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## Opinion

# Growing the national income by establishing welfare projects

**Ahmed Al-Jarallah**

Editor-in-Chief, the Arab Times

TWO days ago, Al-Rai daily published an article in the "Salfa" column stating that the private sector can transform Failaka Island, which has been neglected for decades, into a major tourist destination in the Gulf. The article highlighted that the government should understand that the private sector is a development

partner, not an adversary. This opinion is absolutely correct and could benefit Kuwait in all areas. It is time to break free from the cycle of recycling programs and plans while the outcome is "zero". The Kuwaiti economy, since the establishment of the modern state, has been based on individual initiatives supported by past laws. Unfortunately, decisions and laws issued in recent years have hindered this trend. This has led to a noticeable decline in various fields. Kuwait was once a pioneering country, not only in the Gulf region but throughout the entire region. Individual economic initiatives helped give Kuwait a global presence. For example, Kuwait has invested in major international companies for decades and established leading projects in numerous countries. At the same time, it has

pursued a local economic path that has yielded substantial benefits, too numerous to list in this article. Today, there is a significant opportunity for development following the cessation of hostilities and the beginning of a major regional settlement. Projects, particularly in the tourism sector, are expected to form the backbone of the future. Kuwait has a valuable opportunity, due to its unique strategic location, to become an attractive investment hub, provided the government improves its approach to achieve the necessary balance. The second condition is to remove the decisions that have hindered progress; otherwise, stagnation will continue. Recently, a decision was issued prohibiting the rental and investment of chalets. Some time ago, a decision was also issued preventing beneficiaries from disposing of industrial plots and prohibiting agricultural holdings

owners from developing certain areas of their farms for tourism. What was the result? First, more citizens and residents travel outside Kuwait for vacations and weekend getaways in neighboring countries, where they spend large sums on leisure and entertainment. This has led to a loss of significant purchasing power for Kuwait. Second, investment in the services sector has declined. Third, commercial activity throughout Kuwait has weakened.

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# KUWAIT CHEERS U.S.-IRAN BREAKTHROUGH, HORMUZ REOPENING

## Grades 10, 11 wrap up

### Grade 12 exam to align with holiday

KUWAIT CITY, June 15, (Agencies): Kuwait's Minister of Education Sayed Jalal Al-Tabtabaei convened a meeting with senior officials of his ministry on Monday to review the preparations for the high school final exams including the possible date changes based on new conditions.

He instructed the leaders of the ministry to ensure conveniences of students and stability of the educational process, according to a statement from the ministry.

Based on observations by students and their parents, the ministry adopted changes to the schedules of the Grade 12 final examinations to adapt them to the Hijri New Year holidays.

If the competent authorities decide celebrating the lunar New Year tomorrow, Tuesday, June 16, the exams will start on the following day as per the previously set schedule.

In this case, the scientific section exams will conclude on June 28, and the literary and religious sections exams will conclude the following day, the statement noted.

But in case the New Year is marked on June 17-18, the exams will start on Sunday, June 21, without changing the sequence of subjects on the skids.

In this case, the scientific section exams will conclude on July 1, and the literary and religious section exams will conclude the following day.

The results of the exams will be declared on July 3.

The final versions of skids will be available on the Ministry's website soon after adoption of any of both scenarios by the competent authorities, the statement added.

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Education continued the implementation of its organizational and supervisory plans during the 2025/2026 end-of-year examinations, in line with its commitment to provide an educational environment conducive for the students to take their exams

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KUNA photo  
Students review lessons and make final preparations ahead of their Grade 10 and 11 end-of-year exams.

# Kuwait restores more air routes through T4

Travelers get relief under limited operations plan



Ministry of Justice photo

Deputy Minister of Justice Awatef Abdullatif Al-Sanad, Acting Assistant Undersecretary Nouf Al-Qabandi and newly appointed court session secretaries during a group photo at the Ministry of Justice.

## Justice Ministry taps 27 female court secretaries

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

KUWAIT CITY, June 15: The Minister of Justice, Counselor Nasser Yousef Al-Sumait, has appointed 27 Kuwaiti women as court session secretaries at the Ministry of Justice.

This step is the first of its kind among national cadres working in this field supporting judicial work.

In an official statement, the ministry explained that the candidates successfully completed training at the Kuwait Institute for Judicial and Legal Studies, which has prepared them to work in courts. The move enhances the presence of Kuwaiti women in different branches of the judicial system and its supporting functions.

In this context, Awatef Abdullatif Al-Sanad, the Deputy Minister of Justice, held an orientation meeting for the new candidates

in the presence of Acting Assistant Undersecretary for Technical and Administrative Affairs Nouf Al-Qabandi and a number of ministry leaders.

The nature of the work and the importance of the role played by the court session secretary in supporting the regularity of work within courtrooms were discussed.

The ministry stated that this decision comes as part of its efforts to support national talent and advance administrative and technical development.

It also explained that the court session secretary plays a major role in judicial work, including documenting procedures and following up on decisions taken.

The ministry affirmed that it will continue to support the development of work in different sectors in order to enhance the efficiency of the justice system and improve the quality of services provided.

## KUWAIT CITY, June 15, (Agencies): Kuwait's Public Authority for Civil Aviation announced on Sunday the limited resumption of operations for Gulf, Arab and foreign airlines through Terminal 4 at Kuwait International Airport.

In a statement to KUNA, the authority said the decision reflects its national responsibility and commitment to serving travelers, supporting the continuity of airline operations and maintaining the regular flow of civil aviation traffic.

The authority added that coordination will be carried out with airlines that wish to resume operations to determine flight schedules.

It also stressed that the move responds to travelers' needs and aims to provide more travel options for citizens and residents traveling to and from Kuwait.

It urged passengers to follow updates regarding their flights and contact their respective airlines before heading to the airport.

The authority also affirmed that coordination with all relevant entities will continue to ensure the highest standards of safety, security and operational efficiency, praying for the continued safety and well-being of Kuwait, its people and all residents.

In other news, Kuwait welcomed the agreement reached between the United States and Iran on a memorandum of understanding providing for an immediate and permanent cessation of military operations, freedom of navigation in the Strait of Hormuz and the resolution of several outstanding issues.

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## Kuwait-Saudi Khafji ops eye major output growth

By Najeh Bilal

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 15: Kuwait Oil Company (KOC) and Aramco Gulf Operations Company (AGOC) intend to increase the production capacity of the Khafji Joint Operations to more than 350,000 barrels per day before 2030 by using modern technologies and artificial intelligence, following the renewal of the Khafji Joint Operations agreement.

Sources told the newspaper that

this is part of preparations for the new phase of joint operations, indicating that the share of Kuwait reached about 128,000 barrels per day in 2025, surpassing the targeted level of 125,000 barrels per day.

Sources also revealed that gas production reached 14.64 million standard cubic feet per day for export, strengthening the ability of Khafji to efficiently meet the domestic and international market demand.

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Ties deep-rooted: Thai envoy

## Kuwait, Thailand celebrate 63 years strong friendship

By Fares Ghaleb

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 15: Ambassador of the Kingdom of Thailand to Kuwait Songchai Chaipatiyut said the relationship between Thailand and Kuwait serves as a model of strong bilateral ties founded on mutual respect and trust.

Speaking during an open meeting

with media representatives on the occasion of the 63rd anniversary of diplomatic relations between Thailand and Kuwait, Ambassador Chaipatiyut pointed out that the two countries have been enjoying close and sincere diplomatic relationship for decades through high-level dialogue and exchanges. He stated that bilateral relations are rooted in deep mutual respect between

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## NewsWatch

### June 16 declared Islamic New Year

KUWAIT CITY, June 15, (Agencies): The sighting of the crescent moon for Muharram was confirmed Monday evening, officially designating Tuesday, June 16, as the first day of the Hijri year 1448 AH.

Following the confirmation, authorities announced that the Islamic New Year holiday will be observed on Tuesday, in line with a Cabinet decision and a circular issued by Kuwait's Civil Service Commission.

The occasion marks the beginning of the new Islamic calendar year and will be celebrated as an official public holiday across the country.

□ □ □

**KUWAIT CITY:** Kuwait Communications and Information Technology Regulatory Authority (CITRA) announced on Monday that it achieved operational results totaling KD 115 million (approximately USD 373 million) for the 2025/2026 fiscal year, marking a growth rate of 4.3 percent compared to the 2024/2025 fiscal year. (KUNA)



Songchai Chaipatiyut, Ambassador of the Kingdom of Thailand to Kuwait

## 'Don't join exam leak chats'

KUWAIT CITY, June 15: The Cybercrime General Department issued an awareness post on its X account, warning students and parents against joining WhatsApp groups that share school exam content, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The department emphasized that such activity constitutes a crime punishable by law.

It urged students and parents to avoid interacting with or participating in these groups in order to safeguard their academic progress and future.

The department highlighted that participation in these groups could expose individuals to criminal liability.



Al-Fulajj: 'NBK Ebtakir' brings our vision of embedding innovation into the fabric of our corporate culture to life



LuLu Hypermarket and LuLu Exchange announce 10 strategic partnership to enhance customer rewards through LuLu Happiness Loyalty Program



### Prayer Timings

Fajr	03:13	Asr	15:23
Sunrise	04:48	Maghrib	18:49
Zohr	11:49	Isha	20:21

## Other Voices

# Prophet Muhammad's emigration to Madina

By Hassan Twaha Bwambale

It is worth mentioning that June 16th or 17th, 2026 will be a holiday in Kuwait and other Muslim countries on the occasion of the start of the Islamic Lunar calendar, famous as the Hijri calendar.

Prophet Muhammad's (PBUH) emigration from Makkah to Madina in 622 CE is the foundational event for the Hijri calendar, officially established by Caliph Umar bin Al-Khattab (ra). It marks the shift from persecution to sovereignty, setting 1 Muharram of that year as Year 1 AH (Anno Hegirae), symbolizing the start of the Islamic community in Madina.

When the persecution of the people of Makkah against the Muslims grew intense, Almighty Allah commanded them to emigrate so that they could establish His religion in a land where they could freely worship Him.

Preparing for the journey: Aisha (Prophet Muhammad's wife) narrated, "One day, while we were sitting in Abu Bakr's house at noon, someone said to Abu Bakr (Aisha's father): 'This is the Prophet (PBUH) with his head covered, coming at a time at which he never used to visit us before.' Abu Bakr (ra) said, 'May my father and mother be sacrificed for him. By Allah, he has not come at this hour, except for something important.' So, the Prophet (PBUH) approached and sought permission to enter, and he was permitted. When he entered, he said to Abu Bakr: 'Tell everyone who is present with you to leave.' Abu Bakr (ra) replied, 'There is no one here, except you and my family.'

The Prophet (PBUH) said, 'I have been given permission to emigrate.' Abu Bakr (ra) said, 'Shall I accompany you?' Allah's Messenger (PBUH) replied, 'Yes.' Abu Bakr said, 'O Allah's Messenger, take one of these two she-camels of mine.' The Prophet (PBUH) replied, '(I will accept it) with payment.' So, they prepared the baggage quickly and put some journey food in a leather bag for them."

Prophet Muhammad's (PBUH) emigration to Madina an event that changed history for good. This journey isn't just limited to Islamic history or the Muslims. It shook the world socially, economically, and politically. In Makkah the Muslims were persecuted, but in Madina they freely worshipped Almighty Allah.

Some Lessons learnt from Prophet Muhammad's (PBUH) emigration to Madina:

■ **Trusting Almighty Allah unconditionally:** Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) had unshakable faith in his Lord and this is a great lesson for today's Muslims. The polytheist of Makkah raced after him, knowing he was headed for Madina. Along the way, he and Abu Bakr (ra) took refuge in a cave. While there, some of the enemies reached the entrance of that cave. Upon seeing them, Abu Bakr (ra) was overwhelmed with fear. Allah's Messenger (PBUH) said to him as reported in the Noble Qur'an: "Be not sad or afraid, surely Allah is with us."

■ **Redefinition of Intention:** A man in Makkah wanted to marry Umm Qays and she gave him the condition to emigrate to Madina to marry her. Accordingly, the man migrated to Madina for this specific purpose, and the two were married there. On account of this event, Almighty Allah revealed the man's intention to Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and the man came to be known among Prophet Muhammad's (PBUH) Companions as Muha'jir Umm Qais (i.e., the emigrant for the sake of Umm Qays). The beautiful lesson in this story is that he taught us what it means to have the right intention before every action.

■ **Strengthening the Brotherhood:** One of the beauties the Hijrah brought was the brotherhood between the Muslims. An impeccable scenario is described in the following narration about the strong relationship between the emigrants from Makkah and the original inhabitants of Madina: Anas bin Malik (ra) narrated, "When Abdur-Rahman bin Awf came to us (in Madina), Allah's Messenger (PBUH) made a bond of fraternity between him and Sa'ad bin Ar-Rabei who was a rich man. Sa'ad said (to Abdur-Rahman): 'The An'sar (original inhabitants of Madina) know that I am the richest of all of them, so I will divide my property into two parts between me and you, and I have two wives; see which of the two you like so that I divorce her and you can marry her after she becomes lawful to you by her passing the prescribed waiting period (i.e., 'Idda) of divorce.' Abdur-Rahman said, 'May Allah bless you and your family (i.e., wives) for you. Show me the market place!' Abdur-Rahman went to the market, and did not return on that day, except with some gain of dried yogurt and butter. He went on trading just a few days till he approached Allah's Messenger (PBUH) bearing the traces of yellow scent over his clothes. Allah's Messenger (PBUH) asked him: 'What is this scent?' He replied, 'I have married a woman from the An'sar.' The Prophet (PBUH) said, 'Prepare marriage banquet,

even if only with a sheep.'" (Al-Bukhari)

■ **The Hijrah Calendar:** The Islamic Calendar is a yardstick that Muslims use in timing religious events and activities. The story of the Hijri Calendar as related by Abu Mousa Al-Asha'ri (ra) is a very interesting one. Umar bin Al-Khattab (ra) felt the need to have a dating system that guides the Muslims. He consulted with his fellow Companions of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) to develop one and it was agreed that the most rallying point of reference was the Hijrah since it's an important turning point for the Muslims. After the emigration to Madina, the Prophet (PBUH) was able to organize and establish an ideal community with social, political, and economic independence. The Hijri calendar system heralded tremendous growth and enhanced development based on Islamic principles. It's the official calendar system that guides Muslims in their religious obligations.

Prophet Muhammad(PBUH) prioritized achievements upon his arrival in Madina:

Upon his arrival in Madina, Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) immediately took three fundamental steps to establish and secure the new Muslim community. He did the following:

a. **Building his mosque (Al-Masjid An-Nabawi):** The Prophet (PBUH) organized the construction of the first mosque in Madina, which served as a community center for prayers, education, and administrative affairs – among others - rather than just a place of worship.

b. **Establishing Brotherhood between the emigrants from Makkah and the original residents of Madina:** He paired the migrants from Makkah with the local inhabitants of Madina (Al-Ansaar) in bonds of Islamic brotherhood to foster unity, security, and economic support.

c. **Drafting the Constitution of Medina (Charter of Madina):** Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) instituted a written agreement that established peace between the warring tribes of Yathrab (Madina), guaranteed religious freedom, and formalized the rights and duties of all citizens - including Muslims, Jews, and other groups.

In conclusion, it has to be noted that Prophet Muhammad's (PBUH) migration to Madina was not merely a journey, but a profound transformation: uniting disparate tribes, building the first mosque, and initiating the Islamic calendar, fundamentally altering history.

Courtesy of Kuwaiti Society for Cultural Dialogue



KUNA photo  
Public Authority for Civil Aviation (PACA) President Sheikh Humoud Mubarak Al-Humoud Al-Sabah meets Ethiopian Ambassador to Kuwait Dr. Sied Jibril to discuss strengthening bilateral cooperation in civil aviation.

## Kuwait, Ethiopia eye boost in civil aviation sector ties

KUWAIT CITY, June 15, (KUNA): Public Authority for Civil Aviation (PACA) President Sheikh Humoud Mubarak Al-Humoud Al-Sabah met with Ethiopian Ambassador to Kuwait Dr. Sied Jibril to discuss strengthening bilateral cooperation in civil aviation.

In a statement to Kuwait News Agency (KUNA), the authority said the meeting reviewed areas of cooperation in air transport and explored

opportunities to further develop ties between Kuwait and Ethiopia.

The two sides also discussed enhancing technical and operational expertise exchange in the civil aviation sector, aiming to support the development of joint cooperation in this vital field.

The authority added that the meeting reflects efforts to strengthen coordination and expand cooperation in civil aviation and air transport between the two countries.



Twaha Bwambale



Photo by Rizk Taufiq  
The Municipal Council session in progress on Monday, June 15, 2026.

# 'Take action on railway project'

MC session nods multiple projects

By Inaas Awadh

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 15: The Municipal Council, during its session presided over by Abdullah Al-Muhairi on Monday, approved the request of the Ministry of Public Works to allocate the route to connect the Sixth Ring Road with Sector N12 in Al-Mutlaa residential area.

This road should be five kilometers long and consist of three lanes.

It also approved the request of the Ministry of Social Affairs to authorize several activities for the kiosks on the ground floor of the central markets of cooperative societies. The approved activities include watch repair, traditional food, flower and plant, and mobile phone shops, and a mill.

The Council approved the request of the Ministry of Social Affairs to allocate a site for the construction of a diwaniya in Haiteen.

It approved the renovation of Ibn Bahr Heritage Mosque and the parking area in Sharq.

The Municipal Council approved the

request of the Ministry of Finance to allocate bank branches outside the district center, following the transfer of responsibility from Kuwait Finance House to the ministry.

It approved the 'Park and Ride' project.

It also approved the requests of the Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy, such as the allocation of a route for an underground cable in West Abdullah Al-Mubarak residential area extending to the cloud data center site in Sulaiyia agricultural area, and allocation of a secondary substation in Fahaheel, linked to Shaddadiya and extending to the cloud data center site.

The Municipal Council approved the amendment of the 1963 resolution issued by the council on the development of the main freshwater and saltwater reservoirs in the Central Region.

It approved the allocation of sites for stations in Mutlaa and Jal Al-Atraf, near the tent market.

It also approved the request of the Ministry of Islamic Affairs to relocate and expand the site of a mosque in Jahra, specifically within the camel breeding project.

On the other hand, the council referred the request to establish and validate the foundational planning reference for the railway project within the planning framework of the State to the executive body for action.

## KISR publishes scientific chapters

# Seismic risks and ways to enhance cities resilience

KUWAIT CITY, June 15, (KUNA): Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research (KISR) announced on Monday the publication of three specialized scientific chapters addressing the latest scientific and engineering knowledge on seismic risks and ways to enhance the resilience of cities and infrastructure in earthquake-prone areas.

In a press statement, KISR said that the chapters, authored by Eng. Dana Al-Enezi from the Environment and Life Sciences Research Center (ELSRC), were featured in the scientific book "Resilient Cities and Infrastructure in Earthquake Zones: Sustainable Solutions."

The published chapters, it noted, cover three main topics, starting with "Seismic Hazards and Historical Earthquakes: A Vision from Global to Local Scales."

The other two topics are "Fundamentals of Soil Liquefaction: A Seismic Hazard Perspective Towards Sustainable Infrastructure," and "Sustainable Soil Improvement for Resilient Infrastructure: The Application of Sand Compaction Columns in Seismic Zones."

Furthermore, the chapters review the historical evolution of understanding seismic phenomena up to modern scientific theories.

They also tackle soil liquefaction mechanisms and their impacts on facilities and infrastructure during earthquakes, alongside sustainable soil improvement techniques, particularly sand compaction columns and their role in mitigating geotechnical risks.

By Fares Ghaleb

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 15: Supervisory and leadership vacancies in cooperative societies have attracted significant interest, with 860 applicants registering through the 'Fakhruna' platform of the Public Authority for Manpower (PAM) since applications opened on June 10.

The applicants are competing for 70 supervisory and leadership positions offered by a number of cooperative societies and the Union of Consumer Cooperative Societies.

PAM previously announced that registration for Kuwaiti university graduates and experienced professionals seeking employment in the cooperative sector would be available through the 'Fakhruna' platform from June 10-24.

## New electricity 'projects' soon

By Mohammad Ghanem

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 15: The Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy will soon award a contract valued at KD 84.667 million for the supply and installation of 400 kV overhead power transmission lines.

The ministry is preparing to sign the contract with the successful bidder once approved by the State Audit Bureau (SAB). It already obtained approval to award the contract from the Central Agency for Public Tenders (CAPT) on March 5. The approval was granted based on the compliance of the winning bidder with the terms and technical specifications stipulated in the tender documents.

Under the contract, the winning company will be in charge of the execution, warranty, maintenance and training related to the contracted works in accordance with the technical terms and specifications stipulated in the contract documents. The project is scheduled for completion within 24 months, including a three-month preparatory period commencing from the date of contract signing.

Sources from the ministry stated that the implementation of the project, which will connect the Shagaya Z solar power substation to the Subiya power station, will enable the transmission of electricity generated by photovoltaic panels at the Shagaya Renewable Energy Complex to the national grid through its connection to the Subiya power station.

## Other Voices

# Possession and extraterrestrial beings

By Ahmad alsarraf

Robert McElroy, the Archbishop of Washington, D.C., expelled a prominent Catholic priest following his recent statements regarding extraterrestrial beings and demons.

The expelled priest, Monsignor Rossetti, was known for his belief in demonic possession and ran a spiritual renewal center where he assisted individuals seeking healing and liberation from demonic possession.

The expulsion occurred amid growing controversy in the United States following President Donald Trump's directive, issued several months ago, to his administration to begin releasing government documents related to extraterrestrial life and unidentified flying objects.

The Pentagon recently released documents and published images, but they failed to convince anyone due to their lack of clarity.

The suggestion that intelligent alien beings exist presents profound theological challenges for the Church, and it is more religiously appropriate to understand or interpret them as demonic entities. This is what the devout Catholic Vice President Vance believed and affirmed.

In an interview with Cardinal Rossini, Vance said that while he acknowledged that belief in extraterrestrial life is consistent with Catholic teaching, many, if not most, of these alleged UFO sightings are actually demonic, and that these entities can do things beyond human capabilities.

Apparently, US President Donald Trump did not share his opinion and removed him from his position as an exorcist.

Some official exorcists within the Church operate se-

cretly, without revealing their identities.

However, many others, including Monsignor Rossetti, speak openly about their experiences battling demons. Rossetti has authored several books, including Memoirs of an American Exorcist.

Last year, he appeared in the American version of the Catholic documentary Victory Over Evil: The Battle of the Exorcists.

He previously stated that another exorcist told him he believed someone was possessed by aliens, which Rossetti dismissed as nonsense. He said that if alien beings exist, they do not inhabit humans; rather, they are demonic forces attempting to deceive, conceal, and manipulate.

On another note, a spokesperson for the Catholic University of America confirmed last Thursday that Monsignor Rossetti is still an associate professor in the Department of Theology and Religious Studies.

A spokesperson for the Archdiocese of Syracuse, where Monsignor Rossetti was ordained a priest in the 1980s, said that he still enjoys a good reputation there and that the archdiocese has no further information regarding his dismissal by the Archdiocese of Washington.

This monsignor's story reminded me of a man who lived among us for a long time. Early in his career, he worked as an exorcist, claiming to perform ritual exorcisms.

He used to strike the possessed person with a heavy stick, insisting that the demon leave the patient's body. One day, a man (whose name is known) died as a result of the beating.

The individual was brought to justice and sentenced to ten years in prison for manslaughter. He later received a pardon and went on to become a prominent figure, raising millions through a charity. His Kuwaiti citizenship was recently revoked.

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email: a.alsarraf@alqabas.com.kw

# KPC set to call job applicants soon

By Najeh Bilal

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 15: Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) has started contacting those who applied for engineering and science positions that were announced in January 2026, say reliable sources.

Sources said the selected applicants

are expected to commence work in the corporation and its subsidiaries in the near future.

Sources disclosed that recruitment will be carried out in accordance with Article 23 of Private Sector Labor Law No. 6/2010, particularly the stipulation on occupations classified as hazardous or arduous.

Sources indicated that the recruit-

ment campaign covered a wide range of required specializations, such as mechanical engineering, chemical engineering, industrial engineering, environmental engineering, safety engineering, instrumentation engineering, mathematical sciences, electronics engineering, chemical sciences, cybersecurity, and electrical and computer engineering.

# diwaniya ديوانية

A DIGEST OF PUBLIC OPINION

## World Cup ... Thank you, O people of Qatar, once again

"As usual, many comparisons were made between the opening ceremonies of the 2026 FIFA World Cup and the 2022 FIFA World Cup in Qatar, with many highlighting aspects that favored Doha's presentation," columnist **Sheikh Eng. Fahad Dawood Al-Sabah** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

"One point that stands out is that the ability to innovate and deliver a memorable event is not necessarily linked to a country's size, but rather to its vision and determination. The opening ceremony of the 2022 World Cup was held in a single venue, while the 2026 edition was spread in three stages, which led to a lack of clarity regarding the message the opening ceremony intended to convey.

"In Qatar, the message was clear - to showcase Arab and Islamic culture to the world. The ceremony highlighted Bedouin heritage, Arab hospitality, and the values of co-existence. By contrast, the 2026 World Cup opening ceremony placed greater emphasis on entertainment and world-class musical performances.

"In Los Angeles, the ceremony resembled the opening of a local basketball game. Also, Qatar enabled fans to attend more than one match in a single day.

"However, in the current World Cup, there are numerous difficulties due to the vast distances between stadiums, transportation challenges, and high ticket prices, which place a burden on the budgets of both tourists and local fans, particularly in the United States.

"In Qatar, matches were hosted in only three cities located close to one another. By contrast, the current tournament is spread across 16 cities in three different countries, creating additional challenges for supporters. In Qatar, fans were able to experience the atmosphere of the World Cup in essentially one area, which enhanced the overall experience. As a result, Qatar set a benchmark that will be difficult to replicate. While the current World Cup features a larger number of participating teams, efficient organization remains the benchmark.

"Matches between teams will always produce winners and losers, but what truly matters is the lasting impression left on visitors. Arabs, particularly the Gulf states, are capable of organizing major international projects, provided they are serious about it.

"The Gulf states are rich in experienced individuals whose achievements have earned international recognition in a wide range of fields. This occasion has raised hopes for Arab football teams and reinforced the idea that a culture of peace can contribute to a new era of sustainable development. The Arabian Gulf is increasingly positioned to play a significant economic and humanitarian role on the global stage.

"On this occasion, I would like to express my gratitude to the people of Qatar. Four years later, the world has come to recognize that Qatar succeeded in presenting a positive image of the Arabian Gulf and the Arab world."

**Also:**

"Global economic developments have become part of the daily lives of citizens and residents in Kuwait," Kuwaiti writer **Dr. Nasser Hussein Abbas** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

"A decision made by a global central bank, a disruption in a maritime route, or a fluctuation in energy prices quickly impacts prices, jobs, and public spending. This means that Kuwait no longer deals with the global economy as merely an external matter, but rather as a direct factor in its economic and social security.

"Kuwait possesses advantages in its oil wealth, large financial reserves, and long experience in managing surpluses. However, excessive reliance on oil makes public finances highly sensitive to price fluctuations and raises questions about sustainability.

"How do we preserve our gains if revenues decline? The first impact of global developments is clearly reflected in the public budget.

"What is needed today is not simply to capitalize on periods of prosperity, but to transform them into an opportunity to reform the structure of the economy, rather than a temporary spending surge that ends when prices fall.

"The second impact is seen in the rising cost of living. As most of our needs are imported, the effects of global inflation are not far removed from us. In this context, temporary intervention to control prices is not enough. A more serious food security and customs policy is required, one that relies on diversifying income sources and protecting competition.

"The third dimension relates to the labor market and investment.

"Due to accelerating digital transformation and artificial intelligence (AI), competition between countries will no longer be over traditional resources, but rather over the legislative

environment, ease of doing business, and the speed of decision-making.

"If bureaucracy remains an obstacle, Kuwait will lose significant investment opportunities to more flexible and transparent economies.

"This also intersects with the global shift in the energy sector towards reducing emissions. This shift should be seen as both an early warning and an opportunity to develop value-added industries related to oil and petrochemicals, instead of relying solely on exporting crude oil.

"Addressing these challenges requires a practical plan based on several tracks - diversifying income sources, reforming government administration, accelerating decision-making, empowering the productive private sector, and making genuine investments in Kuwaiti human capital through education and training.

"Kuwait possesses financial resources, a strategic geographic location, and stability. However, it needs to move from a reactive approach to a policy of building resilience.

"The real question is not how global developments will affect us, but whether we will treat them as a temporary crisis or as an opportunity to rebuild the economic model. The answer will determine Kuwait's position in the coming decade."

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"May God have mercy on the late Kuwaiti astronomer **Dr. Saleh Al-Ojeiri**, whose knowledge was not limited to observing the stars and calculating time, but extended to offering insights into the future of the region with rare strategic foresight," Ret. Brigadier General **Abdullah Faleh Al-Ajmi** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

"More than four decades ago, Dr. Al-Ojeiri issued a warning that seemed far-fetched to many when he said, 'The next battle in our region will not be over oil, but over water.'

"Today, in 2026, this statement is no longer merely a prediction, but has become the title of one of the most serious security and political issues facing countries in the region.

"Dr. Al-Ojeiri's vision was ahead of its time, reflecting his deep understanding of the geographical map of the Middle East, including the scarcity of rainfall and the dependence of most rivers on external sources.

"The Tigris and Euphrates originate in Turkey, the Nile River originates in the Ethiopian Highlands, and the rivers of Iran originate in its highlands. From this, Dr. Al-Ojeiri concluded that whoever controls the water supply controls the fate of nations.

"What Dr. Al-Ojeiri said was not a call for pessimism, but rather a scientific analysis of the relationship between geography and conflict.

"The facts on the ground confirm this warning. What Dr. Al-Ojeiri warned against is now being experienced in detail, such as the decline in water levels in the Tigris and Euphrates rivers as a result of Turkey's construction of more than 22 dams as part of the Anadolu Project.

"Iraq's water share has decreased to less than 50 percent of its historical allocation. The city of Basra is now suffering from water salinity and a decline in agricultural activity.

"Al-Ojeiri's warnings about the drying up of the Euphrates have become a daily reality. The Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) represents an existential challenge for Egypt and Sudan.

"The stalled negotiations confirm that the water issue is no longer a technical matter, but rather a matter of national security, just as Dr. Al-Ojeiri described it - 'Egypt's corpse without the Nile.'

"The Gulf states rely on seawater desalination for more than 90 percent of their water needs. Any disruption to energy sources poses a direct threat to water security. This underscores the importance of Dr. Al-Ojeiri's early call for investment in groundwater and nuclear desalination plants as a long-term strategic option.

"Dr. Al-Ojeiri's vision does not contradict reality; rather, it interprets and anticipates it. Politically, Kuwait has engaged with this issue and become a regional mediator in water diplomacy.

"Scientifically, international climate reports have confirmed that climate change has contributed to an increase in conflicts. This aligns with the idea that Dr. Al-Ojeiri pointed to decades ago.

"From a security perspective, water scarcity can lead to forced migration, social tension, and a fertile ground for extremism. This is an equation well understood by security officials.

"The stability of nations today begins with 'dams' before 'tanks.'"

"Dr. Saleh Al-Ojeiri was not only an astronomer but also a strategic thinker who read the map of the future before its borders were drawn.

"The water war that Dr. Al-Ojeiri warned against is no longer a hypothetical scenario; it has become a permanent item on the agenda of the UN Security Council. Perhaps the best way to conclude is with what Al-Ojeiri said, summarizing the crisis - Water is more precious than oil, because oil burns while water gives life. Whoever controls water controls everything."

— Compiled by **Simi K. Kutty**

## KFF e-service helps disabled in emergencies

KUWAIT CITY, June 15, (KUNA): Kuwait Fire Force (KFF) said on Monday it is committed to providing high levels of protection and safety for persons with disabilities through advanced electronic services that enhance emergency response and evacuation efficiency.

Speaking to KUNA, Fire Force spokesperson Brigadier Mohammad Al-Gharib said the service, available on the force's website, allows persons with disabilities to register personal data to enable prior identification of special cases in homes and facilities during emergencies.

He said the system improves preventive safety by providing accurate information to firefighting teams, enabling faster and more appropriate response during rescue and evacuation

operations.

Al-Gharib noted the initiative reflects the Fire Force's social responsibility and its efforts to use modern technology to improve emergency readiness and service delivery.

He urged families to regularly update data to ensure maximum benefit from the service and strengthen coordination with relevant authorities to safeguard lives.



Col Al-Gharib



An abandoned van is seized by the Capital Municipality. Kuwait Municipality photo

## 384 abandoned, scrap vehicles picked in May

KUWAIT CITY, June 15: The Public Hygiene and Road Occupancy Department of Capital Municipality announced the removal of 384 abandoned and scrap vehicles during May 2026, reports **Al-Seyassah** daily.

A total of 190 vehicles were released after their owners rectified the violations. Also, 5,059 warning stickers were placed on abandoned vehicles and boats, indicating their impending removal after the legal deadline.

Faisal Al-Otaibi, Director of the Public Hygiene and Road Occupancy Department at Capital Municipality, explained that intensive field inspection campaigns conducted during May aimed to identify negative practices and take legal action against violators.

The campaigns also focused on monitoring public hygiene operations and ensuring that cleaning companies fulfill their obligations throughout the governorate.

The campaigns resulted in issuing 427 citations related to public hygiene and the misuse of public spaces.

Al-Otaibi emphasized the continuation of monitoring tours and the enforcement of legal measures against violators, stressing that Kuwait Municipality maintains zero tolerance for violations in order to preserve the civilized appearance of the Capital Governorate and enhance cleanliness standards in all areas.

## Customs auction raises KD109,100 in revenues

KUWAIT CITY, June 15: The General Administration of Customs (GAC) announced that the total value collected from a public auction held last Tuesday in Sulaibiya reached KD 109,100, reports **Al-Anba** daily.

GAC indicated that this amount will contribute to strengthening state revenues as part of its strategic objectives.

The daily had reported on June 8 that the auction was being held to sell 2,625 cartons of cigarettes, 230 boxes of shisha tobacco, a 20-foot container of paper cups and plastic lids, another 20-foot container of nails, a container of porcelain tiles, and a 40-foot container of wood.

12 booze bottles seized

## Kuwaiti man acquitted of trafficking in liquor

KUWAIT CITY, June 15: The Misdemeanor Court acquitted a citizen of possessing 12 bottles of liquor with the intent to sell them, reports **Al-Seyassah** daily.

In its reasoning, the court reaffirmed the legal principle that there is no crime or punishment without clear legal basis, citing the absence of conclusive evidence on the intent to sell and the established fact that the liquor was possessed for personal consumption. It stated that the case file has no definitive evidence demonstrating that the defendant engaged in the sale or distribution of alcoholic beverages.

It indicated that the two prosecution witnesses testified that they did not know the reason behind the defendant's possession of the seized liquor, and that there was no evidence showing he was seen selling, delivering or receiving the alcoholic beverages.

It also pointed out that the police investigation concluded the seized liquor was in the possession of the defendant for personal use. This finding was supported by the statements of the defendant during the investigation and in court, where he denied any intention to sell or distribute the beverages.

It emphasized that suspicions and assumptions are insufficient grounds for a criminal conviction, stressing that criminal judgments must be based on certainty and firm conviction rather than doubt or speculation.

It reiterated that the case file lacked any evidence establishing the legal elements required to prove the offense of selling or distributing alcoholic beverages.

Earlier, the Public Prosecution referred the defendant to trial for possessing alcoholic beverages with the intent to sell, seeking his punishment under Article 206 bis of the Penal Code.

During the court proceedings, Attorney Abdulmohsen Al-Qattan appeared on behalf of the defendant and argued that the elements of the offense were not established and that there was no evidence his client engaged in the sale or distribution of the beverages.

He asserted that the seized liquor was intended for personal use, a claim that was supported by both the investigation results and the defendant's own statements.

## 'Royal' gets 3 yrs in funds scandal

Duo acquitted in insult case

KUWAIT CITY, June 15: The Court of Cassation sentenced **Sheikh Talal Al-Khaled** to three years in prison in two "expenses" cases, ordering the penalties to be combined so that the enforceable sentence becomes three years with hard labor and enforcement, reports **Al-Seyassah** daily.

The court had previously reserved judgment on the appeal submitted by **Sheikh Talal Al-Khaled** against a ruling issued by the Ministers Court, which required him to repay amounts he spent from the budgets of the Ministries of Interior and Defense.

The Ministers Court had earlier convicted **Sheikh Talal Al-Khaled** and sentenced him to 14 years in prison - seven years in each case - while also ordering him to repay KD 10 million and imposing an additional fine of around KD 20 million. The charges were related to alleged embezzlement of funds from the budgets of the Ministries of Defense and Interior and money laundering.

With its latest ruling, the Court of Cassation has closed the case by sentencing **Sheikh Talal Al-Khaled** to three years in prison in each case.

□ □ □

**2 acquitted in insult case:** The Court of

Appeals upheld the ruling a lower court, which acquitted two defendants of public insult, threats and making an indecent gesture, after hearing the arguments presented by Attorney **Inam Haidar**, who represented the defendants in court, reports **Al-Seyassah** daily.

According to the case documents, the complainant alleged that one of the defendants insulted and threatened him and made a gesture considered indecent, while the other was accused of taking part in the threats.

Throughout the investigation and trial proceedings, both defendants denied the allegations against them. **Haidar** contended that the evidence presented was insufficient to support a conviction, arguing that the case file contained no conclusive proof to substantiate the accusations or establish that her clients committed the alleged acts.

In its reasoning, the court stressed that criminal convictions must be founded on certainty rather than doubt or speculation. It stated that the complainant's testimony alone was not enough to establish guilt where doubts existed regarding the accusation and where no supporting credible evidence was available.

The court also found that the case file did not contain sufficient evidence that the defendants committed the alleged acts and that the evidence presented did not meet the required standard of certainty for a criminal conviction. Accordingly, it ruled to acquit the defendants.

## Border cops foil smuggling bid

## 210 cigarette cartons seized

KUWAIT CITY, June 15: The General Department of Criminal Investigation, represented by the Land Border Investigations Department, thwarted an attempt to smuggle a large quantity of cigarettes out of Kuwait through the Nuwaiseeb border crossing and arrested a Gulf national involved in the incident, reports **Al-Seyassah** daily.

In an official statement, the Ministry of Interior explained that detectives, based on suspicions, inspected the suspect's vehicle and discovered 210 cartons of cigarettes carefully concealed within its body.

Investigations revealed that the suspect

had previously fled a customs checkpoint earlier that same day but later returned and surrendered himself that evening.

During questioning, the accused confessed to purchasing the cigarettes in advance from two individuals - an Indian and a Syrian. He received the cigarettes at a dirt lot in Wafra, then transported and concealed them inside the vehicle in preparation for smuggling them out of the country.

The necessary legal procedures were taken against the suspect, and the vehicle used in the smuggling operation was confiscated in accordance with the relevant regulations.



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Other Voices

A real Kuwaiti court case reveals why proving an act is not always enough to establish criminal responsibility

# He did it, the court proved it, yet he was not criminally liable

**Dr. Fawaz Khaled Alkhateeb**

Managing Partner, Taher Group Law Firm  
Fawaz@tahergrp.org

After years spent inside Kuwait's criminal courtrooms, there is one question I am asked more than almost any other: If someone commits a crime and the evidence proves it, why wouldn't they be punished?

For many people, justice appears straightforward. An act is committed, the facts are established, guilt is proven, and punishment follows. Yet some of the most important principles of criminal law emerge from cases where the answer is not nearly as simple as it first appears.

A recent case before the Kuwaiti courts provides a powerful example.

The incident involved a man who drove toward the Abdali border crossing, broke through a security barrier, ignored repeated instructions to stop, attempted to flee, and ultimately collided with a police patrol vehicle during efforts to intercept him. The allegations were serious.

The location was sensitive. The conduct posed obvious risks to public safety and to law enforcement officers carrying out their duties.

At first glance, many would assume that the legal outcome was inevitable.

The incident had occurred. Witnesses were present. Official reports documented the events. Technical evidence supported the prosecution's case. From a factual standpoint, the circumstances appeared clear.



Dr. Alkhateeb

Yet criminal courts are not concerned only with determining whether an event took place. They must also determine whether the person who committed the act possessed the legal capacity required to be held criminally responsible for it.

That distinction became the defining issue in this case. As the proceedings unfolded, the court examined medical evidence indicating that the accused suffered from a serious mental illness affecting his awareness, perception, and ability to understand the nature and consequences of his actions at the time of the incident. The court carefully reviewed the medical findings alongside the remaining evidence before reaching its conclusion.

The judgment was both legally significant and publicly instructive. The court found that the acts themselves had occurred. The facts were established. The conduct was proven.

However, the court also found that criminal responsibility could not be established because the accused lacked the degree of awareness and understanding required by law at the time of the events. As a result, the court ruled that he was not criminally liable. The judgment later became final after no appeal was filed.

To many outside the legal profession, such a result may seem surprising. Some may even ask how a person can commit an act of this nature and yet avoid criminal punishment.

The answer lies in one of the most fundamental principles of criminal justice.

A criminal act alone is not enough. Criminal liability requires both the act itself and the existence of criminal responsibility. The law requires that a person possess sufficient awareness, understanding, and mental capacity to appreciate the nature of what he is doing and the consequences that may follow. When

that capacity is absent because of a serious mental disorder, the legal analysis changes entirely.

This principle is neither a loophole nor an act of leniency. It is a cornerstone of justice recognized by modern legal systems throughout the world. Courts do not accept such claims lightly. Medical reports are scrutinized, expert evaluations are examined, and judges carefully assess all available evidence before reaching a conclusion that criminal responsibility is absent.

The threshold is intentionally high because the consequences are profound.

Throughout my legal career, I have often found that the most challenging cases are not those involving disputed facts, but those involving the complex intersection of law, medicine, psychology, and human behavior. These are the cases that remind us that justice cannot be reduced to a simple equation of act and punishment.

The law exists not merely to punish wrongdoing, but to assign responsibility where responsibility truly exists. A fair legal system must protect society, but it must also ensure that punishment is imposed only when the legal conditions for criminal liability have been satisfied.

The Abdali checkpoint case serves as an important reminder of that balance. It illustrates a legal truth that deserves wider public understanding: proving that an event occurred is not the same as proving criminal responsibility for that event. While the two often exist together, they are not always identical.

In every criminal courtroom, two questions must ultimately be answered. The first is whether the act occurred. The second is whether the person who committed it possessed the awareness and understanding required by law. The first determines the facts. The second determines justice.

# Water provision is priority: MEW

By **Mohammad Ghanem**

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

**KUWAIT CITY, June 15: The Grievances Committee asked the Central Agency for Public Tenders (CAPT) to provide copies of documents and information related to two grievances currently under review.**

The first grievance, submitted by a compa-

ny, is about the tender for the supply and installation of three main substations (132/11 kV) for a cloud data center project at various locations in the country, including feeders and accessories.

The second grievance, also filed by a company, is about the tender for the supply and installation of a main substation in Al-Matahin (132/11 kV - B), along with its feeder and accessories. The committee informed the agency that it is in the process of reviewing and deciding on both grievances.

As a result, it requested the suspension of all

procedures related to the challenged decision until a final ruling is issued.

On the other hand, CAPT stated during its meeting last Wednesday that it provided the committee with copies of all relevant documents and notified the Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy to suspend the procedures.

In addition, the Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy is awaiting the approval of the State Audit Bureau (SAB) for Phase Two of the Doha Reverse Osmosis Water Production Plant project, at a total cost of KD114.28 million.



Pictures from the legal workshop conducted by Dar Al Muhama for Americana Kuwait employees.

## Dar Al Muhama delivers legal workshop for Americana Kuwait staff to strengthen corporate compliance under Kuwait Law

KUWAIT CITY, June 15: As part of the growing emphasis among leading institutions on promoting a culture of compliance and corporate governance, Americana Kuwait hosted a specialized legal workshop delivered by the team of Dar Al Muhama, led by Mr. Abdulrahman Al-Houti, Founding Partner. The workshop addressed the mutual rights and obligations of employees and employers under the provisions of the Kuwaiti Labor Law, as well as the practical mechanisms for implementing these provisions within the workplace to ensure legal compliance and foster employment stability.

The workshop was attended by Mr. Tarun, General Manager of Americana Kuwait, together with a number of human resources professionals and operational department representatives. Representing Dar Al Muhama were Ms. Mariam Al-Failakawi, Senior Attorney, Mr. Ahmed Mousa, Office Manager and Senior Legal Consultant, and Mr. Osama Abdullah, Administrative Director.

During the workshop, Ms. Mariam Al-Failakawi outlined the legal framework governing internal investigations and disciplinary measures, emphasizing the importance of strict adherence to due legal procedures to ensure the validity and integrity of employment-related decisions. She noted that understanding the reciprocal rights and obligations of both employees and employers is not merely an administrative requirement, but rather a fundamental pillar for safeguarding the interests of both parties and maintaining workplace stability in accordance with the provisions of the Kuwaiti Labor Law.

For his part, Mr. Ahmed Mousa, Office Manager of Dar Al Muhama, reviewed the key practical challenges faced by human resources departments in implementing labor legislation. He emphasized the importance of adopting professional best practices that strike an appropriate balance between the

demands of effective management and compliance with legal requirements. He further noted that enhancing legal awareness among operational leadership contributes directly to improving institutional decision-making and reducing exposure to legal risks and labor disputes.

### Vision

In turn, Mr. Osama Abdullah, Administrative Director of Dar Al Muhama, stated that this initiative forms part of the firm's vision to support Kuwait's private sector by transferring practical legal expertise and transforming it into a sustainable culture of institutional compliance. He highlighted that keeping pace with the rapidly evolving regulatory landscape in the local market requires continuous legal awareness, stressing that compliance with applicable legislation remains one of the most important foundations for strengthening institutional confidence and enhancing the long-term attractiveness of the business environment for investment.

Participants affirmed that raising the level of legal awareness within companies and institutions constitutes a key factor in supporting business sustainability and strengthening corporate compliance, particularly in light of the rapid regulatory developments taking place within Kuwait's business environment.

Dar Al Muhama's participation in such specialized programs reflects its ongoing commitment to supporting companies and institutions operating in Kuwait through the provision of practical legal expertise tailored to business requirements and the local regulatory framework. This contributes to strengthening compliance, managing legal risks in accordance with best professional practices, and meeting the evolving expectations of the business and investment community in the Kuwaiti market.



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Continued from Page 1

**Growing the**

A recent decision requires investors to have a minimum investment of KD five million and a minimum capital of KD one million to obtain premium residency. This condition is deterring investors, especially considering that some Arabian Gulf states have established more flexible requirements for investors.

In some countries, owning an apartment is sufficient to grant permanent residency. These countries also offer incentives for establishing tourism projects, making them more competitive than Kuwait, which appears to still believe it is the only "paradise."

In February 2014, the Cabinet approved a project to develop Kuwait's islands through a public-private partnership. The project included the development of Boubyan Island, Failaka Island, Warbah Island, Miskan Island, and Awbah Island, transforming them into integrated free economic and tourism zones.

Over the past 12 years, no projects have been implemented on these islands. In the years following this decision, Kuwait has lost over KD 40 billion, spent by citizens and residents abroad on tourism.

Indeed, Al-Rai daily was right in stating that the private sector is a partner, not an adversary, of the government. Do ministers understand this? Will they move quickly to cancel the decisions and laws that are contributing to the decline in domestic spending? Will they free investment from restrictions? Developing the national product requires developing welfare projects.

**Kuwait restores**

In a statement on Monday, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs praised the role played by Pakistan, Qatar and other friendly and fraternal countries in helping bridge differences and facilitate the agreement.

The ministry reaffirmed Kuwait's support for resolving disputes through peaceful means in accordance with international law and the UN Charter.

It expressed hope that the understanding would pave the way for broader efforts to address outstanding issues through sustainable solutions that promote good neighborliness, mutual respect, confidence-building and non-interference in the internal affairs of states.

The ministry said such efforts would contribute to strengthening

regional and international security and stability and ensuring continued freedom of navigation in the Strait of Hormuz.

Kuwait also called on all parties to engage in upcoming negotiations in a positive and constructive spirit to support cooperation, stability and prosperity for the peoples of the region and the world.

Saudi Arabia welcomed the agreement to end military operations and begin detailed negotiations within 60 days aimed at a permanent deal. It emphasized restoring security and freedom of navigation in the Hormuz to its pre-February 28 status and called for an agreement that considers the security interests of the region's countries.

The UAE stressed the priority of dialogue, diplomacy, and full commitment to international law, calling for complete adherence to the agreement's terms to ensure an immediate end to aggressive actions, respect for sovereignty, and protection of maritime routes - particularly the smooth flow of traffic through the Strait of Hormuz.

The GCC Secretary-General and the OIC also welcomed the MoU, praising Pakistan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and Türkiye for their constructive efforts and reaffirming commitment to peace and diplomacy in line with the UN Charter.

Iraq welcomed the agreement and expressed aspiration to restore relations with sisterly countries affected by the war. It reaffirmed its rejection of war and emphasis on dialogue, and welcomed the imminent reopening of the Hormuz to normal maritime traffic, underscoring its importance for global energy markets.

Lebanese President Joseph Aoun welcomed the MoU, noting it recognizes Lebanon's stability as inseparable from regional security and expressing hope it would enable reconstruction and return to normal life. Palestine welcomed the understandings while renewing its call for ending the war in Gaza and achieving a just, comprehensive peace leading to an independent sovereign state. Jordan welcomed the deal as an important step toward restoring regional and international security.

Internationally, Spain, Malaysia, and China welcomed the agreement. China appreciated Pakistan's mediation, stressed the Hormuz's vital role as an international shipping route, and said Beijing will continue playing a constructive role in supporting Gulf and Middle East stability.

The agreement is scheduled to be

signed in Geneva on June 19 and is intended to pave the way for negotiations on Iran's nuclear file and other outstanding issues.

The United States and Iran reached an initial agreement Monday that would extend their shaky ceasefire and lead to the reopening of the Strait of Hormuz, but significant challenges remain to ending the war, including whether Israel will continue its offensive in Lebanon.

Details of the deal were not immediately released, but it appeared that it would not be implemented until it is signed, which mediator Pakistan said would happen Friday in Geneva. Even if the strait - a crucial waterway for the world's oil and natural gas - fully opens then, it will likely take months for the global energy crisis sparked by its closure to ease.

Israel's defense minister said Monday that the country wouldn't withdraw from land seized in Lebanon, where Israel is fighting the Iranian-backed Hezbollah militant group. Israel joined the U.S. in launching the war on Feb. 28, but it is not party to the deal. A spokesman in Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office said Israel will continue to defend itself against any threat to its security.

That alone could scupper the deal, since Iran has insisted any agreement to end the war include an end to the fighting in Lebanon.

But the agreement also faces other major challenges. It gives just 60 days to decide what to do about Iran's stockpile of highly enriched uranium and its nuclear program - which the U.S. and Israel worry could be used to build an atomic weapon, despite Tehran's insistence that it is peaceful. It took years for Iran and world powers to negotiate a 2015 agreement to rein in Tehran's nuclear program.

President Donald Trump unilaterally withdrew the U.S. from that accord in his first term, setting the stage for the tensions that culminated in the current war, which has killed thousands across the Middle East, including the top leaders of Iran's theocracy, and raised the prices of fuel, food and other basic goods far beyond the region.

Trump, who faced pressure to end the war ahead of congressional midterm elections in November, hailed the agreement on social media, saying he had authorized the Strait of Hormuz to open and the U.S. blockade of Iranian ports to end. He later said the strait wouldn't open until Friday.

Iran's deputy foreign minister, Kazem Gharibabadi, confirmed the agreement on state television but said Iran would not start implementing it until it was signed.

**Grade 12**

under the best possible conditions, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

These efforts led to the successful conduct of the examinations and the achievement of high levels of discipline and stability in the examination centers through continuous field monitoring and coordination among various educational and administrative sectors.

Students in Grades 10 and 11 concluded their end-of-year examinations on Monday, following a smooth and well-organized examination period.

The ministry, in cooperation with the school administrations and educational authorities, provided a suitable learning environment that enabled students to sit their examinations in a safe and stable setting, which respected academic standards and ensured equal opportunities for everyone.

Towards the end of the examination period, Grade 10 students took the Islamic Education exams, while Grade 11 students in the science and arts streams took the English language exams. This marked the end of the examination period for both grades following the strict implementation of the regulations and procedures governing examinations, including the rules related to examination violations. These measures helped ensure the integrity of the examinations and uphold the principle of fairness among students.

The ministry attributed the successful completion of the examinations to the efforts of all the relevant sectors. It pointed out that field and administrative teams continuously monitored the work of examination committees to guarantee the smooth implementation of procedures and provide necessary support to students, enabling them to sit their examinations in a calm and organized environment.

It expressed its deep appreciation to the academic and administrative staff, as well as all personnel involved in the examination committees, praising their dedication throughout the academic year and during the examination period. It stated that their professionalism and commitment to their responsibilities played a crucial role in the success of the examinations and in achieving the highest levels of discipline and organization within the examination centers.

It also expressed its gratitude to par-

ents for their support and continuous follow up of their children throughout the academic year.

**Kuwait, Thailand**

the leaders of both countries.

"Thailand fondly remembers the visit of HH the late Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to Bangkok in June 2006 to attend celebrations marking the 60th anniversary of the accession to the throne of King Bhumibol Adulyadej," he added.

He confirmed that the same mutual respect and trust continues to guide bilateral relations under the reign of King Maha Vajiralongkorn Phra Vajiraklaechaewahua and the leadership of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

He asserted that "Thailand has long been a trusted destination for healthcare and medical treatment for Kuwaiti citizens, reflecting the high level of confidence Kuwaitis place in the Thai healthcare sector. Around six percent of Kuwaitis visited Thailand in 2025, benefiting from the cultural diversity, 'halal' cuisine and numerous tourist attractions of the country. The hospitality sector in Thailand takes pride in welcoming Muslim tourists and providing them with a comfortable and welcoming environment."

He also affirmed that "relations between our peoples show a strong human connection. While Thailand continues to welcome Kuwaiti citizens, Kuwait is home to about 1,080 Thai nationals who consider it their second home. This strengthens friendship of the two countries and gives diplomatic relations a truly human dimension."

He emphasized that Thailand, as a trusted partner and friend of Kuwait, will continue to support and strengthen cooperation in a manner that contributes to the realization of Kuwait Vision 2035 and aligns with the shared goals of economic diversification and sustainable development.

**Kuwait-Saudi**

Sources confirmed that Khafji achieved sustainable daily production of 4,190 barrels of natural gas liquids, contributing to the maximization of value from hydrocarbon resources and improving processing and extraction efficiency.

As part of efforts to maintain production levels, KGOC complet-

ed the drilling of two wells for the disposal of water generated during production operations. This development is expected to support ongoing production activities.

In addition, the company started the installation of its second crude oil pipeline to develop the transportation infrastructure. The pipeline is expected to raise the efficiency of crude oil transportation, support production sustainability, and improve overall operational performance.

Remarkable progress was also achieved in strategic projects through the completion of the first phase of the new gas pipeline linking Khafji with the Mina Al-Ahmad Refinery. The project is an important step toward increasing production capacity and maximizing the utilization of gas resources.

Sources added that, in support of electrical infrastructure, the power generation plant at Khafji has been commissioned. A power transformer was activated as well in line with the energy activation initiative of Saudi Electricity Company. These measures ensure operational stability and provide a dependable source of electricity for production activities.

Regarding the Wafra Joint Operations, sources confirmed that the average daily share of Kuwait reached 77,520 barrels per day, reflecting stable operational performance and the commitment to achieve the highest level of efficiency in oil extraction and production.

The company also reported a significant achievement in drilling operations with the completion of 51 new wells, including horizontal and lateral wells. This accomplishment contributes to increasing production capacity and improving oil recovery rates.

In line with its strategy to boost production from challenging reservoirs, five wells were drilled under the low-porosity carbonate development program targeting the Wara and Ratawi limestone reservoirs. The initiative is aimed at improving oil recovery from low-permeability formations through the use of advanced technologies.

An agreement was also reached with the partner to determine drilling locations for Eocene-1 reservoir wells within the Cyclic Steam Stimulation (CSS) project, which is designed to enhance recovery from heavy oil reservoirs, support long-term production growth, and raise the efficiency of oil recovery operations.



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## INTERNATIONAL

## US AI restrictions underscore risk of dependence, says Canadian PM

WESTPORT, Ireland, June 15, (AP): Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney said Sunday US restrictions on Anthropic's newest AI models show the dangers of overreliance on a limited number of American providers.

AI giant Anthropic said Friday it has taken its latest artificial intelligence models, known as Fable 5 and Mythos 5, offline to comply with a directive from the Trump administration to prevent their use by foreign nationals.

The export controls mark the US government's most significant step to date to restrict access to the most advanced AI models. Anthropic released Fable widely this week. That model is a limited version of the even more advanced Mythos, to which the company has tightly limited access due to cybersecurity fears.

"The situation we're in collectively right now with Mythos and Fable is something that can happen with overreliance on certain models," Carney said. "Nobody has done anything wrong in the situation. But we will have done something wrong if we just accept this, don't take the lesson, don't build out and diversify."

Carney made the comments in Ireland ahead of the G7 summit in Evian-les-Bains, France. He said artificial intelligence will be one of the



Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney delivers a speech during his visit to Westport Town Hall Theatre in Westport, Ireland on June 14. (AP)

major discussions on Monday night.

Anthropic, based in San Francisco, California, has said the new Mythos model it announced on April 7 is so "strikingly capable" that it is limiting its use to select customers because of its ability to surpass human cybersecurity experts in finding and exploiting computer vulnerabilities.

"You'll hear me say this over and over again. It is never a good idea to have one option," Carney said.

Carney said he spent 45 minutes talking with French President Emmanuel Macron about artificial intelligence on Friday night. He said there "will not be a mission accomplished banner" that comes out of the summit because the issues are complex.

Carney linked the US AI curbs to Canada's push to diversify trade and technology. More than 70% of Canada's exports go to the US and Carney has set a goal for Canada to double its non-US exports in the next decade. Trump's trade war is causing a chill in investment.

Carney doesn't have a bilateral meeting scheduled with Trump at the G7 despite the free trade agreement between US, Canada and Mexico being up for renewal. He said USMCA discussions will be held at the summit among Dominic LeBlanc, the minister responsible for US trade, Janice Charette, Canada's chief negotiator, and US Trade Ambassador Jamieson Greer and Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent.

"The right way to do it at this stage, will be between the principal negotiators, which is going to happen in Evian," he said.



Emergency personnel investigate the site of a plane crash at the Butler Memorial Airport in Butler, Mo, on June 14. (AP)

## 12 dead in crash of plane on skydiving outing in Missouri

Poor maintenance is often a factor when skydiving planes crash like one did in Missouri on Sunday, and the National Transportation Safety Board has said in past investigations that weak oversight of the skydiving industry can allow problems to go unnoticed.

It is far too soon to know what caused this weekend's crash that happened shortly after a plane took off from a small air-

port about an hour south of Kansas City. Twelve people died in the crash while some of their family members watched from the ground at Butler Memorial Airport. The NTSB will work to determine what happened over the next year or more before publishing its final report on the cause although the agency will release some preliminary details over the next month.

Just two years ago, another skydiving plane crashed near the same airport, but in that case everyone aboard was able to parachute to safety beforehand. The NTSB found that the handle for deploying a skydiver's emergency parachute got caught on something and sent him crashing into the plane's horizontal stabilizer as he jumped, causing the crash. (AP)

Top administration officials, Republican leaders attend event

## Trump celebrates 80th birthday and country's 250th with UFC fights at WH

WASHINGTON, June 15, (AP): US President Donald Trump marked his 80th birthday by staging a once unfathomable cage-fighting show on the White House's storied South Lawn.

Top administration officials and Republican leaders attended the fights, including Secretary of State Marco Rubio and House Speaker Mike Johnson. Polish President Karol Nawrocki was also at the White House.

It started with Trump and UFC chief Dana White walked together from the Oval Office to the Blue Room Balcony to survey the Octagon, standing for the national anthem as fighter jets thundered overhead.

Thousands of spectators crowded into the temporary arena under "The Claw," a spaceship-like metal arch fitted with lights, sound equipment and large screens. Thousands more watched on big screens from the nearby Ellipse.

"This event is one of one event, incredible event," said White, a close friend of the president's, dur-

ing 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.

Before Sunday's final fight, lightweight fighters Ilia Topuria and Justin Gaethje, who wrapped himself in an American flag, each stepped out of the Oval Office and walked to the Octagon - meaning Trump even ceded his workspace as part of the show.

The American Gaethje then stunned Spanish-Georgian Topuria to win after four rounds that left copious blood on the cage floor. Trump later headed inside the cage to shake hands and watch a fireworks display that launched well after 1 am.

That capped a night where many of the winning fighters thanked Trump.

Hokit also headed over to Trump and placed a chain around the president's neck.

Wearing a suit and tie despite the summer heat, Trump a lot of time sitting stoned-faced, watching the action through wire-mesh cage. At



US President Donald Trump and Dana White, UFC president and CEO, stand on the Blue room Balcony during the National Anthem at UFC Freedom 250 on the South Lawn of the White House on June 14, in Washington. (AP)

one point he spoke briefly with Meta CEO Mark Zuckerberg.

When American Sean O'Malley fought Canadian Aiemann Zahabi,

feating American Steve Garcia in the opening fight, the president could be seen speaking to first lady Melania Trump. After Bo Nickal knocked out Kyle Daukaus in the second fight, Nickal went over to Trump and knelt down, chatting briefly.

"I gotta thank President Trump for making this happen," Nickal said in a subsequent interview, as Trump grinned. Nickal added that the president is a "special person," before Trump-favorite "YMCA" played.

The president sought to tie the fights to larger celebrations of the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. But it was so geared toward himself that the G7 summit for leaders of industrialized nations pushed back their get-together so that the president could attend his cage-match party and then fly to Europe for the meetings.

The weekend wasn't all smiles for Trump, though. Crews pried Trump's name off the Kennedy

Center near the White House after a judge ruled naming it after the president had gone too far. And, before the fight began, UFC Middleweight champion Sean Strickland - an outspoken critic of Israel - was escorted out of the Ellipse by a crowd of law enforcement officers.

Still, despite forecasts predicting strong chances of thunderstorms that delayed the event briefly, rain wasn't an issue.

The crowd repeatedly chanted, "USA! USA!" when an American fighter faced a foreign opponent. Until the finale, that didn't always help the American fighter prevail. After winning his fight, Brazil's Mauricio Ruffly proposed to his girlfriend who - in Trumpian fashion - flashed a thumb's up from the crowd.

It was all a very long way from when Trump's predecessor, President Joe Biden, turned 80 in November 2022. Biden celebrated with a private family brunch at the White House, laying bare just how much and how quickly things have changed.



Flares are thrown at police during a 'No G7' demonstration in Geneva, Switzerland on June 14, ahead of the G7 summit scheduled to take place June 15-17. (AP)

## Protesters in Geneva clash with police

Riot police fired tear gas and water cannons in clashes with stone-throwing youths during a protest on Sunday in Geneva against the G7 group of wealthy nations, a day before its leaders including US President Donald Trump hold a summit in nearby France.

A violent standoff extended

into the evening after a series of incidents - including a car set ablaze and a bank's windows smashed - along the route of an afternoon march that drew an estimated 20,000 people, including some 600 so-called "Black Bloc" militants, according to figures from Geneva police spokesman Alexandre Brahier.

The demonstration, which had been previously organized by a hodgepodge of activist groups after weeks of negotiations with local authorities, was otherwise peaceful - with environmentalists, women's rights advocates, supporters of Palestinians and foes of imperialism, fascism and capitalism. (AP)

## PM faces dilemma as challenger 'Il Generale' Vannacci rises in Italy

ROME, June 15, (AP): In a packed auditorium in Rome on Sunday, a former Italian army general known to supporters as "Il Generale" rallied followers of his fledgling party, casting himself as an outsider reshaping Italy's right and challenging Premier Giorgia Meloni.

Roberto Vannacci's "National Future" party is injecting uncertainty into the conservative bloc that has underpinned Meloni's government, exposing tensions ahead of the 2027 general election.

Meloni's party has its roots in fascism and she campaigned as an EU-skeptic, prompting analysts to speculate she would be a hard-line nationalist if elected. Instead, she has been a pragmatic conservative leader with a more moderate, pro-European approach, which also ensured a period of unusually long stability for Italy.

In early September, if still in office, Meloni will become the longest-serving head of government in the 80-year history of the Italian Republic, sur-



EU Parliament member and former Italian army general Roberto Vannacci addresses the audience as he concludes the two-day founding congress of his far-right party, Futuro Nazionale (National Future) in Rome on June 14. (AP)

passing the late Silvio Berlusconi.

A rival carving out space to her right could test her ability to hold that tack, analysts say. The question is no longer whether Vannacci will influence the vote, but whether Meloni can contain, co-opt or outmaneuver her challenger.

"With us, Italy will once again be the home of Italians," Vannacci said at his party's founding assembly on Sunday. "Everyone must feel safe in their own home."

One day earlier, he proudly described his core lawmakers as the "dirty dozen," stressing his outsider role.

Vannacci, 57, emerged politically with his 2023 self-published book "Il mondo al contrario" (The World Upside Down), which drew controversy for harsh attacks migrants and minorities.

He entered politics a year later with Matteo Salvini's anti-migration League, winning more than 530,000 preferences in European Parliament elections.

## Russian strikes on Ukraine kill 11 and leave cathedral in flames

KYIV, Ukraine, June 15, (AP): Russia fired hundreds of drones and dozens of missiles at Ukraine's biggest cities in a nighttime bombardment that killed at least 11 people and set fire to a renowned religious site, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy and other officials said Monday.

The attacks on the capital, Kyiv, and the second-largest city, Kharkiv, came after Zelenskyy and Russian President Vladimir Putin spoke separately by phone with US President Donald Trump on Sunday. The exchange suggests Washington hasn't given up on its diplomatic efforts to stop the fighting that followed Moscow's all-out invasion of its neighbor in February 2022.

The war in Ukraine is also set to feature in talks on Tuesday between G7 leaders at a summit in France. Zelenskyy and Trump are due to attend the gathering, as the Ukrainian leader pushes to keep the war on leaders' minds while the Iran war diverts international attention from Ukraine's plight.

"This is how Russia shows the world its intention to continue the war," Zelenskyy said in a post on X, referring to the overnight attack.

"It is very important that there be a response from the G7 countries ... and that this response be decisive and substantive; more pressure on



Accompanied by Ukrainian Prime Minister Yulia Svyrydenko, (center, left), and Interior Minister Ihor Klymenko, President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, (center), enters the Dormition Cathedral of the Kyiv-Pechersk Lavra, which was damaged in an overnight drone attack in Kyiv, Ukraine on June 15. (AP)

the aggressor and more support for Ukraine's air defense, especially anti-ballistic capabilities," the Ukrainian leader said.

Zelenskyy said that the Russian strikes killed 11 civilians and emergency workers and wounded 53 across Ukraine.

Five were killed in Kyiv, Mayor Vitali Klitschko said, where at least 30 others were also wounded, including two children aged 5 and 6, according to Tymur Tkachenko, head of the city's Military Administration.

A series of powerful explosions were heard across Kyiv, with a wave of ballistic missiles followed by Shahed drones as many people sought shelter underground. Clouds of black smoke drifted over the city.

Five strikes hit civilian sites in the city's Shevchenkivskiy district in less than 30 minutes, Tkachenko said, including a 25-story apartment building, while a market and a grocery store caught fire. In the Obolon'skiy district, a nine-story residential building took a direct hit.

## Europe

**PM's party wins in Armenia general election:** Armenia's polling authority on Sunday confirmed that the party led by Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan won a general election seen as a vote on its geopolitical future and a test of Russia's influence in the South Caucasus region.

Pashinyan's government is seeking closer relations with the European Union and the United States despite longstanding ties with Russia that have been championed by his critics.

Final results issued by the Central Electoral Commission for the ballot held on June 7 showed the ruling Civil Contract party won 49.7% of the vote, and it will be able to form a government.

The pro-Russian opposition Strong Armenia party had appealed to the commission to annul the results, citing alleged "widespread violations" during the vote. Strong Armenia and other opposition parties held a rally in front of the Central Electoral Com-



Pashinyan

mission while it was meeting to finalize the election results. (AP)

**Norway crown princess eldest son gets 4 yrs:** Marius Borg Høyby, the eldest son of Norway's Crown Princess Mette-Marit, was sentenced to four years in prison Monday after being convicted of rape.

He was found guilty of two of the four rape charges he was facing and acquitted of the other two.

He was also convicted of assault and abuse in close relationships. In addition to the prison sentence, Høyby was ordered to pay compensation to the victims.

Høyby, 29, had been charged with assaulting four women between 2018 and 2024. He faced a total of 40 criminal charges including some for lesser offenses, such as assault, drug-related crimes and violations of a restraining order.

Høyby had denied the rape allegations but admitted to several of the lesser offenses. Prosecutors had asked Oslo District Court to sentence him to seven years and seven months in prison, while defense lawyers had argued that he should be acquitted of the rape allegations and receive no more than 18 months for offenses he had admitted to. (AP)

'Guerrero's organization terrorizing communities across United States'

## US strike against TDA leader in Venezuela exemplifies Trump's approach to war on drugs

BOGOTA, Colombia, June 15, (AP): The US military attack in Venezuela Friday that killed the leader of the Tren de Aragua gang reflects a strategic shift by US President Donald Trump toward direct US involvement in the war on drugs that began earlier this year, with a special focus this time on gaining access to Venezuela's lucrative mining sector, analysts told The Associated Press.

Trump announced Friday the death of gang leader Hector Rusthenford Guerrero in an airstrike on his compound in rural Venezuela. He has long accused Guerrero's organization, also known as TDA, of terrorizing communities across the United States, where it has been linked to extortion rackets, drug trafficking and illegal immigration.

The group was listed as a foreign terrorist organization by the State Department last year, with federal prosecutors accusing Guerrero of shipping drugs to the US and organizing acts of terror across borders, including the murder of a Venezuelan dissident in Chile.

Venezuela's government said in a

statement Friday that it worked with the US to kill the gang leader, also known as El Niño Guerrero, and described the airstrike as part of a "joint operation" to fight organized crime.

Venezuela's government said the strike occurred in southeastern Bolivar state, an area where various criminal groups, including Colombian rebels, have been running illegal gold mines for more than a decade.

Venezuelan authorities ramped up operations against illegal mining this week, with helicopters shooting at wildcat miners to try to get them to clear the area's open-pit mines.

Bram Ebus, a consultant for the International Crisis Group who researches organized crime in the Amazon basin, said that the recent operations, including the attack on Guerrero's compound, could be part of a broader push to pave the way for foreign investment in Venezuela's mining sector, which has long been hampered by the presence of criminal groups.

After the Trump administration arrested Venezuela's then-President Nicolas Maduro in January during a pre-dawn raid, Venezuela's interim



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

government has passed laws that facilitate foreign investment in the oil and mining industries.

"We know that Venezuela's minerals, including gold and critical minerals, are on the menu of Trump," Ebus said. "This operation cannot be seen apart from Washington's bigger push to access Venezuela's natural resources."

The US has long supported law enforcement agencies in Latin American countries, including Colombia and Mexico, with training, weapons and logistical support to fight drug cartels and organized crime.

"Instead of aiding other militaries to carry out operations, they are

now happy to carry out these attacks on their own," said Adam Isacson, national security expert at the Washington Office on Latin America, a foreign policy think tank based in Washington, referring to the Trump administration.

The US recently launched joint military operations with Ecuador's government against drug traffickers near the Colombian border, while Trump has repeatedly pressed Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum to allow the US to conduct strikes against drug cartels in Mexico. The New York Times reported in May that Guatemala agreed to let the US conduct strikes on its territory, which the Guatemalan president denied.

Trump-aligned Latin American governments could allow direct US strikes against criminal groups in their territory in the following months - if courts in those countries allow it, Isacson said. But this approach poses risks.

"US personnel could be killed or hurt," he said. "There's also the risk that the US could get its intelligence wrong and kill innocent citizens of other countries on their soil, or that

U.S. personnel could be working hand in glove with militaries that are carrying out human rights abuses in the same operation."

Isacson explained that while killing Tren de Aragua's kingpin serves as a victory for the Trump administration, there is no clarity on how the group's finances or its links to corrupt officials have been affected.

"The kingpin strategy has been questioned for decades now," Isacson said. "US prisons are full of cartel leaders, from 'El Chapo' Guzman to the leaders of the Cali Cartel, and the amount of drugs produced has only increased or stayed the same."

Tren de Aragua is a minor player in the global cocaine industry involved in drug shipments leaving Venezuela, so analysts don't expect the killing to drastically change the flow of drugs to the U.S. TDA also takes a cut from illegal gold mining.

Isacson said that outside of Venezuela, the group engages in less profitable crimes, such as extortion and human trafficking.

## Once beset by power outages, thousands of Puerto Ricans also hit with severe water shortages

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico, June 15, (AP): Thousands of Puerto Ricans are struggling with water shortages so severe that the governor of the US territory has activated the National Guard and emergency responders are fielding calls every day.

Officials have not publicly pinpointed the cause, with shortages largely affecting some areas in the island's most populated cities, including the capital San Juan. The island's utilities company extracts water from rivers, reservoirs and underground aquifers that have in the past provided sufficient supply for the island's 3.2 million people.

Residents are being forced to buy potable water, spend money at laundromats and haul heavy buckets up several flights of stairs to wash dishes, flush toilets and take showers. The elderly and disabled struggle the most, with community leaders noting that some have been hospitalized as water shortages persist.

Jorge Figueroa, a community leader for several impoverished San Juan neighborhoods, stood by his car one recent morning fielding questions from residents wondering when the next water truck would swing by.

"They are playing with people's health and lives," Figueroa said.

Some customers in San Juan began reporting intermittent service more than a year ago, with the governor acknowledging the infrastructure has

lacked investment and maintenance for decades.

The water outages have grown so severe that Mayor Miguel Romero sued Puerto Rico's Water and Sewer Authority in late May.

People like Jeannette Mercado Rodríguez have spent up to two weeks without water as Puerto Rico's searing summer starts and meteorologists are already issuing heat advisories.

"This is really exhausting; it's maddening," she said.

The 52-year-old is among the lucky ones: a water truck is stationed near her public housing complex, Las Margaritas. But she still has to haul five buckets and 10 2-liter (half-gallon) bottles up to her third-floor apartment every day. She recently injured her shoulder doing so.

"We can't take it sometimes," Mercado said, confiding that she has broken down and cried. "There are older people here, bedridden people."

Nearly 40,000 customers were hit with water outages on the first weekend of June. That prompted Gov. Jennifer González to activate the National Guard, which began distributing water via four trucks with a capacity of 2,000 gallons (7,570 liters) each.

Puerto Rico's Tourism Company brought in additional water trucks with a capacity of 12,800 gallons (48,453 liters) to help serve hotels and short-term rentals.

The need for water is so great

that even Puerto Rico's Department of Agriculture sanitized two large trucks that transport milk and instead used them to deliver potable water.

Despite those measures, water remains scarce for many in San Juan and beyond. At least one stationary tanker in an impoverished community sat empty for a couple of days, with residents cheering the water truck when it arrived, calling municipal workers "heroes." Other residents also complain that the government doesn't inform them when a water truck will stop by, with those at work missing out.

"This has been a disaster," said Luz Laborde, president of a neighborhood association in Santurce, a working-class community in San Juan. "This is inhuman ... It's destroying the emotional state of a people."

Dozens of Puerto Ricans young and old crowded into a courtroom on a recent morning, eager to hear a ruling on the lawsuit that San Juan's mayor filed against the island's water and sewer company as they questioned when their water would return.

"We are exhausted," said Marcia Soler Paris, a 61-year-old community leader. "We shouldn't be living this way. We don't deserve this."

Every day at dawn, phones ping as people in San Juan and elsewhere share whether they have water, just a trickle or nothing at all.

Soler calls the emergency man-

agement office every other day to request a water truck for her and her neighbors. She lives with her daughter, who has three boys ages 13, 10 and 4, and they play soccer every day. Like many, they don't have a cistern.

"I don't know what it is to see a stream of water," said Soler, who recently spent \$40 at a laundromat and was forced to buy plastic cups and plates for her family.

The extra costs are straining the budgets of many on the island of 3.2 million people where more than 40% live below the poverty line.

Soler said some of her neighbors bedridden and caregivers are forced to use towels and wet wipes to clean them. Another neighbor is blind, so people ferry water up to her apartment.

For years, chronic power outages have been a big frustration for many Puerto Ricans. Water woes also are at the top of the list now.

At Villa Kennedy, a nearby public housing complex, Elizabeth Sánchez, 79, explained how she injured her waist carrying buckets of water. Her husband can no longer help because he injured his back for the same reason.

"What we are going through is horrible," she said as she began to cry.

In February 2025, Puerto Rico's governor appointed Luis González Delgado as executive president of the island's Water and Sewer Authority.



Bryan Pérez hauls a five-gallon water jug to his apartment in the Villa Kennedy public housing complex in San Juan, Puerto Rico on June 10. (AP)



Rong Chhun, a prominent Cambodian opposition politician, right, leaves his Supreme Court hearing in Phnom Penh, Cambodia on June 15. (AP)

## Cambodian opp'n politician seeks Supreme Court reversal of incitement conviction

PHNOM PENH, Cambodia, June 15, (AP): A prominent Cambodian opposition politician emerged Monday from his Supreme Court appeal to a crowd of cheering supporters, telling them he was anxious for judges to overturn his incitement conviction so that he could get back into politics.

Rong Chhun, a top adviser to the Nation Power Party, was found guilty last year of inciting social unrest after he met villagers displaced by government construction projects. His conviction was seen as one of many legal moves taken by the government of Prime Minister Hun Manet to stifle criticism.

The 56-year-old was sentenced to four years in prison and barred from running for office and from voting. At his trial he had argued his innocence, saying all he had done was post photos of himself with the villagers and comments on Facebook.

He emerged from the morning hearing to a crowd of some 300 supporters chanting "Drop the charges, release Rong Chhun!" and holding signs with slogans calling for his freedom.

He told them that with tensions between Cambodia and neighboring Thailand, a struggling economy and other issues facing the country, he wants to promote "national reconciliation and national unity" for Cambodia's 17 mil-

lion people.

"I hope the court will grant me freedom and justice so that I can continue to practice politics in the future," he said.

Roads leading to the court were blocked by several dozen police officers at barricades, and Rong Chhun walked to the hearing accompanied by his supporters, including local and international human rights advocates.

"We are not worried about going to prison," he said. "We are willing to sacrifice everything and we are determined to use the resources our parents gave us to invest so that Cambodia can achieve true freedom and democracy."

Incitement allegations are frequently used by authorities in Cambodia against opponents.

Rong Chhun was already sentenced to two years on incitement charges in 2021, based on accusations he spread false information about Cambodia's border with Vietnam after meeting with farmers in the area. He was released later the same year by an appeals court.

Cambodia's government insists it promotes the rule of law under an electoral democracy, but political parties seen as mounting strong challenges to the ruling Cambodian People's Party have been dissolved by the courts or had their leaders jailed or harassed.

## Drone strikes killed over 1,000 in Sudan in 5 months: UN

CAIRO, June 15, (AP): Drone strikes killed more than 1,000 civilians in war-torn Sudan in the first five months of 2026, a senior United Nations official said Monday as the unmanned aerial vehicles turn the conflict deadlier for civilians.

UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Türk said his office has documented a "sharp increase" in drone attacks as well as rape and sexual violence in the Sudan war, now in its fourth year.

He said his office registered the killing of over 1,000 civilians by drone strikes between January and May this year.

"In Sudan, the horrific conflict has expanded and escalated, marked by a sharp increase in the use of drone warfare," Türk told the Human Rights Council in Geneva.

The war in the northeastern African country broke out on April 15, 2023, when a power struggle between the military and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces exploded into open fighting in the capital, Khartoum, and elsewhere in Sudan.



Lawyers Antonia Mulvay, (left), and Willis Otieno, center, who are part of the legal team filing a law suit against Sudan's Rapid Support Forces (RSF) on behalf of Sudanese torture victims, speak to the media in Nairobi on June 9. (AP)

The war killed at least 59,000 people over the course of three years, according to the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project, known as ACLED. The U.S.-based war-tracking group, however, said the actual toll was almost certainly

higher, given reporting difficulties.

At least 2,670 people, including combatants and civilians, were killed in 2025, marking a 600% increase in drone-related deaths and an 81% increase in drone attacks compared to 2024, according to ACLED.

The latest drone strike by the paramilitary group last week killed at least 15 people after hitting a cemetery and a gas station in the central city of el-Obeid, health officials said at the time.

Both warring parties have increasingly launched explosive-laden drones that, in multiple cases, targeted civilian infrastructure, including hospitals, dams, schools, markets, and displacement camps.

The conflict has created the world's largest humanitarian crisis, with about 34 million people - almost two out of every three Sudanese - needing assistance, according to the UN.

Meanwhile, victims of alleged atrocities linked to the war in Sudan asked prosecutors in Kenya to investigate allegations of torture and sexual violence by members of a notorious paramilitary group.

It is the first attempt to prosecute members of the Rapid Support Forces, or RSF, the paramilitary group fighting against the Sudanese military for over three years, outside Sudan.

### Subcontinent

**Pakistan army aircraft crashes, 2 pilots dead:** A Pakistani Air Force aircraft crashed during a routine training mission in an open area near the northwestern city of Mardan on Monday, killing both pilots, the military and officials said.

In a statement, the military identified the pilots as Flt. Lt. Muhammad Qasim Abdullah of the Pakistan Air Force and Lt. Taha Abbasi of the Navy. It said a board of inquiry has been ordered to determine the cause of the crash.

In separate statements, President Asif Ali Zardari, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, Army Chief Field Marshal Asim Munir and the armed forces expressed "deep grief" over the loss of lives and extended condolences to the families. (AP)

□ □ □

**Head-on vehicle crash kills 5 in Afghanistan:** Five people died and three others were injured when two vehicles collided at high speed in Afghanistan's northern Kunduz province late Friday, local authorities said on Saturday.

The crash occurred on the outskirts of Imam Sahib district when a vehicle carrying young people slammed into an oncoming car due to reckless driving, according to Jumadin Khaksar, spokesman for the provincial police. All five fatalities were young people who died at the scene.

The injured were transferred to a nearby medical facility for treatment, said Khaksar, adding that an investigation into the cause of the accident was underway. (Xinhua)

## Boursa Kuwait ends mixed on Monday

KUWAIT CITY, June 15, (KUNA): Boursa Kuwait ended Monday's trading session on a mixed note, with the General Index edging down by 3.13 points, or 0.04 percent, to close at 8,835.90 points. Market activity remained robust, with total trading volume reaching 530.8 million shares executed through 33,580 cash transactions, valued at KD

143.8 million (approximately USD 469.3 million). The Main Market Index outperformed, rising by 94.23 points, or 1.08 percent, to settle at 8,805.33 points. Trading on this market totaled 274.3 million shares across 16,556 transactions, with a value of KD 40.8 million (around USD 133.1 million).

# Business

Supporting customers with innovative solutions to complement their travel and lifestyle needs

## stc sponsors 'Tourista Expo 2026' for travel and tourism

KUWAIT CITY, June 15: Kuwait Telecommunications Company – stc, a world-class digital leader providing innovative services and platforms to customers, enabling the digital transformation in Kuwait, sponsored the Tourista Expo 2026, where it showcased its comprehensive roaming services and bundles. Through its participation, stc engaged with visitors and highlighted its commitment to supporting customers with reliable and seamless connectivity solutions that help them stay connected wherever they are, ahead of traveling season.

stc offers roaming services in more than 150 countries worldwide, in addition to specially designed bundles for select destinations, including the GCC countries and Turkey, with unlimited internet access where they can benefit from the services using eSIM, by simply subscribing through the stc website or through the mystc App.

The 'Tourista Expo 2026' was held at The Assima Mall from June 11th to the 13th, and brought together various airlines, travel agencies, tourism service providers, and other industry providers under one platform. As part of the exhibition, stc welcomed visitors at its dedicated booth, where visitors learned more about the Company's roaming offerings, travel solutions, and digital services designed to enhance their travel experiences.

During the exhibition, stc showcased a wide range of roaming packages and connectivity solutions tailored to meet the diverse needs of travelers. Visitors had the opportunity to explore flexible roaming options, learn about international coverage and service benefits, and discuss the most suitable packages with stc representatives based on their travel destinations and requirements. Through these offerings, stc continues to deliver convenient, reliable, and customer-centric solutions that ensure uninterrupted connectivity while abroad.



stc's public relations team during the exhibition opening.

stc's public relations team during the exhibition opening.

stc's public relations team during the exhibition opening.

stc's public relations team during the exhibition opening.

reflects our ongoing commitment to staying close to our customers and providing them with solutions that complement their lifestyles and evolving needs. The exhibition provided an ideal opportunity to engage directly with visitors and showcase the roaming services and connectivity solutions that enable them to remain connected wherever they travel."

AINowaiabet added, "At stc, we continuously strive to enhance the customer experience by delivering innovative digital services that support customers both within and beyond Kuwait. Through our advanced connectivity solutions and customer-focused approach, we remain committed to empowering customers with reliable services that provide convenience, flexibility, and peace of mind throughout their journeys. We also actively participate in initiatives that provide us with the opportunity to engage face-to-face with our customers', while also offering solutions that meet their needs during different seasons throughout the year."

In addition to learning more about stc's roaming services and travel connectivity solutions, visitors at the stc booth enjoyed a range of interactive activities and exclusive giveaways throughout the exhibition period. Through its participation, stc continued to demonstrate its position as a leading digital enabler and a pioneer in the telecommunications sector, showcasing solutions that reflect its ongoing commitment to innovation and technological advancement.

### To drive financial strategy and support growth

## Jazeera Airways appoints Andrew Littledale as new CFO

KUWAIT CITY, June 15: Jazeera Airways, Kuwait's leading low-cost carrier, has announced the appointment of Andrew Littledale as Chief Financial Officer (CFO), effective 1 July 2026.

Welcoming Andrew on board, Barathan Pasupathi, Chief Executive Officer of Jazeera Airways, said:

"We are excited to welcome Andrew Littledale to the leadership team at Jazeera Airways. His extensive aviation finance experience and proven track record in financial strategy, transformation and capital management will be invaluable as we continue to strengthen our business and pursue our growth ambitions.

"Andrew's expertise will help support our future expansion while ensuring we remain focused on delivering long-term value for our shareholders, customers and employees."

A Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Management Accountants (FCMA), Littledale brings more than 25 years of international



Jazeera Airways appoints Andrew Littledale as new CFO.

finance leadership experience, including senior executive roles within the aviation industry. He has extensive expertise in financial strategy, capital management, business transformation, investor relations, fleet financing, and corporate restructuring, having worked with leading airline groups including AirAsia, AirAsia X and Air Arabia across Asia, the Middle East and Europe.

His experience in supporting airline growth, enhancing financial performance, and navigating complex operating environments will further strengthen Jazeera Airways' leadership team as the airline continues to expand its network and operations.

As Jazeera Airways continues to strengthen its position as a leading carrier in the region, Littledale's appointment further enhances the airline's executive leadership team, supporting its ambitions for sustained growth, financial discipline, and future expansion.



The American Flag flies next to a One9 Fuel Stop sign displaying gas prices for diesel and unleaded gas in Wilmington, Ohio, Wednesday, June 10, 2026. (AP)

### Ceasefire eases oil prices

## Energy supply faces slow recovery after Iran war

NEW YORK, June 15, (AP): High oil and gasoline prices and energy supply problems won't be solved overnight, despite an agreement to end the Iran war and open the Strait of Hormuz announced Sunday.

It will likely take months before energy companies can resume operations to the point of meeting the world's demand, according to energy experts. The slow pace of the process of shipping and refining crude oil, and doubts about the security of traveling through the strait mean the effect won't be seen immediately, they said.

Ships loaded with crude oil have been stranded in the Persian Gulf for more than three months, unable to safely travel through the waterway, through which about a fifth of the world's oil and gasoline supplies typically traveled before the war began.

"It's going to take time for people to feel comfortable and for insurance to be in place ... particularly to get people on the ground to restart some of these assets," said Daniel Evans, global head of fuels and refining research at S&P Global Energy.

Still, oil prices slipped early Monday after the deal was announced. Brent crude, the international standard, was down \$3.45 at \$83.89 per barrel. U.S. benchmark crude oil lost \$4.03 to \$80.85 per barrel.

Those prices are still well above the roughly \$70 per barrel where oil was trading before the war started.

As the higher prices unwind, ships that have been stranded will have to exit the strait, and then new tankers will have to come in to be loaded, Evans said.

"To bring a ship in, you need to

be confident that you've got a big enough window of safety to bring it in, load it and move it out," he added.

Oil tankers also move slowly, he explained. It takes months to travel from the strait to distant countries, deliver the crude oil to a refinery for processing and then arrive at its final destination.

In addition, some producers in the Middle East paused extracting oil from the ground, known as a shut-in, when they ran out of storage space. Restarting those operations can be a slow process.

Countries such as Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates, where there are alternate pipelines or routes besides the Strait of Hormuz to deliver oil, may be among the quickest to resume production, said Alan Gelder, senior vice president of refining, chemicals and oil markets at Wood Mackenzie, an analytics firm.

"But places like Iraq could be much more challenged because they've had a much bigger shut-in, their fields are more difficult ... it may well take about a year before they get back," he said.

Investment in the energy system, which can take years to see the results, ground to a halt after the strait's closure, Gelder said. So it will take time for this capital to restart.

Countries that shut in oil production won't want to restart until they know there is a stable, durable strait, and that a ceasefire will last more than 30 or 60 days, said Daniel Sternoff, senior fellow at the Center on Global Energy Policy at Columbia University.

"We don't know what open means or what the speed of evacuation of trapped material is going to be," he said.

### As part of the 'Let's Be Aware' campaign

## Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait participates in the radio interview to deliver banking advice

KUWAIT CITY, June 15: As part of its ongoing support for the 'Let's Be Aware' campaign, organized in collaboration with the Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) and the Kuwait Banking Association (KBA), Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) continues its efforts to promote financial inclusion and raise awareness of the diverse banking services and solutions available to all customer segments in Kuwait.

The campaign also aims to educate customers about their rights and responsibilities when conducting banking transactions, digital banking solutions, and other key financial topics, reflecting ABK's role as a responsible and leading financial institution in Kuwait.

On this occasion, Ali Bu Hamad, Head of Complaints and Customer Protection at ABK, participated in a radio interview on the program 'Shay Thani' on Marina FM. During the interview, he discussed the importance of the campaign, shared key banking tips for customers ahead of the travel and holiday season, and provided an overview of the updated Consumer Protection Guide and its significance within the banking sector.

The interview highlighted ABK's commitment to implementing the updated guide, which directs banks to provide comprehensive facilities and services for customers with special needs. The guide also requires banks to provide customers with a Key Information Statement for banking products and services, ensure that all forms and contracts are printed in a unified font with a minimum size of 12, and equip all



Ali Bu Hamad participating in the interview.

branches with accessible entrances and exits to facilitate safe and convenient access for customers with mobility impairments to branches and ATMs. In addition, the interview emphasized the reduction of customer complaint response times to just five business days, among other provisions introduced under the updated regulations that came into effect at the end of April 2026.

Customers were also warned against clicking on untrusted links, particularly as many individuals search online for links to watch major events, such as the FIFA World Cup. It was noted that fraudsters and cybercriminals often exploit such events to carry out scams and steal personal data and funds.

The interview further encouraged customers to contact the Bank immediately if they suspect



any unauthorized or suspicious activity on their accounts and to request the suspension of their cards when necessary. ABK reaffirmed its readiness to support customers and meet their needs around the clock through its call centre, WhatsApp banking service, and branch network.

ABK remains committed to delivering impactful awareness content through its branch screens, digital channels, and social media platforms, covering the various themes of the 'Let's Be Aware' campaign.

This interview is one of a series of initiatives undertaken by ABK throughout the year in support of the campaign and its objectives, contributing to its success and helping the Bank achieve leading positions in the annual evaluation conducted by CBK and KBA.

## Warba Bank expands support for Kuwait's resource conservation campaign

KUWAIT CITY, June 15: Warba Bank announced its sponsorship of the Ministry of Electricity, Water, and Renewable Energy's participation in the "Waffar" national conservation campaign.

The initiative aims to raise public awareness of electricity and water consumption and promote resource efficiency, aligning with the bank's corporate social responsibility (CSR) and sustainable development commitments.

This sponsorship builds on an ongoing partnership between the bank and the ministry to support community awareness campaigns, particularly during the peak summer months when utility demand rises significantly.

### Ministerial Meeting:

As part of this institutional commitment, Hamad Musaed Al-Sayer, Chairman of Warba Bank, led a senior delegation to meet with Minister Dr Sabeeh Al-Mukhaizeem, Minister of Electricity, Water, and Renewable Energy.

The meeting reviewed joint efforts to raise awareness of electricity and water efficiency. The two parties discussed expanding public-private partnerships to launch awareness initiatives that encourage individuals to adopt more efficient resource consumption habits.

Al-Sayer praised the ministry's role in executing strategic conservation programs and infrastructure projects, saying Warba Bank remains committed to supporting national sus-



Chairman Hamad Musaed Al-Sayer meets Minister Dr Sabeeh Al-Mukhaizeem, emphasizing public-private partnerships for sustainable development.

tainability goals.

### Public Awareness Event at 360 Mall:

Commenting on the bank's community outreach, Al-Sayer stated: "Through our sponsorship of the ministry's event at 360 Mall, Warba Bank aims to extend the campaign's reach to a broader audience, providing practical daily guidance on electricity and water conservation."

"The event highlighted simple, effective measures that individuals can implement at home and work to reduce electricity consumption and optimize resource use," Al-Sayer added. "This is especially critical during the summer season, when cooling systems drive peak energy demand."

### Long-Term Sustainability Commitment:

Warba Bank's support for the "Waffar" campaign for the second consecutive year follows its previous digital awareness initiatives. The bank previously leveraged its digital and social media platforms to share educational content featuring ministry specialists who provided practical conservation guidelines for households and businesses.

The bank's long-term environmental commitment aligns with Kuwait's broader national objectives and sustainable development goals (SDGs), while supporting resource efficiency.

Five teams present their final project solutions at the 'NBK Ebtakir' Demo Day

# Al-Fulaij: 'NBK Ebtakir' brings our vision of embedding innovation into the fabric of our corporate culture to life



National Bank of Kuwait's executive management with the winning team in the 'NBK Ebtakir' program.



National Bank of Kuwait team with Plug and Play.



During the Plug and Play speech.



One of the teams participating in the program.



Isam Al-Sager and Shaikha Al-Bahar listening to a presentation by one of the program's participating teams.



Salah Al-Fulaij delivers a speech during the closing ceremony of the 'NBK Ebtakir' program.



Participants listening to team presentations during the program.

KUWAIT CITY, June 15: As part of its ongoing commitment to embedding innovation at the heart of its corporate culture and fostering an environment that encourages creativity, collaboration, and continuous improvement, National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) hosted the Demo Day of its "NBK Ebtakir" program, during which the finalist teams showcased their innovative ideas and final project solutions before the Bank's Executive Management Committee.

Launched in partnership with global innovation platform Plug and Play, the program is the first initiative of its kind in Kuwait and is designed to embed innovation as a core element of NBK's corporate culture. It empowers employees from across the Bank's various divisions to develop innovative business solutions using agile methodologies and design thinking frameworks. The program also promotes cross-functional collaboration, encourages an entrepreneurial mindset in addressing challenges, and enables participants to transform ideas into valuable prototypes, supporting NBK's digital transformation journey while unlocking the full potential of its talent.

The Demo Day featured five finalist teams that advanced through a rigorous and highly competitive innovation journey. The program initially selected 50 employees from across the Bank's various business and support functions from among hundreds of applicants, who were then grouped into 10 cross-functional teams. Over the course of the program, participants underwent an intensive development experience built on globally recognized innovation methodologies, including design thinking, customer-centric problem solving, and hypothesis-driven validation, before earning their place in the final stage.

The finalist teams delivered compelling presentations that reflected the depth of their strategic thinking, clarity of vision, and ability to translate ideas into practical, high-impact solutions. Their projects demonstrated strong analytical capabilities in identifying challenges, evaluating opportunities, and developing innovative concepts with clear potential for implementation and future scalability. The solutions also showcased a sophisticated understanding of evolving customer needs and expectations, with a strong emphasis on creating tangible value, enhancing the customer experience, and supporting the continued digital transformation of the banking industry.

The event was professionally orchestrated, providing participants with a platform to confidently present their projects before the Executive Management Committee. The presentations were met with strong engagement and widespread recognition, particularly for the ambitious ideas and innovative solutions showcased, all of which were underpinned by clear methodologies and demonstrated strong potential for real-world implementation.

- Transforming promising ideas into innovative solutions reinforces NBK's position as a leading institution shaping the future of banking in Kuwait and across the region
- We are committed to unlocking our employees' creative potential and empowering them to be at the forefront of driving meaningful change
- Innovation is no longer an option; it is a strategic imperative that strengthens our leadership position and enhances our competitiveness in a rapidly evolving industry
- The winning team will have the opportunity to gain advanced innovation expertise through an immersive learning journey to Silicon Valley
- The solutions presented by participating teams reflect a high level of creativity and underscore the program's success in nurturing talent and developing capabilities
- We leverage artificial intelligence and advanced analytics to develop banking solutions that deliver tangible impact and create lasting value

The Executive Management Committee evaluated the projects against a rigorous set of criteria, including innovation, feasibility, the value proposition of the proposed solutions, and the teams' ability to develop concepts with long-term scalability potential. At the conclusion of the event, the winning team was selected to further refine its project and transform it into a fully integrated digital solution ready for practical implementation.

The winning team will also be awarded a unique opportunity to deepen its innovation expertise through an immersive learning journey to Silicon Valley, including participation in a specialized innovation summit scheduled for November 2026. The experience is designed to foster entrepreneurial thinking, strengthen innovation leadership capabilities, and provide exposure to global best practices, enabling participants to bring valuable insights back to NBK and support the continued development of innovative solutions across the organization.

Highlighting the significance of the initiative, Mr. Salah Al-Fulaij, CEO

of NBK-Kuwait, said: "NBK Ebtakir is a tangible expression of our ambitious vision to embed innovation as a defining element of our corporate identity. We are committed to unlocking the creative potential of our employees and empowering them to be at the forefront of driving meaningful change. By equipping them with world-class innovation frameworks and advanced practical capabilities, we aim to transform promising ideas into impactful banking solutions that create lasting value, reinforce our position as a leading financial institution, and contribute to shaping the future of banking in Kuwait and across the region."

"The projects showcased during today's Demo Day reflect an exceptional level of professionalism, creativity, and forward-thinking. They underscore the success of the program in strengthening the capabilities of our teams and further embedding a culture of innovation across the organization. We look ahead with confidence to the next phase, where these ideas will be transformed into practical initiatives that enhance our services and elevate the customer experience to new levels of excellence and innovation," Al-Fulaij added.

Al-Fulaij emphasized that "Innovation is no longer an option; it has become a strategic imperative for strengthening our leadership position, enhancing our competitive edge, and ensuring the long-term sustainability of our business in a rapidly evolving industry. Against this backdrop, we continue to harness the latest technologies, particularly artificial intelligence and advanced analytics, to empower our teams to develop practical, scalable, and impactful solutions that support our transformation into a more agile, forward-looking, and future-ready banking model."

Building on its long-standing commitment to talent development, NBK continues to invest in a comprehensive suite of programs designed to strengthen the capabilities of its workforce, enhance technical expertise, and foster a culture of continuous learning. These initiatives include NBK Academy, which equips fresh graduates with essential banking skills, and NBK Tech Academy, which advances the digital capabilities of young professionals. They are complemented by a range of specialized training and leadership development programs that empower employees to navigate evolving market dynamics and contribute to the achievement of the Bank's strategic objectives.

Through these initiatives, NBK reaffirms its commitment to building a knowledge-driven and innovation-led banking model that enhances workforce readiness and keeps pace with the rapid transformation of the financial services industry.

NBK Ebtakir further builds on this legacy by empowering employees, fostering a culture of innovation, and ensuring that every employee has the opportunity to play an active role in shaping the future of financial services in Kuwait and across the region.

Boosting customer engagement with unified loyalty and remittance services

## LuLu Hypermarket and LuLu Exchange announce strategic partnership to enhance customer rewards through LuLu Happiness Loyalty Program

KUWAIT CITY, June 15: LuLu Hypermarket and LuLu Exchange have announced a strategic collaboration aimed at delivering enhanced value to customers across Kuwait by integrating LuLu Money remittance services with the LuLu Happiness Loyalty Program. The partnership was formally unveiled at an event held at the LuLu Hypermarket Head Office Kuwait on 15 June in the presence of senior management from both organizations.

Under the new collaboration, customers using LuLu Money services will now earn LuLu Happiness Points on eligible remittance transactions. These points can be seamlessly redeemed across LuLu Hypermarket outlets in Kuwait, creating a unified and rewarding customer experience that combines everyday financial transactions with retail benefits.

The initiative brings together two trusted brands within the LuLu ecosystem, enabling customers to maximize the value of both their remittance and shopping activities. By rewarding routine transactions, the partnership reinforces LuLu's commitment to customer satisfaction and engagement.

A key feature of the partnership is the ability for customers to earn loyalty points on every eligible LuLu Money transaction, transforming regular remittance activity into tangible rewards. The accumulated points can be redeemed conveniently across LuLu Hypermarket stores and digital platforms, providing greater flexibility and convenience for customers.

The collaboration also introduces an enhanced referral program that rewards existing customers for recommending LuLu Money services to family and friends. The initiative is expected to support community-driven growth while strengthening customer loyalty across both brands.

Speaking on the occasion, Mr. Rajesh Rangray,



LuLu Exchange, Hypermarket tie-up enhance customer rewards ecosystem.

General Manager, LuLu Exchange, said: "This collaboration reflects our shared commitment to delivering greater value to customers by combining the strength of LuLu Exchange's remittance network with the widely recognized LuLu Happiness Loyalty Program. We are confident that this partnership will create a more rewarding experience for our customers while encouraging greater engagement with our digital services."

Mr. Sreejith K. S., Director, LuLu Hypermarket, highlighted the customer-centric nature of the initiative, stating: "This partnership is designed to deepen customer engagement and retention by rewarding everyday transactions in a way that resonates with the diverse communities we serve across Kuwait. By connecting remittance services with our loyalty ecosystem, we are enhancing the overall value proposition for our customers."

The launch event was attended by Mr. Sakeer Hussain N., Regional Director, LuLu Hypermarket; Mr. Shinuraj Kaviraj, Regional Manager, LuLu Hypermarket; Mr. Antony Pathrose, Commercial Manager, LuLu Hypermarket; Mr. Subaheer Thayeril, Deputy General Manager, LuLu Exchange; Mr. Shafaz Ahamed, Head of Operations; Mr. Shehbaz Shoukathali, BDM – Digital Operations; Mr. Muhammad Aslam, Digital Manager; and Mr. Basheer Valiyapeedikayil, Head of Accounts, along with other representatives.

This strategic alliance marks a significant milestone in LuLu Exchange's ongoing efforts to enhance digital engagement and customer loyalty while strengthening the integration of retail and financial services offerings across Kuwait. The partnership underscores both organizations' commitment to innovation, convenience, and delivering meaningful rewards to customers through an interconnected ecosystem of services.

## West Bank economy near breakdown, report warns

RAMALLAH, June 15, (AP): The economy in the West Bank is teetering toward collapse as Israel maintains a web of restrictions that limit opportunities for Palestinians living under long-term military occupation, according to a new report from a leading conflict tracker.

The International Crisis Group says that Israeli measures restricting movement, withholding revenue and taking land are not only crippling the Palestinian economy but also fueling deep instability.

"The economic conditions necessary for any Palestinian future other than permanent subjugation are being dismantled," it says.

The report, based on interviews with Palestinian business leaders, mayors and government officials, details the financial crisis afflicting companies, households and the internationally backed Palestinian Authority, which administers cities and towns in the West Bank.

It says Israeli policies suggest a concerted effort to "advance Israel's own declared goal of extending its control and preventing a Palestinian state from emerging."

Throughout decades of military occupation, the Palestinian economy has been hobbled by checkpoints and military gates that curtail movement of people and goods. Households and businesses have relied heavily on jobs and imports tied to Israel, and faced restrictions on land and trade. The roughly 3.4 million Palestinians living in the West Bank today face roughly 30% unemployment and have seen their economy contract substantially since the start of the Israel-Hamas war.

After Hamas' Oct. 7, 2023, attack, Israel revoked work permits for most of the nearly 200,000 Palestinians who had worked there previously. Officials cited security but in effect, it deprived the Palestinian economy of nearly \$400 million a month, or almost one-fourth of its overall economic output.

Many businesses today are struggling to pay workers, contractors and suppliers, with private companies seeing an estimated 50% decline in business since before the war, "reflecting tightened move-

ment controls, disrupted supply chains and heightened uncertainty," the report says.

"Palestinian society survives, but in a state of grinding immiseration. Absent remedies, the result will likely be a loss of hope and a growing risk of instability and greater violence," it says.

As the occupied West Bank's largest employer and service provider, Palestinian Authority is at the heart of the crisis. Government agencies have borrowed heavily to stay afloat as public sector workers go unpaid and infrastructure like roads and water lines crumble. The inability to fund to public services is keeping patients out of hospitals and kids out of school.

Most of the PA's money comes from taxes collected on goods entering the West Bank through Israeli ports, because Palestinians do not control their own borders. But under hard-line ministers in Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's government, Israel has withheld billions of dollars in owed tax revenue and unilaterally imposed deductions on the funds. No transfers have been made since May 2025.

Joost Hiltermann, International Crisis Group's special adviser for the Middle East and North Africa, said the world's focus on more than two years of war in Gaza had drawn attention away from the West Bank, but that changes taking place now could have arguably wider consequences for Palestinians' future aspirations.

Hiltermann, who wrote the report, said Israeli officials, who exert considerable control over many of the policies in question, did not agree to be interviewed. But he noted disagreements within Netanyahu's government, with settler leaders and security officials often clashing on how to manage the Palestinian economy.

"The security establishment doesn't want the Palestinian Authority or economy to collapse because they would have to assume the burden of governing the territory in full after essentially destroying it," he said.

## AI, airline stocks lead gains Stocks leap worldwide, and oil prices drop after the US and Iran reach tentative deal on their war

NEW YORK, June 15, (AP): Stock markets are rallying worldwide Monday, and oil prices are easing after the United States and Iran reached a tentative deal to extend their ceasefire and reopen the Strait of Hormuz to get the global flow of crude going again.

The S&P 500 rose 1.7% on hopes that this time, the announcement of an Iran-U.S. agreement will mean a long-term fix to a conflict that has worsened inflation around the world. The Dow Jones Industrial Average was up 673 points, or 1.2%, as of 11:15 a.m. Eastern time, and the Nasdaq composite was 2.7% higher.

Stocks got a lift after the price for a barrel of Brent crude oil fell 4.7% to \$83.25, back to where it was in early March. While that's still higher than its price of roughly \$70 from before the war more than three months ago, it's lower than the \$100 plus it cost just a few weeks ago. The hope is that lower oil prices will take pressure off households and businesses, which have had to pay higher prices for everything from food to fuel to fertilizer because of the war with Iran.

Iran confirmed the agreement but signaled its implementation would not start until it's signed, which Pakistan said would happen Friday in Switzerland. Broader negotiations on issues like Iran's nuclear program are expected to continue over the next 60 days. That leaves opportunity for hiccups that could derail the agreement. And even if the deal does reopen the Strait of Hormuz, it will take months for the energy industry to get back to full speed.

For now, though, relief swept through financial markets worldwide.

On Wall Street, stocks of companies with big fuel bills were instant winners. United Airlines flew 5.2% higher, American Airlines climbed 3.5% and cruise operator Carnival rose 4.2%.

Stocks of companies enmeshed in the artificial-intelligence industry also jumped. These stocks have yo-yoed sharply in recent weeks, going from roaring to records to suddenly turning lower. The big concern is whether such stocks shot too high, too fast because of AI mania, and their careening moves have sometimes reversed direction by the hour.

Micron Technology rallied 9.4%, and Advanced Micro Devices rose 7.5%. Nvidia's climb of 3% was the strongest force pushing the S&P 500 upward because the AI chip company is Wall Street's most valuable company, giving it more weight on the index than any other.

SpaceX, Elon Musk's rocket company that also owns the AI company xAI, rose 7.9% in its second day of trading on Wall Street. Its successful debut on the Nasdaq suggested plenty of



Trader Patrick Casey works on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange, Wednesday, June 3, 2026. (AP)

demand still exists among investors for AI. The market has given SpaceX a total value of more than \$2.1 trillion, making it bigger than Exxon Mobil, Bank of America and Coca-Cola combined.

In the bond market, Treasury yields eased on hopes that lower oil prices will remove pressure on central banks worldwide to raise interest rates.

The yield on the 10-year Treasury eased to 4.45% from 4.48% late Friday.

Europe's central bank last week became the first major one in the world to raise interest rates to combat high inflation. High interest rates can keep a lid on inflation, but they also slow economies and undercut prices for all kinds of investments, including stocks and cryptocurrencies. They hit investments seen as the most expensive in particular, and some critics are calling the AI industry a bubble where investment inflated too far.

The Fed will announce its latest decision on interest rates later this week, which will be the first under its new chair, Kevin Warsh. President Donald Trump nominated Warsh to the position, and Trump has been loudly calling for lower interest rates.

But traders see it as a near certainty that the Fed will leave its main interest rate steady after its two-day meeting ends Wednesday. Traders

had been raising bets that the Fed may actually have to raise interest rates this year because of how high inflation has gotten and how solid the U.S. job market remains.

But the tentative deal between the United States and Iran means traders are now betting on only a 56% chance of a hike this year, down from 71% a week ago, according to data from CME Group.

Elsewhere on Wall Street, Roku fell 0.6% after the company announced that Fox Corp. is buying the streaming pioneer in a cash-and-stock deal valued at approximately \$22 billion.

Roku's stock had already soared 20% Friday, when early media reports emerged about a deal, which will give Fox access to the Roku channel, first-party data and more than 100 million global streaming households. Fox's stock fell 16.1%.

In stock markets abroad, indexes climbed in Asia and Europe. Japan's Nikkei 225 jumped 5% for one of the world's biggest gains and finished at a record.

"This is great news," said Takashi Hiroki, chief strategist at Monex. "Buying by foreign investors is leading the market with expectations of easing tensions around the situation in the Middle East."

South Korea's Kospi surged even more, 5.2%, thanks in part to continued rallies for AI winners like Samsung Electronics.

Economic pressures spur reform push in Cuba

## Cuba moves to attract investment amid fuel shortages

HAVANA, June 15, (AP): Cuban President Miguel Díaz-Canel on Friday announced a package of economic reforms aimed at attracting investment, expanding participation by Cubans living abroad in the economy and decentralizing parts of the country's administration.

The president did not provide details about the measures or a timetable for their implementation but said during remarks to state media that it is now "time to change" and that the country "simply cannot continue on its current course."

"Every opportunity in the midst of a crisis must be seized as a moment for takeoff, as a moment for growth," Díaz-Canel said, according to a statement from the presidency that was republished by state-run media. "We have established a group of priorities to confront this situation," he added without offering specifics.

The announcement comes as Cubans have struggled with fuel shortages as a result of the U.S. oil blockade and food insecurity. In January, the United States tightened restrictions on Cuba's oil supplies in an effort to pressure the island's government to change its political and economic model, exacerbating challenges that have persisted for about five years.

The U.S. State Department had no comment on the Díaz-Canel remarks and

referred to the statement released Thursday on the latest sanctions.

Díaz-Canel said officials are evaluating measures related to foreign trade, exports, supply chains and logistics. Without elaborating, he suggested the government could eliminate mandatory state intermediaries in import and export operations and grant tariff benefits to those who bring raw materials into the country for production.

"The numbers don't add up, and the government wants to make this look like a matter of will rather than a math problem," Cuban economist Pedro Monreal wrote on X, in response to Díaz-Canel's proposals.

The Spain-based former UNESCO official went on to criticize the collapse of a centralized planning model, for which he said "there are two respectable alternatives: assume the political price of failure, or self-critically rectify and drastically transform the model."

For decades, Cuba maintained a centralized, vertical system under strict state control. This structure began to shift gradually over the last decade when the government introduced permits for independent workers. More recently, the state authorized the operation of the country's first small- and medium-sized private enterprises.

Earlier Friday, a ship carrying nearly 100 tons of food and essential goods

arrived from Colombia as part of the humanitarian aid that several countries have sent to Cuba in recent months as a U.S. 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 nonperishable 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, U.S. President Donald Trump threatened tariffs on any country that sells or provides oil to Cuba. The move has deepened a preexisting 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 semiparalyzed and subjected to severe power outages.

## TV dramedy mixes espionage stakes with comic tone

# 'Ponies' gallops into Emmy season as a comedy with danger

LOS ANGELES, June 15, (AP): "Ponies" is a bit of a unicorn.

The Peacock series that stars Emilia Clarke and Haley Lu Richardson as widows of CIA operatives who become intelligence assets in the 1970s Soviet Union has real stakes, and real blood. But its tone is comic first and foremost. And it has been submitted for the forthcoming Emmy nominations as a comedy, despite its hourlong episodes that on television usually mean drama.

The tone-mashing comes naturally to its showrunners, Susanna Fogel and David Iserson, a couple of veterans of film and TV writing. "Ponies" - intelligence-speak for "persons of no interest" - is the first show they have worked on that they created.

"We understand that we're not a pure comedy and we're not a pure drama, which is nothing that we wanted, and we were happy with that. But it was always also part of the calculus that when our characters are in peril, we should feel like they could die," Iserson told The Associated Press in a joint interview with Fogel. "These characters are experiencing grief. These characters are experiencing peril and also they're funny people, and that is just the way that we both see the world."

Fogel puts it a little more succinctly: "Funny people in serious situation is our thing."

Their two stars have youthful vibes but mature acting skills and they seamlessly handle the show's swerves. Clarke's character, Bea, begins as an innocent in a dangerous world the same way her Daenerys Targaryen began on "Game of Thrones." Richardson's Twila starts as the same sort of worldly, savvy character she has played on "The White Lotus" and elsewhere.

Then both go on major arcs.

"We wanted to give these actresses



This image released by Peacock shows Haley Lu Richardson, left, and Emilia Clarke in a scene from "Ponies." (AP)

something new that they hadn't done, but that didn't feel like they were fighting some essential part of who they were," Fogel said.

She and Iserson have what she calls "an open creative marriage."

Separately, Fogel was a writer on the 2019 film "Booksmart" and the

HBO series "The Flight Attendant." Iserson has written for series including "Mad Men" and "Mr. Robot."

Together, their work includes the 2018 film "The Spy Who Dumped Me," which stars Mila Kunis and Kate McKinnon as women thrust into espionage. In retrospect, it feels

like a dress rehearsal for "Ponies."

"That was more on the comedic side of the spectrum for both of us and we were more excited to do something that was more grounded but had the same friendship story to it," Iserson said. "So we took the things we loved about that ex-

perience and then used some of our other skills to make something that felt a little bit more in the dramedy sphere."

The show felt grounded enough to some viewers that if you Google it, a question that pops up on search: "Is the TV series Ponies a true story?"

"I think good comedy is like a high-wire act. In a way it feels like a high-risk, high-reward thing to be able to do anything that's doing that," Fogel said. "I'm not sure how you can stand out with things that are just 100% serious."

The half-hour comedy vs. hour-long drama split, which the overwhelming majority of historic TV series follow, really seems to matter where Emmys are concerned.

It is probably the reason the half-hour "The Bear" has been able to pass as a comedy and dominate those categories at the Emmys, to the chagrin of some makers of more purely funny stuff.

Though the hourlong comedy isn't unheard of and the Emmys have recognized that before. "Ally McBeal" would get an annual raft of nominations in the late 1990s and once won best comedy series. "The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel" did the same in the 2010s.

Many of the Emmys' technical and craft awards, including cinematography and sound, are broken into half-hour and hour categories instead of comedy and drama.

Another Emmy contender, "A Knight of the Seven Kingdoms," HBO's latest "Game of Thrones" spinoff, is the flip side of "Ponies," since it's a drama with episodes that land at just over 30 minutes.

Showrunner Ira Parker says the old distinctions maybe ought to be scrapped.

"Look at all your favorite dramas of all time, like 'The Sopranos' and even like, 'The Wire,' how funny those were," Parker said. "I actually think the difference should be 30 minutes and an hour versus comedy and drama."

"Ponies" has not yet been renewed for a second season, but a few Emmy nominations could change that.

## Variety

LOS ANGELES: Tyra Banks has filed a defamation lawsuit against Netflix and the directors of its docuseries "Reality Check: Inside America's Next Top Model," alleging that the producers stripped down hours of interview footage to construct a false narrative.



Banks

In the lawsuit filed Saturday in Los Angeles federal court, the model who created and hosted "America's Next Top Model" said she was interviewed for 3 1/2 hours, during which she took responsibility for some of the show's controversial decisions. Those interviews were edited down to 16 minutes and manipulated "to support a false and defamatory narrative unrelated to what she actually expressed," the lawsuit said.

"The accountability Ms. Banks took ended up on the cutting room floor. It was there, but viewers were never given the opportunity to see it," her lawyers wrote. (AP)

RIO DE JANEIRO: Two helicopters collided over Rio de Janeiro on Sunday morning and crashed in the city's western zone, killing all six people aboard, firefighters said.

Rio de Janeiro's Military Fire Department said one of the helicopters crashed on the parking lot of a car dealership, where several electric vehicles were parked, igniting a fire that was extinguished.

Officials said an investigation is underway to determine the cause of the collision.

Police said that American singer and comedian Oliver Tree was on the list of passengers given to aviation authorities, but they have not been able to identify the bodies of those killed in the crash. (AP)

CAIRO: A daredevil adventurer known as "The Spider-Man of Yemen" has died after falling into a volcano crater while attempting to climb vertical rock faces without safety equipment, authorities said.

Al-Qaqa Ibn Antar, 30, was climbing the steep walls of the Hardah Dam volcanic crater in the southern province of Dhale on Friday when he lost his grip and fell into the 120 meter (393 feet) crater, according to the Civil Defense Authority, which posted a short video capturing the moment of his fall.

The 10-second video shows Antar climbing a rocky cliff without any safety equipment. On the cliff he is scaling names in Arabic have been written in white across the rocky wall. (AP)

## Films

Indie horror hit 'Obsession' continues remarkable run

# 'Disclosure Day' posts \$92.9 million global debut

NEW YORK, June 15, (AP): Steven Spielberg's "Disclosure Day," billed as his first popcorn movie in years, launched with \$44 million in domestic theaters, according to studio estimates Sunday.

"Disclosure Day" opened largely as expected, collecting \$92.9 million worldwide over its first weekend. That was good enough to give the 79-year-old Spielberg, who conceived the film's story, his best opening weekend for an original movie, not accounting to inflation.

Of course, Spielberg is the father of the modern blockbuster. But "Disclosure Day," released by Universal Pictures, is his first summer movie in 10 years. And it opened in a much different movie world than once greeted "Jaws" or "Jurassic Park." Its closest competition was the indie horror hit "Obsession," directed by a YouTuber-turned-filmmaker, Curry Barker, more than 50 years Spielberg's junior.

"It played very, very evenly across all of the U.S. and Canada," said Jim Orr, distribution chief for Universal. "It did not come across as a coastal big-market movie. It resonated with everybody."

While a much-watched NBA finals game might have been expected to depress ticket sales, at least in New York, Orr said there was no noticeable dip in the city's box office numbers Saturday night.

After Gen Z propelled moviegoing for the last several weeks, a slightly older audience drove interest in "Disclosure Day." Some 41% of moviegoers were aged 45 and up.

"What's encouraging is that we had this big an opening with that audience demographic and with the



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

fact that it's an original film," said Orr. "So if we're opening this well, and we think we're going to have great word-of-mouth, and we have an older audience that doesn't necessarily rush out on opening weekend, all of that points to a great run through the summer."

"Disclosure Day" returns Spielberg to the subject of alien life. Emily Blunt, Josh O'Connor and Colman Domingo star in a chase to reveal government evidence of UFO encounters. It cost \$115 million to make.

While a good start, "Disclosure Day" - like most original movies - will depend on strong legs to be successful. Reviews (80% fresh on Rotten Tomatoes) have been strong, though audience response wasn't overwhelming. The movie landed a "B" CinemaScore.

"It's off to a solid start," said Paul Dergarabedian, head of marketplace trends for Rentrak. "Let's see how it plays in the coming weeks. If it holds like some of these other films have, like 'Project Hail Mary,' 'Michael,' 'Obsession,' it will be in

good shape. Staying power has been the bread and butter of this year and this summer."

Meanwhile, the "Obsession" sensation continues. Though it originally opened with \$17.2 million, the Focus Features release has exceeded that for four consecutive weekends. It did so again this weekend, collecting \$19 million in ticket sales to bring its North American haul to \$188.3 million and its worldwide total to \$286.5 million.

Having cost less than \$1 million to make, "Obsession" ranks among

the most profitable releases in recent memory. Focus acquired it for \$15 million.

Last weekend's top film, "Scary Movie," slid to third place with \$14.5 million. The Paramount Pictures release, the sixth entry in the horror spoof franchise, dropped steeply from its opening weekend, down 73%. But with a modest production budget of \$30 million, the Miramax-produced sequel is already a considerable success. Its two-week domestic total is \$88.6 million.

A24's "Backrooms" added \$11.3 million domestically in its third weekend. It's rapidly grossed \$262.3 million globally.

In its second weekend, Amazon MGM's "Masters of the Universe" fell fast following a disappointing launch. Its box office dropped 71% with \$8.7 million. Its two-week domestic total stands at \$46.7 million.

Next weekend, The Walt Disney Co.'s "Toy Story 5" opens with big expectations at the box office.

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

1. "Disclosure Day," \$44 million.
2. "Obsession," \$19 million.
3. "Scary Movie," \$14.5 million.
4. "Backrooms," \$11.3 million.
5. "Masters of the Universe," \$8.7 million.
6. "Star Wars: The Mandalorian and Grogu," \$4.7 million.
7. "Michael," \$4.1 million.
8. "The Furious," \$2.8 million.
9. "Stop! That! Train!," \$2 million.
10. "The Amazing Digital Circus: The Last Act," \$1.8 million.

# Fox to buy streaming pioneer Roku in a \$22 billion deal

LOS ANGELES, June 15, (AP): Fox Corp. has agreed to buy the streaming pioneer Roku in a cash-and-stock deal valued at approximately \$22 billion, including debt.

The deal will give Fox access to more than 100 million global households, along with the Roku channel and its first-party data. Fox oversees a massive sports, news and entertainment network, as well as Tubi, which it acquired in 2020.

Roku founder Anthony Wood had initially worked within Netflix in the early 2000s as that company attempted to make the seismic shift from renting DVDs, to streaming.

Roku was spun off by Netflix, however, and the company released its first set-top box in 2008.

Wood, who is Roku's chairman and CEO, said his motivation in pursuing the technology was his desire to record and play his favorite show, "Star Trek."

The companies said Monday that



Left: A person walks past the Fox News Headquarters in New York on April 12, 2023. Right: This Aug. 13, 2020 file photo, shows a logo for Roku on a remote control in Portland, Ore. (AP)



Roku will continue to be run as an open, partner-friendly platform. Fox and Roku said that the combined company will become the third-largest player in U.S. television by share of viewing.

Fox Corp. CEO Lachlan Murdoch said in a statement that combining the businesses will bring together Fox's live news and sports content with a streaming platform with large viewership. It will also give Fox

more exposure to advertising and streaming subscriptions.

"The combination with FOX is an extraordinary opportunity to accelerate our vision, scale faster and innovate more aggressively for view-

ers, partners and advertisers," Wood said in prepared remarks.

Wood will have an ongoing role at the company and will join the Fox board of directors after the transaction closes.

## Technology

## PM eyes children safety

## Starmer plans UK social media ban for under-16s

LONDON, June 15, (AP): Britain will ban children under 16 from using a range of social media apps including Snapchat, TikTok and YouTube to protect young people from harmful content and excessive screen time, Prime Minister Keir Starmer said Monday.

Starmer told a news conference that he will fight back if technology companies resist the move, and acknowledged some teens would try to find their way around a ban. But he said he is "not prepared to compromise on the safety and happiness of our children."

"Every parent can see it with their own eyes. Social media is making children unhappy," said Starmer, who has two teenage children. "I've heard first hand from families crying out for change and we will do right by them."

The move, expected to take effect early next year, makes the U.K. part of a growing global movement to tighten online safety for children. Australia, Canada, Brazil and Indonesia have introduced legislation or announced age-based restrictions or requirements for children's access to social media. France, Spain, Denmark, Thailand and South Korea are among others studying or developing similar approaches.

The U.K. plans to follow the same model for a social media ban as Australia, which last year became the first country to bar under-16s from holding social media accounts. Platforms that fail to take reasonable steps to exclude children younger than 16 could be punished with multimillion-dollar fines.

The U.K. said its ban will apply to platforms including Snapchat, TikTok, YouTube, Instagram, Facebook and X, but not YouTube Kids or messaging services like WhatsApp and Signal. Starmer stressed that enforcement action will target tech companies, not children.

The prime minister also said he will go further than Australia's measures.

He said the government will act to prevent strangers from contacting children on gaming and livestreaming platforms. Authorities are also considering additional measures including overnight curfews and breaks in infinite scrolling for those under 18. More details are expected next month.

The decision follows a public comment period in which the government got 116,000 responses from parents, the tech industry and children. The number of responses was second only to one seeking input about same-sex marriage in 2012.

The vast majority of respondents - more than 90% - wanted an under-16 ban, the government said.

Esther Ghey, whose 16-year-old daughter Brianna was killed in 2023

by two teenagers who had accessed harmful content online, said the ban would "potentially save so many children's lives," but had to be accompanied by other measures.

NSPCC, a leading children's charity, praised the government's ambition but urged authorities to ensure platforms roll out "robust age checks" and effectively enforce the policy.

Others are more skeptical. Critics including the Open Rights Group have expressed concerns about age verification companies and how users' private data is protected.

Reacting on Monday, a spokesperson for YouTube warned that a blanket social media restriction could "push kids out of such curated, supervised, beneficial experiences and towards anonymous, less-safe services."

Starmer acknowledged the challenges, but said success for the ban would mean "a massive drop off of children on social media" and "a cultural change, a sense that actually you can grow up differently."

Starmer, elected just under two years ago, is under pressure to step down from members of his own party over what they see as poor leadership and could face a leadership challenge in the coming days or weeks. He is seeking to bring in consequential measures that can serve as a legacy.

The ban could further inflame tensions with the U.S., which has warned that regulations should be narrow and not violate free speech protections, according to a statement from the U.S. Embassy in London. It said it was also concerned that regulations would place greater burdens on American technology companies.

Starmer said he expected to discuss the issue with U.S. President Donald Trump and other world leaders at a Group of Seven summit in France that starts Monday.

"I honestly think that across world leaders, there has always been a recognition that leaders have to take steps to protect children," he said. "I don't think that's controversial. There will always be arguments as to exactly what the limits of that are and what rules should be in place, but I don't see that as a problem."

Jon Crowcroft, a communications systems professor at the University of Cambridge, said people supporting social bans are well-meaning but probably misguided, and changes could prevent children from accessing sites they need.

"There is a real risk this will drive some users to worse sites and policing devices is close to impossible technically," Crowcroft said. "Policing platforms is far easier, if only regulators would bother."



Britain's Prime Minister Keir Starmer attends a press conference to announce government action to protect children online, at Downing Street in central London, Monday, June 15, 2026. (AP)

## Arts &amp; culture

## Legal battle ends with a quiet removal at the landmark venue

## Trump name comes down at Kennedy Center



Women take a selfie as the wall of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts is covered in tarp as work continues on the removal of President Donald Trump's name in Washington. Inset: A worker constructs scaffolding in front of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts sign in Washington, Friday. (AP)

WASHINGTON, June 15, (AP): The curtain may have come down for President Donald Trump at the Kennedy Center but the tarp stays up for now.

Matt Floca, executive director and chief operating officer of the performing arts venue, told a federal court Saturday that the institution had complied with an order to remove Trump's name from the facade. In a filing, Floca said the board of trustees and the center had removed "all physical signage on the Kennedy Center building and grounds, including the front portico, that purports to rename the Kennedy Center after President Trump."

But for onlookers who have gathered on the plaza in front of the center over the past day hoping to witness a dramatic moment symbolizing the limits of Trump's power, it was virtually impossible to see whether the signage was gone. A tarp hung over the scaffolding constructed for workers to perform that task. It was unclear when the tarp might be removed to reveal the original lettering that had endured for decades: "The John F. Kennedy Memorial Center for the Performing Arts."

A reporter was able to peer through a slight opening in the tarp, which was pulled tightly against the wall, and saw that the letters for Trump's name were no longer affixed to the building.

By the end, the Kennedy Center's leadership had dug in against a federal judge's order to erase Trump's name from the building. Two courts rejected the institution's last-minute request to retain Trump's name pending an appeal. After severe thunderstorms raked Washington on Friday evening, the Kennedy Center sought one more extension before complying with a noon Saturday deadline.

Those who pushed for the scrubbing of Trump's name were in a celebratory mood. Rep. Joyce Beatty, D-Ohio, an ex officio member of the board who sued to remove references to the president from the building and the center's operations, was spotted in the plaza late Friday and Saturday morning. She posted a video to so-

cial media that purported to show her performing the "Trump dance" in one of the Kennedy Center's great halls.

"Today's victory is the beginning of returning the Kennedy Center to the American people," Beatty said in a statement. "The rule of law prevailed, and that is worth celebrating."

Leo Bartholomaeus, a recent graduate of Syracuse University who lives in Virginia, said he was walking by the Kennedy Center on Friday afternoon after visiting the National Mall to see events related to this weekend's UFC match at the White House. He said he was not happy that Trump added his name to the building.

"My grandmother had a big love of the arts," he said. "I've been here to see 'The Lion King.' I wasn't a fan of Donald Trump putting his name on it. I thought it was better as the Kennedy Center."

The removal of Trump's name closes one of the more unusual chapters in the history of the Kennedy Center, which began construction in 1964 and was dedicated to the memory of the slain president, Democrat John F. Kennedy. At what is typically one of the few relatively nonpartisan spaces in Washington, Trump has wielded tremendous influence over the venue during his second term.

Though he rarely discussed the Kennedy Center during his 2024 campaign, Trump moved quickly to oust the institution's leadership when he returned to office in January 2025 and replaced it with a board of trustees that named him chairman. His name was quickly added to the building.

While the removal of his name marks a setback for Trump, he is moving forward with plans to reshape the physical landscape of the nation's capital in ways that have few modern parallels.

He demolished the East Wing of the White House and is building a controversial ballroom in its place. He remodeled the Lincoln Memorial Reflecting Pool and plans extensive renovations of a golf course in East Potomac Park, moves that could significantly reduce the pub-

lic's access to running and biking paths. He is also moving forward with a triumphal arch that will sit near Arlington National Cemetery across the Potomac River in Virginia.

Indeed as Trump's name was being removed from the Kennedy Center, the South Lawn of the White House has been transformed into a venue for a UFC match intended to celebrate the 250th anniversary of American independence but also coinciding with Trump's birthday on Sunday.

Back at the Kennedy Center, there are many questions about the institution's future. The same May court decision that ordered Trump's name to be removed from the building also blocked a planned two-year closure for renovations that was set to begin next month.

The Kennedy Center's calendar for the weeks ahead include performances of "Moulin Rouge! The Musical" and "Bluey's Big Play." Comedian Bill Maher is to be awarded the Mark Twain Award for American Humor during a ceremony on June 28.

But little is scheduled for the stages beyond that and, after substantially reducing staff, it is unclear how quickly the Kennedy Center could build out a robust performance list. Trump, angered by the court's order to remove his name, has said he would turn the Kennedy Center over to Congress and has suggested it might simply shutter because of public safety concerns.

In its unsuccessful appeal on Friday seeking a pause on the order removing Trump's name, the Kennedy Center's leadership argued, in terms that seemed similar to the president's speech patterns, that the lower court was interfering with needed renovations.

"The District Court is not allowing us to close in order to properly fix up and repair the Building, including potentially life threatening structural damage like beams and parking garage ceilings that are rusted, and in serious danger of falling onto people below," according to the appeal. "Indeed, total collapse!"

The institution also suggested that the president's name could return to the building if the Kennedy Center later wins its appeal.

## Ramos honored for moving from Broadway to film &amp; television

## Puerto Rican Day Parade lights up Manhattan with music and color



Dayanara Torres takes part in the National Puerto Rican Day Parade, Sunday, June 14, 2026 in New York. (AP)



A person participates in the National Puerto Rican Day Parade, Sunday, June 14, 2026 in New York. (AP)



New York City Mayor Zohran Mamdani takes part in the National Puerto Rican Day Parade, Sunday, June 14, 2026 in New York. (AP)



Congresswoman Nydia Velázquez and Brooklyn Borough President Antonio Reynoso take part in the National Puerto Rican Day Parade, Sunday, June 14, 2026 in New York. (AP)



Dancers and a person in a Bad Bunny costume take part in the National Puerto Rican Day Parade, Sunday, June 14, 2026 in New York. (AP)

NEW YORK, June 15, (AP): New Yorkers who weren't partied out after the Knicks championship found another excuse to celebrate on Sunday as the National Puerto Rican Day Parade marched through Manhattan with pulsing music and vibrant colors.

Tens of thousands of spectators lined Fifth Avenue under sunny skies to watch marchers decked out in

red-white-and-blue. This year's honorees included rapper and singer Daddy Yankee, who served as grand marshal, and actor Anthony Ramos, who was part of the original Broadway cast of "Hamilton."

Mayor Zohran Mamdani drew cheers as he clutched a small Puerto Rico flag and wore a Knicks jersey over a shirt and tie.

The event, which bills itself as America's largest cultural celebration, honors the contributions of Puerto Ricans on their home island and throughout the nation and world. It's a been a June tradition in the city since the late 1950s.

U.S. Congresswoman Nydia Velázquez and jazz musician Charlie Sepulveda were recognized with

lifetime achievement awards.

The parade was traveling along Fifth Avenue in Manhattan from 44th Street to 79th Street, spanning 35 city blocks.

The National Puerto Rican Day Parade Scholarship Gala was held on Friday, celebrating academic excellence and student achievement.



This photo provided by the US Centers for Disease Control shows an adult female lone star tick crawling on a blade of grass in 2023. (AP)

## What to know about alpha-gal syndrome, life-threatening meat allergy caused by tick bites

WASHINGTON, June 15, (AP): It's common knowledge that ticks can spread infections that cause serious illnesses, including Lyme disease. Now health officials are trying to raise awareness of a lesser-known problem: a life-threatening allergy to meat triggered by tick bites.

The problem, known as alpha-gal syndrome, was first linked to a particular species of ticks about 15 years ago. But cases are on the rise as more people report symptoms such as hives, diarrhea and itches after eating as little as a mouthful of meat and - in some cases - dairy. The allergy doesn't impact consumption of seafood or poultry. Chicken, turkey and eggs are all OK to eat.

For years, the standard treatment has involved avoiding foods that come from cows, pigs and lambs while carrying an epinephrine injector in case of medical emergency. But regulators recently approved the first drug for the condition, and more therapies may be on the way.

Here's what to know about alpha-

gal syndrome:

Unlike other tick-borne illnesses, such as Rocky Mountain spotted fever, alpha-gal syndrome isn't caused by a bacteria or a virus. Instead, it occurs when the human immune system triggers an allergic response to a type of sugar, known as alpha-gal.

Alpha-gal is found in the meat of most mammals, but not in humans or other primates. It's also found in the saliva of certain ticks.

When eaten, the sugar is normally harmless. But when ticks bite through the skin, they can introduce the sugar directly into the bloodstream. That triggers the development of antibodies - immune system proteins that fight off foreign invaders - that quickly learn to identify and attack alpha-gal sugar molecules.

"It turns out that the skin is a fantastic way to make an allergic response," said Dr. Scott Commins, an alpha-gal syndrome researcher at the University of North Carolina. "If this all happened orally, and we were eating alpha-gal like we do with steaks

or barbecue, then we wouldn't become allergic."

People that develop the antibodies will often experience a strong allergic reaction a few hours after consuming meat or dairy. But it can take weeks or months for the problem to develop, with the severity of symptoms often increasing over time.

Experts point to increased awareness among health professionals and the public.

"I think part of it is more people have learned about it and are on the watch for this syndrome," said Maria Diuk-Wasser, a Columbia University researcher who studies tick-borne diseases.

But rising cases also reflect the expanding habitat range of the lone star tick, the primary source of the condition in the US. Often identifiable by a white dot on its back, the lone star tick is most common in the eastern and southern US. But in recent years it's been reported in new parts of the country, including the Great Lakes region and as far north as Martha's

Vineyard in Massachusetts.

Researchers worry that other types of ticks, including blacklegged ticks, may also increasingly spread the condition.

Roughly 450,000 Americans are estimated to have developed the allergy, according to a 2023 study by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

People usually seek medical attention after experiencing worrisome symptoms, including hives, dizziness, difficulty breathing and swelling of the lips, throat, tongue or eyelids. Some people may only experience digestive issues, including diarrhea, stomach pain, vomiting and nausea.

Doctors diagnose the allergy based on results from a blood test, symptoms and other details reported by the patient, including whether they recall any recent bug bites.

The blood test detects the presence of alpha-gal antibodies, but not all patients with a positive result develop the condition. Sometimes the test can also be wrong.

### Women first caregivers in outbreak and most at risk

## Ebola cases in eastern Congo climb to 782 as deaths hit 181: authorities

KINSHASA, Congo, June 15, (AP): Congolese authorities have reported one of the highest increases in Ebola cases in one day, as weak contact tracing, insecurity and funding gaps continue to hinder the response a month after the outbreak was declared.

The Congolese Ministry of Health said Sunday 72 new cases were reported in a 24-hour period, bringing the total number of confirmed cases to 782. This includes 181 confirmed deaths, after 32 new deaths were confirmed.

However, the number of cases in Congo is believed to be higher because the outbreak was confirmed on May 15, weeks after it is suspected to have begun, and the contact tracing coverage rate is at 56%, a sharp decrease from last week.

The latest Ebola outbreak is caused by the rare Bundibugyo virus, which has no approved vaccine or treatment, unlike the Zaire virus, which was responsible for most of Congo's past 16 outbreaks of the disease.

Fifty-six people have recovered, and the current fatality rate of the outbreak is 23%, the ministry said.

The World Health Organization said Sunday it is intensifying testing and contact tracing and treatment.

Africa's top health body said the same day it is deploying technical expertise and supporting laboratory systems, active case finding and

community engagement efforts to accelerate the response to the disease outbreak.

"We remain committed to supporting affected countries until transmission is stopped. We call on partners and donors to urgently mobilize resources to strengthen the response and save lives," said the head of the Africa Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, or Africa CDC, Jean Kaseya.

The outbreak is concentrated in Congo's eastern province of Ituri, which accounts for more than 90% of the cases. Cases have also been recorded in the North Kivu and South Kivu provinces, and have spread across the border to Uganda.

Nearly a million people have been displaced by conflict in Ituri, according to the U.N. humanitarian office, making contact tracing difficult as people flee attacks or move frequently in the vast province with dense forests, poor roads and remote villages that can take days to reach.

Tracing is also difficult among the thousands of artisanal miners who regularly move between remote sites in the mineral-rich region.

Meanwhile, every day for the past week, Aline Kasiwa has fed her sick mother, helped her drink and washed her clothes, all while fearing she could catch the Ebola virus as eastern Congo is plagued by one of the fastest-spreading outbreaks of the disease on record.

"She is the only family I have left.



Health workers disinfect themselves after preparing the body of an Ebola victim at Citadelle Clinic in Bunia, Congo on June 12. (AP)

I cannot abandon her," Kasiwa told The Associated Press, adding that she is too afraid to take her mother to the hospital where an infection could be confirmed. "These days we hear that many people are dying there, even nurses," she said.

With no protective equipment beyond a cheap face mask, the 28-year-old in Bunia, a city at the heart of the outbreak, symbolizes the women in eastern Congo who are almost always the first caregiver, a role that health workers say is putting them at higher risk of contracting Ebola.

"It's the woman who gives them a bath, it's the woman who feeds them, and it's the woman who's

everything else," said Dr. Furaha Elisabeth, director of the Karibuni Wa Maman gynecology and obstetrics clinic in Bunia.

Bundibugyo, the type of Ebola in this outbreak, has no approved treatment or vaccine. Even health workers have said they don't have the masks, gloves and other gear to protect themselves.

That leaves some women with impossible choices, especially pregnant ones.

"When you see the way people die - even the nurses who treat us are dying - how can you not be afraid?" said Anny Ekyambo, a 32-year-old in Bunia who said she

is too afraid to go to a clinic for checkups, even though she is five months pregnant.

The outbreak was identified weeks late because the rare Bundibugyo type was not tested for at first.

It is not clear how many women have been infected. But history shows that previous Ebola outbreaks have affected women more.

In the first recorded outbreak in the 1970s, women accounted for 56% of deaths, UN Women said. During the 2018-2020 outbreak in Congo, the deadliest in the country's history, women and girls made up about two-thirds of reported cases.

"We will certainly see the same pattern emerge in the current outbreak," Sofia Calltop, UN Women's chief of humanitarian action, said in a statement. "Ebola transmission follows social realities. The virus spreads along the lines of care-giving, domestic labor, front-line health work and burial practices."

Women in many eastern Congo communities are the ones preparing bodies for burial.

At the Karibuni wa Maman clinic, staff said they had received no personal protective equipment since the outbreak began, despite appeals to health authorities.

Patients showing symptoms are examined at the clinic before being referred to larger treatment centers, exposing doctors and nurses to potential infection with minimal safeguards.

Julienne Lusenge, president of Women's Solidarity for Inclusive Peace and Development, the aid group running the clinic, said they have sought protective equipment from various partners, receiving only hand sanitizer and a few masks for nurses.

She said the equipment gap also endangers the women caring for sick relatives at home, with most of them unaware that Ebola may be the cause.

"During previous outbreaks, many women died because they were the ones nursing sick family members," Lusenge said.

Despite new arrivals of aid and better-organized health facilities in recent days, Doctors Without Borders has said the virus continues to spread faster than the response.

"Nobody knows the true scale and severity of this outbreak," Dr. Alan Gonzalez, the medical charity's deputy director of operations, has said in a statement.

The outbreak is unfolding in unfavorable surroundings. Ituri province has poor road networks and under-equipped health facilities more than 1,000 kilometers (620 miles) from Congo's capital, Kinshasa.

Attacks by the Allied Democratic Forces, a rebel group allied with the Islamic State group, and a coalition of ethnic militias also have hindered the response. Other cases have been reported in North Kivu and South Kivu provinces where the Rwanda-backed M23 rebel group controls key cities Goma and Bukavu.

## Who are hospital ethics consultants, and why should you care?

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



By Jennifer McCurdy  
Michigan State University

Imagine the following scenarios:

A surgeon prepares to amputate a patient's foot to save his life, but the patient refuses the procedure. His decline in thinking and memory raises doubts about his ability to consent, and he has no family or friends to help with the decision.

A 17-year-old declines a liver transplant, while her mother insists on going forward with the lifesaving surgery.

Siblings stand divided at the bedside of their 85-year-old mother with dementia, one rejecting a feeding tube, the other calling it a basic human necessity.

I am a hospital ethics consultant, and these are the kinds of situations my colleagues and I regularly encounter. Yet many people are unaware that hospital ethics consultants even exist - or that they can ask for one.

Healthcare ethics consultants are trained to help patients, families and clinicians navigate difficult medical decisions.

They could be called in situations where healthcare staff struggles with providing procedures such as cardiac resuscitation that are unlikely to benefit the patient and might even cause more pain and suffering. They could also be called when it is unclear who has authority to consent for a patient's care, or when end-of-life decisions are complicated and resources are limited - such as ICU beds and ventilators during COVID-19.

Ethics consultants come from a range of disciplines: physicians, nurses, social workers, chaplains, lawyers and philosophers who have specialized training and experience in clinical ethics. Since 2018, ethics consultants are increasingly pursuing formal certification through the American Society for Bioethics and Humanities.

The modern field of bioethics emerged from the 1947 Nuremberg Doctors' Trial, where Nazi physicians were prosecuted for conducting brutal medical experiments on imprisoned people.

This led to the 1947 framework outlining ethically acceptable human research called the Nuremberg Code, written by a panel of American judges. The 1979 Ethical Principles and Guidelines for Protections of Human Subjects of Research, called the Belmont Report, followed the Nuremberg Code. The Belmont Report turned the ethical ideals of respect for persons, beneficence - to do good - and justice into a regulatory framework to protect vulnerable and marginalized medical research participants in the U.S.

In the 1980s, many of these ethics protections moved from the research lab to the patient bedside. During this time, lifesaving technologies such as the ventilator, dialysis machine and organ transplantation created new, difficult ethical questions: When should life support end? Who decides? And what happens when there aren't enough resources?

A series of court cases and laws expanded patients' rights, with the Patient Self-Determination Act, a 1990 law which upheld patient rights to refuse or accept medical treatment, marking the key turning point.

High-profile court cases exposed the ethical dilemmas around end-of-life care and patient self-determination. The 1976 case, *In re Quinlan*, involved Karen Ann Quinlan, a young woman in a persistent vegetative state whose family sought permission from the court to withdraw her ventilator.

Following *In re Quinlan* was the 1990 case, *Cruzan v. Director, Missouri Department of Health*, which affirmed that adults have the right to refuse life-sustaining treatment.

Both cases became touchstones for how ethics consultants and care teams navigate the life and death decisions that have become routine in an era of life sustaining technology.

Today, most hospitals have some formal process for addressing ethical concerns in patient care.

A member of the healthcare team usually requests an ethics consult when they face conflict or uncertainty about the care of a patient. Patients and families can also request an ethics consultation, but in reality, few know this option exists or feel empowered to use it.

The ethics consultant's first task is to gather as much information as possible from everyone involved to understand the full context of the case. Importantly, ethics consultants do not make treatment decisions; they assist the people who do.

Imagine a loved one with advanced dementia who is in the intensive care unit with respiratory failure and is on a ventilator. The physician believes further treatment will prolong suffering; the family is not willing to let him go.

An ethics consultant would be called by the family or healthcare team to slow things down, provide space to reflect, and help navigate the situation. The ethics consultant will often meet with everyone involved to ensure that all voices are heard and that the patient's wishes remain central to the discussion.

As part of the ethics review, the ethics consultant would draw on their knowledge of policies, laws and ethical precedent about withdrawing life-sustaining treatment to provide some guardrails for the situation. In this case, a legal guardrail might be that the physician cannot remove the ventilator without the family's consent.

Rather than making a decision, the ethics consultant would then outline the ethical options available from which the patient, family, and healthcare team can choose.

Ethics consultants are trained to help people work through not just the medical facts, but the deeply human questions beneath them: What counts as an acceptable quality of life? How do we weigh hope against suffering? How can we know what a patient would want if they cannot speak for themselves?

In these moments, decisions can feel urgent and heavy, and communication can easily break down. Ethics consultants don't take decisions away from patients or families, and they don't replace the role of clinicians. Instead, they help ensure that everyone understands the situation, that different perspectives are heard and that the conversation stays grounded in the values and goals of the patient. (AP)

## World wants more high-protein products, but there's not enough whey to go around

WASHINGTON, June 15, (AP): Global consumers want more protein in every bite, but the dairy industry is struggling to give it to them.

Athletes and older adults have long used smoothies and shakes blended with whey protein concentrate - a powdered byproduct of cheese-making - to build or maintain muscle. More recently, food companies have sprinkled it into everything from breakfast cereals, Pop-Tarts and potato chips to bagels, tortillas and Starbucks drinks to meet growing consumer demand.

The average US supermarket now has 38,708 products advertising their protein content, according to NielsenIQ, a market research company. But the eagerness to appeal to ingredient-focused shoppers is causing shortages of food-grade whey protein and pushing prices to new records.

"Demand is very firm and seemingly outpacing supply for right now," said Kathleen Wolfley, vice president of Ever.Ag Insights, a data provider and consulting company for the agriculture industry.

Wholesale prices for whey protein began rising in 2024, and the pace accelerated last year and so far this year, Wolfley said.

Whey protein concentrate with 80% protein - the type often used by food makers and supplement companies as a booster - is trading on the dairy commodities market at more than \$13 per pound in the U.S., up 250% from a year ago, according to Ever.Ag. Whey protein isolate, a more refined version that contains at least 90% protein, is 150% more expensive than last year, the company said.

That's raising prices for consumers. US prices for whey protein concentrate powder have increased by around 15% over the past year, while more premium whey isolate powder has seen steeper gains, according to Datassembly, a price-tracking company.

It's a similar story in Europe. In late May, 80% whey protein concentrate hit a new record average of 26,450 euros (\$30,518) per metric ton, a price more than double from less than a year earlier, according to DCA Market Intelligence, a Nether-



Protein products sit for sale at a grocery store on June 10, in Dallas. (AP)

lands-based commodity pricing firm.

Here's what's happening with whey protein and when strained supplies might be alleviated.

Milk contains two proteins: casein and whey. During the cheese-making process, the casein - which forms solid curds - is separated from the liquid whey, which is dried to form a powder. Every pound of cheese yields nine pounds of whey, according to the US Department of Agriculture.

US milk consumption has fallen for decades as Americans shifted to beverages like sodas. But the appetite for cheese remained strong, Wolfley said. A nation of cheese-eaters generated a lot of whey protein, and some of the excess used to be exported to China and other countries.

The domestic hunger for high-protein snacks and meals is now keeping more whey protein in the U.S. for use as a food additive or a nutritional supplement. US exports of 80% whey protein concentrate and whey protein isolate to China fell 47% from January through April compared to the same four-month period a year ago, according to Vesper, an Amsterdam-based company that tracks commodity prices.

"There simply isn't enough product for the US customer, and exports have therefore been paused as much as possible," said Jasper Endlich, a Vesper dairy analyst.

China is seeking more whey protein from Europe, which also is seeing shortages thanks to reduced U.S. exports, Endlich said.

Use of GLP-1 weight-loss drugs is one of the factors that has supercharged demand for whey protein concentrate, Wolfley said.

Obesity drugs like Wegovy and Zepbound are designed to suppress the appetites of people taking them. The foods they do eat need to be nutritionally dense, experts say. GLP-1 users often are advised to consume enough protein to help them feel full for longer and to retain muscle mass as they lose weight.

Around 6% of obese and diabetic patients in the US and 2% of obese and diabetic patients worldwide were using GLP-1 drugs last year, according to an estimate by the investment bank Morgan Stanley. Some estimates have put GLP-1 use as high as 12% of the US adult population, since not everyone on GLP-1 drugs is obese or diabetic.

Food and nutrition companies are creating added-protein products to attract those consumers as well as people who think drinking protein shakes to replace meals will help them lose weight.

Tight supplies and higher costs have caused some manufacturers to increase the prices consumers pay for protein powder or protein-enriched products.

### Al-Hajri eyes strong showing

## Kuwait U-19 handball team heads to Slovenia & Croatia for training camp

By Khaled Al-Enezi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, June 15: Kuwait's national U-19 handball team departs this morning for Slovenia and Croatia to begin a two-week training camp as part of its preparations for the Asian Men's Youth Handball Championship, scheduled to be held in China next month. The tournament serves as a qualifier for the 2027 IHF Men's Youth World Championship in North Macedonia.

The delegation is led by Acting President of the Kuwait Handball Association, Shabib Al-Hajri, alongside Secretary General Qaed Al-Adwani and team manager Yousef Shaheen. The squad will be guided by head coach Heine Jensen, assistant coach Musaad Mefreh, perfor-

mance analyst Ayman Al-Sheikh, goalkeeping coach Yassine Idrissi, physiotherapist Mehdi El Bakouch, and 23 players.

Al-Hajri stressed that the team is fully committed to reaching the highest levels of technical and physical readiness ahead of the continental event, particularly after the recent interruption to sporting activities caused by regional security developments.

He acknowledged the challenges awaiting the team in the Asian championship but expressed confidence in the players and coaching staff, noting that all efforts are currently focused on making up for lost preparation time and ensuring the team is ready to compete at its best.

He added that the squad includes a number of talented and promis-



Media briefing by Shabib Al-Hajri, Acting President of the Kuwait Handball Association.

ing players who are following an intensive training schedule featuring morning and evening sessions. The objective, he said, is to maximize the team's readiness and enable Kuwait to deliver a strong performance and proudly represent the nation on the Asian stage.

### Strong performance seals qualification

## Al-Kharafi secures spot at Aachen Equestrian World Championship

KUWAIT CITY, June 15: Kuwait Club and national team rider, Asian champion, international equestrian Ali Jassim Al-Kharafi, has qualified for the finals of the Equestrian World Championship, set to take place in Aachen, Germany, next August. The prestigious event is one of the highlights on the calendar of the International Equestrian Federation (FEI).

Al-Kharafi confirmed his qualification following a strong performance in the Grand Prix competition, where he secured the final qualifying position for the World Championship.

"We delivered a solid result in the Grand Prix and earned the qualification spot for the World Championship," Al-Kharafi said.

The Kuwaiti rider has recently delivered impressive performances aboard his horse in several Grand Prix events across different jumping heights, further enhancing his reputation at both regional and international levels.

Aachen is widely regarded as one of the most iconic destinations in equestrian sport, with a long-standing tradition of hosting elite global competitions and featuring one of the most renowned arenas in the discipline.

The upcoming championship is expected to attract major



Al-Kharafi clears a jump during a showjumping competition.

global attention, bringing together the world's top riders in show jumping, dressage, and other elite equestrian disciplines. Show jumping and dressage events, in particular, are anticipated to feature fierce competition among the sport's highest-ranked athletes and horses.

# Hurricanes win Stanley Cup

Staal earns Conn Smythe honors



The Carolina Hurricanes pose for photos after a win over the Vegas Golden Knights in Game 6 of the NHL hockey Stanley Cup Final series in Las Vegas. (AP)

LAS VEGAS, June 15, (AP): Carolina spent the first part of the Stanley Cup Final surviving, finding ways to overcome deficits and play a high-scoring game that didn't fit the Hurricanes' typical style.

But when it came down to doing what it takes to win the Cup, the Hurricanes' defense put its stamp on this series, shutting down the Vegas Golden Knights and not letting up.

The Hurricanes held Vegas to five total goals in Games 4 and 5 and used a suffocating defense in a 3-0 shutout Sunday night in Game 6 to win their first championship in 20 years.

"That's a lot of years," said Carolina center Jordan Staal, who received the Conn Smythe Trophy as playoff MVP. "It's amazing. This is something I've been going after ever since we got the first one. You want to win it again and again and again."

Brandon Bussi, whose entrance late in Game 3 helped turn around the series, had his first career playoff shutout in stopping 22 shots. Jackson Blake had a goal and assist, and Taylor Hall scored just 3:47 into the game to set the tone. Nikolaj Ehlers added an empty-netter.

"Your mind wanders the last couple of days and wonder what it may be like out here (on ice after winning) and it's better than I could have



Vegas Golden Knights right wing Mark Stone, left, is checked by Carolina Hurricanes center Jordan Staal during the third period in Game 3 of the NHL hockey Stanley Cup Final series Saturday in Las Vegas. (AP)

expected," Hall said.

The Golden Knights struggled badly to muster any kind of offense in Game 6 and went 18:37 between shots on goal in the second and third periods. Playing in their third Cup final, this is the first time they have been shut out.

This final game was what many observers expected the series to be like between the defensive-minded teams, but each side watched leads of two-plus goals disappear in the first three games.

Now, the Cup belongs to the Hurricanes, led by coach Rod Brind'Amour, who also captained Carolina to its 2006 title.

"It's just as awesome," Brind'Amour said. "But as a player,

it was a little different. I worked and dreamt of winning the Cup my whole life, so that was like a piano came off my back. This time around, I wanted it for the group."

This was the first game of the series that Vegas goalie Carter Hart didn't allow four goals in a game. He finished with 20 saves.

The Hurricanes began to assume control of the series after falling behind by the score of 4-0 in Game 3. They came back force overtime, and though the Canes lost, they outplayed the Golden Knights from there on out.

Reflecting the do-or-die situation for the Golden Knights, they made several lineup changes, with Brett Howden replacing the injured Wil-

liam Karlsson at second-line center. Mitch Marner could have moved there, but remained at right wing.

Original Golden Knight Reilly Smith made his Cup final debut at third-line right wing, and Braeden Bowman made his playoff debut at fourth-line right wing. Kaedan Korczak replaced Dyland Coghlan on the third defensive pairing.

"This is tough to be on this side of it," Golden Knights defenseman Brayden McNabb said. "But on the other side, these chances don't come around very often. So it stings."

This title is a testament to Carolina's resilience as a franchise that kept coming close to winning the Eastern Conference, but couldn't quite get through until now.

Brind'Amour made sure the Hurricanes kept getting back up after losing in the conference final twice in the past three years and three times in their current eight-year playoff run. The talent was clearly there, but there was always a stumbling block.

Not anymore. After dispatching Montreal in five games to make the final, the Hurricanes then faced perennial power Vegas and took care of business there, too. Now, Brind'Amour will get his name on the Cup for the second time.

So will 37-year-old Staal, who also won the title in 2009 with Pittsburgh. He planted himself in front of Hart and dared the Golden Knights to knock him out of the way. Staal scored in each of the first five Cup final games, the first time that has happened.

## UFC brings its trademark mayhem to White House

WASHINGTON, June 15, (AP): President Donald Trump emerged from the Oval Office first, then fighters from around the globe followed straight into the fight cage, in part for the president's 80th birthday celebration and to bring a sport long on the fringe of mainstream acceptance into a main event on the White House South Lawn.

For a president who revels in winners, Trump had to enjoy crowning two champions on a big fight night staged closer to the Rose Garden than Madison Square Garden in the co-main event of UFC Freedom 250.

American lightweight Justin Gaethje capped his unification championship victory in the main event over Ilia Topuria with a backflip off the top of the cage. He crouched near Trump for a celebratory chat and the betting underdog draped the American flag over one shoulder - and the 155-pound title belt over another. Trump later stepped into the cage to congratulate Gaethje.

"Hey, I'm from America. 250 years ago we were way more than 6-1 underdogs," Gaethje said. "I know that was absolutely legendary because I can not even believe it."

Topuria and Gaethje made their walkouts from the Oval Office as fireworks exploded overhead during Michael Buffer's introductions. Gaethje - who appeared to skim the copy of the Declaration of Independence on his way out - mustered some scattered "USA!" chants against the Spanish-Georgian Topuria, though not even the main event could stop the trend of mostly quiet fights.

It took the gory sight of a bloodied Topuria - his back to Trump in a white "USA" hat as he peered through the wire-mesh cage - nearly having the fight waved off to get a "let them fight!" chant going. The fight continued, and the 37-year-old Gaethje won eventually via corner stoppage in the fourth round.

"Hard work, baby," Gaethje said. "I am made for these moments. This

sport is made for me."

Earlier, Cyril Gane hammered Alex Pereira with a series of elbows and fists to the head and won via TKO in 1:27 of the second round to claim the interim heavyweight belt for a second time and set up a rematch with heavyweight champ Tom Aspinall.

Like the bulk of the fighters who had their hands raised in victory, Gane thanked Trump.

The White House was a most improbable all-American setting for a fight promotion that long ago shed the "human cockfighting" tag and decades later became entwined with the emboldened right-wing "manosphere" that soaks up UFC fights and threw its support behind Trump in two elections.

Trump and UFC boss Dana White, the tempestuous tag-team that rallied the fight company to the nation's capital, walked from the Oval Office to the Blue Room Balcony to chants of "USA! USA!" to kick off the fight card jacked up by a dose of high-octane patriotism on a blustery night for cage fighting.

This was no Easter Egg Roll. The Marine Band jazzed up the festivities and played fighter entrance music in front of the White House and Zac Brown sang the national anthem - never performed before normal UFC fight cards because of the mix of nationalities fighting inside the Octagon. The Navy's Blue Angels and Air Force Thunderbirds zipped overhead as part of a flyover to celebrate Trump's birthday and the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence's signing.

The 4,000-plus fans - Meta CEO Mark Zuckerberg and Paramount Skydance CEO David Ellison among them - on the South Lawn who sat under the claw, the flying saucer-like, open-air structure that housed the cage, mostly sat on their hands until the fighters used theirs to deliver punishing blows and a true fighting spirit that got everyone on their feet.



Ilia Topuria, right, fights Justin Gaethje during UFC Freedom 250 on the South Lawn of the White House, Monday, June 15, 2026, in Washington. (AP)

## Hamlin wins third straight NASCAR Cup at Pocono Raceway

LONG POND, Pa., June 15, (AP): With every Denny Hamlin victory, speculation about his future grows and talks of retirement are questioned.

He signed a two-year extension with Joe Gibbs Racing that runs through 2027 and he insists it will be his last season. At 45, he's the oldest full-time Cup Series driver in the field, but he can't stop winning.

Hamlin won the NASCAR Cup Series race at Pocono Raceway on Sunday for his third consecutive victory and passed the late Kyle Busch for sole possession of ninth place on the all-time wins list.

Hamlin last week won his 63rd race in NASCAR's top series to tie his former Joe Gibbs Racing teammate on the all-time wins list. His eighth career victory at Pocono pushed him ahead of Busch for sole possession of ninth.

His recent success - it is his fourth win of the season, not including the non-points All-Star race - has renewed talk that Hamlin should reconsider retirement when his deal with Gibbs expires.

"I think for Denny, he wants to leave on



Denny Hamlin celebrates in Victory Lane after winning a NASCAR Cup Series auto race at Pocono Raceway in Long Pond, Pa. (AP)

top, right? He doesn't want to leave where it was one year too long," said JGR co-owner Heather Gibbs. "At this rate, what he's producing out there, it's not something you would not consider. We want the best drivers in our cars. Our teams work to put the best cars on track."

"If it works out and he's still producing and he wants to, it's a huge commitment

for him, he's got his own team that he kind of wants to run. It's hard when you dangle checkered flags in front of him, too. He so far has put a stop to such talk despite performing at the highest level of his long career."

Hamlin, who wasn't even sure he wanted to return to honor this two-year extension after losing the championship in last November's season finale and then the December death of his father in a house fire, understands he's performing at a high level.

But as far as continuing past 2027? It's not yet on his radar despite how strong he's been on the track.

"I would certainly say it's the best we've been," Hamlin said. "We come to the race-track every week knowing we got a great shot to win. The team's doing an amazing job giving me exactly what I need in the car every single week. That's why we're winning."

Sunday's win comes nearly 20 years to the date after his first career victory, which was at Pocono on June 11, 2006. He swept the races at the Pennsylvania track that year.

Hamlin said Pocono has become "like a

second home for me."

"First win here, so special here. Pocono has mastered the fan experience from the crowd in the stands to the infield here," Hamlin said. "Just so happy for this whole Joe Gibbs Racing team. The pit crew is flawless right now. We got it all going."

Despite 64 career victories, this marks the first time in his career that Hamlin has won three consecutive races.

The feat tied Richard Petty, who did it in 1966 and 1967, Bobby Allison in 1971 and Darrell Waltrip in 1981. Petty, Allison and Waltrip are all in the NASCAR Hall of Fame.

He also took a job at NASCAR, noting that it was technically his ninth victory at Pocono, but he was stripped of the victory in 2022 when NASCAR said he and Busch's car's failed post-race inspection.

"They aren't getting that checkered flag back," Hamlin said.

Tyler Reddick, who drives for the 23XI Racing team owned by Hamlin and Michael Jordan, finished second as Toyota took the top two spots. Hamlin is now 19 points behind Reddick in the Cup Series standings.



Embassy of India  
Kuwait

Tender No.- KUW/ADM/868/01/2025 Dated - 15<sup>th</sup> June 2026

**TENDER NOTICE - SUPPLY, INSTALLATION AND COMMISSIONING OF INTERNET SERVICES AND CORE NETWORK ROUTERS**

Embassy of India, Kuwait invites bids from interested companies for Supply, Installation and Commissioning of Internet Services and Core Network Routers at the Embassy

Prospective / Interested companies are advised to inspect the area and present their offers in a sealed cover marked "Offer for Supply, Installation and Commissioning of Internet Services and Core Network Routers - to be opened by addressee only" and addressed to the "Head of Chancery, Embassy of India, Diplomatic Enclave, Arabian Gulf Street, Safat 13015, Kuwait." The bid must be submitted at the Embassy on or before 08<sup>th</sup> July 2026.

The detailed tender document along with its annexure may be downloaded from Central Public Procurement Portal (CPPP) at <https://eprocure.gov.in/cppp> and on the official website of the Embassy of India, Kuwait at <https://indembkuwt.gov.in>. The tender document may also be accessed by scanning the QR code.

For any other clarification please contact Mr. Santosh Kumar, Attache on any working day (Sunday - Thursday) between 0800 hrs 1630 hrs on +965 97229912 or email to: [admkuwait@mea.gov.in](mailto:admkuwait@mea.gov.in).





## Fan Zone



Fans react ahead of the World Cup Group F soccer match between Sweden and Tunisia in Guadalupe, near Monterrey, Mexico. (AP)



Tunisia supporters react ahead of the World Cup Group F soccer match between Sweden and Tunisia in Guadalupe, near Monterrey, Mexico. (AP)



Fans cheer during the World Cup Group E soccer match between Ivory Coast and Ecuador in Philadelphia. (AP)



German fans wait for the World Cup Group E soccer match between Germany and Curaçao in Houston. (AP)



Japan fans celebrate their team's goal against Netherlands as they watch a public viewing of the World Cup soccer tournament between Japan and Netherlands in San Francisco. (AP)



Fans of the Netherlands cheer prior to the World Cup Group F soccer match between the Netherlands and Japan in Arlington, Texas, near Dallas. (AP)

## Havertz sparks Germany's 7-goal show as Curaçao nets historic World Cup goal

We are on the right path: Nagelsmann

**HOUSTON, June 15, (AP):** Germany's seven-goal rout of Curaçao in its World Cup opener was the perfect outcome to overshadow a close first half and boost the team after consecutive group-stage exits for the four-time champion.

Kai Havertz scored two goals as Germany pulled away from World Cup first-timer Curaçao and piled it on in a 7-1 win in group play. The smallest country to ever appear in the tournament hung tight at 1-1 until the 38th minute.

"We really needed this convincing win," coach Julian Nagelsmann said. "We needed this self-confidence. It was there but it definitely grew."

He said Sunday's display was important for the country's fans.

"We have to show them that we can perform and we have to have the confidence," he said. "I think we're in a better spot than we were entering this match."

Livano Comenencia tied it at 1-1 with his left-footed shot through traffic from the center of the box in the 21st minute to give Curaçao its first goal in the tournament and send fans of the tiny Caribbean nation into a frenzy.

"Even though it wasn't me, it felt like it was me, it was all of us, the whole island, everybody," Curaçao's Jearl Margarita said. "We screamed our lungs out. So we were happy."

It was all Germany after that with the team regaining the lead on Nico Schlotterbeck's header off Nathaniel Brown's corner kick in the 38th.

"One team has very high expectations and the other one doesn't and that's a bit tricky," Nagelsmann said.

The six-goal margin was well short of the World Cup record of nine, which has happened three times, most recently when Hungary beat El Salvador 10-1 in 1982. And the performance from the Germans was much more expected than the last time they won 7-1 in a World Cup, beating host Brazil in the 2014 semifinals.



Germany's Jamal Musiala scores during the World Cup Group E soccer match between Germany and Curaçao in Houston. (AP)

Havertz connected on a penalty shot into the left goal in first-half stoppage time to make it 3-1. Germany was awarded the penalty shot after Felix Nmecha was tripped in the box by Riechedly Bazoer.

Germany wasted no time after halftime to extend the lead, with Jamal Musiala scoring on a right-footed shot across the goalkeeper's area in the 47th minute.

Brown scored in the 68th minute to push the advantage to 5-1. The 22-year-old has an American father, but made it clear ahead of the World Cup he'd be representing the country in which he was born and raised by his mother.

Deniz Undav added a goal in the 78th minute. Havertz's second goal came in the 88th.

Germany is seeking redemption after failing to get out of the group stage in Russia and Qatar following its 2014 title.

"We are on the right path but of course there are things that we can

do better and we will have stronger opponents," Nagelsmann said.

Nmecha one-timed it with his right foot into the near post just inside the upper box with an assist



Germany's Nico Schlotterbeck celebrates after scoring his side's second goal during the World Cup Group E soccer match between Germany and Curaçao in Houston. (AP)

from Florian Wirtz in the sixth minute to make it 1-0.

The crowd of 68,021 was overwhelmingly rooting for Germany but there was a spirited contingent of people cheering on Curaçao.

It was the first match of the tournament at NRG Stadium, home of the NFL's Houston Texans.

Manuel Neuer, the 40-year-old goalkeeper who came out of international retirement for the tournament, had one save in his first appearance for Germany in almost two years.

The match featured the largest age gap between coaches in World Cup history with Curaçao's 78-year-old coach, Dick Advocaat, becoming the oldest ever in the tournament against 38-year-old Nagelsmann, who is the youngest coach in this year's tournament.

Germany faces Ivory Coast in its next match in Toronto on Saturday and Curaçao meets Ecuador Saturday in Kansas City, Missouri.

Netherlands extend unbeaten streak

## Kamada's late blow earns Japan draw against Dutch

ARLINGTON, Texas, June 15, (AP): Daichi Kamada and his Japanese teammates were minutes away from a World Cup -opening loss that wouldn't have been unexpected considering the opponent.

His tying goal will be remembered for a long time in his homeland, especially if the country with some soccer momentum reaches the round of 16 again.

Kamada scored when a header by teammate Koki Ogawa deflected off his head into the Dutch goal in the 88th minute, sending the Samurai Blue fans into a frenzy and giving Japan a 2-2 draw with the higher-ranked Netherlands.

While the Dutch extended their unbeaten streak to 17 games in group play, the orange-clad Oranje supporters were stunned by the late goal that left them with 21 wins, two losses and 11 draws in group play at the World Cup.

"Our players managed to be tenacious but at the same time be patient and just keep calm and finding and seizing an opportunity," Japan coach Hajime Moriyasu said through an interpreter. His team reached the round of 16 for the fourth time in 2022 in Qatar.

Virgil Van Dijk and Crysencio Summerville scored off each post for the Netherlands early in the second half, while Keito Nakamura had a goal between those as part of a three-goal flurry in just 14 minutes.

A mostly uneventful first half changed quickly after the break for a crowd evenly split at AT&T Stadium, the home of the Dallas Cowboys with the retractable roof that offered relief from the muggy Texas heat, and the giant video board that fans had a hard time keeping their eyes off.

Summerville gave the eighth-ranked Dutch the lead in the 64th minute, and Japan was running out of hope until a Ogawa's perfectly timed header off a corner kick. The ball glanced off Kamada's head and past goalkeeper Bart Verbruggen, who got his hands on it with a sprawling dive but couldn't keep it from going in.

Van Dijk sent a header toward the far post on the right in the 50th minute, bending forward from inside the penalty area as he stared at the ball before it caromed in for the Dutch captain's 13th international goal.

Nakamura answered seven minutes later for 18th-ranked Japan, turning and rifling a shot past Verbruggen from the left side of the arc after taking a pass from Takefusa Kubo.

Another seven minutes later, Summerville took a pass from Ryan Gravenberch and sent a left-footed shot to the far left post past Zion Suzuki, where it caromed in again.

"It's disappointing now because obviously conceding the lead is never good," said Van Dijk, the second-oldest Dutch goal scorer in a World Cup at 34 years, 341 days, behind Giovanni van Bronckhorst at 35 and 151 against Uruguay in 2010. "It's extra disappointing that we conceded from a set piece so late on."

The Dutch's most recent loss before the elimination round came the last time the World Cup was in the United States in 1994, when a group play defeat was followed by a quarterfinal loss to Brazil at the Cotton Bowl in Dallas.

The pressure is always on the Netherlands to reach the elimination round, in part because it's the only country to reach the final three times without winning the World Cup.

A draw to open Group F, which includes Sweden and Tunisia, won't ease that pressure on coach Ronald Koeman, who faced several pointed questions about strategy and shot back with cryptic replies.

The Dutch beat Japan in their only other World Cup meeting in 2010.

"I'm disappointed that we didn't win, but that's because we were ahead twice," Koeman said through an interpreter. "Many people underestimated Japan, but for the 100,000th time, if you underestimate them, that's your problem. You think Japan's strength was overexaggerated before the match? Let's wait until the end of the tournament to see who's right."

The Netherlands plays Sweden on Saturday in Houston, while Japan goes to Monterrey, Mexico, to face Tunisia on Saturday.



Japan's Koki Ogawa heads the ball during a World Cup Group F soccer match against the Netherlands in Arlington, Texas, near Dallas. (AP)

## Racism monitor urges FIFA to act over ref after gesture row

GENEVA, June 15, (AP): FIFA's discrimination monitor at the World Cup called Monday for a video review official to be removed for appearing to make a hand gesture resembling a white supremacist sign.

When the official broadcast of Germany's opening game against Curaçao on Sunday cut pregame to show the team of video review analysts, Shaun Evans from Australia made an "OK" symbol with his right hand in front of his right leg. Though the game was played in Houston, video officials work in Dallas at the World Cup broadcast center.

In 2019, the gesture - with thumb and forefinger touched in a circle and other fingers outstretched - was designated a hate symbol by the New York-

based Anti-Defamation League.

"Advice from our experts is that the gesture used clearly resembles an upside down 'OK' hand symbol used as a 'white power' symbol in global far-right circles," the Fare network, a long-time partner of FIFA and European soccer body UEFA to monitor racist and discriminatory chants, flags and symbols at international games, said in a statement.

"Clearly this official should have no further role to play in this World Cup," Fare said in a statement, describing the gesture as "neo-nazi."

FIFA was asked for comment.

In Australia, the Professional Football Referees Association and governing body Football Australia were contacted for comment.

It was unclear if Evans, working at his first

game at the World Cup, was making a political gesture or playing a children's game prank.

The "gotcha" or "circle game" is where someone flashes an upside-down OK sign below their waist and punches in the shoulder anyone who looks at it.

It was appropriated a decade ago as a signal for white supremacy that started as a hoax on the far-right online message board 4chan.

In 2019 when the sign was designated as a hate symbol, Oren Segal, director of the ADL's Center on Extremism, said context is key to interpreting whether an "OK" symbol is hateful or harmless.

At the time, he said, "there is enough of a volume of use for hateful purposes that we felt it was important to add."



Ivory Coast's Yan Diomande, left, and Ecuador's Piero Hin-capie battle for the ball during the World Cup Group E soccer match between Ivory Coast and Ecuador in Philadelphia. (AP)

# Sports

## Cape Verde secures stunning draw with Spain

Diallo strikes at the death for Ivory Coast

**ATLANTA, June 15 (AP):** Tiny Cape Verde pulled off a stunning result in its World Cup debut, shutting out heavily favored Spain.

An impressive performance by 40-year-old goalkeeper Vozinha helped Cape Verde play one of the favorites to in the tournament to a 0-0 draw. The final score is the biggest shock of the tournament so far.

Cape Verde actually had a chance to in the game, but Diney Borges' late header was saved by Spain keeper Unai Simon.

European champion Spain's roster is filled with superstar players. But they were frustrated by the underdogs from Cape Verde, with Vozinha pulling off a string of saves before halftime.

Barcelona forward Ferran Torres came closest to scoring for Spain, hitting the bar with shot and later forcing a save from Vozinha on another well-struck ball.

The keeper also denied Pedri and pushed away another potential score late in the half.

Cape Verde - a group of islands with around half a million inhabitants - is playing at its first World Cup.

The 2010 champion Spain is aiming to win the World Cup for a second time, but coach Luis de la Fuente warned on Sunday that Cape Verde could be one of the surprise teams of the tournament.



Spain's Pedri tries to save the ball in front of Cabo Verde's Kevin Pina during the World Cup Group H soccer match between Spain and Cape Verde in Atlanta. (AP)

Cape Verde continued to defend stubbornly in the second half and not even teenage star Lamine Yamal

could turn the game Spain's way after he entered the match. Ivory Coast did not make the

knockout round in three previous World Cups. Les Éléphant came to the United States set on changing

that - and they are off to a great start. Amad Diallo scored in the 90th minute to lift Ivory Coast to a 1-0

victory over Ecuador in its first World Cup appearance in a dozen years.

"We came here with ambitions and high hopes," coach Emere Faé said through an interpreter. "Everything is going well."

The teams combined to hit the crossbar three times before Diallo - the Manchester United winger who entered as a substitute in the 56th minute - broke through with a left-footed shot from just inside the penalty area that beat diving goalkeeper Hernán Galíndez. Wilfried Singo set up the goal with a strong run down the right side.

"This was a fantastic goal," Faé said. "(Singo) delivered a wonderful assist to Diallo, and he finished well. Very happy to see just what we worked on."

Ecuador saw its 19-game unbeaten streak end with its first loss since a 1-0 decision against Brazil on Sept. 6, 2024.

"It hurts," Ecuador coach Sebastián Beccacece said through an interpreter. "This is a very painful situation. It needs to make you stronger for the future."

Elye Wahi hit the crossbar in the 52nd minute for Ivory Coast after Ecuador's John Yeboah and Nilson Angulo did the same in the opening half.

Ecuador, making its fifth World Cup appearance and looking to reach the knockout round for the second time, was playing a virtual home game at Lincoln Financial Field, with most of the capacity crowd of 68,274 wearing the yellow jerseys of La Tri.

Ayari scores twice

## Sweden pounds Tunisia to move atop Group F

**MONTERREY, Mexico, June 15, (AP):** Yasin Ayari scored twice and Sweden showed it belonged at the 2026 World Cup, pounding Tunisia 5-1 to move atop Group F.

Alexander Isak and Viktor Gyökeres each had a goal and an assist, and Mattias Svanberg also scored for Sweden, which entered ranked 39th in the world and missed the 2022 World Cup after reaching the quarterfinals eight years ago in Russia.

Omar Rekik scored for 45th-ranked Tunisia, which is playing in its seventh World Cup but has never advanced beyond the group stage.

The higher-ranked teams in the group, the Netherlands and Japan, played to a 2-2 draw earlier Sunday at Arlington, Texas.

Ayari bookended the scoring for the Swedes at Estadio BBVA with long-range goals in the seventh minute and in second-half stoppage time. He was muted in his celebration of the first goal, raising his hands out of respect for the country where his father was born.

Isak scored his 18th international goal in the 30th minute when Gyökeres found the Liverpool striker - who was sidelined much of last season with a broken leg - on a counterattack. Isak cut inside and fired a low shot past the hands of Tunisian goalkeeper Mouhib Chamakh, who struggled all night.

Isak said he and Gyökeres and "have quite different qualities which is very beneficial for the team," adding: "We can bring different types of attacks."

After Rekik stalled Sweden's momentum with his goal in the 43rd minute, Isak and Gyökeres put Sweden back in control. Isak stole the ball and found Gyökeres for a one-on-one against Chamakh that the Arsenal striker won easily for his 16th goal in his last 15 appearances for Sweden and 21st overall.

Sweden coach Graham Potter said Isak and Gyökeres have strong chemistry.

"Behind them, they needed a team that functioned well. I'm pleased for the players tonight that we took a step forward in that," Potter said.

Svanberg scored in the 84th minute, a goal that was awarded after a lengthy video review.

Ayari, who represented Sweden at the youth level, was given the chance to switch allegiances and play for Tunisia ahead of the 2022 World Cup, but he declined.

When asked about his son's choice to represent Sweden, Azzouz Ayari told Swedish newspaper Aftonbladet earlier this year that he agreed with the decision.

"No, I wanted him to play for Sweden," Azzouz Ayari



Sweden's Viktor Gyökeres (17) kicks the ball clear during the World Cup Group F soccer match between Sweden and Tunisia in Guadalupe, near Monterrey, Mexico. (AP)

said. "He must feel like he's giving back to the country that took care of him."

On Saturday, Tunisia coach Sabri Lamouchi also offered support to Ayari.

"I know him and his brother," Lamouchi said. "He made a choice, I have a lot of respect, and he's a very good player. We wish him after the game best of luck, but that is after the game." Sweden will play the Netherlands at Houston on Saturday, while Tunisia will remain in Monterrey and face Japan the same day.

## Burgan edges Al Duhail to reach historic Asian Club Handball Championship final

**KUWAIT CITY, June 15, (KUNA):** Kuwait's Burgan Club booked its place in the final of the 28th Asian Men's Club Handball Championship, currently hosted in Kuwait, after a dramatic 32-31 victory over Qatar's Al Duhail in the semi-final on Monday.

Backed by a strong home crowd at the Sheikh Saad Al Abdullah Sports Complex, Burgan produced a remarkable comeback to reach the Asian final for the first time in its history. Al Duhail led 16-14 at half-time, but Burgan responded with a powerful second-half display to overturn the deficit and secure a famous win.

Despite the defeat, Al Duhail's Mustafa Heiba was named Man of the Match. The championship final is set for June 17.



Burgan players make a tackle during the semifinal match between Burgan and Al Duhail.

'You don't win WC based on your first match'

## South American teams start off on wrong foot

**PHILADELPHIA, June 15, (AP):** South American teams have got off to disappointing start to the World Cup, failing to produce a win in three games.

Ecuador lost to Ivory Coast 1-0 on Sunday in Philadelphia. Brazil drew 1-1 with Morocco on Saturday, and Paraguay was routed 4-1 by tournament co-host the United States.

Comments from coaches after the underwhelming results struck a similar tone.

Ecuador coach Sebastián Beccacece called it a "very painful situation." Paraguay coach Gustavo Alfaro referred to his team's loss as a "very painful lesson."

Coach Carlo Ancelotti said five-time World Cup champion Brazil cannot lose heart: "You don't win a World Cup based on your first match."

Defending champion Argentina takes on Algeria on Tuesday and Colombia is against Uzbekistan on Wednesday.

South America has a proud soccer tradition, and is the only continent other than Europe to produce World Cup champions.

The slow start to the tournament of some South American nations contrasts to a solid opening performance by North American teams on home soil.

"The U.S. won this match very clearly and fairly," Alfaro said after Paraguay's opening loss. "They dominated tactically, technically and physically as well. They have answers to everything you throw at them."

Adding to the victory by the U.S., Mexico kicked off the World Cup with a 2-0 win over South Africa, and Can-



Brazil goalkeeper Alisson Becker, right, makes a save against Morocco's Ayoub Amamoumi during the World Cup Group C soccer match between Brazil and Morocco in East Rutherford, N.J., near New York. (AP)

ada earned its first World Cup point after a 1-1 draw with Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Ecuador, making its fifth World Cup appearance and aiming to reach the knockout round for the second time, was playing a virtual home game at Philadelphia Stadium, where most of the capacity crowd of 68,274 wore the team's yellow jerseys.

But La Tri saw its 19-game unbeaten streak end with its first loss since a 1-0 defeat to Brazil in September 2024.

"I'm very sorry we did not give our fans the joy they came to seek," Beccacece said. "It was an unfair defeat, played out in a fantastic stadium atmosphere. We have to process it, put what happened behind us, focus on what lies ahead, and - I believe - keep the faith."

Ecuador captain Enner Valencia said the team remains hopeful despite the loss.

"We're keeping our heads held high knowing that this is just the beginning," he said, "and there's still a tournament ahead of us."

After the game, Ecuador goalkeeper Hernán Galíndez spoke about the unpredictability of the World Cup opening games and how they shouldn't necessarily be a marker of the tournament's finishing results.

"In the last World Cup, we won the first game and then were left out," he said. "Argentina, in the last World Cup, lost the first game and won the World Cup, so nothing guarantees you anything."

## France opens campaign against ambitious Senegal

**WALTHAM, Mass., June 15:** France begin its 2026 FIFA World Cup journey today with a high-profile Group I clash against Senegal, in a meeting that pits one of the tournament favorites against a determined African side eager to make a strong statement.

The French enter the tournament with strong credentials, featuring a star-studded squad and extensive international experience, and is widely regarded as one of the leading contenders for the title. Senegal, however, arrives with confidence and belief, aiming to challenge one of world football's elite sides and secure a positive start to its campaign.

"Les Bleus" are targeting an opening victory to set the tone in Group I, which also includes Iraq and Norway, as they look to push once again for World Cup glory after lifting the trophy in 1998.

France relies on a deep pool of top European talent and is determined to begin the tournament on the front foot, fully aware of the importance of early momentum in a demanding group stage.

Senegal, meanwhile, comes into the match buoyed by recent successes, including its Africa Cup of Nations triumph and a strong showing at the 2022 World Cup, where it reached the knockout stages.

The "Lions of Teranga" will look to combine physical strength, speed, and experience as they aim to challenge France and potentially deliver a result that could reshape the outlook of Group I.

### World Cup Fixtures

France vs Senegal 22:00

Wednesday

Iraq vs Norway 01:00

Argentina vs Algeria 04:00

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