through the amendment of laws and regulations, as well as the improvement of the economic infrastructure, since foreign investors usually look for incentives, profitability and competitive advantages before committing capital to any country.

Beirut hit

northern Israel, releasing footage where an audible boom was followed by smoke rising above the tree line.

An Associated Press photographer at the scene said the building struck was a five-story apartment building with shops on the ground floor. The two lowest floors were the most heavily damaged. Residents of the southern suburbs, many of whom had returned home after relative calm in recent weeks, could

be seen fleeing the area.

Hezbollah fired missiles into Israel on March 2, two days after the U.S. and Israel attacked Iran, sparking war in the Middle East. Israeli troops have since pushed their invasion of Lebanon deeper than at any point in over a quarter century.

Iran wants a ceasefire deal to include the fighting in Lebanon. Israel has been sidelined in negotiations led by Pakistan and others.

"Israel will not tolerate firing into its territory," Netanyahu and Defense Minister Israel Katz said in a statement.

Iran's parliamentary Speaker Mohammad Bagher Qalibaf, a lead negotiator for Tehran, warned on X that Israel's strikes on Beirut's suburbs show that "America either lacks the will to fulfill its commitments or the ability to do so." He warned that the strikes could imperil the final stage of negotiations.

"Without a doubt, these crimes will not go unanswered," said Gen. Mohammad Jafar Asadi, deputy commander of Iran's Joint Command Headquarters, the official Mizan news agency reported.

Qatari mediators traveled to Tehran on Sunday to finalize the agreement, according to two regional officials.

The officials, who spoke on the condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to speak to the media, expressed cautious optimism that the U.S. and Iran were finally approaching a deal that could halt hostilities that have killed thousands of people and reopened the Strait of Hormuz, whose closure has thrown world markets into disarray.

Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif said Saturday the deal would be signed Sunday, while Iran's foreign ministry spokesperson Esmail Baghaei said it could happen in the coming days. Trump

said the Strait of Hormuz would open immediately after the signing.

The deal is expected to be signed electronically, without an in-person ceremony, though it's unclear when or how the signing will take place.

The deal does not solve the thorniest issues between the U.S. and Iran, including Iran's nuclear program or its billions of dollars in frozen funds, but offers a 60-day framework for technical discussions on those issues, according to Pakistani and regional officials familiar with the ongoing negotiations who spoke on the condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to speak publicly.

The officials described Pakistan's effort leading the negotiations, struggling for months to keep both sides from walking out and a total collapse of the negotiations on multiple occasions.

Under the deal being discussed, U.S. and Israel appear to have fallen short of their original goals of destroying Iran's missile and nuclear programs and ending its support for proxies. It is not clear how the deal will address these issues, or if they will be part of the final agreement.

Iran's nuclear program and highly enriched uranium have long been at the center of tensions with the U.S. and Israel and an international source of concern. Trump on social media asserted that "when all is calm," the U.S. would go in and "downblend and destroy" the enriched uranium in Iran or in the U.S.

Meanwhile, Trump was expected to discuss demining the Strait of Hormuz during the Group of Seven summit that starts Monday. The waterway is crucial to significant shipments of oil, natural gas and related products like fertilizer, and its effective closure rocked the global economy.



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More laws possible this year

Trump tried to block state AI regulations, but some US states forging ahead

HARRISBURG, Pa., June 14, (AP) — Six months after US President Donald Trump warned states not to regulate artificial intelligence, they are increasingly doing just that.

Congress has stalled on producing federal regulation of artificial intelligence as states forge ahead and scrutinize how chatbots interact with children, how AI systems are used by employers and what developers must do to try to prevent an AI-caused catastrophe.

State lawmakers have stepped back from earlier, wider-ranging attempts to regulate AI that were vetoed or otherwise derailed by governors who viewed the measures as too onerous toward the industry's development, including efforts to hold developers accountable for bias in AI systems.

But they are returning with legislation that is more targeted and, often, probes the corners of life where Americans interact with AI but may not know it.

Trump's move to restrain states' actions on AI drew criticism from members of both political parties

and civil liberties and consumer rights groups who worried that banning state regulation would amount to a gift to AI giants, who enjoy little to no oversight.

Trump has made AI a top national and economic security priority, and he said that letting states clutter the regulatory playing field for an industry that's spending trillions of dollars and driving the economy is too risky in the race with China for AI superiority.

Trump issued an executive order that directed the attorney general to create a task force to challenge state laws that are more than "minimally burdensome," and directed the Commerce Department to draw up a list of problematic regulations. It also threatened to restrict funding from a broadband deployment program and other grant programs to states with AI laws.

The White House said it wouldn't target state laws that seek to prevent fraud and protect consumers and children.

In the meantime, the Trump administration released a "national



Flanked by Sen Ted Cruz, R-Texas, (left), Secretary of Commerce Howard Lutnick, (second right), and White House AI and Crypto Czar David Sacks, President Donald Trump displays his signed AI initiative in the Oval Office of the White House on Dec 11, 2025, in Washington. (AP)

policy framework" in which it urged Congress to preempt state AI laws that are out of step with its regulatory worldview and to pass legislation to protect children, intellectual

property rights and free speech. In recent days, a new bipartisan draft proposal in the House met withering criticism from key Democrats and Republicans.

The White House has given no indication that it has made good on its threat to enforce the president's executive order by going to court against a state's AI law or withholding money. In a statement, it said the Trump administration is "eager to work with partners" to enact its policy framework.

Trump's executive order didn't seem to discourage states from trying to regulate how AI is used. More bills have been introduced this year than last, including by Republicans, said Justine Gluck, policy director of the Future of Privacy Forum, a non-profit that advocates for data privacy in technology and whose members are from industry, academia and civic groups.

In Illinois, legislation on the desk of Democratic Gov. JB Pritzker piggybacked on elements of laws passed last year in California and New York that require developers of large advanced AI models to create protocols to prevent their systems from causing a catastrophe, such as a biological weapons attack, power outage or large-scale hack.

Illinois added a requirement that AI developers must get an independent auditor to review whether they are complying with their own policies. Analysts see it as a step toward requiring AI developers to take greater accountability for their products.

The bill's sponsor, Democratic state Sen. Mary Edly-Allen, brushed aside Trump's threat.

"I don't know if you've met Illinois, but we're pretty independent," Edly-Allen told The Associated Press.

The bill drew nearly unanimous support, signaling a willingness by members of Trump's party to cooperate with Democrats in filling the AI regulatory vacuum left by the federal government.

This kind of legislation is expected to expand to other states.

A growing number of states are imposing restrictions on how AI chatbots can interact with people, especially children. A mix of Republican- and Democratic-led states have passed such laws this year, including Colorado, Connecticut, Idaho, Iowa, Nebraska and Oregon.

America

Unhealthy air quality in California city: Officials in a Northern California city urged people sensitive to smoke to keep indoors as firefighters spent a third day Saturday battling a fire in a huge medical equipment warehouse.

Air quality on the south side of Tracy, a city of 100,000 people where the Medline warehouse fire has been burning since Thursday, was in the "unhealthy" range, according to air monitors.

Firefighters expected the next few days to remain smoky amid a lengthy effort to put out the fire inside the building, South San Joaquin County Fire Authority Fire Chief Randall Bradley said in a statement.

The local fire marshal was investigating, and officials are meeting with company representatives, structural engineers and others to assess the building, Bradley said.

Plans were being made for employees to retrieve their vehicles from the site. Meanwhile, firefighters urged people to avoid the area and not touch or move debris from the fire. (AP)



Bradley

F/A-18 Hornet fighter jet crashes: US authorities said Sunday that an F/A-18 Hornet fighter jet belonging to the Marine Corps crashed during a training mission in Washington State, while the pilot survived. State officials said the aircraft struck mountainous

terrain in Yakima County, triggering a fire near the crash site.

The pilot sustained minor injuries after ejecting and was taken to hospital for treatment. Fire crews were dispatched to contain the blaze.

The Marine Corps said in a statement that the aircraft was assigned to Marine Aircraft Group 11 and the 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing.

The statement added that the jet experienced a malfunction during a routine training exercise about 55 miles southeast of Seattle, Washington. (KUNA)

McDonald to lead prosecutor's office: US President Donald Trump said Saturday that he will appoint one of his personal lawyers to serve as the top federal prosecutor in Manhattan, filling a pending vacancy after Trump tapped the man currently in the job to be director of national intelligence.

James M. McDonald, a former federal prosecutor in the office he had been picked to run, served as a financial regulator during Trump's first term and worked in the White House counsel's office in President George W. Bush's administration.

A partner at the law firm of Sullivan & Cromwell, McDonald is part of the legal team handling Trump's pending appeal of felony convictions in New York related to hush money payments to adult film actor Stormy Daniels as the Republican ran for president in 2016.

Trump said Saturday he would name McDonald to the role of US Attorney for the Southern District of New York, one of the most influential positions in the Justice Department. He would replace Jay Clayton, whom Trump put forward this week as his pick for the director of national intelligence. (AP)

Early results show Swiss voters reject right-wing bid to cap population at 10m

GENEVA, June 14, (AP) — Voters in Switzerland have cast their final ballots on Sunday on an initiative championed by the top right-wing party to cap the rich Alpine country's population at 10 million. Early results showed Swiss voters were leaning against it.

The populist Swiss People's Party, which has the most seats in parliament, has stirred up and fostered anti-migration sentiment over the years, notably about an influx of workers from the neighboring European Union.

Critics call the bid a self-inflicted wound, saying the boom in migration over the last generation has brought foreign labor and skills to sectors such as healthcare, finance, pharmaceuticals, and technology. Some also worry the proposal, if approved, will weaken critical ties with Brussels. The EU is Switzerland's top trading partner.

Recent polling from the gfs.bern agency suggested that it could be a close contest.

Preliminary results shared by the federal government showed that nearly 54% of voters rejected the proposal, with turnout exceeding 57% nationwide. Results were still pending from many of Switzerland's 26 cantons.



A poster reading 'isolate ourselves from Europe? Certainly not now! - No to the SVP/UDC Chaos initiative' featuring images of US President Donald Trump, Russian President Vladimir Putin and Chinese President Xi Jinping, urging people to vote against the Swiss People's Party (SVP) referendum titled 'No to a Switzerland with 10 million inhabitants' photographed in Lausanne, on May 27. (AP)

The Swiss People's Party put forward the "sustainability initiative" measure, saying Swiss infrastructure, housing, social programs, natural resources and way of life have been strained by demographic growth.

The federal government and Parliament oppose the idea.

Swiss democracy gives voters a direct say in policymaking through referendums typically held four times a year. Most ballots are cast through the mail, and in-person voting ends at noon local time on Sunday.

A "yes" vote would require the Swiss government to take action to cap the population by 2050.

If the population reaches 9.5 million before then, the government would be forced to restrict asylum, family reunification and residency permits, and may have to scrap Switzerland's EU deal on the free movement of people.

The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development has reported that Switzerland had a foreign-born population of 32% as of 2024, behind only Luxembourg and Australia among the group's 38 member countries.

International migration has long been a sensitive issue in Europe, as nations grapple with an aging population and increasing anti-foreigner sentiment. While that sentiment in other European countries centers on migrants from the developing world, most foreigners in Switzerland are Europeans.

Europe

Britain detains sanctioned oil tanker: Armed British forces boarded and detained a sanctioned tanker Sunday that is suspected of being part of the Russian "shadow fleet," shipping oil in violation of international sanctions over Moscow's war on Ukraine, British Prime Minister Keir Starmer said Sunday.

Royal Marine commandos rappelled from helicopters onto the vessel, the Smyrtos, in the English Channel, in what the country's Defense Ministry called "the first U.K.-led operation of its kind."

The vessel will be held and monitored off the south coast of England for investigation, according to the Defense Ministry. The operation was carried out "in close coordination" with French authorities, who have previously intercepted a number of vessels linked to the "shadow fleet." (AP)



Starmer

Romania's prez nominates Vestea as PM: Romanian President Nicusor Dan nominated a former mayor to be prime minister on Sunday as he seeks to end a political crisis after his previous pick for the premiership withdrew after failing to win political support.

Dan nominated 53-year-old Adrian Vestea, a career politician from central Brasov County and longtime

member of the National Liberal Party, to try to form a government. Vestea is Dan's second prime ministerial nomination this month, after his previous pick, Eugen Tomac, failed to present a cabinet to Parliament within 10 days.

"Eugen Tomac withdrew his mandate this morning and ... I nominate Adrian Vestea as prime minister," Dan said at the presidential Cotroceni Palace, in Bucharest. The nomination will need to be approved by lawmakers.

Dan said that Vestea was suitable for the role because he had "gone through all the administrative stages" throughout his political career, during which he served as mayor of a small town and as county council president of Brasov, where he attracted European funds. (AP)

Thousands march in Rome: Tens of thousands of people marched through the streets of the Italian capital in anti- and pro-migration demonstrations Saturday, after a far-right citizens' initiative seeking sweeping measures against migrants garnered enough support to be brought to Parliament.

A petition by the initiative, named "Remigration and Reconquest," gathered the 50,000 signatures needed to trigger parliamentary discussion, pushing the onerous concept of "remigration" into the political mainstream. No date has been scheduled yet for a vote.

The proposal, promoted by right-wing groups, calls for sweeping measures targeting foreigners, including coercive returns, incentives to leave Italy and broader policies critics say could extend to legal residents. (AP)



Canada's Prime Minister Mark Carney gives remarks at Trinity College in Dublin, on June 13. (AP)

Middle-power countries shouldn't compete for favor with US - Carney

DUBLIN, June 14, (AP) — Canada's Prime Minister Mark Carney continued his efforts to pivot away from the United States and align with Europe, meeting with the leader of Ireland on Saturday ahead of the upcoming G7 summit and saying middle power countries shouldn't compete for favor with America.

Carney said that Canada and the European Union have a combined population that is more than twice that of the United States, with a similarly sized economy and a collective defense budget that is twice that of China's.

He said smaller nations can multiply their strength by partnering with like-minded allies.

"In a world of great power rivalry, middle powers have a choice - to compete for favor or to combine to create a third path with impact," Carney said at Trinity College in Dublin.

He made similar comments at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, which became a symbol of middle-power resistance in January, when he declared the global rules-based order over and condemned coercion by great powers on smaller countries.

Carney visited Ireland's Taoiseach Micheál Martin earlier on Saturday and French President Emmanuel Macron on Friday ahead of the Group of Seven summit of industrialized democracies that begins on Monday in France.

US President Donald Trump

leaves for the G7 summit right after he hosts UFC fights at the White House on Sunday for his 80th birthday.

Trump is not currently scheduled to hold bilateral talks with Carney during the summit, according to a senior U.S. administration official.

Carney described Canada and Europe as a "force for good - because we safeguard the values of human rights, dignity and pluralism that our people hold dear."

The prime minister said together, the EU and Canada are one of the largest economic, cultural, technological, financial and military blocs in the world.

"The new world order will be built starting with Europe," Carney said at an earlier joint news conference with Martin. "Canada is the most European of non-European countries. We are transforming our cooperation with Europe."

In February, Canada became the first non-European member of the SAFE mechanism, the European Union's defense procurement initiative. Carney, on his ninth trip to Europe since becoming prime minister 15 months ago, noted Canada 56 partnerships in the critical minerals sector across more than 10 countries, primarily in Europe.

Trade tensions continue to simmer between Canada and the US. There is a scheduled July 1 review of the U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA) the latest iteration of the

North American free-trade pact that has intertwined the economies of the three countries since the early 1990s. Trump said this week that he may not renew the deal.

Carney said Canadian Trade Minister Dominic LeBlanc will meet with US Trade Representative Jamieson Greer at the summit.

The prime minister said he doesn't believe the US is interested in big changes to free-trade agreement with Canada and Mexico.

"The U.S. has been clear. They don't want to change the fundamental architecture," Carney said.

Carney emphasized that the Trump administration has allowed about 85% of Canadian trade to the US to be tariff free because it is covered under USMCA.

Carney said that to fundamentally change the agreement the White House would have to go to Congress, adding that the White House doesn't want to do that.

The US official, who briefed reporters on the condition of anonymity on ground rules set by the White House, said the US has had outreach from Canada to set up further discussions on trade with the U.S. administration.

The Trump administration views a recent move by the Canadian government to roll back a regulatory decision that required foreign streaming platforms to allocate a portion of their Canadian revenues to fund local news and programming as positive decisions, the official added.



Motorsports athletes and stunt performers do a motorcycle jump ahead of the UFC Freedom 250 fights on the South Lawn of the White House on June 13, in Washington. (AP)

temporary arena under "The Claw," a spaceship-like metal arch fitted with lighting, sound equipment and large screens. Thousands more will be watching on big screens from the nearby Ellipse.

"This event is a one of one event, in-

credible event. I love it," said UFC chief Dana White, a close friend of the president, during a Friday night hype session at the Lincoln Memorial where pairs of fighters shoved and scuffled for the cameras under the stoic gaze of Honest Abe's marble likeness.

Asia

Body of girl recovered after man found dead in Sydney river: Police divers recovered the body of a missing girl in the river in the inner-western Sydney suburb of Concord on Saturday.

A search operation commenced after the body of a man was found shortly before 11:45 am on Saturday in waters off Bayview Park, Concord, police in the Australian state of New South Wales (NSW) said in a statement. Officers were told the man had been seen in a small boat with a child shortly before his body was discovered, NSW police said.

A command post was established at the scene and a search operation commenced. The missing girl's body was located at about 5:30 p.m.

Information provided indicated the man was in his 40s, while the girl was believed to be aged six or seven, NSW police said.

Officers were providing support to the child's mother as inquiries continued, the police said. (Xinhua)

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3 bodies recovered after supply boat sinks off Singapore: Three bodies were recovered from the waters after a supply boat sank off Singapore on Friday, the Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore (MPA) said in a statement.

The three individuals are "believed to be deceased crew members" of the supply boat, which sank off the Pasir Panjang Terminal in southern Singapore at about 9:30 am local time (0130 GMT) after colliding with a landing craft, the MPA said.

The landing craft remained stable with no injuries reported among its crew on board, the MPA said.

Search and rescue operations, including diving activities, are ongoing to determine whether any other crew members from the supply boat remain missing.

Port operations have not been affected, the MPA added. Navigational



The operation floor inside the Unit 6 reactor building is pictured during a media tour at Tokyo Electric Power Company Holdings' (TEPCO) Kashiwazaki-Kariwa nuclear power station in Kariwa Village, Niigata prefecture, Japan on May 1, 2026. (AP)

broadcasts have been issued advising vessels to keep clear of the incident area. (Xinhua)

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Release of Fukushima N-contaminated wastewater halted again: The release of nuclear-contaminated wastewater from Japan's crippled Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant into the ocean was automatically suspended again on Saturday after an alarm was triggered by low water flow in the pumping system, Kyodo News reported.

The alarm sounded at around 5:05 pm local time. The plant's operator, Tokyo Electric Power Company Holdings (TEPCO), said that following an on-site inspection, no equipment malfunction was identified.

TEPCO determined that a momentary simultaneous outage affecting two power transmission circuits reduced the flow rates of the seawater transfer pumps, causing the emergency shutoff valve to close and the discharge operation to be suspended.

The company said discharge will resume once preparations are complete.

This was the second alarm triggered during the plant's nuclear-contaminated wastewater discharge operations in a week. The previous one, on Wednesday, was traced to a possible valve malfunction in a water storage tank and also halted the release. Discharge resumed the following day after the operator replaced the valve.

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

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

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Chinese FM congratulates Maltese counterpart on assuming office: Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi on Friday sent a congratulatory message to Chris Fearn on his assumption of office as Malta's minister for foreign and European affairs.

Wang, also a member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, said that since the establishment of diplomatic ties, China and Malta have always treated each other with mutual respect and on an equal footing, and that the traditional friendship between the two countries enjoys broad popular support.

In recent years, the two countries have maintained a high level of political mutual trust and achieved fruitful cooperation in such fields as green development, fisheries, culture and tourism, Wang said. (Xinhua)

Ramaphosa deploys army to streets in several hotspots

Mass shootings in S.Africa's poorest areas symptom of organized crime, police failures

JOHANNESBURG, June 14, (AP): A mass shooting in South Africa this week was the latest in a trend of killings in some of the country's poorest areas that experts say is a symptom of organized crime gangs taking advantage of the failures and sometimes absence of police.

The shooting carried out by multiple suspects in an informal settlement of shacks in Johannesburg left 12 people dead and at least 15 wounded, according to authorities.

There have not been any arrests.

South Africa's president deployed the army to the streets in several hotspots earlier this year in an attempt to combat organized crime - an unusual move seen by critics as an admission that police in Africa's most developed country were losing the battle in those areas.

Alongside that, South Africa's police force has been embroiled in allegations of corruption and collusion with criminal syndicates. That has resulted in more than a dozen senior officers being arrested and top officials, including the police minister and the national police commissioner, being suspended.

Recent mass shootings - including two in December that left more than 20 people dead - have occurred in poor areas away from city centers where organized crime gangs take advantage of conditions like a lack of security, poor lighting and slow police responses, experts say.

"Criminal syndicates explicitly capitalize on this to hide weapons, execute hits, and vanish into the shadows," Jacob Mofokeng, a professor of criminology at the University of South Africa, told The Associated Press.

South Africa has very high levels of violent crime, with the most recent annual statistics showing an average of more than 60 homicides a day.

But the vast majority of killings occur in poor townships or informal settlements. South Africa has a long history of deep inequality that is reflected in its crime: rich neighborhoods have much lower violent crime rates.

Illegal mining gangs have long been a problem in and around South Africa's largest city of Johannesburg, which has some of the biggest gold reserves in the world.

The gangs are notorious and known as zama zamas - which translates



South African police gather at the scene of a mass shooting in Bekkersdal, South Africa on Dec 21, 2025. (AP)

roughly as "hustlers" or "chance-takers" in the Zulu language. They establish bases in impoverished and poorly policed areas and fight turf battles with other gangs or use violence to hold control in those areas.

Mining gangs often include migrants from neighboring countries who are in South Africa illegally, according to authorities.

That makes it hard for police to track down suspects as they have "no legal identification, no registered address, and no fingerprints or DNA profile," said Mofokeng. "They are effectively a ghost."

South Africa's government has said it loses more than \$3 billion a year to illicit

mining. Zama zamas have been a problem for decades and were one of the reasons South African President Cyril Ramaphosa authorized a yearlong deployment of troops on the streets to fight organized crime in specific areas across the country.

Residents in the Johannesburg neighborhood hit by this week's mass shooting said illegal mining gangs were known to operate there. Police said the motive for the shooting was not known, but mining gangs were a focus of the investigation.

South Africa has strict regulations controlling the legal ownership of firearms, but there are around 2 million to 3 million illegal guns circulating in a country of 62 million people, according to independent studies and civil society organizations.

Guns are by far the most common cause of homicides.

Willem Els, an analyst at South Africa's Institute for Security Studies, said the flow of illegal guns and police failures led to an ideal environment for criminality.

"In South Africa, we actually managed to create conditions that are very conducive for violent crime and also for organized crime syndicates to operate with impunity," he told the AP. "We've got a lot of unregistered firearms that are not being controlled by the police."

Analysts say police in South Africa are under-resourced, but allegations of corruption in the force have also seriously undermined its credibility.

South Africa has had police corruption problems before. A new allegation last year by a provincial police commander that top officers and officials were colluding with organized criminals led President Ramaphosa to announce a national investigation into police corruption. That has resulted in a wave of arrests of senior police officers.

Private investigator and security specialist Mike Bolhuis said police corruption has implications for on-ground policing in those areas impacted by violent crime as citizens are sometimes hesitant to give out information or help authorities.

"The public doesn't trust the police, they don't trust the authorities, and they don't trust each other," Bolhuis said.

Lat/Am

Mexico probes homicide of mayor in Oaxaca: Mexican authorities announced Saturday that they are investigating the homicide of a mayor in San Miguel Amatitlan, Oaxaca, in the country's latest case of political violence.

Joel Bravo Martínez was gunned down Saturday, weeks after he reported that he feared for his life and requested protection from the state government, according to a statement from his party PAN.

The Oaxaca state prosecutor's office said in a statement that once it learned of the killing, the institution "immediately activated the protocols for the investigation of crimes of high impact."

The Mexican Security Cabinet said it was working with state authorities to investigate the crime and arrest those responsible and that it had sent additional forces to the area.

"There will not be impunity," the Cabinet said in a statement on social platform X.

Local politicians in Mexico are frequently victims of political and organized crime violence.

This homicide comes as Mexico seeks to project an image of safety and modernity as it hosts the World Cup along with the US and Canada. (AP)

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Lula finishes preventive radiation therapy: Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva said Friday that he had finished preventive radiation therapy for skin cancer.

"Today, I went to Sirio-Libanês Hospital and com-

pleted my 15th radiation therapy session. I had skin cancer, and the radiation therapy is to make sure any possibility disappears completely," Lula said at the Planalto Palace. "I am happy ... about my definitive cure for this skin cancer."

The treatment began on May 25 at the Sirio-Libanês Hospital in Brasilia, which described it as a complementary procedure. (Xinhua)

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Colombia ship laden with food docks in Cuba: A ship carrying nearly 100 tons of food and essential goods arrived Friday from Colombia as part of the humanitarian aid that several countries have sent to Cuba in recent months as a US energy embargo persists.

The ship, which departed Cartagena in early June, crossed the Havana Bay channel early in the morning flying the Colombian flag and escorted by a small Cuban auxiliary vessel, The Associated Press confirmed.

The Colombian Presidential Agency for International Cooperation said that, on orders of President Gustavo Petro, the shipment included non-perishable food, medicine, hospital supplies, electrical materials, solar panels and other items.

The ship also carried seven tons of goods collected by solidarity groups. Last weekend, another ship carrying 1,700 tons of essential goods from Mexico and Belize arrived in Havana.

In late January, US President Donald Trump threatened tariffs on any country that sells or provides oil to Cuba. The move has deepened a pre-existing crisis caused by U.S. sanctions. Washington is pressing the Cuban government to release political prisoners and move toward political and economic liberalization in return for a lifting of sanctions.

Cuba produces only 40% of its oil, leaving the island semi-paralyzed and subjected to severe power outages. (AP)



Police clash with protesters at a demonstration as Congo's opposition rejects a proposed constitutional change in Kinshasa, Congo on June 12. (AP)

Violent clashes erupt in Congo's capital

Violent clashes erupted Friday in Congo's capital, Kinshasa, during a rally against a proposed constitutional change that opponents say could pave the way for President Félix Tshisekedi to seek a third term.

The demonstration, organized by the opposition coalition C64, was dispersed by police with tear gas after protesters clashed with pro-government supporters outside Parliament.

Congo is plagued by multiple crises, including an Ebola outbreak and an escalation of the decades-

long conflict with the Rwanda-backed M23 rebels, one of more than 100 armed groups vying for control in the eastern provinces.

Tshisekedi, 62, has been in office since 2019, and is due to complete his second five-year term in 2028. He has said he would be willing to seek a third term if approved by voters in a referendum.

The Congolese Constitution bars any revision of presidential term limits. However, a bill under consideration in the National Assembly, a lower chamber, would al-

low the president to amend those provisions in the event of a "major dysfunction" that paralyzes state institutions, potentially following a referendum.

The country's main opposition parties, which have been divided in recent years, joined forces in May under the banner of C64, or Coalition Article 64, to oppose what they describe as an attempt by Tshisekedi to remain in power. The coalition has called the proposed changes a "serious threat" to the country's stability. (AP)

Armed men in Haiti's capital seize top security official in high-level abduction

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico, June 14, (AP): Armed men in Haiti have kidnapped James Boyard, cabinet director of the Defense Ministry and a highly respected security expert who also serves as inspector general of Haiti's police, a person with the knowledge of the situation said Saturday.

He is the highest-ranking official to be kidnapped in the gang-ravaged Caribbean country in recent years.

A person with knowledge of the situation who was not authorized to speak publicly about the case confirmed the kidnapping to The Associated Press on Saturday.

Local media reported that Boyard was seized Thursday in Bourdon, one of the few areas in Port-au-Prince that is considered relatively safe. An estimated 70% of the capital is controlled by a powerful gang coalition known as Viv Ansanm, which the US designated as a foreign terrorist organization in May last year.

Boyard, who is also a political scientist, was tasked with helping



National Police patrol as factory workers march demanding a salary increase in Port-au-Prince, Haiti on April 14. (AP)

rebuild Haiti's armed forces and has helped assess Haiti's National Police to implement reforms.

It was not clear who kidnapped him or whether a ransom has been requested.

"A person of this rank clearly has a fairly important security detail,"

said Diego Da Rin, an analyst with the International Crisis Group.

He said the abduction of Boyard possibly suggests the kidnapping was planned with great detail and might have depended on the collaboration of someone close to his security detail.

At least 17 killed and 13 wounded by gunmen in northwestern Nigeria

ABUJA, Nigeria, June 14, (AP): Gunmen killed at least 17 farmers and wounded at least 13 others as they worked in their fields in northwestern Nigeria, a local official and a resident said.

The attack occurred on Friday in the town of Goron Namaye in the Maradun area of Zamfara state. No group has claimed responsibility but attacks by armed gangs have increased in recent months.

"The farmers were working on their lands when the bandits suddenly attacked and killed 17 of them," Shehu Musa, a resident of Maradun, told The Associated Press on Saturday, adding that the wounded were being treated at a hospital.

The attack was a result of the refusal of the Zamfara state government to negotiate with the gunmen, Sanusi Dosara, chairman of the Maradun local government, said in a statement. Dosara appealed on



Nigeria's President Bola Tinubu gives a joint statement with Brazil's President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, at the Planalto presidential palace, in Brasilia, Brazil on Aug 25, 2025. (AP)

government forces to dismantle the Bayan-Ruwa enclave in the Mara-

dun forest, where the gunmen were hiding.

Boursa Kuwait closes strong

KUWAIT CITY, June 14, (KUNA): Boursa Kuwait closed Sunday's trading session on a strong note, with all major indices posting gains amid active market participation.

The general index advanced by 116.07 points,

or 1.33 percent, to settle at 8,839.03 points. Trading activity saw 474.5 million shares change hands through 26,418 cash transactions, with a total value of KD 133.9 million (approximately USD 436.5 million).

Other Voices

The mega IPO wave

By Hassan F. Beidas

Financial markets are entering a remarkable phase where resilient corporate profits, moderating inflation pressures, and investor appetite for innovation are converging to create what may become one of the largest IPO waves in recent history.

The latest economic data continues to reflect an environment that is challenging, yet far from alarming. April's Personal Consumption Expenditure (PCE) index — closely watched by the Federal Reserve — showed headline inflation at 3.8% year over year, while core inflation stood at 3.3%.

Although inflation remains elevated, its reach across the economy is considerably narrower than during the post-pandemic inflation surge. Price increases today appear concentrated in selected sectors rather than spreading aggressively throughout the broader economy. In many respects, inflation remains well outside the traditional danger zones that economists associate with uncontrollable overheating.

Nevertheless, elevated prices continue to place pressure on consumers. Real disposable income growth has recently slipped into negative territory, reminding households that inflation still affects day-to-day purchasing power. At the same time, the labor market continues to show resilience, with job growth averaging around 36,000 over the past month while unemployment claims remain relatively low.

Economists typically become cautious when short-term inflation readings begin accelerating faster than medium- and long-term trends — specifically when one-month inflation outpaces the three-month trend, and the three-month trend exceeds the 12-month average. While those signals deserve attention, the broader corporate backdrop remains constructive.

Corporate profitability across the U.S. economy is gradually improving, with S&P 500 companies continuing to represent nearly 40% of total profits. More importantly, profit margins expanded across 10 sectors of the S&P 500 during the first quarter, led by strong earnings momentum in the technology sector.

Against this backdrop, investors are now turning their focus toward an extraordinary IPO (Initial Public Offering).

This year is expected to feature some of the largest IPOs ever recorded, with several anticipated listings estimated

to be two to three times larger than many previous landmark deals. One of the most talked-about transactions emerged from the aerospace sector, where SpaceX reportedly completed a major capital raise last Friday, securing nearly \$75 billion. Shares closed near \$161, placing the company's valuation close to an extraordinary \$2 trillion.

The excitement is not limited to aerospace. Several high-profile artificial intelligence companies are also expected to enter capital markets later this year, adding further momentum to investor enthusiasm surrounding AI-driven growth.

The structure of modern equity indices may also play a significant role in shaping how these IPOs affect broader markets.

The Nasdaq 100 now allows companies to become eligible for index inclusion roughly 15 days after their IPO, following recent methodology changes and without requiring profitability. By contrast, the S&P 500 maintains more stringent standards, requiring companies to complete a 12-month seasoning period alongside a full year of profitability before qualifying for inclusion.

Importantly, index providers base inclusion weightings on free float — the shares available for public trading — rather than total market capitalization. Economists expect many of these mega listings to debut with relatively low free floats, likely below 10%.

This is a critical distinction because it limits the risk of sudden market disruption from passive investment flows or forced selling among existing large-cap index constituents. Historically, changes to index composition occur gradually over several years rather than through a single market event.

In the short term, IPOs often generate strong enthusiasm from investors. The average first-day return for 2026 listings has reached approximately 15%, reflecting strong market demand for new growth opportunities.

Over longer investment horizons of one to three years, however, IPOs have historically underperformed their more established industry peers. In many cases, mega listings are driven by founders and early investors seeking to cash out accumulated gains and capitalize on elevated valuations.

Ultimately, while these upcoming IPOs are likely to dominate headlines and capture investor attention worldwide, the mechanics of index construction and limited initial free floats appear likely to contain the risk of large-scale market disruption.

The IPO wave may redefine market narratives for years to come — but beneath the excitement, the broader financial system still appears positioned to absorb these massive listings in a measured and orderly manner.

The price of always-on

By Hala Al-Humaidi

Not long ago, it wasn't remarkable if you couldn't be reached immediately. If a person didn't pick up the phone or reply to an email, no big deal. You could get it done the following day. At the weekends, you would enjoy some free time for your family and other interests. Technology has today changed this, however, as it has created the new expectation of always being reachable.

While the potential of constant access has indeed brought numerous advantages, from more rapid communication and greater work flexibility to always being just the click away from the information you need, it has also brought a price, which is not always recognized. We are increasingly being expected to react as quickly as possible to emails, notifications, and messages, whatever the time or context.

All of this is changing the ways we engage in our lives in subtle but powerful ways. A notification in the evening might interrupt a nice dinner. A message received at night might keep you thinking. You may be right in front of us, but your brain is still busy thinking about things that require your attention.

Researchers in psychology are already examining how the effects of constant accessibility could negatively impact on people's mental and physical health. According to their studies, the inability to disconnect mentally from work or social commitments could lead to increased stress, anxiety, and burnout. Just as muscles require recovery time following exercise, so does the brain. If that recovery time is not provided, then the brain is likely to become fatigued over time.

One of the problems associated with the current situation is that it creates a self-imposed obligation. Many individuals check their phones not because they have to, but rather because they want to make sure they do not miss anything. A phone call or email that goes unanswered for an hour may lead to some unease, though it might be unnecessary in many situations. Our brains become trained to stay alert as a result, and the longer we continue this, the more difficult it will become for us to switch off completely.

The problem is not just limited to business, however. Social networks have created an expectation of availability. We are aware of who is online, and whether messages have been received or even read, or how long it takes for a reply to arrive. Therefore, communication is no longer limited to the provision of information alone, as it has been linked to social expectations and perceived availability.

In order to regain control, there may be certain adjustments you can make in your own use of modern technology to restore the balance. It is possible for an individual to achieve this goal by turning off non-essential messages or notifications on the phone, scheduling time to leave the phone at home, or simply refusing to immediately answer every message. What is more, it is important to keep in mind that, every now and then, it is perfectly normal and acceptable to be unreachable. The ability to say you are busy and therefore cannot be available to everyone at all times is an essential requirement for good mental health.

There is increasing awareness, in today's world of continuous interaction, of the importance of being able to unplug. In this age, learning to turn off one's attention for the moment can be an extremely important skill. We must understand that it does not take being connected all the time to get things done and maintain relationships, but rather being completely involved when it really counts.

Business

As part of its ongoing partnership with INJAZ Kuwait

Gulf Bank honors university winners of 2026 'Company Program' competition



Dari Al-Rashid Al-Bader and Laila Hilal Al-Mutairi with the winning team.

KUWAIT CITY, June 14: As part of its continued support for youth, Gulf Bank honored the winners of the "Best Student Company of the Year 2026" award in the university category, during the winners' recognition ceremony organized by INJAZ Kuwait at Kuwait Technical College (Ktech). The event was attended by a number of sponsoring entities and companies, students, parents, volunteers, and school teachers.

On this occasion, Mr. Dari Al-Rashid Al-Bader, General Manager of Corporate Affairs at Gulf Bank and Board Member of INJAZ Kuwait, said: "Just a few days after honoring the winning teams from the high school category, we are pleased today to share the joy of the university students as they win the Best Student Company of the Year 2026 award. We wish the winning teams from both categories success in representing the State of Kuwait at the upcoming regional competition in Cairo."

He added: "At Gulf Bank, we are proud of our continued partnership with INJAZ Kuwait, which extends over more than 20 years and has witnessed the adoption and support

Dari Al-Bader: We congratulate the winners and wish them success in representing Kuwait at the INJAZ regional competition

of many youth-led ideas and companies, some of which have become part of Kuwait's business and economic landscape today."

Al-Bader emphasized Gulf Bank's commitment to supporting youth as part of its dedication to encouraging and developing their professional skills, enabling them to keep pace with the evolving requirements of the local and global labor markets. This comes within Gulf Bank's strategy, which places youth at the heart of its priorities, and in line with Kuwait Vision 2035, which highlights the importance of investing in youth, as well as the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

He noted that the "Company Program" competition enjoys strong popularity among ambitious young people, as it provides them

with an exceptional hands-on experience in establishing and managing a real company, with the support and sponsorship of leading institutions, foremost among them Gulf Bank.

In a related context, Gulf Bank volunteers have played a prominent role in supporting young participants across INJAZ Kuwait's various programs this year, contributing significantly to career guidance programs, engaging with student groups, and mentoring them.

The Company Program provides high school and university students with entrepreneurial skills, teaching them how to establish business ventures while equipping them with leadership, management, and financial literacy skills. Students are given the opportunity to establish and manage a student company, going through the full stages of launching a new business, starting with developing a business plan, conducting feasibility studies, building a team, and raising capital, leading up to creating and selling a product or service. The program concludes with an annual local competition to evaluate the student companies.

Supporting youth talent at KU Dentistry Graduation

ABK supports graduation ceremony for Kuwait University Dentistry Graduates

KUWAIT CITY, June 14: Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) sponsored the graduation ceremony of a new cohort of students from the Faculty of Dentistry at Kuwait University. The event was attended by Dr. Rashid Al-Azmi, Dean of the Faculty of Dentistry, faculty members, graduates and their families. During the ceremony, certificates were awarded to the graduates, while ABK was also recognised and honored for its role as a leading banking institution in the Kuwaiti market.



Sager Albenali

This sponsorship further strengthens ABK's distinguished record in social responsibility and reflects its commitment to supporting students and young national talents, while contributing to the advancement of education and healthcare in Kuwait. It also aligns with the Bank's sustainable strategy, which places education and youth empowerment among its key priorities.

On this occasion, Sager Albenali, Chief Communications Officer at ABK, said, "We are proud to sponsor the graduation ceremony of this outstanding group of future dentists. Dentistry is a fundamental pillar of the healthcare sector, and we are confident that these graduates will play an important role in serving the community and delivering healthcare services in line with the highest professional standards."

He added, "Sponsoring this ceremony is a tangible reflection of our social responsibility strategy, which we view as a long-term sustainable investment in the core pillars of society, foremost among them education and healthcare. Empowering young national talents in the medical field directly contributes to strengthening the efficiency of the healthcare system, ultimately supporting sustainable development and enhancing community well-being."

Albenali continued, "As a leading financial institution, we believe our role extends beyond providing banking services to fulfilling our responsibilities as a corporate citizen committed to contributing to the progress of society. Sharing in the graduates' achievements and celebrating this important milestone is part of our duty to support and encourage young talents and initiatives that serve the public good."

He concluded by noting that sponsoring the ceremony underscores



ABK honors new dentistry graduates in Kuwait.

ABK's role as a development partner that supports and empowers Kuwait youth across various academic and professional fields. He highlighted that ABK's social responsibility program, which is continuously enhanced and expanded, reinforces the Bank's commitment to supporting the next generation during pivotal moments in their lives, particularly as they transition from education into the workforce.

Visa: Kuwait leads GCC in social commerce

KUWAIT CITY, June 14, (KUNA): The State of Kuwait is leading the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) in e-commerce through social media, a senior Visa corporation official said Sunday, making it a daily marketing experience.

Consumers' confidence is key for continuous e-commerce in general and trading through social media, as well as supporting objectives of New Kuwait Vision 2035, which aims at consolidating Kuwait's financial and commercial competitive edge, Shank Singh, Visa Vice-President and General Manager for Kuwait and Qatar, said in an interview with KUNA.

Singh said the e-commerce law, recently approved by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MOCI), helped boost consumers' confidence because of its rules and regulations of purchasing, consumers' rights, refunds and settlement of disputes "which will thus support e-commerce growth and offers trusted environment for consumers and companies."

E-commerce should not only depend on

user-friendly providers because consumers may turn to new shopping methods just because they are faster and more convenient, added Singh. They will not continue using these new methods while feeling unsafe and vulnerable to attacks, he said.

Online payment should have a trusted infrastructure supporting e-economy growth, he noted.

Consumers, he said, expected to see banks, service providers, payment portals and technicians to be jointly responsible for boosting protection and fighting fraud.

Visa, in this regard, was supporting digital payments with encryptions, safe authentication and anti-fraud solutions to make sure consumers' information were protected and their payments were secured.

Online shopping supports objectives of New Kuwait vision 2035, said Singh, by allowing companies to reach more customers while giving service providers and small-size enterprises more opportunities to grow and compete.

Increasing dependence on e-commerce

encourages companies to speed up digital transformation, improve online payments, better use of customers' data, speeding up transactions and create growth opportunities, said Singh, while also supporting financial technology companies, delivery platforms, digital services and cross-border trade.

"Building a commercial and financial center requires payment infrastructure that is upgraded and trusted, in addition to consumers who feel confidence when using digital payments, and merchants who can easily accept payments and a market whose transactions are safe and trusted," he said.

Visa, he said, was supporting this approach by using its expertise in payments in addition to its local partnerships with financial institutions, merchants, technology companies and public sector to expand safe and less complex digital payments.

"Kuwait has a solid foundation in this area, which include high digital payment levels and advanced encrypted payment infrastructure which gives it a real competitive edge," he said.

Al-Sager: NBK reinforces role as government's trusted financing partner

National Bank of Kuwait sponsors the Second Kuwait Forum of Major State Development Projects (ENCON 5)



NBK continues supporting strategic national projects.

KUWAIT CITY, June 14: National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) is sponsoring the Second Kuwait Forum of Major State Development Projects (ENCON 5), organized by the Kuwaiti Federation of Engineering Offices and Consultant Houses in collaboration with Kuwait Municipality and the Public Authority for Housing Welfare. The forum will be held on 14-15 June at the Crowne Plaza Hotel under the theme: "Investment Opportunities in Housing and Mortgage Projects – Transparency, Delivery, and Sustainability as the Principles of a New Era." The event is held under the patronage of H.E. Eng. Abdul Latif Hamad Al-Mishari, Minister of State for Municipal Affairs and Minister of State for Housing Affairs.

The forum will bring together a broad range of participants, including representatives from government entities, financial institutions, engineering and consultancy firms, as well as real estate and investment companies, alongside a distinguished group of industry experts and specialists. Discussions will focus on the future of Kuwait's major development projects, investment opportunities within the housing and mortgage sectors, and the role of the private sector and financial institutions in supporting the country's national development agenda.

In his keynote address at the forum's opening ceremony, Mr. Isam Al-Sager, Vice Chairman and Group Chief Executive Officer of NBK, underscored the significance of the current phase Kuwait is navigating amid rapidly evolving regional and global developments, stressing the importance of concerted efforts among all stakeholders to support the country's development agenda and accelerate the implementation of strategic projects.

"I am delighted to join you today at this important forum to discuss the future of development in Kuwait and the pivotal role we all share in shaping the country's next phase of growth and long-term prosperity. As regional and global dynamics continue to evolve at an unprecedented pace, it is imperative that we approach the future with a clear vision, strategic resolve, and the agility required to navigate an increasingly complex environment," Al-Sager said.

"While we remain confident in the resilience of the Kuwaiti economy and its ability to navigate the implications of recent geopolitical developments, we look ahead with confidence to the next phase, one focused on moving beyond managing challenges toward accelerating sustainable growth and building a more diversified and resilient economy," Al-Sager added.

He further noted that economic reform will remain a key priority in the period ahead, through addressing structural challenges, enhancing the efficiency of the business environment, adopting more investment-friendly policies, and increas-

- Public-private partnership remains the cornerstone of accelerating development and building a more diversified and sustainable economy
- We look ahead with confidence to the next phase of transitioning Kuwait's economy from managing challenges to accelerating sustainable growth
- Economic reforms and increased investment spending are key drivers of national competitiveness
- Development and infrastructure projects represent a fundamental pillar for stimulating economic activity across sectors

ing capital expenditure levels. Such measures, he emphasized, will strengthen the competitiveness of the national economy and support its long-term sustainable growth trajectory.

Moreover, he noted that accelerating the implementation of development and infrastructure projects represents a fundamental pillar for stimulating economic activity across sectors, creating sustainable opportunities, and enhancing the country's competitiveness, thereby supporting Kuwait's broader development agenda. He emphasized that achieving these objectives requires a genuine partnership and effective collaboration among government entities, the private sector, and financial institutions.

"This collaboration serves as the cornerstone for overcoming challenges and capitalizing on opportunities to build a better future for our country," Al-Sager stated. He further highlighted NBK's commitment to aligning its strategic objectives with Kuwait's national development plan, reinforcing its position as the government's leading partner in financing major strategic projects, while continuing to empower the private sector and provide financing solutions that support economic growth.

Al-Sager concluded his remarks by expressing his appreciation to the organizers of the forum and reaffirming his optimism for a brighter and more prosperous future for Kuwait.

The forum's agenda features a series of panel discussions and specialized sessions addressing key issues related to the housing and mortgage sectors. Participants will explore the impact of development and mortgage initiatives on housing

policies in Kuwait, investment opportunities available to real estate developers, and the role of banks and financial institutions in supporting the mortgage ecosystem and financing housing and development projects.

The sessions will also examine the Real Estate Developer Law, the opportunities it presents for the real estate sector, and the challenges associated with its implementation. In addition, discussions will focus on modern standards for planning smart and sustainable cities and their role in enhancing the urban environment, improving quality of life, and strengthening the sustainability of future projects.

Additionally, the forum will further address the future of housing finance and mortgage lending in Kuwait, as well as the role of modern urban planning in advancing the sector. Discussions will also highlight the contribution of Kuwaiti contracting companies to the implementation of the Real Estate Developer Law, alongside the legal and regulatory requirements needed to overcome challenges and encourage greater private sector participation in the development of housing projects.

ENCON 5 aims to foster dialogue and collaboration among government entities, private sector stakeholders, financial institutions, and investment organizations, while highlighting the opportunities associated with major development projects. It seeks to contribute to attracting investment, encouraging the participation of international companies, and providing local and global private sector players with greater visibility into the State's development pipeline, enabling them to prepare for participation and offer solutions and initiatives that support efficient and effective project execution.

The forum also focuses on promoting the principles of transparency, timely delivery, and sustainability in the implementation of major development projects, recognizing their vital role in advancing economic and social development, supporting the objectives of Kuwait's long-term vision, and strengthening the country's position as an attractive destination for investment and business.

NBK continues to strengthen its position as a leading financial institution in structuring and financing landmark transactions and transformational projects across Kuwait and the region, underpinned by the strength of its balance sheet, deep sector expertise, and enduring relationships with clients and stakeholders locally and internationally. The Bank remains well positioned to capture opportunities across regional markets, leveraging its long-standing track record in leading complex financing syndications and delivering tailored funding solutions for strategic, large-scale projects spanning diverse sectors of the economy.

Precious metals rise

Gold prices in Kuwait track global volatility

KUWAIT CITY, June 14, (KUNA): Precious metal prices in Kuwait were affected by global developments, with the price of 24-karat gold reaching about KD 42.625 per gram (approximately \$138.73), while 22-karat gold recorded about KD 39 (approximately \$127).

Silver prices also rose to KD 797 per kilogram (approximately \$2,593), amid continued investor monitoring of global economic and geopolitical developments affecting precious metals markets.

Internationally, gold prices ended last week's trading at \$4,219 per ounce after a week marked by sharp volatility, influenced by geopolitical developments in the Middle East and shifting global monetary policy expectations among central banks.

According to a report issued by Dar Al-Sabaek Company in Kuwait, gold rose by about three percent in Friday's session, supported by easing concerns over escalating conflict between the United States and Iran, amid increasing indications of progress in ongoing talks between the two sides and the possibility of reaching an agreement in the coming period.

Despite this strong increase, the yellow metal recorded its second consecutive weekly loss due to continued market expectations that interest rates will remain high for a longer period, especially after U.S. data showed persistent inflationary pressures.

A 6.5 percent year-on-year rise in the Producer Price Index in May reinforced investor expectations of a possible interest rate hike before the end of the year, although these expectations have recently declined with growing prospects of a US-Iran agreement.

Markets continue to monitor developments in negotiations related to reopening the Strait of Hormuz, given its direct impact on global oil prices. Any final agreement would ease pressure on energy markets and reduce inflation concerns that have led many central banks to adopt tighter monetary policies in recent months.

The report highlighted that investors' attention this week is focused on the upcoming meeting of the US Federal Reserve, the first under the chairmanship of Kevin Warsh, along with the release of the economic projections summary and US retail sales data.

It indicated that markets are also awaiting monetary policy decisions from several major central banks, including the Bank of England, the Bank of Japan, the Swiss National Bank, and the Central Bank of Norway, in addition to a range of important economic data from the United States, China, Germany, and the United Kingdom.

The report affirmed the expectation of continued volatility in gold prices in the coming period, with investors remaining cautious pending the outcomes of US-Iran negotiations and central bank interest rate decisions.

On the technical side, the report stated that the \$4,250 per ounce level represents the first major resistance point, followed by \$4,300, while the \$4,200 level represents important support, followed by \$4,150 per ounce.

It affirmed that gold movements in the coming phase are primarily linked to global inflation trends, US Federal Reserve decisions, and geopolitical developments in the Middle East, which continue to be the most influential factor in global market trends.

Highlights role of investment in housing and infrastructure development

Markaz participates in ENCON5 with Gold Sponsorship



Markaz champions Kuwait's development vision at ENCON 5.

KUWAIT CITY, June 14: Kuwait Financial Centre "Markaz" reaffirmed its commitment to supporting Kuwait's long-term economic and urban development objectives through its participation as Gold Sponsor of the Kuwait Second Forum on State Development Projects (ENCON5), held on June 14-15, 2026 at the Crowne Plaza Hotel.

Organized by the Kuwaiti Federation of Engineering Offices and Consultant Houses under the patronage of His Excellency Eng. Abdul Latif Hamed Hamad Al-Mishari, Minister of State for Municipal Affairs and Minister of State for Housing Affairs, the forum brought together senior government officials, financial institutions, developers, engineering consultancies, and legal experts to discuss investment opportunities and policy frameworks shaping Kuwait's housing and mortgage sectors.

Held under the theme "Transparency, Achievement, and Sustainability – Principles of the New Era," ENCON5 served as a strategic platform for advancing dialogue around housing development, mortgage financing, regulatory frameworks, smart city planning, and sustainable urban communities. The forum reflects growing momentum behind Kuwait's efforts to accelerate development projects and enhance private-sector participation in delivering national priorities.

Mr. Abdullatif Al-Nusif, Deputy CEO, presented Markaz at the opening ceremony and delivered a keynote address alongside leaders from Kuwait's foremost financial and real estate institutions, emphasizing the importance of mobilizing capital and innovative financing solutions to support the country's next phase of growth.

In his address, Mr. Abdullatif Al-Nusif stated: "Kuwait is entering a pivotal phase in its development journey, driven by an ambitious vision focused on economic sustainability, modern infrastructure, and enhancing quality of life. Housing and urban development projects represent a key pillar of this vision, creating investment opportunities

that extend across multiple sectors and contribute meaningfully to economic growth. Markaz announced a strategic partnership with Touristic Enterprises Company (TEC) to jointly develop an entertainment project in Jahra, reinforcing its commitment to advancing Kuwait's economic growth. At Markaz, we believe the financial and investment sector plays a vital role in supporting these priorities through innovative investment and financing solutions that help channel capital toward strategic sectors and create long-term value for the national economy."

Markaz's participation in ENCON5 reflects the firm's broader strategy of actively engaging in initiatives that contribute to Kuwait's economic transformation and sustainable development goals. As one of the region's leading asset management and investment banking institutions for more than 50 years, Markaz continues to leverage its expertise to support investment opportunities across strategic sectors, facilitate capital formation, and encourage greater private-sector participation in projects that drive long-term economic growth and resilience.

About Kuwait Financial Centre "Markaz"

Established in 1974, Kuwait Financial Centre K.P.S.C "Markaz" is one of the leading asset management and investment banking institutions in the MENA region with total assets under management of over KD 1.45 billion (USD 4.74 billion) as of 31 March 2026. Markaz was listed on the Boursa Kuwait in 1997. Over the years, Markaz has pioneered innovation through the creation of new investment channels. These channels enjoy unique characteristics, and they have helped Markaz widen investors' horizons. Examples include Mumtaz (the first domestic mutual fund), MREF (the first real estate investment fund in Kuwait), Forsa Financial Fund (the first options market maker in the GCC since 2005), and the GCC Momentum Fund (the first passive fund of its kind in Kuwait and across GCC that follows the momentum methodology), all conceptualized, established, and managed by Markaz.

AlShamlan: KFH plays a key role in supporting economic growth and investment across the region

KFH participates in Kuwait Second Forum on State Development Projects



Khaled AlShamlan receiving the award from Minister Abdul Latif Al Mashari.



Minister Abdul Latif Al Mashari, Khaled AlShamlan, Yousef Al-Ruwaieh, and Bader Al-Salman



A group photo of Khaled AlShamlan, Minister Abdul Latif Al Mashari, and the participants in the forum.

KUWAIT CITY, June 14: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) Group Chief Executive Officer, Khaled Yousef AlShamlan attended the opening of the Kuwait Second Forum on State Development Projects (ENCON5). Under the theme "Investment Opportunities in Housing and Mortgage Projects – Transparency, Achievement, and Sustainability: Principles of the New Era", the event featured His Excellency the Minister of State for Municipal Affairs and Minister of State for Housing Affairs, Eng. Abdul Latif Hamid Al Mashari, with senior officials and industry experts.

At the forum, AlShamlan emphasized supporting dialogue on the future of the housing and real estate sector. He noted that this vital industry directly impacts citizen quality of life and drives economic development.

AlShamlan explained that Kuwait is experiencing promising development driven by an ambitious vision for economic growth, infrastructure, and sustain-

ability. He emphasized that the banking and real estate finance critically drives housing and development projects by providing innovative financing solutions that meet market needs and ensure efficient, sustainable project execution.

He explained that KFH has partnered in national development for nearly five decades by financing strategic projects and providing Islamic Sharia compliant banking solutions.

AlShamlan added that KFH strengthens its position as a leading global Islamic financial institution, drawing on deep experience and a vision aligned with economic shifts and modern development needs.

He emphasized the bank's continued support for the housing sector through integrated financing solutions tailored for retail and families, boosting real estate growth and sustainability. Additionally, he highlighted KFH's commitment to Sharia-compliant real estate products, such as construction financing

with convenient repayment options, alongside diverse offers partnered with leading local suppliers.

AlShamlan noted that in 2025, KFH participated in Middle East, North Africa and South Asia sovereign financing deals for real estate finance, trade, industry, energy and services sectors exceeding USD 3 billion, reflecting its pivotal role supporting economic growth and promoting investment.

To enhance transparency and provide accurate information, AlShamlan explained that KFH issues quarterly real estate reports. These reports offer a comprehensive, impartial analysis of the Kuwaiti market to help investors and interested parties make informed decisions.

AlShamlan concluded by thanking the organizers and participants, wishing the forum success and hoping it supports Kuwait's comprehensive development.

Al-Houti attends forum

Dar Al Muhama joins London International Disputes Week

LONDON, June 14: Global Legal Developments Are Redefining Standards of Confidence in the Business and Investment Environment

Amid increasing interconnectedness among global markets and the growing importance of legal certainty as a key factor influencing investment decisions, participation in international legal forums has assumed a significance that extends beyond professional representation to encompass the monitoring of developments that directly affect the business environment and the movement of capital. Against this backdrop, Mr. Abdulrahman Al-Houti, Attorney-at-Law, represented Dar Al Muhama at the London International Disputes Week (LIDW), one of the world's foremost legal gatherings dedicated to international commercial arbitration and dispute resolution.

This participation comes at a time when the global legal sector is undergoing rapid transformation driven by technological advancement and the expanding role of artificial intelligence in legal services, alongside challenges associated with cross-border commercial disputes. These issues have become closely linked to the investment climate and the sustainability of business operations across various markets.

The conference served as an international platform bringing together leading judges, arbitrators, legal experts, and corporate counsel from around the world to discuss the issues expected to shape the future of dispute resolution in the years ahead. Topics addressed included international commercial arbitration, the management of complex disputes, digital evidence, and the impact of economic and geopolitical developments on

international commercial relations.

During his participation in the conference proceedings, Mr. Abdulrahman Al-Houti attended a number of specialized sessions and discussions addressing the future of international commercial arbitration and cross-border dispute resolution—areas that continue to gain importance in light of the expansion of international investments and economic partnerships. Mr. Al-Houti is widely recognized for his active presence within Kuwait's legal community and his commitment to staying abreast of global legislative and regulatory developments, thereby strengthening the connection between modern legal practices and the needs of the business and investment sectors in Kuwait.

Specialists note that the significance of such events is not limited to their academic or professional dimensions; rather, they also provide valuable insight into emerging trends that increasingly influence the decisions of multinational corporations when selecting jurisdictions in which to invest or from which to conduct their commercial operations. The efficiency of dispute resolution mechanisms and the speed with which disputes are addressed have become key indicators of the maturity and attractiveness of an investment environment.

In this context, the importance of monitoring leading international experiences in arbitration and dispute resolution is becoming increasingly evident, particularly within the Gulf region, which continues to witness sustained growth in major projects and cross-border investment partnerships. This growth is accompanied by an increasing demand for sophisticated legal solutions that align with the best international practices.



Abdulrahman Al-Houti during his participation in London International Disputes Week (LIDW).

Iranians endure war fatigue and soaring prices as conflict deepens domestic woes

CAIRO, June 14, (AP): Iranians are living between confusion and exhaustion as the country and its economy are squeezed between war and multiplying crises at home.

U.S. President Donald Trump said Thursday that he called off fresh strikes on Iran as he claimed a deal to end the war was imminent. Back-and-forth strikes earlier this week pushed a shaky ceasefire to the edge of collapse, which, if it happens, would inflict more havoc on Iran's battered economy.

Strikes on steel and petrochemical industries and energy infrastructure earlier in the war have spurred a wave of business closures and job losses in Iran, where people now struggle to afford groceries in the face of triple-digit food inflation.

Along with the cratering economy, the specter of war has left many people desperate for an end to the turmoil and deeply anxious about the future. Huraz Ahmadi, a 19-year-old street vendor in the capital of Tehran, said he feared renewed fighting.

"I don't think they will reach an agreement, given the way things are going. But I hope they make a deal. An agreement is much better than war," Ahmadi said. "In wars, innocent and good people die. I personally lost a relative."

In the past year, Iranians have faced two wars - first Israel's 12-day war in 2025 against Iran followed by a joint assault with the U.S. that began on Feb. 28. Both attacks were launched in the middle of talks about Iran's nuclear program.

Fresh U.S. strikes on Monday sowed confusion in Iran's capital following growing optimism that Tehran and Washington were nearing a deal. One Tehran resident in his late 20s said the echo of explosions and air defenses in the capital triggered "maybe a half hour of panic." Long lines formed at gas stations, but people returned within hours to "living normally," he said.

"War is also becoming normal. And that is very upsetting," the resident said, speaking on the condition of anonymity out of security fears.

"Everybody is stressed out for a thousand reasons," he added. "Our lives are constantly in this political game where we can't plan anything or know what's going to happen."

A critical demand in talks for Iranian negotiators is that the U.S. deliver some kind of sanctions or economic relief, besides lifting a naval blockade that has throttled Iran's oil exports as well as imports of raw materials and other goods.

Many business owners are struggling to survive, a member of a council representing Iranian industrialists said.

"The main concern of many industrialists and entrepreneurs is the survival of their businesses and production. The concern is

Businesses struggle as war and sanctions squeeze Iran



Street musicians play music as a woman carries a dog on a sidewalk in northern Tehran, Wednesday, June 10, 2026. (AP)

about the disruption of the supply chain of raw materials, parts and machinery due to the cruel U.S. blockade," Mehdi Bostanchi said.

Tehran-based Bostanchi, who owns a company that makes ventilation systems, is part of a trade group for factory owners across Iran. Its members include textile, food and metal producers and printing firms.

Bostanchi said uncertainty over any deal to end the war is stifling the ability of businesses to plan ahead and look toward any kind of recovery.

"Society is tired of instability and does not want a wider war to break out," he added.

Iran's rial currency has also lost over half its value in the past year. Exchange rates have crashed to around 1.8 million rials to the dollar, compared with 41,600 rials 10 years ago.

The deepening economic problems have stoked unrest in Iran. In January, security forces shot thousands of anti-government protesters in the streets. Arrests of protesters and those expressing support for them has continued through the war.

Alongside fear of their own leaders, Iranians who oppose the government also fear a return to open war, said a social media influencer and therapist who lives in central Tehran and has participated in past anti-government protests.

"The war isn't anything but destruction for us. And in reality, the attacks that happened killed a number of ordinary people and destroyed a number of homes and residential buildings," she said, speaking on the condition of anonymity out of fear of retribution.

Residents contacted by The Associated

Press also expressed worries that renewed conflict would lead Iranian authorities to cut internet service again. Repeated blackouts since the January protests have crippled what was a strong digital economy and stoked job losses. A partial restoration has seen a limited uptick in connectivity.

A few hours after threatening to launch further attacks, Trump posted on social media that significant points in the negotiations "have been brought to the highest level of Iranian leadership and approved." But a spokesperson for the Iranian Foreign Ministry, Esmail Baghaei, said in a live phone call on state television that mediators were active and nothing had been finalized to end the conflict.

Iran's ability to withstand U.S.-Israeli assaults and to close the globally strategic Strait of Hormuz has also rallied the Islamic Republic's hard-liner base. Authorities have organized nightly rallies in past weeks as they try to project popular support for a tough stance in U.S. talks.

Hamid Reza Bani Ebrahimi, a 47-year-old merchant, said he opposed any agreement that would limit what he sees as Iran's right to enrich uranium and develop nuclear technology. Israel and the U.S. have repeatedly struck sites and figures linked with the country's atomic program.

"Our scientists worked so hard to acquire this technology, and then they came and martyred them," Bani Ebrahimi said.

Abdullah Hosseini, a 45-year-old university professor in Tehran, said Iranian strikes on Gulf states and Jordan this past week were part of an effort to deter further attacks.



This image released by Universal Pictures shows a scene from "Disclosure Day." (AP)

UFO debate reaches pulpits as alien questions go mainstream

In "Disclosure Day," out Friday, Steven Spielberg is once again inviting audiences to ponder the existence of extraterrestrial life - and the implications it would have for religion on Earth.

But Spielberg is hardly the only one making headlines of late about UFOs and the possibility of life on other planets.

What was once considered fringe or conspiratorial has in recent months popped up everywhere from the White House to the Catholic Church, as public fascination with unidentified anomalous phenomena - or UAPs, as the government calls them - becomes more mainstream.

The Pentagon in May made public large swaths of UFO files with very little context, leaving curious sleuths to piece together their own interpretations. The dump came just weeks after former President Barack Obama set off a media frenzy for stating unambiguously in an interview that aliens are real, though he later tempered that take.

"Statistically, the universe is so vast that the odds are good there's life out there," the former president, who made a surprise visit to the "Disclosure Day" set, posted on social media. "I saw no evidence during my presidency that extraterrestrials have made contact with us. Really!"

Some religious adherents, as well as some nonbelievers, maintain that the existence of life on other planets might undermine many faiths because it would complicate assertions that humans are unique. But others argue the opposite.

"Belief in UFOs is really one of the best things that's happened to religion in a long time," said Diana Walsh Pasulka, a religion scholar at the University of North Carolina Wilmington. "It's a blow to the secular, materialist worldview."

Even if broad interest in UAPs bolsters the case for an enchanted universe, some believers in religions such as Christianity think



This image released by Universal Pictures shows Josh O'Connor in a scene from "Disclosure Day." (AP)



Left: This image released by Universal Pictures shows a scene from "Disclosure Day." Right: This image released by Universal Pictures shows Colin Firth, center, in a scene from "Disclosure Day." (AP)



they are something to be wary of. "I don't think they're aliens. I think they're demons," Vice President JD Vance, a Catholic convert, said in a recent podcast interview.

That sentiment was echoed by Monsignor Stephen Rossetti, formerly an exorcist with the Archdiocese of Washington. He was removed last week by the archbishop, who said statements by

Rossetti "gravely undermine" Catholic teaching on demons and the devil.

"It's my personal belief that probably many, if not most, of these UFO sightings are in fact demons," Rossetti said in a May 29 video posted on his Facebook page. "Aliens, if there are aliens, don't possess people."

Christopher Baglow, who heads a science and religion initiative at

the University of Notre Dame, was surprised by the firing given that Rossetti made clear in the video he was expressing his own opinion. Baglow speculated that there may be other factors behind the decision.

"I ask forgiveness for any ways that I have not been faithful to the teachings of the Church's Magisterium," Rossetti said in a statement online.

Despite the assertions by Vance and Rossetti about demons, Baglow maintains the Catholic Church has long been open to the possibility of extraterrestrial life. "Theologians have been speculating about this for centuries and the church has never ever taught one way or the other," he said.

While meeting with astronomy students last year at the Vatican, Pope Leo XIV spoke about the

"ancient light of distant galaxies" and the "mysterious joy" provoked by the study of outer space. Some interpreted these remarks as tacit speculation about the possibility of life on other planets.

In one sense, the idea of otherworldly beings coming to Earth can be traced back millennia.

"People would call it the plurality of worlds. So even back in the time of Socrates and Aristotle, there were Greek philosophers who talked about beings on other planets and other stars," Walsh Pasulka said.

But it wasn't until after 1945 that modern conceptions of UFOs began to develop, according to Jeffrey Kripal, a historian of religions at Rice University. "The flying saucer and the alien and the UFO - it's definitely a Cold War invasion narrative," he said.

That narrative explains why UAPs are often perceived as hostile to humans. But it's also evolved over time and led to the formation of some religions - like Scientology, which counts many a Hollywood celebrity among its adherents - that see extraterrestrials as good or even part of a divine plan.

The International Raëlian Movement, also known as Raëlianism, is a UFO religion that was founded in France in the 1970s. It is still practiced today, with its strongest followings in parts of Asia, Africa and Canada, according to Susan Palmer, a sociologist who studies new religious movements at Concordia University in Montreal.

Kripal, who heads Rice's archival collection of reported paranormal experiences called the Center for the Impossible, perceives an increasing openness to these kinds of conversations about the existence of UFOs - and the possibility that they are not hostile.

"People are reporting these experiences or these encounters with entities and they're religious through and through," he said. "My colleagues in the academy, they're really starting to listen in a different way." (AP)

DOJ signs off on deal as global review continues

Major win for Paramount as US clears Warner takeover

LOS ANGELES, June 14, (AP): An investigation by the U.S. Justice Department into Paramount Skydance's proposed acquisition of Warner Bros. Discovery has determined that the mammoth Hollywood media merger is not likely to harm competition in the industry or be harmful for consumers.

The agency said Friday that it closed its probe into the deal, with regulators at its antitrust division concluding that the impact of the merger "will be to increase competition across the media and entertainment ecosystem, with benefits for American consumers and workers."

David Ellison's Paramount Skydance reached a deal to acquire Warner Bros. Discovery in late February. Paramount's victory came after months of negotiations and a rival bid by Netflix that ultimately fell short. Paramount was bought by Skydance last year.

The companies contend that merging will be good for growth in the industry and give consumers access to more content, particularly if the HBO Max and Para-

mount+ libraries are combined. But critics have decried what further consolidation could mean in an industry already controlled by just a few major players.

Among the potential market impacts from the merger, regulators weighed whether the deal would hurt competition in video streaming. They concluded that the merger would likely increase competition by giving customers a more "robust competitive alternative" to larger video streaming alternatives.

The agency also determined that YouTube, TikTok and other social media portals that also offer video streaming content "do not appear to be competitive substitutes here under well-established antitrust legal precedents, although they compete broadly for consumer attention."

Regulators also concluded that the merger is not likely to harm competition for so-called linear television, citing a strong competition for live programming.

On the question of competition in Hollywood, regulators found that the combination of two major film

studio operators is not likely to harm competition in studio development, production or distribution of films for theatrical release.

"Instead, evidence shows extensive competition within the industry, which has generated greater output and diversity of film offerings, and is likely to continue unabated," regulators concluded.

Thousands of actors, directors, writers and other industry professionals have voiced "unequivocal opposition" to the Paramount deal, arguing that further consolidation will lead to job losses and fewer choices for filmmakers and moviegoers. Many lawmakers have similarly sounded the alarm.

Ellison, chief executive of Paramount Skydance, has pledged to keep Paramount and Warner Bros. as stand-alone movie studio operations, and vowed to release a combined 30 movies a year in theaters. Paramount has acknowledged the merger will also lead to significant cuts due to duplication.

While the Trump administration's Justice Depart-

ment has now confirmed it won't be challenging Paramount's \$81 billion purchase of Warner, the mega merger is still being reviewed by other regulators both in the U.S. and abroad.

California Attorney General Rob Bonta has been particularly vocal about the transaction, and he said his state is investigating it.

Beyond the U.S., European regulators are also looking into the deal. The European Commission has listed July 7 as a tentative deadline for its review. And the U.K.'s Competition and Markets Authority is aiming to make an initial decision about its probe by early August.

Paramount and Warner previously said that they hoped to close their deal sometime in the third quarter of this year. And that clock is ticking. Paramount pledged to give shareholders some compensation if the acquisition doesn't close by Sept. 30 - in the form of a 25-cent per share "ticking fee" for every quarter past that date. It has also agreed to a regulatory termination fee of \$7 billion.

Music

Music, memory and football collide in viral rallying cry

Dubioza Kolektiv's 'USA' reborn as Bosnia's surprising World Cup anthem

SARAJEVO, Bosnia-Herzegovina, June 14, (AP): The opening lyrics couldn't be plainer: "I am from Bosnia; take me to America." But by rewriting its classic "USA," the Bosnian band Dubioza Kolektiv has transformed a song about disillusionment with the American Dream into a viral anthem powering Bosnia-Herzegovina's own World Cup dreams.

On the eve of Friday's match between Bosnia and Canada, members of the genre-bending rock group met The Associated Press in the Sarajevo neighborhood where they filmed the new music video for the accordion-heavy earworm, now titled "I Am From Bosnia, Take Me to America." In less than three weeks, the video celebrating soccer's working-class roots has notched nearly 2 million views on YouTube - on top of the 26 million views the original "USA," released in 2011, has amassed over the years.

"It's an interesting story how this song got its second and third and fourth incarnation in these 15 years," muses



Brano Jakubovic, a member of Bosnian band Dubioza Kolektiv, speaks during an interview for The Associated Press at a soccer playground where the video for the song 'I Am From Bosnia, Take Me to America' was filmed, in Sarajevo, Bosnia, Thursday, June 11, 2026. (AP)

Vedran Mujagić, bassist for the band that has woven political and social causes into its identity. "It evolved from this satirical take on immigration and (the) American Dream and it was translated into (an) American football dream for the entire nation."

Bosnia-Herzegovina is making only its second appearance at a World Cup, a goal that once seemed improbable as more traditional soccer powers stood in the way of qualification. At the end of April, though, Bosnia's late goal against Wales propelled the team to a victorious penalty shootout, a feat it would replicate days later against Italy. The band members were surprised when fans unfurled a banner emblazoned with their lyrics, singing them as a rallying cry.

"First, it was working as a joke, but what I like the most is the supporters kind of loaded completely new meaning to the old song, and this is the best thing for the band or for the song: when people take over and load new meaning and then it becomes theirs," keyboardist Brano Jakubović says. "It's not ours anymore."

The original "USA" is as up-tempo and catchy - it's hard not to wander around muttering, "I can no longer wait, take me to United States / Take me to Golden Gate. I will assimilate" - but its protagonist's eagerness to flee slides quickly to disenchantment with life outside the Balkans.

The band decided to deliver an updated version of what Jakubović describes as a "typical immigrant song," writing new lyrics befitting a soccer anthem. While "USA" is in English, this version is mostly in Bosnian - "so people will understand," he says - and mostly about the sport. The language switch has done nothing to lessen its global appeal, as a quick perusal of the YouTube comments suggests, though there are some jokes Jakubović acknowledges would be inscrutable outside Bosnia. (See: burek without cheese.)

Jakubović's favorite new line is a chance to excise something that has haunted the country since the 2014 World Cup: "And that goal against Nigeria, that was never offside."

Maritime Silk Road wins Silver Award

HAIKOU, China, June 14, (PRNewswire): A news report from chinadaily.com.cn

The Chinese documentary Silk Road Sunken Treasures won the Silver Award in the General Documentary (Short Form) category for television at the 47th Telly Awards - one of the longest-running and most prestigious honors in international film and video production. It stood out from more than 13,000 entries submitted from over 50 countries.

The documentary - produced by CGTN under China Media Group - used compelling deep-sea footage and rigorous academic interpretations to bring the story of a milestone Chinese deep-sea archaeology discovery to a global audience.

The film presents the discovery and investigation of shipwreck sites on the northwestern slope of the South China Sea. The judges said it makes these findings accessible and emotionally resonant for viewers worldwide and marks a significant step in telling just what deep-sea archaeology is all about beyond the specialist research community.

From 2023 to 2024 - under the coordination of the National Cultural Heritage Administration - archaeological teams conducted systematic and groundbreaking surveys of two shipwreck sites located at a depth of about 1,500 meters southeast of Sanya.

The project involved 70 days of offshore operations and 63 dives by the crewed submersible Shenhai Yongshi - successfully recovering 928 cultural relics.

Archaeological research confirmed that both vessels were ancient trading ships dating to the Hongzhi and Zhengde periods of the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644).

The total estimated number of artifacts at the sites exceeds 100,000 pieces - making it one of the most significant underwater archaeological discoveries in the world in recent years and providing vivid evidence of the commercial vitality of the ancient Maritime Silk Road.

A spokesperson for the Hainan Provincial Institute of Cultural Relics and Archaeology said the shipwreck sites on the northwestern slope of the South China Sea represented a marine cultural heritage site of both local and global significance, bearing witness to Hainan's deep-rooted maritime civilization.

Obituaries

Ronnie Schell passes away after decades in television, film, and voice acting

British art legend David Hockney dies aged 88

LONDON, June 14, (AP): David Hockney, a treasured British artist whose paintings of shimmering pools and colorful iPad drawings became icons of contemporary art, has died, his publicist said Friday. He was 88.

Over a seven-decade career, Hockney explored and reimagined classical portraiture, landscape painting and pop art, working in painting, collage, photography and digital drawing.

Hockney was born in the north of England but lived much of his life in Southern California, making its sun-drenched suburban views a major motif.

Later in life he returned to Europe, finding renewed inspiration in the wooded hills of his native county of Yorkshire and the fields and trees of France's Normandy region. One of the most popular and critically lauded British artists of his generation, his works sold for record prices at auction.

Historian Simon Schama said it's no mystery why the appeal of his work endures.

"His work is admired - loved is not too strong a word - by the millions who, worldwide, flock to see it because it presupposes an expectation of pleasure," Schama wrote in an essay accompanying a 2025 Hockney exhibition in Paris.

Hockney's publicist, Erica Bolton, said he died at his home in London on Thursday, less than a month short of his 89th birthday. She did not give a cause of death.

He is survived by his longtime partner, Jean-Pierre Gonçalves de Lima; his great-nephew and studio assistant, Richard Hockney; his brothers Philip and John; and numerous nieces, nephews, great-nieces and great-nephews.

With his trademark round glasses and bleached-blond hair, Hockney was a well-known figure in the swinging British and American art scenes of the 1960s, even before he reached the age of 30. His paintings were just as distinctive, many of them creating a dreamlike world of patterned light bouncing off water and windows, and human forms rendered in flattened, simplified shapes in matte acrylic paint.

"I'm excited every day," he told the Los Angeles Times in 1979. "London has lots of dreary parts, but I never find anything dreary in Los Angeles."

Hockney was born July 9, 1937, in Bradford, a large industrial city whose chief export was woolen textiles. He spent his first two decades there before going to London's Royal College of Art. He made an impact even before his graduation, and art dealer John Kasmin took him into his stable of artists in 1961.

His artistic influences ranged widely, including Renaissance portraits, 18th-century English artist



In this file photo, British artist David Hockney sits in front of The Queen's Window, a new stained glass window at Westminster Abbey, London, designed by David Hockney and revealed for the first time. (AP)

William Hogarth's satirical drawings, 19th-century English painter J.M.W. Turner's landscapes, Pablo Picasso's experiments in Cubism and 20th-century American pop art.

He shared with other pop artists an interest in the polished surface of modern life. And, like Andy Warhol with his Brillo boxes and Campbell's soup cans, Hockney occasionally incorporated advertising labels, such as a British Typhoo Tea box used in his 1961 "Tea Painting in an Illusionistic Style."

He told The New York Times in 1964 that he enjoyed the burgeoning pop art scene in New York but wasn't sure he was part of it.

"I'm just an ordinary artist," he said. "I do admire American pop - in fact it seems that everything fresh-looking and vital in England these days has been coming from the U.S."

Nonetheless, he said in 1995 that he still considered himself "very much an artist in the English tradition."

Hockney, who was out as a gay man long before it was common, explored erotic themes, giving youthful male bodies the same tender scrutiny that artists had been giving the female nude for centuries.

Early works like "We Two Boys Together Clinging" and "Two Men in a Shower" celebrated gay rela-

tionships when homosexuality was still illegal in Britain.

Early in his career, two of his drawings were bought for the Museum of Modern Art in New York.

"The moment I first sold pictures to earn a living, I felt rich. I've been rich ever since," he told The Associated Press in 1995. "I didn't have much money, but I did what I wanted. ... You are a rich man if you do the things you want to do."

In 2018, his 1972 painting "Portrait of an Artist (Pool with Two Figures)" sold at a Christie's auction for \$90.3 million, at the time a record for a living artist.

While many of his best-known paintings had American scenes, he



In this file photo, Britain's King Charles III talks with artist David Hockney during a luncheon for Members of the Order of Merit at Buckingham Palace in London, Thursday, Nov. 24, 2022. (AP)

also tackled British subjects. He immortalized his parents in several portraits and his friends Ossie Clark and Celia Birtwell in "Mr. and Mrs. Clark and Percy," a 1971 portrait voted one of Britain's greatest paintings in a 2005 BBC poll.

Like many traditional artists, he considering drawing a fundamental skill and lamented that it wasn't taught as rigorously as it used to be.

"Human beings are the most interesting things we see, so they're the hardest to draw," he said in a 1996 AP interview.

Hockney also embraced other media, including printmaking, photo collage and video. He contributed costume and set designs for the theater and opera, including a celebrated production of "Tristan und Isolde" first staged in 1987 at the Los Angeles Opera.

When he took up photography, he fused genres, assembling individual photos into elaborate collages like "Pearlblossom Highway, 11-18th April, 1986," built up of individual views of a desert highway intersection.

Ronnie Schell, who played the best friend to the title character on the 1960s sitcom "Gomer Pyle, U.S.M.C." and whose gradual as-

pendancy in show business earned him the title of "America's Slowest Rising Comedian," died Friday. He was 94.

Schell died of natural causes at Ronald Reagan UCLA Medical Center. He had been hospitalized after a recent fall, according to publicist Harlan Boll, who spoke to Schell's son Gregory.

Schell played Marine Pvt. Duke Slater opposite star Jim Nabors for three seasons on the popular CBS show.

He left during the fourth season to star as a DJ in his own sitcom, "Good Morning, World." But it flopped after 26 episodes, and Schell returned to "Gomer Pyle" for its fifth and final season. By then, his character was promoted to corporal.

Schell was tagged with the "slowest rising" label by San Francisco radio personality Don Sherwood.

"It was Sherwood who coined the phrase because everybody I worked with moved on ahead," Schell told The Mercury News in 2011, citing Phyllis Diller and the Smothers Brothers as newcomers who later hit it big.

Schell's co-star on "Good Morning, World" was Goldie Hawn, who became a regular on "Rowan & Martin's Laugh-In" and won a supporting actress Oscar in 1970.

Medical team combines healthcare & culture in a community event

Dragon Boat Festival brings China's traditions to Namibian children

WINDHOEK, June 14, (Xinhua): Laughter and curiosity filled the grounds of the SOS Children's Villages in Windhoek, capital of Namibia, on Saturday as children gathered around tables covered with bamboo leaves, sticky rice, and colorful threads, embarking on a cultural journey that carried them thousands of kilometers away to China.

For many of the children, it was their first encounter with the ingredients and traditions of China's Dragon Boat Festival. Under the guidance, small hands carefully folded bamboo leaves around sticky rice to make zongzi, the festival's signature delicacy. Others threaded colorful bracelets around their wrists or examined fragrant sachets, eager to learn the stories and blessings embedded in these centuries-old customs.

The event, themed "Sharing the Warmth of the Dragon Boat Festival, Promoting Health and Well-being," was organized by the China Henan International Cooperation

Group (CHICO) together with the 17th batch of the Chinese medical team in Namibia. It combined cultural exchange with community outreach, offering children a glimpse into Chinese traditions and access to free healthcare services.

Home to orphaned and vulnerable children, the SOS Children's Villages provides family-like care, education, and support. On this occasion, it became a vibrant venue for cultural exchange, where Chinese festive traditions met gestures of care and friendship.

The Dragon Boat Festival, one of China's most celebrated traditional holidays, commemorates the ancient patriotic poet Qu Yuan. The festival is marked by customs such as eating zongzi, wearing protective sachets and five-colored bracelets, and watching dragon boat races.

As this year marks the China-Africa Year of People-to-People Exchanges, organizers also introduced the symbolism behind these



Children interact with staff members of the China Henan International Cooperation Group (CHICO) and the 17th batch of the Chinese medical team in Namibia during a Dragon Boat Festival cultural event at the SOS Children's Villages in Windhoek, Namibia, June 13, 2026. (Xinhua)

traditions. Fragrant sachets are believed to ward off illness, while five-colored bracelets carry wishes for peace, health, and happi-

ness. For Ben Gariseb, one of the children from the global child-focused organization, the experience was both eye-opening and memorable.

"It is my first time participating in an activity related to Chinese culture. I made zongzi, had my health checked, and witnessed acupuncture being administered for the first time. I wish to learn more about Chinese culture," Gariseb said.

The cultural activities were complemented by practical support, with organizers donating food and other essential supplies to help improve the children's daily lives and well-being.

Julietta Ferreira, national director of SOS Children's Villages Namibia, said the Chinese community in Namibia has supported the organization for many years, helping it care for orphaned and vulnerable children. "Hosting the Dragon Boat Festival so-

lifies the impact already made by Chinese companies and their support for the people of Namibia. It builds a bridge for grassroots interaction between China and Namibia. We carry China's contribution within us," she said.

Cui Yunke, managing director of CHICO in Namibia, said the event aimed to introduce the origins, traditions, and meaning of the festival while extending care to children at the organization.

"A cultural journey to China opens a window not only to China's history but also fosters a deeper understanding between our two peoples," said Cui.

Meanwhile, members of the Chinese medical team provided free health examinations and traditional Chinese medical services, including acupuncture consultations. They also held health education sessions featuring demonstrations on proper handwashing, personal hygiene, and disease prevention.

UK gov't sets target of 87% cut in carbon emissions by 2042

Climate change makes once-rare coastal floods more likely, says study

WASHINGTON, June 14, (AP) — Extreme floods that once swamped coastal communities only rarely are becoming far more common as climate change caused by humans pushes sea levels higher, according to new research published. Experts say the findings are crucial for making plans about floods and coastal infrastructure as the planet warms.

These big coastal floods happen when high tides and storm surges - the amount above normal tide level - combine with seas that are already rising. Those pile on top of natural climate patterns and other human influence.

Climate change has strengthened storms like Hurricane Ian, which caused significant flooding in 2022, scientists say. Flooding threatens hundreds of millions of people each year in low-lying coastal areas across the globe. It also causes billions of dollars in damage and can be deadly.

Floods that historically had a 1% chance of striking a coastline in a year are now about 12 times more likely, on average, according to a new study published in the journal Nature Climate Change. Those events have become about four times more likely due to human-driven climate change, the research shows.

Researchers looked at how often

extreme sea level events - which cause coastal flooding - happen by considering long-term records from tide gauges at more than 100 sites, as well as using climate modeling. The study looked at the increase from 1900 to 2005. It was limited through 2005 because after that, there weren't enough models that could point to instances of human-driven climate change. The researchers said their findings likely understate today's risk, because human contributions to changes in coastal extremes have only increased since then.

Researchers looked at which changes were caused by human activity, natural forces or shifts in the landscape. Although sea level changes earlier in the 20th century could mostly be chalked up to natural forces, the scientists found that since the 1960s, human-caused warming was the main reason sea levels are going up.

A separate study published in the journal Science Advances on Wednesday also supports the idea that extreme ocean heights come from climate change, specifically around 58% of the days with big floods from 2000 to 2018. Climate change has also, on average, nearly tripled the number of days where the sea tops extreme flood levels since



People wade through a recreational vehicle park flooded by a king tide on Jan 3, 2026, near Corte Madera in Marin County, Calif. (AP)

the 1970s, according to that study.

"Essentially every coastal flood today has human fingerprints on it through climate change," said Ben Strauss, chief scientist at Climate Central and a co-author of the Science Advances study. "Without the extra bit of sea level rise caused by global heating, most of these events would not have reached the status of flood."

The research in Nature Climate Change didn't fully examine individual human factors, said Sönke Dangendorf, the lead author, but he noted greenhouse gases - the result of burning fossil fuels such as oil, gas and coal - are the most significant.

"Since the 1970s, it's by far the dominating factor, and this is of course not good news," said Dan-

gendorf, also an associate professor at Tulane University. He said the threat is growing, and communities need to do more to prepare.

Jeff Williams, a retired United States Geological Survey oceanographer who wasn't part of either study, said the research shows that planners need to take the growing threats into account. They should also think about how much money they'll need to increase coastal protection, he said, and figure out who pays for it.

The current protections for New Orleans, for instance, "will likely not be adequate beyond the next couple decades," Williams said. Nations across the globe are increasingly using renewable energies like solar and wind. Last year, clean power generation exceeded overall global electricity demand growth, and the share of renewables hit more than one-third of the world's electricity mix for the first time.

Even in the United States, where the Trump administration has boosted fossil fuels, solar is growing as coal power declines. As such, scientists have recently said the world is no longer on track for the worst case scenario for warming - but it's also not on track to the best case, either.

"The impacts, even of a relatively little sea level rise, can be pretty im-

pectful on our coasts," Dangendorf, the Tulane author, said.

"There is a silver lining because we have control about how much we emit, right?" he said. "So we can stop that development, at least to some degree."

Also:

LONDON: The British government said Tuesday that it's sticking to its net-zero goal, despite pressure on energy supplies from global conflicts, and will reduce the United Kingdom's planet-warming greenhouse gas emissions by 87% of 1990 levels in the next decade and a half.

The UK has a legally binding target, set in 2008, of achieving net zero carbon emissions by 2050. By law, the government must legislate for emissions caps for future five-yearly budgets on a strict timetable.

Energy Secretary **Ed Miliband** said that the government will accept the advice of its independent Climate Change Committee of an 87% target for the next budget, covering the years 2038 to 2042.

The government argues that moving to clean energy will reduce the country's exposure to fuel-price shocks like those seen from the **Russia-Ukraine** war and the conflict in the **Middle East**.



Workers at a Medicaid call center in Jefferson City, Mo., field questions and review information regarding eligibility determinations on Aug 16, 2023. (AP)

Too sick to work, but can they prove it? New Medicaid rule worries patients

NEW YORK, June 14, (AP) — On hot afternoons, DeAnna Brandon's three dogs zag around while she splashes in a backyard kiddie pool with her grandkids. These are the moments the 48-year-old blood cancer survivor cherishes - and wonders if she will get to have in the years to come.

Brandon, who lives in Rockwell, North Carolina, is worried that new Medicaid work requirements starting next year could jeopardize her health coverage. She had expected to qualify for a medical frailty exemption, but new guidance introduced by President Donald Trump's administration last week has thrown that into question.

The interim final rule released by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services means being sick with extreme exhaustion and memory challenges related to her treatments may not be enough for Brandon to evade the new work requirements. She will have to attest and later prove that those symptoms "significantly impair" her ability to fulfill the mandates.

If the government doesn't accept her case, she could lose her coverage and the twice-monthly maintenance chemotherapy that keeps her multiple myeloma in remission. Working is "outside of the realm of possibility for me," she said in an interview.

"I was always a push-through-it person - you know, 'Oh, you're tired. Push through,'" Brandon said. "It's hard to explain to people you can't push through it."

Health analysts have sounded the alarm about the Republican Trump administration's newest guidance, which differs from what states had been expecting. Experts said it will put more Americans at risk of losing health insurance and force states to scramble in their already harried efforts to implement the changes on time.

"This will mean more paperwork for Medicaid patients - specifically for the sickest Medicaid patients," said Adrianna McIntyre, a professor at Harvard University's school of public health. That, she said, "is going to push in the direction of more

people needlessly losing coverage."

The new Medicaid restrictions, which Democrats have criticized, were part of Trump's big tax and policy law in 2025. The change affects those covered through an expansion in most states that gave more lower-income people access to the government's safety net healthcare program.

Expansion enrollees age 19 to 64 will have to show that they work or do community service at least 80 hours a month or are in school at least half the time. There are exceptions for those considered medically frail or in addiction treatment programs, among others.

Last week's announcement from CMS caught states off guard with a new definition of medical frailty. The law had said medically frail people include those who have substance use disorders, disabilities or serious medical conditions. But the CMS rule went further, saying someone's condition must "significantly impair" their ability to work, volunteer or attend school at the rates required in the law for them to be granted an exemption.

Plastic bags don't go in recycling bin, what should you do instead?

NEW YORK, June 14, (AP) — Soft, stretchy plastics can make up grocery bags, bubble wrap and more. They're impossible to avoid and harder still to properly dispose of.

If thrown in the trash, they can take up to hundreds of years to degrade in landfills and release harmful microplastics into the environment. Over 3 million tons (2.7 metric tons) of plastic bags, sacks and wraps in the United States went to landfills in 2018, according to the Environmental Protection Agency.

Grocery bags dumped in curbside recycling bins, on the other hand, can create problems for recycling.

"Once they get shredded or even before, a lot of times they just clog recycling equipment," said Delaware-based chemical engineering expert and science communicator Erha Andini.

Learning how to manage such plastics is worthwhile, as there likely won't be a slowdown in production anytime soon: negotiations for a global plastic treaty have stalled in recent years, with the U.S. and other oil-producing countries resisting any limits on the production of plastics, which are made predominantly from oil.

Disposing of these flexible products, known as plastic films, can differ based on which ones you have and where you're located.

While it's difficult to live a plastic-free life, there are simple ways to get rid of the most common culprits, as well as other ways you can make a difference.

"It's a problem of volume," said Gary Dusek, founder of Precious Plastic NYC. "So literally the tiniest thing definitely moves the needle."

Here are some tips: There are many different plastics, from harder kinds like water bottles and takeout containers to softer plastic films. Experts say the best way to describe plastic films is with examples: think bread bags, plastic cereal bags and overwrap for bulk items like toilet paper.

To identify a plastic film, you can also look for the classic three-arrow logo with a number inside it. That logo identifies what kind of plastic an object is made of - not whether it's recyclable in a curbside bin.

Many plastic films are labeled with the numbers two or four, meaning they are made of either high or low-density polyethylene. These can be dropped off for recycling at some



Plastic bags with groceries sit in a cart on May 18, in Cincinnati. (AP)

designated local grocery or convenience stores.

Items without these numbers may be more complex and made with multiple kinds of plastic layered together. For example, the plastic wrap that keeps meat fresh at the grocery store, Andini said, can be made of up to five or more film layers, depending on the packaging design.

Putting such films in general recycling bins with the hope they'll end up in the right place - a concept known as wishcycling - can make it harder to process other plastics, so it's worth considering other options.

Instead of stashing plastic films with household recycling like cardboard or cans, leave them in the specific drop-off bin at a grocery or convenience store. Once dropped off, the bags are given to recyclers who reprocess them into materials for new things like furniture.

The company Trex makes outdoor decking out of recycled plastic films and has a locator on its website to find drop off points by zip code, said Stephanie Hicks, the organization's materials and recycling manager.

Grocery bags and soft plastics labeled with the numbers two and four are generally accepted at these bins. To figure out what other kinds of plastic you can bring, look up recycling regulations for the specific store and your area.

Before dropping something off, make sure it's not covered in food residue or too degraded. Such plas-

tics aren't good candidates for recycling and should go in the trash. Don't forget to remove stray items like receipts from plastic bags.

Some grocers have eliminated in-store drop-off programs over concern that the stretchy plastics end up in landfills instead of getting recycled. If that's a concern, other organizations in your area might also accept plastic donations.

NOVA Creative Reuse Center in Virginia repurposes donated bubble wrap for artwork. Precious Plastic NYC melts plastics to make clipboards and clothes hangers and accepts donations by appointment. And online tutorials offer at-home inspiration, like making plastic yarn out of old grocery bags to crochet new totes.

"All we're really trying to do is take this stuff out of the environment, and put it into something where we know what it is," said Dusek, with Precious Plastic NYC.

If it's tough to drop plastic films off for recycling, consider reducing your reliance on them. Opt for reusable grocery and product bags at the store and avoid plastic packaging where possible.

Plastic wrap is an important component of food safety, as it keeps certain products like cucumbers fresh for longer, said plastics engineering expert Meg Sobkowicz with the University of Massachusetts Lowell. But it's still possible to make small swaps, like grabbing individual apples from a grocery stand instead of selecting wrapped bunches.

FDA's e-cigarette authorization: Fruity vapes not significantly better than tobacco ones

WASHINGTON, June 14, (AP) — Fruit-flavored e-cigarettes recently authorized by the Food and Drug Administration were not significantly better at helping smokers quit than tobacco-flavored e-cigarettes, according to a new memo that's likely to stir more questions about the agency's decision.

The FDA last month gave its first OK to fruit-flavored vapes - essentially endorsing them as a less-harmful alternative to traditional cigarettes. The decision came despite the agency's longstanding position that such flavors appeal to children and must show extra health benefits to warrant approval for adults.

Health groups and Washington lawmakers quickly condemned the decision and have called for an explanation.

A six-page FDA memo released this week provides more details about the agency's rationale. In it, FDA regulators appear to sidestep previous statements about the risks of sweet vaping flavors while acknowledging shortcomings in the data submitted by vape manufacturer Glas Inc.

To meet federal standards, companies must show that their products benefit public health. In practice, that means demonstrating that their vapes help adult smokers switch or quit cigarettes, while not attracting underage use by teens.

Smokers who tried Glas vapes were much more likely to completely switch from cigarettes over the



Disposable flavored electronic cigarette devices are displayed for sale at a store in Pinecrest, Fla., June 26, 2023. (AP)

course of a three-month study, according to the memo.

But the data did not show "statistically significant differences" between adults using the company's mango and blueberry flavors and those using a tobacco-flavored e-cigarette.

That means the new vapes failed to meet the same bar as a handful of other flavored products previously sanctioned by the FDA, including menthol-flavored vapes from Juul and NJOY. Those companies showed that adults who used menthol were significantly more likely to cut down or quit cigarettes compared with those vaping tobacco flavors.

Elsewhere, FDA regulators explained that the Glas flavored vapes "did not have to demonstrate added adult benefit," because young people were unlikely to use them. Glas requires users to unlock each e-cigarette with an age-verifying cellphone app.

The agency's authorization also runs counter to recent FDA guidelines advising companies that fruit and dessert flavors would have to meet "a high evidentiary burden" for adult use, given their risks to children. Tobacco-flavored products are not popular with teens and generally face lower regulatory hurdles at the FDA.



The Food and Drug Administration seal is seen at the Hubert Humphrey Building Auditorium on April 22, 2025. (AP)

Nara Organics recalls baby formula sold at Target

SAN FRANCISCO, June 14, (AP) — Nara Organics recalled its organic baby formula sold nationwide in Target stores and online Saturday after a multistate outbreak of infant botulism, federal authorities said.

Three babies between 2 and 5 months became ill in April and May in California, Pennsylvania and Washington after consuming Nara Organics Whole Milk Organic Powdered infant formula, which is also sold on Nara.com, the US Food and Drug Administration said.

They were hospitalized and treated with the FDA-approved treatment for infant botulism, the agency said.

Infant botulism is a rare but serious illness that occurs in babies under age 1, whose gut microbiomes are immature. It is caused when infants consume bacteria with spores that produce a toxin in the gut.

Symptoms include constipation, poor feeding, drooping eyelids, weak muscle tone, difficulty swallowing and breathing problems, among others.

As part of its commitment to support the youth initiatives and sports in Kuwait

stc becomes a platinum sponsor of the third season of 'The Thirty Challenge' sports trivia competition

KUWAIT CITY, June 14: Kuwait Telecommunications Company – stc, a world-class digital leader providing innovative services and platforms to customers, enabling the digital transformation in Kuwait, announced its platinum sponsorship of the third season of "The Thirty Challenge" sports talk show, a highly popular sports and football trivia competition created by Kuwaiti content creator Musaed Al Fawzan. Through this sponsorship, stc continues to support initiatives that bring people together around shared interests and create engaging experiences for audiences across digital platforms as part of its comprehensive corporate social responsibility (CSR) framework.

"The Thirty Challenge" trivia

competition has grown into one of the region's most recognized YouTube-based competitions, attracting a wide audience of sports enthusiasts and football fans across Kuwait and the region. The competition tests participants' football knowledge through a series of fast-paced rounds and challenges that require contestants to answer questions, recall statistics, and demonstrate their understanding of the sport within a 30-second timeframe. Over the years, the challenge has evolved into a large-scale tournament that continues to attract significant engagement through its content and audience participation.

As a platinum sponsor, stc will maintain a strong presence throughout the third season of the competi-



Sponsorship signing ceremony at company headquarters.

tion, extending all the way to the grand finale. The sponsorship reflects the Company's dedication to engaging with audiences through platforms and experiences that align with their interests while showcasing its latest products, services, and digital solutions.

During the press conference held at the company's headquarters on the sidelines of the announcement of sponsorship of the "Thirty Challenge" program, stc emphasized that supporting initiatives that encourage participation and audience engagement remains an important part of its broader approach to community outreach. The Company continues to seek opportunities to engage with different segments of society through meaningful experiences that

reflect their interests and contribute to building stronger connections with the communities it serves.

stc further highlighted that digital content continues to play an increasingly important role in shaping how people connect, interact, and share experiences. Through partnerships with local creators and widely followed initiatives, the Company aims to contribute to a vibrant digital landscape while supporting platforms that provide engaging and entertaining content for audiences across the region. This sponsorship, as well as others, align with the objectives and themes defined under the Company's annual CSR and Sustainability Program agendas, with a specific focus on supporting the youth and the sports community in Kuwait.

Kuwait U-19 handball team to face five European tests

By Khaled Al-Enezi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 14: Kuwait's national youth handball team is continuing its preparations in Slovenia and Croatia with a two-week training camp as part of its build-up to the Asian U-19 Championship, set to take place in China from July 15 to 27. The tournament also serves as a qualifier for the 2027 World Championship in North Macedonia, with the top four teams earning qualification.

The delegation includes 24 players alongside the administrative and technical staff, while four players were unable to join due to their commitments with high school examinations.

Faisal Siwan, Director of National Teams at the Kuwait Handball Federation, confirmed that the "Blue" youth team will play five friendly matches during the European camp against Croatia, Slovenia, Montenegro, and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The fixtures form part of a structured preparation plan designed by the technical and ad-

ministrative staff in coordination with the federation's board to ensure optimal readiness ahead of the Asian tournament.

Siwan noted that the current preparation period is relatively short, lasting just 16 days outside domestic training, adding that recent interruptions in sporting activity in Kuwait have had an impact on overall team readiness.

He emphasized that the players carry full responsibility and are determined to represent Kuwait in the best possible way, highlighting the need for maximum effort to compete at a high level in the continental championship.

Despite the challenges, he expressed confidence in the squad's ability and said the team aims to secure a spot at the World Championship.

The draw for the Asian Championship placed Kuwait in Group B alongside Iran, India, Japan, Qatar, South Korea, and the UAE. Kuwait will open its campaign against Iran on July 15, followed by matches against India, Japan, South Korea, and Qatar, before concluding the group stage against the UAE.



Kuwait's youth handball team jogs during a training session.

Tactician replaces Thorup

Al Ahly appoints Hussein as head coach on two-year deal

CAIRO, June 14: Egyptian sports giant Al Ahly has officially appointed Moroccan coach Hussein Amouta as the new head coach of the first team on a two-year contract, replacing Danish manager Jes Thorup, who left by mutual consent following a run of poor results.

The agreement was finalized after intensive negotiations conducted by an Al Ahly delegation that traveled to Rabat, led by club treasurer Khaled Mortagy.



Moroccan coach Hussein Amouta instructs players during a match.

All contractual, legal, and financial details were reviewed and signed, formally completing the club's search for a new leader for the "Red Devils."

Amouta secured full control over the composition of his technical staff as part of the deal, which will include four foreign assistants: an assistant coach, fitness trainer, performance analyst, and goalkeeping coach. The club also plans to add a local staff member from within its former players or experienced figures to support his integration.

The Moroccan coach is expected to arrive in Cairo in the coming days to begin preparations, including logistical arrangements for pre-season training, as well as reviewing squad changes, including potential departures and new summer signings.

Al Ahly's decision to turn to Amouta comes amid ongoing financial pressure linked to previous coaching changes, with the club still feeling the impact of costly contractual terminations and compensation clauses from earlier managerial appointments.

Knicks end 53-year wait, win NBA championship

Brunson earns MVP honors

SAN ANTONIO, June 14, (AP): Knowing New York had waited 53 years to see the Knicks hoist the NBA championship trophy, owner James Dolan didn't even wait to be handed the 30-pound gold-plated prize.

He grabbed it and lifted it skyward with a yell.

"I want to say something to New York," Dolan shouted. "Hey New York! I'm sorry it took so long! But here we are, and hopefully it won't take that long again!"

The New York Knicks are champions of the NBA for the first time since 1973, beating the San Antonio Spurs in five games for this title. The clincher came Saturday night in a 94-90 victory, the Knicks' fourth comeback win of the series.

Some will say it's the first "major" professional sports championship for New York in more than 14 years; that would be true when counting only Major League Baseball, the NFL, the NHL and the NBA, though it would be wrong to ignore the New York Liberty's run to the 2024 WNBA title and New York City FC winning the MLS Cup in 2021.

But as far as the teams that have been part of the city's fabric for generations and generations, yes, this 14-year drought is finally over. The New York Giants won the Super Bowl in 2012, capping the 2011 season.

The Yankees - the most decorated



The New York Knicks pose for photographers with the Larry O'Brien Championship Trophy after defeating the San Antonio Spurs in Game 5 of the NBA Finals basketball series in San Antonio. (AP)

team in U.S. major pro sports history - haven't won a World Series since 2009. The Mets haven't brought a World Series title to New York since 1986. The Rangers last hoisted that trophy in 1994, the Islanders in 1983. The New York Jets haven't won a Super Bowl since 1969.

None of that matters, at least not right now. The Knicks - who won 13 consecutive games at one point in this playoff run and rallied from 29

points down to win Game 4 of the finals at MSG - are the toast of the town.

"Of course I've never seen anything like it, because it'd never happened before," NBA Commissioner Adam Silver said of the Game 4 comeback in an interview on NBA TV on Saturday. "But it's been amazing."

The Amazin' Knicks, indeed. It has not always worked. Over a

25-year stretch that ended with the 2021-22 season - not that long ago - the Knicks had the worst record in the NBA. In the four years since, starting with the acquisition of Jalen Brunson from Dallas, the Knicks have the NBA's fifth-best record.

And now, Brunson - the finals MVP - is the best player on the best team in the world.

"It means the world to me," Brunson said.

Russell finishes second

Hamilton celebrates 1st win with Ferrari

MONTMELO, Spain, June 14, (AP): Lewis Hamilton won his first race since joining Ferrari two years ago while Formula 1 leader Kimi Antonelli broke down at the Barcelona-Catalunya Grand Prix on Sunday.

Hamilton increased his record win haul to 106 career victories with his first since the Belgian GP in July 2024 while he was still with Mercedes.

The seven-time world champion took advantage of fresher tires and a superior pitstop strategy by Ferrari to overtake the pole-sitting George Russell, who finished second.

Antonelli had passed his Mercedes teammate Russell when his

car came to a stop on the track with just four laps to go. He had won five races in a row.

Hamilton broke Mercedes' grip on the top spot of the podium this season, which had lasted six races.

"Thank you so much to help me achieve this dream," Hamilton told his team radio. "Thank you for everyone pushing so hard at home, thanks to my family, and to my fans who continue to remind me who I am. I couldn't have done this without you."

He then stood on his car, pumped his fist and sprinted to leap into the arms of his thrilled engineers and pit crew members.



Ferrari driver Lewis Hamilton of Britain celebrates after winning the Spain F1 Grand Prix race at the Barcelona Catalunya racetrack in Montmelo, near Barcelona, Spain. (AP)

Kuwait Club advances to Championship semifinals



Kuwait Club and Sharjah players battle for the ball during their Asian Men's Club League Handball Championship group-stage match at Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Sports Complex in Kuwait.

By Khaled Al-Enezi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 14: The semi-final stage of the 28th Asian Club Handball Championship will be held today in Kuwait at the Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Sports Complex Hall.

Burgan will meet Qatar's Al Duhail at 5:00 pm, while Kuwait Club face Saudi Arabia's Al Khaleej at 7:30 pm. The winners will advance to the final, scheduled for the day after tomorrow at the same venue, while the defeated sides will contest the third-place match.

Al Khaleej topped the preliminary round standings to set up a semi-final clash with fourth-placed Kuwait Club, while Burgan finished second and will face third-placed Al Duhail. The tournament follows a format where first plays fourth and second meets third.

Both Kuwait Club and Al Duhail secured their semi-final spots after the

final round of the group stage. Kuwait Club fell 30-28 to UAE's Sharjah, while Al Duhail defeated compatriots Al Arabi 25-20. Kuwait Club finished the group stage with five points, while Al Duhail collected seven.

Bahrain Handball Federation President Ali Ishaqi described the current edition as the strongest in the tournament's history, citing the participation of elite Asian clubs strengthened by top international professionals.

He noted that the competition has been highly balanced and intense, with two semi-final spots only decided in the final round of group matches, reflecting the high level of competition.

Ishaqi also praised the excellent organization of the event in Kuwait, highlighting Kuwait Club's strong track record in hosting major continental tournaments, which has contributed to the smooth running and positive feedback from participating teams.



First-ever appearance brings culture and tourism story to North America

Jordan's historic World Cup debut shines a global spotlight on the destination

NEW YORK, June 14: For the first time in its history, Jordan will compete in the FIFA World Cup™, marking a milestone moment for the nation after more than four decades of pursuit and 11 qualification campaigns. Known to fans as Al-Nashama ("The Brave Ones"), Jordan enters the 2026 tournament as one of only four nations making its World Cup debut.

Jordan qualified on June 5, 2025, following a decisive 3-0 victory over Oman and arrives at the tournament on the heels of a runner-up finish at the 2023 AFC Asian Cup. Led by head coach Jamal Sellami and captain Ihsan Haddad, the squad features standout players including Ligue 1 star Musa Al-Taamari, prolific striker Ali Olwan and defender Yazan Al-

Arab.

The team's Group J matches include:

■ June 16: Austria vs. Jordan at Levi's Stadium in Santa Clara, California

■ June 22: Jordan vs. Algeria at Levi's Stadium in Santa Clara, California

■ June 27: Jordan vs. Argentina at AT&T Stadium in Arlington, Texas

"As Jordan takes the field on the world's biggest sporting stage, millions of viewers will discover not only a talented football team but also a remarkable destination rich in history, culture and hospitality," said Jordan Tourism Board.

While many Americans know Jordan for Petra, the UNESCO World

Heritage Site and one of the New Seven Wonders of the World, the country offers far more from the dramatic desert landscapes of Wadi Rum and the healing waters of the Dead Sea to the vibrant food and café culture of Amman, world-class diving in Aqaba and the acclaimed Jordan Trail.

The tournament puts Jordan in front of a global audience at exactly the right moment. Royal Jordanian now flies nonstop to Amman from New York-JFK, Chicago, Washington DC, Detroit, Montreal, and — as of May 2026 — Dallas-Fort Worth. U.S. travelers receive a visa on arrival, and the Jordan Pass bundles the visa fee, Petra entry, and admission to more than 40 sites. But what travelers consistently bring home isn't a

landmark — it's the hospitality. Long meals, strong tea, dark desert skies, and a culture built around welcoming strangers. The World Cup window offers a rare chance to see Jordan at its most outward-facing and joyful: a country in celebration.

Jordan Comes to Texas: Jordan House in Arlington

To celebrate Jordan's historic appearance against defending champions Argentina, the Jordan Tourism Board will host Jordan House from June 25-27 in Arlington, Texas. Located at the Levitt Center across from Arlington City Hall, the three-day cultural experience will transform the surrounding area into a gathering place for football fans, families and the local Jordanian and Arab-Ameri-

can communities.

Visitors can enjoy live match screenings on a giant outdoor screen, authentic Jordanian cuisine from local food vendors, performances by the Jordan Armed Forces Band, traditional Dabke dancers, acclaimed Jordanian singer Omar Abdalat, cultural demonstrations, children's activities and immersive experiences showcasing Jordanian heritage and hospitality.

The event also coincides with Royal Jordanian's new nonstop service between Dallas-Fort Worth and Amman, launched in May 2026, providing North Texans with direct access to Jordan for the first time.

Bay Area Celebrations Around Levi's Stadium

On June 21-22, the San Jose Con-

vention Center will host a Jordan House fan experience featuring cultural programming, Jordanian cuisine, live entertainment, and watch-party activities around the Jordan vs. Algeria match.

In Northern California, Jordanian fans and supporters will gather for community events surrounding Jordan's two World Cup matches at Levi's Stadium, organized by the Jordanian Fans Association of San Francisco with support from the Jordan Tourism Board.

The events offer local residents, football supporters, and media a chance to experience Jordan's culture, cuisine, and welcoming spirit during one of the nation's most significant sporting moments.

Fan

Zone



Fans of Morocco cheer prior to the World Cup Group C soccer match against Brazil in East Rutherford, N.J., near New York. (AP)



Qatari fans cheer during the World Cup Group B soccer match between Qatar and Switzerland in Santa Clara, Calif., near San Francisco. (AP)



Australia fans celebrate a goal during first half Group D World Cup soccer action against Turkey, in Vancouver, British Columbia (AP).



Turkey fans show their support before Turkey takes on Australia during a World Cup Group D soccer match, in Vancouver. (AP)



Haiti fans react ahead of the World Cup Group C soccer match between Haiti and Scotland in Foxborough, Mass., near Boston. (AP)

Australia spoils Turkey's World Cup return, Scotland ends 28-year wait with Haiti win

Socceroos goalkeeping gamble pays off as Beach stars in opener



Turkey's Orkun Kokcu (6) challenges for the ball with Australia's Paul Okon-Engstler (24) during the World Cup Group D soccer match between Australia and Turkey in Vancouver, British Columbia. (AP)

VANCOUVER, B.C., June 14, (AP): Nestory Irankunda and Connor Metcalfe scored and Australia spoiled Turkey's return to the World Cup for the first time in 24 years with a 2-0 victory.

Goalkeeper Patrick Beach made eight saves for the Socceroos in their group opener as FIFA President Gianni Infantino looked on. Australia was playing in its sixth straight World Cup and seventh overall.

Turkey reached the semifinals of the 2002 World Cup but then missed five straight tournaments before qualifying this year by beating Kosovo in a playoff.

Irakunda broke through for the Socceroos in the 27th minute with a low shot while pursued by three defenders. It came less than a minute after the first-half hydration break.

Irakunda celebrated by punching the corner flag in a tribute to Australian soccer legend Tim Cahill. The 20-year-old who plays for Watford

is the Socceroo's youngest-ever goal scorer at a World Cup.

Minutes later Beach stopped Abdulkemir Bardakci's blast from distance. Beach started in goal for the Socceroos rather than experienced counterpart Matthew Ryan in a surprise decision from coach Tony Popovic.

Irakunda said the Socceroos took issue with comments Turkey captain Hakan Calhanoglu made a day before the match, proclaiming that his side had "more qualities and a more talented team."

"Yeah, it was extra motivation," Irakunda said. "Obviously we don't like people to talk bad about us because we're a great team. People underestimate us."

Kenan Yildiz, a 21-year-old who plays for Juventus, was not in the starting lineup but subbed in for Turkey at half-time.

Turkey had a dangerous free kick in the 57th minute, but Arda Güler's attempt was saved by Beach. Güler, a talented 21-year-old attacking midfielder who plays for Real Madrid, was not yet born the last time Turkey played in the World Cup.

Connor Metcalfe capitalized on Ismail Yüksek's turnover in the 75th minute to double the Socceroos' lead. The Socceroos fell to France in the opener in Qatar but then beat Tunisia and Denmark in their group before getting knocked out by eventual champion Argentina in the round of 16.

Turkey maintained 72% of possession during the match and outshot the Socceroos 30-9, but couldn't manage to score.

Coach Steve Clarke made it clear he didn't enjoy his first two experiences leading Scotland during lackluster showings in the European Championship.

So far the sport's biggest stage has brought him - and the Scots - a lot more luck.

John McGinn deflected a shot off an opposing defender and past goalkeeper Johny Placide in the 28th minute, and Scotland defeated Haiti 1-0 in Group C of the World Cup.

"When it went into the back of the net, you could feel the Scotland fans," McGinn said.

Scotland, making its first appearance in the tournament since 1998,

earned its first World Cup victory since 1990, when it beat Sweden 2-1.

"We came here to get three points. We did and now we move on," Scotland midfielder Lewis Ferguson said.

Getting those crucial points did a lot more than that.

Group favorites Brazil and Morocco played to a 1-1 draw earlier in the day, putting Scotland at the top of the group standings.

"We obviously have a little less pressure than everyone put on us in this game," Clarke said. "They deserve to be the team that finally got in under their belt in the World Cup."

Haiti, whose only other World Cup appearance was in West Germany in 1974, is still in search of its first World Cup point. The Grenadiers had multiple chances in the second half but couldn't quite equalize.

"We're playing at an extremely high level. But you can get punished with one oversight," Haiti coach Sébastien Migné said.

McGinn's goal came off a rebound from Che Adams' miss in the box that bounced off Placide and into open space. McGinn's shot ricocheted off a defender from 13 yards out.

2 Texas men charged after England team gear stolen en route to Kansas City for WCup base

KANSAS CITY, Mo., June 14 (AP): Two men have been charged with one felony count each of receiving stolen property late Saturday after England's national team discovered that some of its equipment had been stolen while The Three Lions were moving from their pre-training base in Florida to their World Cup base camp in Kansas City.

Prosecutors in Jackson County, Missouri, charged Mustafa Salik and Erfan Kamal, both of San Antonio, Texas, with the class D felony, which carries a sentence of up to seven years in prison. Bond was set at \$75,000 for each of them.

"Jackson County will not tolerate any criminal activity that targets World Cup visitors, including the international teams that have traveled here to compete," Jackson County prosecutor Melesa Johnson said. "We thank the Kansas City Police Department and our on-call attorneys for their quick work in filing charges immediately."

None of the stolen property, which was estimated at about \$18,000 in value, was essential to England's preparations.

According to a probable cause statement obtained by The Associated Press, items found in Salik and Kamal's possession included nine pairs of cleats, goalkeeper gloves, a World Cup soccer ball, several sets of shirts and shorts, electronics, stuffed animals, several signed national team jerseys and a Lego set of Nike Air shoes valued at \$99.99.

"I am grateful for the quick work of the Kansas City Police Department and the prosecutor's office in resolving an investigation across several states, helping crime victims recover goods stolen in transit, and ensuring the accused will face prosecution," said Kansas City, Missouri, Mayor Quinton Lucas said in a statement late Saturday.

"Kansas City's public safety leadership will continue to ensure all are safe and offenders will

be held accountable swiftly."

The theft occurred before England's charter jet arrived in Kansas City at around noon on Saturday.

The team was greeted first at its upscale boutique hotel in Prairie Village, Kansas, by the drum corps, cheerleaders and mascot of the NFL's Kansas City Chiefs. Then, The Three Lions headed to an open training session at Swope Soccer Village, where MLS club Sporting Kansas City once trained, and where its second-division team and academy programs are still based.

The England flag was flying above the complex, and a large sign stated that it was "The Home of England," while hundreds of fans and reporters greeted the team on a hot, humid afternoon for the community training session.

The practice ended about two hours before tornado sirens sounded across the metro and a heavy storm rolled through town.



Qatar's Yusuf Abdurisag, left, and Switzerland's Michel Aebischer fight for the ball during the World Cup Group B soccer match between Qatar and Switzerland in Santa Clara, Calif., near San Francisco. (AP)

Sports

Morocco rattles Brazil as Qatar holds Switzerland



Morocco goalkeeper Yassine Bounou (1) punches the ball during the World Cup Group C soccer match between Brazil and Morocco in East Rutherford, N.J., near New York. (AP)



Qatar's Pedro Miguel, yells as he celebrates after teammate Qatar's Boualem Khoukhi, right, scored his sides first goal during the World Cup Group B soccer match between Qatar and Switzerland in Santa Clara, Calif., near San Francisco. (AP)

Khoukhi strikes in stoppage time

EAST RUTHERFORD, N.J., June 14, (AP): Samba soccer this wasn't.

Facing pressure to win its first World Cup title since 2002, five-time champion Brazil was outplayed early and needed Vinicius Junior's 32nd-minute goal to gain a 1-1 draw against Morocco in a pulsating, high-profile group match.

"We started on a really bad note," Vinicius said through a translator. "For certain, we got to hold on to the ball. We have to move better."

A semifinalist four years ago, Morocco had 12 shots in the first 30 minutes and went ahead on Ismael Saibari's 21st-minute goal, a chip over goalkeeper Alisson Becker.

Brazil evened the score 11 minutes later. Vinicius exchanged passes with Bruno Guimaraes on the left flank, took a few touches to cut around Neil El Aynaoui and rifled a right-footed shot past the outstretched arm of Yassine Bounou for his 10th international goal.

"We are satisfied with the draw," Morocco coach Mohamed Ouahbi said. "We are not euphoric."

Fans in Brazil's canary yellow dominated the crowd of 80,663 at MetLife Stadium - only about five sections near the south goal had fans in Morocco's red.

Seleção supporters expected the flowing, entertaining play of Pelé's era and were subdued before Vinicius

evened the score with his spectacular angled effort.

Brazil extended its unbeaten streak in World Cup openers to 21, including 17 wins, since a 1934 loss to Spain. No. 6 Brazil and seventh-ranked Morocco are the only top 10 teams to meet in the first round of the expanded 48-nation World Cup tournament.

Brazil plays Haiti on Friday in Philadelphia, then closes Group C against Scotland in Miami Gardens, Florida. Morocco faces Scotland in Foxborough, Massachusetts, on Friday, then meets Haiti in Atlanta.

One hour before the match, an Uber from Times Square to the stadium, site of next month's final, was \$126.95 - up from \$83.95 for advance booking for the same time Sunday.

Ancelotti, the Italian who became Brazil's first foreign World Cup coach, wore a three-piece suit with a necktie on a sunny afternoon with a 88-degree Fahrenheit (31-degree Celsius) temperature for the 6 p.m. start.

Qatar might be able to finally move forward from its forgettable home World Cup four years ago, scoring a stoppage-time goal to earn a shocking 1-1 draw with Group B favorite Switzerland.

And oh, what a miss by the mighty Swiss.

Boualem Khoukhi scored the equalizing goal on a header in the fourth minute of injury time to give Qatar

its first-ever point at the World Cup in front of 67,966 spectators at Levi's Stadium.

"Every draw feels like a loss," Switzerland midfielder Granit Xhaka said. "We're looking at ourselves. This performance was not good enough today to win."

Several of the Qatari players fell to the ground in celebration of the late goal as others ran to each other to embrace.

"I was very proud about today ... our mentality, the discipline they showed today," Qatar coach Julen Lopetegui said. "We needed to have our plan we needed to fulfill. We were a little bit lucky sometimes, but you need to believe and to want to have this belief and bit of luck in life and in football."

Breel Embolo scored for Switzerland from the penalty spot in the first half just over a week after being cleared to enter the U.S. following a visa delay, but the Swiss failed to capitalize on multiple other scoring chances.

Switzerland midfielder Denis Zakaria was asked by RTS if the result was a devastating scenario.

In the 13th minute, Embolo was fouled by Qatar goalkeeper Mahmoud Abunada, who received a yellow card on the play. Abunada lay face down and appeared motionless for a couple of minutes before he began to move his legs and was able to stand up again.

When Embolo calmly sent his penalty into the upper left corner in the 17th minute, it sent the red-clad Swiss fans into a dancing frenzy in the stands.

The 29-year-old forward applied for an urgent visa at the United States embassy in Bern on June 3, one day after he was denied boarding the team's flight to travel for his third World Cup because of a 2018 criminal conviction that was only finalized in April.

Switzerland dominated the possession game on an unseasonably warm June afternoon - with sprinklers running during a first-half break.

The Swiss used consistency and experience to go unbeaten through qualifying against Sweden, Kosovo and Slovenia. Coach Murat Yakin's team produced four wins and two draws to secure its sixth straight World Cup appearance and hasn't missed one since 2002, but the team has never gotten beyond the quarterfinals.

Qatar had to qualify through a playoff in November - beating the United Arab Emirates and Oman - after missing an opportunity from its group stage in Asian qualifying.

The Gulf State country became the first host nation to lose all of its group matches four years ago. Qatar lost to Senegal, Ecuador and the Netherlands in the 2022 tournament, scoring its lone goal in a 3-1 loss to Senegal.

Raya praises Simón and downplays goalkeeping debate ahead of opener

ATLANTA, June 14, (AP): David Raya toned down the debate over the starting goalkeeper for Spain at the World Cup, praising teammate Unai Simón on Saturday and saying La Roja is in good hands with him.

Spain begins its quest for a second World Cup title on Monday against Cape Verde in Group H in Atlanta.

Simón has been the regular starter under coach Luis de la Fuente, but talk about a possible change in goal increased following stellar seasons by the squad's other goalkeepers: Raya, who helped Arsenal win the Premier League and reach the Champions League final, and Joan García, who helped Barcelona win the Spanish league while being named the competition's best goalkeeper.

"Spain is in very good hands no matter who gets to play," Raya said Saturday. "I think Unai Simón, since his debut, has raised the level of the goalkeeping position. We won the Nations League and the European Championship with him. And I think he's a great goalkeeper who has given us these titles as the starter."

De la Fuente did not name his starting goalkeeper in advance, adding fuel to the debate in Spain. He used all three of them in the team's warmups ahead of the World Cup, though Simón got the nod to start in the final preparation match.

"It's normal (to have a debate)," Raya said. "There's always been a lot of competition among the goalkeepers that we've had. It's about camaraderie, striving to be better, to make the coach's job difficult. We're all here to help the team. Whoever gets to play will do their best."



Spain goalkeeper David Raya, center, attends a training session in Chattanooga, Tenn., ahead of the World Cup soccer tournament. (AP)

World Cup Fixtures

Spain vs Cape Verde 19:00

Belgium vs Egypt 22:00

Tuesday

Saudi Arabia vs Uruguay 01:00

Iran vs New Zealand 04:00

Portugal embraces World Cup expectations and carries Jota's memory into tournament

'One game at a time'

PALM BEACH, Fla., June 14, (AP): Portugal is very aware of the enormous expectations it faces in the World Cup.

The squad featuring star forward Cristiano Ronaldo is among the favorites to win the expanded 48-team tournament and hoist its first World Cup trophy, but players are not looking ahead to that point yet.

"We have not talked about putting the high pressure on our team," midfielder Vitorino said through a translator Saturday before Portugal's first training session in the United States. "All competitions are won by focusing on the present moment and not worrying about future outcomes."

"What we can do is think game by game. ... We would love to win, and if we go through the group stage, we will go one game at a time."

Portugal begins group play against Congo on June 17 in Houston.

Vitorino said the team believes it has the talent to go far in the tournament, and each player will compete with a heartfelt reminder. Portugal's Prime Minister recently met with the team and gifted each player a bracelet bearing their name as well as the name of the late Liverpool forward Diogo Jota, who was killed in a car crash in Spain last July.



Portugal's Cristiano Ronaldo warms up during the men's national soccer team training session ahead of their FIFA World Cup soccer tournament in Palm Beach Gardens, Fla. (AP)

Jota, who was a regular on Portugal's squad, was also included this year as an honorary team member by coach Roberto Martínez.

"We have received this with a lot of love," Vitorino said, pointing to the green and red bracelet on his wrist.

Portugal arrived in the U.S. on Friday evening and will be based in Palm Beach Gardens, Florida.

An energetic group of fans cheered and chanted as players took the pitch on Saturday, and Ronaldo led the team in applauding the fans in attendance.

It was just before sunset on a humid afternoon, but temperatures in Palm Beach were in the upper 80s F (around 31-32 Celsius).

There have been concerns over

the impact of extreme temperatures on both players and spectators across many of the 16 host cities, with certain protections like cooling stations and hydration breaks during matches implemented.

Vitorino said he expects the heat to affect Portugal players, but he knows it will be the same for many other squads, too.

"Obviously the physical question is very important," he said. "The weather conditions will very much affect how we play, but that is for everybody. It's not just for us. With the temperatures in the United States, Mexico and Canada, it is very different, but it is the world championship. There are no excuses. There are no conditions that can keep us from giving everything for our national team."

Players hydrated throughout Saturday's training session, as is typical during any practice, but they didn't seem affected much by the heat. Perhaps they were pretty acclimated to it by then, after spending some time at the beach earlier Saturday to unwind.

"It's important for our head, our mental aspect as well to take advantage of the conditions we have," Vitorino said, "to relax a little bit."

De Bruyne not taking 4th WC appearance for granted

RENTON, Wash., June 14, (AP): Kevin De Bruyne has accomplished plenty in his decorated career. Yet, the star Belgian midfielder does not plan to take his fourth World Cup appearance for granted.

Two days ahead of Belgium's World Cup opener against Egypt, the 35-year-old De Bruyne stressed much has changed since his days as a Premier League sensation for Manchester City. Nearly two decades removed from representing his home country for the first time and 119 appearances later, the two-time Premier League player of the season considers himself grateful to do so.

"It's an honor for me to still be here after playing for the national team for

about 16 years. So, that means I've done something good," De Bruyne said with a laugh during the English portion of Saturday's press conference. "Hopefully I can play a good tournament and do something well for Belgium."

The 2025-26 season, his first with Serie A club Napoli, was a challenging one for De Bruyne after 10 years at City, during which he scored 108 goals in 285 games to help the English club to six Premier League titles, two FA Cups and a Champions League trophy. In October, De Bruyne had a severe lesion to his thigh muscle and did not return until March 6.

Since March, De Bruyne has appeared in 10 Serie A matches, as well

as four friendlies for Belgium. In the most recent, on June 6, he scored during a 5-0 victory against Tunisia.

Before Belgium's practice at the training facility of Major League Soccer's Seattle Sounders, De Bruyne declared himself ready for the tournament.

"I have done everything I could to get fit," De Bruyne said in French, "and I feel that way too."

Even with a clean bill of health, De Bruyne knows he has fewer chances to play for the Belgium national team. The Drogen, Belgium, native admitted as much, noting he doesn't have another 10 years remaining in his career, and that he wants to enjoy all aspects of this tournament.

De Bruyne's perspective is significantly different from previous stints with the Belgium national team, and his City tenure.

"You are only focused on winning and the next match," De Bruyne said, "but after you have won, it is suddenly over."

De Bruyne doesn't plan to ease back on his intensity with teammates. But, with other star players like winger Jérémy Doku on the roster, De Bruyne recognizes the onus for winning does not fall solely on him, or seasoned veterans like striker Romelu Lukaku or goalkeeper Thibault Courtois.

The 24-year-old Doku, a teammate with De Bruyne at City for two seasons, has impressed the veteran.